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Re-Envisioning the Resilient Individual

Reflections on the Science of Human Adaptation in Light of Paul Ricoeur and Julian of Norwich

By

Nathan Hadley White

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Durham University

Department of Theology and Religion

2017

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Abstract

This thesis engages the concept of resilience in light of the disciplines of social science, philosophy, and theology. Viewing resilience through these lenses presents the possibility of 're-envisioning' human responses to adversity in ways that both question assumptions underlying resilience and corroborate current research. Social science data are foundational for understanding factors significant in human resilience to adversity, but may be further 'thickened' through narrative accounts of human being. Attention to the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur provides insight into both the 'surplus of meaning' possible through narrative and human identity formed in relation to the Other. These take on added significance when understood in light of the narrative of the Christian Gospel that discloses meaning through relation to the self-giving God. Julian of Norwich serves as an example of the meaningfulness of the Gospel narrative, known through a personal experience of Divine love.

Thus, the resilient individual may be re-envisioned through the transformative narrative of the Gospel. A renewed understanding of personhood situates responses to adversity within the meaningfulness of the 'world' projected by this narrative. Through participation in the narrative of the Gospel, the love of God engenders human resilience by creating meaning and connection in an environment of eschatological hope.

Declaration

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or in any other university for a degree.

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Nathan White

Durham, Epiphany 2017

For Caroline

Of whom it may be said:

"Je remets mon esprit à Dieu *pour les autres*" (Ricœur 2007:130)

Introduction

The Semiotics of Tree Rings and Human Lives

The giant redwood and sequoia trees that tower over California are a sight to behold, majestic in their stately grandeur. Growing as tall as 375 feet, as wide as 30 feet, and living for as many as 3,000 years, these trees boast among their ranks the largest living organism in the world (Redwood National and State Parks 2014b). If one were to take a cross-section of one of these tree's trunk, its growth would be evident in hundreds upon hundreds of concentric circles, each marking a year of the tree's life. Those rings tell a story—the narrative of the tree's existence—through drought, fire, and disease as well as through plenty, health, and growth: "Staying true to its name, the adaptations of Sequoia sempervirens (ever-living Sequoia) seem to bend time as it continues to prove itself one of the earth's most tenacious survivors" (Redwood National and State Parks 2014a). This tale of survival is written in and through the waxing and waning of rings of growth—a story of struggle unknown apart from peeling back the layers of time.[1]

But, in meaningful ways, human resilience will look quite different than the resilience of the stoic sequoia. For one, human beings are much more complex—involving biological, psychological, social, and spiritual components—that, invariably, affect resilient adaptation. Yet human beings are also more dynamic than the stately tree; we are ever changing, adapting, moving, and *living*. How might one 'intersect' such a mutable being?

The 'vivisection' required to examine the complexities of human life, I suggest, is accomplished through narratival means. If one were to 'cut away' (metaphorically speaking) the trappings of a human life, a story also would come to light—told not by concentric rings of growth, but through memories and ambitions, hopes and fears, wishes and dreams—all interwoven in the individual's self-identity and narrated through time. Here there would be love, joy, and happiness as well as pain, sorrow, and depression; seasons of thriving and seasons of regression.

[1] The wounds of survival—scars and lost limbs—can become meaningful in the context of the tree's narrative of existence.

Through the course of this study a particular human story will frame our discussion of resilience. This story will bring to the forefront certain issues pertaining to the relationship between resilience and theology. Her story is only one among many, and so is not generalizable to all contexts.[2] Nonetheless, as a particular story, her life narrative may provide insight into resilient adaptation that is otherwise unavailable. This is Anh's story.

If you met Anh Vu Sawyer today, you would immediately notice the spring in the step of this spry sixty-something woman. Her bounding energy and enthusiasm for life dwarfs that of many half her age. Yet her jovial demeanor and engaging manner bely the difficult circumstances she endured. Or, as it may be, are they a result of those experiences? You be the judge:

'It is 1975 in Vietnam. A young Vietnamese woman watches as a helicopter emblazoned with the American flag lands on top of the U. S. Embassy, just beyond barbwire-topped walls from where she sits. She and her companions—family members ranging in age from 7 to 70—gaze desperately through the barbwire at their last hope of escape before the brutal Viet Cong seize Saigon.'[3]

The life-threatening danger and extreme adversity that Anh faced may not be evident at first glance. As it were, her infectious joy, in fact, issues from a depth of character that has weathered the storms of life. Some would say that Anh could be described as resilient. But what does this mean, exactly? Is it that she survived the worst that life could throw at her? Or does it describe the way in which she weathered the storms of life? Whatever it is, it must be contingent. Many others have not fared nearly as well as her.

Thus, for the human being, will this narrative be a tale of survival, or of some other fate? Is it possible to thrive—like many giant redwoods? And, if so, what creates and sustains

---

[2] For additional stories showing the power of a moral life in the face of adversity see *What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life Amidst Uncertainty and Danger* (Kleinman 2006).

[3] Anh relates her story in *Song of Saigon: One Woman's Journey to Freedom* (Sawyer and Proctor 2003).

such human flourishing? While the possibility of prolonged biological life is attractive for many, I suggest that human well-being is much more extensive than physical health—an assessment that is elucidated through an evaluation of resilience.

Why Resilience?

A recent trend in Western culture seeks to assess how human beings may thrive in the midst of adversity—not *despite* difficulty, but *in* and *through* it. This idea of 'bouncing back' links resilient adaptation to a number of character traits, skills, and practices. The thought is, to put it crudely, if we can distill and inculcate certain characteristics, individuals will be able to overcome adversities. A slew of books promise to make the reader more resilient, and along with it, more healthy, happy, and wise.[4] While many of these books provide helpful insight, they do not address several important questions regarding assumptions underlying resilience: in particular, whether resilience is always a good to be pursued, what the goal of resilient adaptation is, and what suppositions underlie the claim that resilience and happiness are synonymous. I contend that the answers to these questions reveal as much about our understanding of ourselves as human beings as they do about resilience. Furthermore, I believe that a theological account of resilience can shed light on the concept itself, and also upon the complex nature of human existence.

In the prologue to his book, *Creative Suffering* (1982),[5] the renowned physician, Paul Tournier, notes with some astonishment an article by Pierre Rentchnick (1975) that compiles a suggestive list of many of the significant leaders throughout history who have been orphans.[6] How, this physician wonders, can those lacking the most basic human needs of a loving father and mother go on to become some of the most powerful

[4] E.g. (Duckworth 2016; Greitens 2015; Wicks 2010).
[5] Tournier suggests that this, his twentieth book written in his eighties, is the culmination of many years of personal experience, study, and listening to others' experiences (1982:1).
[6] Tournier lists, among many others, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Louis XIV, George Washington, Napoleon, Queen Victoria, Hitler, and Stalin (1982:2) as well as creative individuals such as Bach, Camus, Kipling, Dante, Tolstoy, Voltaire, and Dostoyevsky (1982:13). Tournier's own experiences as an orphan seem to shape his viewpoint (1982:3). Significant for this project, I would add Paul Ricoeur, who also was an orphan, to this list.

individuals in history (1982:2)? Certainly, the answer is relevant to gaining insight into resilience.

Tournier's discussion begs another question, however: In what sense is the deprivation of the orphan the same or different than other forms of deprivation?[7] Tournier concludes that the deprivation of an orphan is but an intensified form of the deprivation and finitude which is the common lot of humanity (1982:10); the orphan is "simply a special case of the countless sufferings of life" (1982:12). While being careful not to justify experiences of suffering—even proposing that it is "especially dangerous and repellant if [one] suggests that the relationship is one of cause and effect, or that suffering has didactic value" (1982:20)—Tournier nonetheless suggests that there can be some benefits associated with deprivation, including increased creativity (1982:14–21). He notes that it is "revolting" to consider glorifying suffering or pursuing it for supposed benefits (1982:20), but he also suggests that scholars often do not address the "serious question" of this supposed correlation (1982:20–21). This, in one sense, is a question at the heart of resilience: Can an individual 'bounce back' from adversity?

Tournier's account, taken as a whole, creates a problematic for a common narrative told in Western society today.[8] Provide all of the ingredient necessary for flourishing, we are told, and the best, most productive and well-developed citizens will be the result. This narrative, often coinciding with what is called 'resilience,' is challenged by Tournier's remarks.[9] What if the narrative of resilience being espoused in modern Western culture is, in fact, mistaken? Is this narrative too simple? Does our understanding of what it means to ultimately flourish, and the path to arrive at this flourishing, need to be re-evaluated, or even re-envisioned?

---

[7] One might also question whether having power and flourishing as a human are synonymous.

[8] This is a narrative not at odds, *per se*, with resilience research, but rather with many modern Western conceptions of resilience.

[9] Tournier writes, "Among other projects, Paul Ricoeur and I were asked to write a book together on 'man in crisis situations', because it is then that man reveals what he is. However, the departure of Paul Ricoeur for the Sorbonne, summoned by other concerns, cut our plans short" (1982:38). We can only imagine how useful this work might have been!

A Problem for Human Adaptation in Western Society?

A growing number of professionals are increasingly concerned about the mental health and resilience of individuals in Western cultures, especially young people (Gray 2015; Haidt and Lukianoff 2015). This makes the need for this study all the more timely and pertinent. For almost all individuals it is a question of 'When?' rather than 'If?' they will face adversity. As the Christian tradition affirms, the experience of adversity is common to human life due to the broken nature of the world. This brokenness is not merely theoretical, but rather is experienced by countless individuals on a daily basis. The need for resilience, then, is a given for most individuals.

This experience of adversity, as understood in much of Western society, necessitates adaptation in order to flourish, yet both beneficial and maladaptive coping are possible. An assessment of assumptions underlying resilience and human flourishing may yield helpful insights. For instance, we must examine the assumed universal positive nature of resilient adaptation as well as whether 'resilience' provides an adequate description of this phenomenon.

A Solution in Narrative Theology?

While much research assesses resilient adaptation through social scientific means,[10] little attention has been given to the ways in which these accounts may be inadequate to describe the complexity of human resilience. This study seeks to address whether a Christian theological account of resilience can provide insight into human response to adversity. In doing so, I will address how religion and spirituality (R/S) are related to resilience as well as how insights from the disciplines of science and theology can be integrated. Most significantly, philosophical and theological accounts of the human person will provide insight into resilience.

Any exploration of resilience in today's society must take into account intellectual and societal currents. Due to the influence of postmodern thought and an emphasis upon 'small' stories, individuals in Western culture largely perceive themselves, and thereby

[10] Take, for instance, studies utilizing qualitative and quantitative ethnographic studies of individuals and communities, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and genetics. These studies will be addressed in detail in the next chapter.

resilience, through this lens. I do not attempt to escape from the particularity of this human experience, but rather appeal for individual narratives to be understood in relation to the Gospel narrative—a vision of reality that can provide meaning and connection amidst distended human experience.[11] In this regard, I do not seek to develop a 'metanarrative' regarding resilience, only to gain insight into the common human experience of adversity and the possibility of its redemption through grace.

In light of these insights, I contend that the resilient individual may be re-envisioned through a Christian theological vision, enacted through the transforming narrative of the Gospel (Good News). I will not here advocate the Gospel as a tool for the pragmatic promotion of resilience by clinicians in clinical settings. Certainly, my argument has substantial practical implications for inculcating resilience, but I suggest that these must be understood in the context of a Christian faith community. This setting provides a proper framework for understanding human existence and the significance of meaning-making and relational connection to God. In this project, I will propose that these can provide a renewed understanding of the human person. My argument, then, is that through participation in the narrative of the Gospel, the love of God engenders human resilience by creating meaning and connection in an environment of eschatological hope. But, before addressing these subjects, more must be said regarding the concept of resilience itself.

What is Resilience?

Human geographer Ben Anderson suggests that

> something called 'resilience' appears to have proliferated across multiple, at best partially connected, domains of life. Resilience, whatever it is, appears now to be everywhere; the latest iteration of the promise of security…offered as a desperate hope of survival in a world of roiling crises, and demanded of subjects, populations and systems (2015:60).[12]

[11] Cf. (Ricoeur 1984b:4). Here Ricoeur draws upon Augustine's assessment of the human condition.

[12] Anderson also notes that many scholars have suggested an intertwining of the resilience concept with the agenda of neo-liberalism.

Yet, despite the 'proliferation' of this concept, scholars do not agree about "what exactly it is that has proliferated, how and why" (Anderson 2015:60). What is resilience? We begin with a definition.

Resilience Defined

The Oxford English Dictionary defines resilience as "The quality or fact of being able to recover quickly or easily from, or resist being affected by, a misfortune, shock, illness, etc.; robustness; adaptability" (Anon n.d.).

Similarly, the Oxford Thesaurus of English gives these terms as synonyms for resilience: "1…flexibility, pliability, suppleness, plasticity, elasticity, springiness, spring, give; durability, ability to last, strength, sturdiness, toughness…2…strength of character, strength, toughness, hardiness; adaptability, ability to bounce back, buoyancy, flexibility" (Waite, Maurice 2004:805). It gives as the opposite of resilience: "1…rigidity; fragility…2…vulnerability, weakness" (Waite, Maurice 2004:805). Throughout this project we will assess how accurate these descriptions may be for the phenomenon of human resilience. However, as can be seen from the variety of synonyms, the word 'resilience' has a wide base of meaning. These meanings gain additional significance when paired with the history of the term.

The History of 'Resilience'

Early Roots

The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology notes that 'resilient' comes from the verb 'resile,' which is defined as to "draw back, shrink, recoil" and is derived either from the French, *resilir* or the Latin *resilire* (Onions, C. T. 1967:759). This dictionary defines 'resilient' as "returning to the original position" and notes that it was first used in the 16th century. Francis Bacon, in the 17th century, was the first to use the noun 'resilience' in a scientific context while discussing the strength of echoes (Alexander 2013:1260; Onions, C. T. 1967:759).

The Latin *resilire* is found in the writings of a number of classical writers to include Seneca the Elder, Pliny the Elder, Ovid, Cicero, and Livy in addition to Quintillian and St. Jerome (Alexander 2013:1260). D. E. Alexander writes that, in most cases, *resilire* was used "to describe leaping, jumping or rebounding" (2013:1260). 'Resilience' was included in Thomas Blount's 1656 lexicon, *Glossographia*. In it, "[h]e attributed it a dual meaning: to rebound and to go back on one's word" (Alexander 2013:1262).

Then, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the term was largely used to describe emotion. Additionally, cognates of 'resilience' found their way into use in German as well as a number of English texts where they were "used in various ways to denote the rather varied concepts of rebounding, elasticity and fickleness" (Alexander 2013:1262–63). During this early period of usage, 'resilience' did not have a technical use, its meaning instead being tied closely to its roots in Latin.

There is some dispute regarding the first known scholarly use of 'resilience' in an engineering context. Despite some contentions, it is clear that 'resilience' was not used in this sense until the 19th century, and even then it was confined to the description of the ability of various materials to bear heavy loads (Alexander 2013:1262–63; Anon 2014; McAslan 2010:2).

Modern Usage

The first use of the term in the modern sense of psychological resilience was in 1857 in Cassell's Illustrated History of England: "In their struggles with the ponderous power of England [the Scots] discovered an invincible vigour, not only of resistance, but of resilience" (Anon 2014; Smith, Howitt, and Cassell 1857:333). Even after this, the term was used rarely in this way until recently.

In the 20th century, the term was introduced as a descriptive concept into the field of ecology by C. S. Holling who defined resilience as the "measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (1973:14).

Around the same time, but independent of the development in the field of ecology, resilience appeared in the field of psychology (Masten 2014:7),[13] though it did not gain widespread popularity in the field until Fredrich Flach's 1988 work *Resilience: Discovering a New Strength at Times of Stress* (Alexander 2013:1264). Ann Masten notes regarding resilience that "[s]ocial scientists intrigued with understanding how some people escape the harmful effects of severe adversity, cope well, bounce back, or even thrive, eventually settled on this word to label the focus of their research" (2014:7).

Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith were pioneers in the study of resilience through their longitudinal study of children on the island of Kauai (Rutter 2013:474). They followed nearly 700 children from their births in 1955 to assess vulnerability and growth through adversity. Their published findings in 1982 and 1992 provided much of the raw data for initial resilience research (Werner and Smith 1982, 1992).

Resilience research has had close ties with the field of developmental psychology from early on, especially in the area of child development (Cicchetti 2013; Luthar 2006; Masten 2013). Masten, who began working in the field of resilience studies in 1976, argues that the significant connections resilience research has with developmental psychopathology give it a depth of understanding how humans adapt to adversity over the lifespan.[14]

Masten describes the history of modern resilience research in terms of four 'waves' (Masten 2007; Wright, Masten, and Narayan 2013). The first wave was descriptive in nature and sought to identify the characteristics that are correlates of resilience. The second wave focused on finding processes involved in resilient adaptation while the third wave sought to identify factors significant for 'prevention and intervention' through experimentation (Masten 2007:922). The fourth and current wave "is characterized by a focus on multilevel analysis and the dynamics of adaptation and change" (Masten 2007:921). This new wave also emphasizes a systems-based conceptualization of resilience that gives rise to the possibility of gaining insight into the biological underpinnings of resilience.

[13] Cf. (Garmezy 1971).
[14] See (Masten 2014:6–7). Cf. (Lerner et al. 2012; Overton 2013; Sameroff 2000).

In the 20th century, the study of human beings' response to adversity has often been tied to research on circumstances surrounding war. This was true of the foundational understandings developed with soldiers returning World War I and World War II (Masten 2014:7–8),[15] but also true of the more recent study of resilience and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (Bonanno et al. 2012; Cornum, Matthews, and Seligman 2011; Harvey et al. 2012; United States and Rand Corporation 2011; Zimmermann et al. 2014). Additionally, a growing body of research has assessed the resilient responses of children in war zones (Theresa S. Betancourt et al. 2010; Betancourt and Khan 2008; Masten and Narayan 2012; Panter-Brick et al. 2011; Peltonen et al. 2014).

Conclusions

Though the history of resilience is rich and diverse, "few scholars seem to be aware of the term's long and distinguished history," which impoverishes their understanding of how the term and concept may be used today (Alexander 2013:1258–59).

The concept of resilience, at first confined to the realm of human action or emotion, moved into the natural sciences, and then branched in a number of directions, being utilized in fields as diverse as engineering and anthropology.

The Utility of Resilience

Adversity is common to the human experience. As certain as death or taxes, it could be said, one can expect to face adversity. This adversity may come in the form of a small annoyance such as a traffic jam, or it may be more significant like an experience of abuse.

The term 'resilience' has come into vogue in the last several decades across a variety of domains to describe the experience of thriving in spite of significant adversity (Masten 2014:6). In the past twenty years, 'resilience' has seen an eight-fold increase in scholarly usage (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335) and has been used in many

[15] Cf. (2007:436).

disciplines to display "how well complex systems anticipate, adapt, recover, and learn in the context of major threats, surprises, and disasters" (Masten 2014:7).

As an indicator of the recent surge in scholarly work in the area of resilience, an EBSCO search for "resilien*" in the title of articles in peer reviewed journals published between January 2000- November 2014 revealed 10,283 articles. This "irrepressible surge in usage of the term resilience within scholarly literature over the past two decades" shows "that resilience is a 'meme' or conceptual unit capable of 'extraordinary replication'" (Panter-Brick 2014:438).[16]

What is so attractive about resilience? Certainly, the concept itself, in various forms, is as old as the human race. But perhaps the idea of being 'resilient' speaks to a particular need in society today, or even to a longing more central to human beings?

A number of factors are involved in the rapid increase in the usage of this term, but some scholars suggest that, in particular, it is a "response to a generalized contemporary sense of uncertainty and insecurity and a search for formulas for adaptation and survival" (Christopherson, Michie, and Tyler 2010). Certainly, in the post-9/11 world of political instability more uncertainty exists than in many previous eras.

Other scholars suggest that recent interest in resilience is due to a rejection of the idea that a negative outcome necessarily follows adversity (Yehuda and Flory 2007:435–36). This may be linked to cultural narratives of autonomy and independence. Indeed, the thought that individuals may be able to overcome negative environmental circumstances to thrive is indeed a compelling narrative.

Thus, many in the social sciences see resilience "as a counter-narrative to discourses of vulnerability and social suffering" (Panter-Brick 2014:439).[17] This understanding of resilience has ideological implications as well: resilience offers "a powerful narrative, embraced by the political discourse of the left, which endorses civil society, and by the

[16] Here Panter-Brick draws upon terminology from Alastair Ager (2013:489).
[17] Cf. (Almedom et al. 2010).

politics of the right, which holds individuals responsible for their own actions" (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335). The concept holds symbolic power for several segments of society, as well as significance for philosophical anthropologies more broadly through conceptual linkage to human self-efficacy and empowerment.

Part of the appeal of the concept may lie in its flexibility and applicability across domains. The metaphorical nature of resilience is primary to understanding the concept and enables resilience to be used across a variety of scholarly domains and in everyday parlance.[18] Researchers note that resilience has "multiple levels of meaning, from the metaphorical to the specific" (Carpenter et al. 2001:765). Thus, some consider resilience a 'boundary object' that enables cross-disciplinary communication through common vocabulary. It is not just a term, but "a way of thinking, a perspective or even paradigm for analyzing social-ecological systems" (Brand and Jax 2007). Resilience, then, is an ideal object of study from multiple levels of analysis and diverse disciplines. This is the thrust of the current project, with the aim of ultimately gaining insight into human well-being. As Tournier notes, "'man [*sic*] in crisis situations'…reveals what he is" (1982:38). [19] Investigating resilience, then, provides a window into human being; hence a theological account of resilience may give insight into theological anthropology.

Research Assumptions

Despite the recent interest in this term, still much needs to be understood about the way that human beings thrive in the midst of adversity. An interdisciplinary assessment of resilience is needed at the current juncture of resilience research. In particular, I propose that dialogue with theology can be beneficial both to current understandings of resilience in the social sciences and to theological understandings of human being.

[18] The concept is based upon a description of physical phenomena but this meaning has been extended to non-physical domains. Anderson suggests, however, that "resilience is many different types of things" rather than a unitary concept that can be utilized across various disciplines (2015:60–61). Attention to the diverse expressions of resilience, I believe, is beneficial and I hope to give credence to Anderson's critique through attending to resilience in only one specific domain: human experience.

[19] I will attempt to use gender-inclusive language throughout, but, in the interest of the integrity of texts, I will not always change the language of authors who wrote in a time before the importance of such language was acknowledged.

In this project, I am primarily concerned with a dialogue between the social sciences and the discipline of theology on the topic of resilience. A variety of disciplines including geology, ecology, and physics have appropriated the resilience concept, but, while the term's usage in these contexts may be helpful for an understanding of the term, these disciplines will not be the primary focus of this study.

Etic and Emic Approaches

To interrogate the complexity of resilience, a multi-level approach is needed that makes use of diverse methodologies and disciplines. The complexity of human experience suggests that resilience must be assessed from both etic (variable-centered or quantitative) and emic (person-centered or qualitative) perspectives (Hatala 2011).

While recently researchers have undertaken a number of both etic and emic studies of resilience, practitioners within the field of psychology, religion, and spirituality have highlighted the need for more research in the area of spiritual and religious responses to trauma (Walker and Aten 2012). This study aims to begin to fill that need. But, rather than adding to the body of empirical research on resilience and R/S, this study seeks to provide a theological contribution to the discussion that deepens, complexifies, and clarifies the concept.

Theology and Resilience

Any attempt to theologically address a 'buzz word' concept must be done with caution. Hans Urs von Balthasar warns, "A theology that develops from catchword principles is always a theology that levels out, mitigates and cheapens, and finally liquidates and sells out" (1994:121). I will attempt to avoid the pitfalls von Balthasar points out, in part, through acknowledging the mystery that always remains in any theological venture (Coakley 2016). By attending to mystery, the theologian retains an attitude of wonder resulting in a posture of humility (Louth 1983).[20]

[20] Tomas Halik suggests: "God is a mystery—that should be the first and last sentence of any theology" (2009:46).

The aim of this project, then, is not as much prescriptive as it is descriptive and suggestive. This project is not as concerned with creating particular methodologies for increasing resilience as with suggesting understandings of the theological and philosophical underpinnings that promote resilient adaptation, though practical implications certainly may be drawn from this project. Primarily, I will seek to reframe resilience through the lens of Christian theological reflection.

Theologically, I take as a given the reality of sin, depravity and suffering in the lived experience of human beings. The depth of this depravity is enmeshed at personal, communal, and structural levels (McFadyen 2000). Adversity, therefore, should be regarded as characteristic of human existence rather than an exception.[21] Many excellent works address the question of how belief in a good God and evil and suffering can coexist.[22] This project does not address such questions of theodicy; rather the emphasis of this work will be on how the reality of suffering and evil can be endured and even transformed. This emphasis does not diminish the painful reality of the experience of many individuals, only seeks to interpret this experience in light of what comes after acknowledging this reality.

'Complexifying' the Paradoxical Nature of Resilience

This emphasis will both complexify and clarify the concept of resilience through making the paradoxes at the heart of resilience clearer. In particular, I suggest that a narrative understanding of human meaningfulness and a relational understanding of the self provide unique insight into resilience.

For instance, the description of resilience as 'bouncing back' may be perfectly adequate in the physical sciences when describing materials, but this understanding is not as helpful for describing persons. An individual can never be the person she was previously or 'bounce back' to the same place—life is always forward moving. [23] The

[21] This claim in itself is counter to most modern Western conceptions of human existence that expect a life of easy flourishing as the norm.
[22] See, for instance, (Castelo 2012; Stump 2012; Swinton 2007).
[23] For this insight, I am indebted to Warren Kinghorn.

past will never exist again, but it may be transformed and redeemed. A better metaphor for human resilience, therefore, is needed.

Furthermore, we should not regard resilience as independent "white knuckled" determination; rather, we ought to see it in light of a receipt of the self from the Other through relational dependence. Resilience, then, must be understood as a result of giving and receiving, seen clearly through the receipt of a new perspective. Resilience in a world of suffering and evil necessitates a 're-seeing' of that world through the lens of the Gospel. Thus, resilience may be created and sustained through gaining a meaningful perspective that presents the hope that the world will not always be as it currently is.

This is not merely a new perspective, but also a new identity formed in relation to the God of the Gospel. In essence, the Gospel must project a new way of being-in-the-world before we can step into its actuality.

This vision of resilience in the light of the Christian Gospel is both like and unlike previous understandings of Christian response to adversity. Others throughout history have addressed difficulty in view of the Gospel,[24] including several recent studies that highlight biblical emphases significant for resilience (Allain-Chapman 2012; Ford 2007; Shooter 2012; Stump 2012).[25] In this study, however, I seek to supplement this body of literature with assessment of the theological and philosophical foundations of resilience.[26] The emphasis of this project is most clearly evident in its engagement with science and focus upon the narrative theory and philosophical anthropology of Paul Ricoeur. This project, then, will be in continuity with previous efforts, but will also differ in its emphases and methodology.

[24] See (McNeill 1951) for an extensive survey of this history.
[25] Many biblical passages could also prove significant for resilience: E.g. Prov. 24:16, 1 Cor. 1:18, Gal. 5:11, and Gal. 6.
[26] Craig Stephen Titus (2006) also provides a very thorough and helpful engagement of Thomas Aquinas' theology with resilience. I will dialogue more with this work later in this project.

Project Overview

Research Methodology

At the heart of this project is a narrative approach that, while drawing upon empirical research, will 'thicken' these accounts through a variety of means. Paul Ricoeur's philosophy will provide the framework for this narrative understanding as well as for a theological anthropology of the resilient individual. Narrative accounts will further our understanding of the resilient individual. Though the goal of Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy is a philosophical anthropology, the real import of his philosophy comes through the type of praxis displayed in these narratives.

In this study, I will utilize a variety of methodological approaches from multiple disciplines in order to gain a clearer account of resilience, focusing on potential Christian theological understandings of resilience. While many other profitable avenues of pursuit are possible, these are beyond the scope of the current project.

I begin by surveying insights from the social sciences on resilience, then critique and integrate these insights through Christian theological sources. Each chapter is intelligible on its own terms but moves the argument forward, disclosing a unique contribution to a Christian theological understanding of the resilient individual. I start with an assessment of resilience from the standpoint of the social sciences, not because their understanding has epistemic primacy, but rather so that, having gained an idea of the concept, this understanding may be critiqued and furthered through engagement with theological sources. The insights of science as well as of philosophy and theology are needed in order to fully understand the complex phenomenon of human resilience. Furthermore, narrative provides a means of enquiry into human being that is intelligible across disciplinary bounds.

Overview

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the concept of resilience and survey modern social science research on human adaptation to adversity. I emphasize studies from the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and medical anthropology. Further, in Chapter 2 I

utilize research from these disciplines to evaluate empirical understandings of the relationship between religion, spirituality, and resilience.

Moving to a more theoretical approach, in Chapter 3 I give attention to the nature of knowledge assumed by, alternatively, research in the social sciences and insight from the disciplines of theology and philosophy. I propose *phronesis*—practical wisdom—as a means of integrating insights from a diversity of disciplines. In Chapter 4 I utilize Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, laying the necessary foundation for understanding how narrative may create the possibility of hope, and further deepening insight into human resilience through portraying the self as contingently constituted in relation to the Other. I give further theological significance to Ricoeur's insights through identifying the creative capacities of the narrative of the Gospel and through proposing that the human being is constituted through relation to the Divine Other.

In the third section, I illustrate and develop these themes through an example. Highlighting the utility of historical narrative, in Chapter 5 I explicate Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* with a view towards practical application of her vision of the world as being significant for resilience.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I draw out the implications for a theological understanding of resilience and assess potential limitations and cautions.

Like the rings of giant redwood trees, the shape of resilience may be traced through the narrative of a human life. Yet even the rings of the tree tell their story in differing ways, answering differing questions depending upon the method of enquiry—chemical analysis provides a very different perspective than visual investigation, for instance. In the same way, human resilience may be evaluated through various means. In assessing the contours of human life, then, we begin with a view of human resilience from the domain of science.

Chapter 1: 'Resilience' in the Social Sciences

"The night sky lit up like lightning as the flares of fireworks burst all over the city to celebrate Têt. It was January 31, 1968…The ground war had come to the cities, and to Saigon itself, and our future—as a family, and as a nation—was very much in doubt…From then on, my light girlish fantasies dissolved in the face of questions rooted in deeper, more disturbing realities. Could we survive? Would we survive?...During those days in Saigon…we accepted fear as a beggar accepts poverty or a patient with a terminal illness accepts impending death. Fear was just part of life.

Each night, my sisters and brothers and I approached bedtime with stoic apprehension and more than a vague consciousness of our own mortality…" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:171–72, 175–76).

The study of resilience has seen a number of significant changes within the last several decades. Starting in the field of developmental psychology (Windle 2011:152), it has now branched out into an incredible array of scholarly disciplines. Yet despite its considerable growth there is still more that remains to be said about and discovered through this remarkably adaptable topic.

While the primary purpose of this project is theological in nature, in order to fully investigate the construct of resilience, we begin with an understanding of the concept on the basis of social science research. This chapter serves as an analysis of resilience from the standpoint of social science research on its own terms.

Social Science Definitions of Resilience

Generally speaking, in the field of developmental psychology resilience can be understood as "positive adaptation or development in the context of risk" (Masten 2013:580). Coming to an agreement about a scholarly definition of resilience has proven to be more difficult, however.

George Bonanno acknowledges the difficulty of scholarly agreement upon a definition for resilience in the field of psychology both due to the large colloquial usage and varied definitions used by researchers. He notes, "as a field we struggle with these definitions" (Southwick et al. 2014). Others have acknowledged the same difficulties with defining

resilience (Haskett et al. 2006; Luthar, Suniya S., Cicchetti, Dante, and Becker, Bronwyn 2000; Masten 2007) and some have gone as far as to say that "both conceptual clarity and practical relevance [of the term] are critically in danger" (Brand and Jax 2007:23).

Catherine Panter-Brick describes resilience as a term that makes "intuitive sense but often elude[s] simple definition" (2014:432). Much of the difficulty with defining resilience lies in the metaphorical nature in which it is used as well as in its usage across many disciplines and in colloquial usage. This project is concerned primarily with the concept of human resilience in the face of adversity. As such, definitions of resilience from within the social sciences, especially from within psychology will be considered.

In the following definitions, the development of the resilience concept within the social sciences clearly can be seen. Differences in understanding of what constitutes resilience are also evident and will be discussed more fully.

Social Science Definitions of Resilience

"Protective factors which modify, ameliorate or alter a person's response to some environmental hazard that predisposes to a maladaptive outcome" (Rutter 1987:316).

"The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best, and Garmezy 1990:426).

"A dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000:543).

"A class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development" (Masten 2001:228).

"The personal qualities that enables one to thrive in the face of adversity" (Connor and Davidson 2003:76).

"A dynamic process that is influenced by neural and psychological self-organisation, as well as transactions between the ecological context and the developing organism" (Curtis and Cicchetti 2003:776).

"The ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances who are exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event such as the death of a close relation or a violent or a life-threatening situation to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning, as well as the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions" (Bonanno 2004:20–21).

"The protective factors, processes and mechanisms that contribute to a good outcome despite experiences with stressors shown to carry significant risks for developing psychopathology" (Hjemdal et al. 2006:195).

"The ability to rebound from crisis and overcome life challenges" (Walsh 2006:ix).

"In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways" (Ungar 2008:225).

"An individual's stability or quick recovery (or even growth) under significant adverse conditions" (Leipold and Greve 2009:41).

"The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of threat" (American Psychological Association 2010).

"The process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and 'bouncing back' in the face of adversity" (Windle 2011:163).

"The process of harnessing biological, psychosocial, structural, and cultural resources to sustain well-being" (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:333).
"An interactive phenomenon that is inferred from findings indicating that some individuals have a relatively good outcome despite having experienced serious stresses or adversities" (Rutter 2013:474).
"Moving forward and not turning back" Rachel Yehuda in (Southwick et al. 2014).
"The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development" (Masten 2014:6).

Table 1.1

Each of the definitions above includes several integral components of resilience: 1) facing significant adversity or risk, 2) using resources or strengths to adapt in the midst of adversity, and 3) a positive outcome.[1] While there is diversity of opinion regarding resilience, these definitions delimit and help define the concept.

Development of Resilience Definitions and Future Directions

In line with the development of the concept of resilience, definitions of resilience progressed from being specifically focused on individual traits to seeing resilience in terms of systems and as contextually dependent (Betancourt and Khan 2008). This development is evident even within changes of definition and emphasis by two prominent researchers (Rutter and Masten) and is indicative of Masten's description of the fourth wave of resilience research. These emphases are also seen in the more recent definitions of resilience listed above.

In addition to the development of the concept, the definitions here listed indicate the broad diversity of opinion among scholars as to what constitutes resilience. A lack of

[1] Cf. (Windle 2011:159). Craig Steven Titus suggests three similar aspects of resilience: "(1) good outcomes despite actual risk, (2) resistance to destruction, and (3) positive construction" (2006:7).

consensus in the field can prove difficult for comparing research findings and makes clearly defined terms and presuppositions all the more necessary.

On the other hand, the diversity of opinion within the field allows for a breadth and richness of understanding. This is true of the diversity of usage within the social sciences as well as in other fields, such as the natural sciences (Holling 1973; Hughes et al. 2005), economics (Pendall, Foster, and Cowell 2009; Pickett, Cadenasso, and Grove 2004), geology (Brown 2014; Brown and Westaway 2011; Chang et al. 2014; Manyena 2006), and sport science (Fletcher and Sarkar 2012; Sarkar and Fletcher 2014).

For instance, within the definitions listed above, there are contributions from developmental psychologists, anthropologists, biological psychologists, and psychiatrists.

A board of several prominent resilience researchers assessed the current state of research on resilience and noted both differences and similarities in their understanding of resilience:

> The panelists agreed that resilience is a complex construct and it may be defined differently in the context of individuals, families, organizations, societies, and cultures. With regard to the determinants of resilience, there was a consensus that the empirical study of this construct needs to be approached from a multiple level of analysis perspective that includes genetic, epigenetic, developmental, demographic, cultural, economic, and social variables (Southwick et al. 2014).

In recent years, there has been a move away from seeing the possibility of a metatheory of resilience[2] toward seeing resilience as contextually-based. Additionally, the study of resilience has moved away from its roots in developmental psychopathology to an understanding that multiple levels of analysis are needed to understand the concept, to include input from different disciplines (Cicchetti 2010; Cicchetti and Blender 2006). This type of multiple-levels-analysis allows for insights that would not otherwise be available from a single perspective (Cicchetti and Valentino 2007:276). It also helps to bridge the gap between researchers and clinicians in the implementation of resilience principles (Cicchetti and Valentino 2007:272).

[2] For an example of this understanding, see (Richardson 2002).

There has also been a move towards viewing individuals as a part of a complex and dynamic system that is dependent not only on variables of context, but also of time and level of risk (Tol, Song, and Jordans 2013:445; Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008). Many of these conceptions of resilience are influenced by a biological understanding of the concept in which the individual both influences and is influenced by the environment (Windle 2011:155). Von Bertalanffy's general systems theory (von Bertalanffy 1968; Masten 2014:7) as well as the family systems theory in the field of psychology (Becvar 2007:71–72) greatly affected these understandings.

It is important to note that the resilience concept may be applied to individuals (Mancini and Bonanno 2009; Tugade and Fredrickson 2004), families (Becvar 2007; Walsh 2006), and larger entities (Chang et al. 2014; Christopherson et al. 2010; Holling 2001; Pendall et al. 2009; Pickett et al. 2004). The principles remain the same though the context changes. We must beware of over-generalizing the concept, however. Catherine Panter-Brick notes: "We fall prey to problematic generalizations because empirical, statistical statements are readily transformed into normative, deterministic statements about individuals regardless of context" (2014:432).

All in all, it is fair to say that "resilience has been frequently redefined and extended by heuristic, metaphorical, or normative dimensions" (Brand and Jax 2007:23) which has proven difficult for the usefulness of the concept; however, these same extensions of meaning are also what make resilience such a useful concept across so many domains.

In order to better understand resilience, we will now turn to the study of resilience and its constituent parts. The themes touched on above now need to be more fully developed.

The Study of Resilience

The Promise of Resilience

The concept of adapting in the midst of adversity, implicit in resilience, is itself very old; this term, however, has not always been used. In its modern understanding the rise of the resilience concept is a part of a shift away from a pathology-focused health model to

a focus on health promotion. Or, in other words, it is a move away from a 'deficit' way of thinking about illness to health orientation (Windle 2011:152).

Aaron Antonovsky was one of the pioneers of this shift of thinking in the 1970's and 80's with the advent of his salutogenesis construct (Antonovsky 1980, 1987). In many ways, his concept of a 'sense of coherence'[3] in salutogenesis is closely related to the concept of resilience (Almedom 2005; Windle 2011:161). What largely distinguishes the two constructs is the focus of resilience on contexts of adversity.

Other scholars give a slightly different account of the development of thought in the psychological community. The introduction of the term 'resilience' slightly pre-dated but conceptually coincided with what they see as a broader change in paradigm within the study of psychology: a move away from "assert[ing] that persons were fundamentally resilient" (Yehuda and Flory 2007:436).[4]

Some suggest that there is more room in the future for dialogue between resilience studies (largely situated within developmental psychology and psychiatry) and salutogenesis (a medical sociology concept) or other disciplines (Almedom 2005). A lack of multi-disciplinary integration may be partly to blame for the lack of dialogue up to the present.

This type of interdisciplinary work is beginning to be done, as Masten (2007) describes regarding the fourth wave of resilience research. As such, the concept of resilience holds promise, not only in the fields of psychiatry and psychology, but also across many different disciplines. Some scholars argue that "the appeal of resilience is that it does cut across so many areas of research. Thus, while such breadth can be challenging, it also indicates the potential for the concept of resilience to inform any number of research areas" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:51).

Within the field of medical anthropology, there is also a recognition of the potential in resilience:

> Resilience offers the promise of a paradigm shift in many fields of research,

[3] Understood as "a feeling of confidence that demands are comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful" (Leipold and Greve 2009:41).
[4] See also (Bonanno 2004:22, 25).

> clinical practice, and policy. A lens on resilience shifts the focus of attention—from efforts to appraise risk or vulnerability, towards concerted efforts to enhance strength or capability. It also shifts the focus of analysis—from asking relatively limited questions regarding health outcomes, such as what are the linkages between risk exposures and functional deficits, to asking more complex questions regarding well-being, such as when, how, why and for whom do resources truly matter (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:333).

The advent of the modern concept of resilience is situated within a broader change of paradigm in psychology and in other social sciences. From all indications, that change is still taking place and therefore the outcome is still in flux. I, along with others (Brown 2014; Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013), believe that there are great opportunities for new understanding implicit within the resilience concept. These possibilities have yet to be realized fully, however.

Models of Resilience

Researchers have used many different models to study resilience and its correlated concepts.[5] Masten (2001) describes two main approaches as variable-focused and person-focused approaches.

Variable-focused Approaches

Variable-focused approaches use multi-variate statistics in order to investigate how risk/adversity, protective factors, and resilience outcomes are related (Masten 2001:229; Windle 2011:159). While these studies indicate a possible relation between these factors, they are unable to display causality (Masten 2001:229). Within variable-focused approaches, there are three distinct models that seek to explain how protective factors ameliorate the effect of adversity: compensatory, protective, and challenge models (Bartley et al. 2010:102; Fergus and Zimmerman 2005).

[5] For a helpful summary of models of resilience, see (Hatala 2011:29).

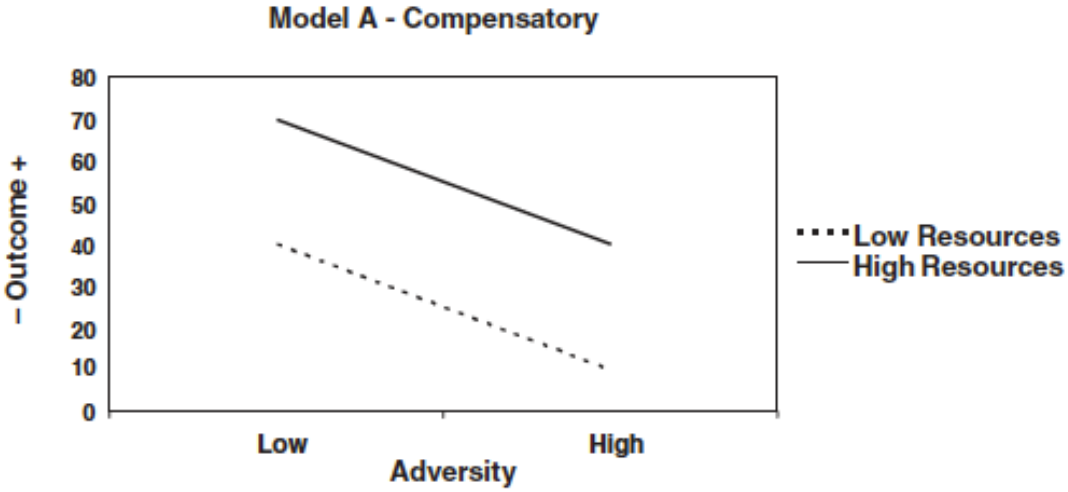

FIGURE 1.1[6]

The compensatory model shows the main effects that risks or assets have on situations of adversity independent of other variables. The effect is correlated to outcome at both high- and low-risk situations and is often studied through the use of multiple regression procedures or structural equation modeling (Masten 2001:229–30; Windle 2011:159). Interventions based on this model would focus on adding additional assets to increase positive resilience outcomes.

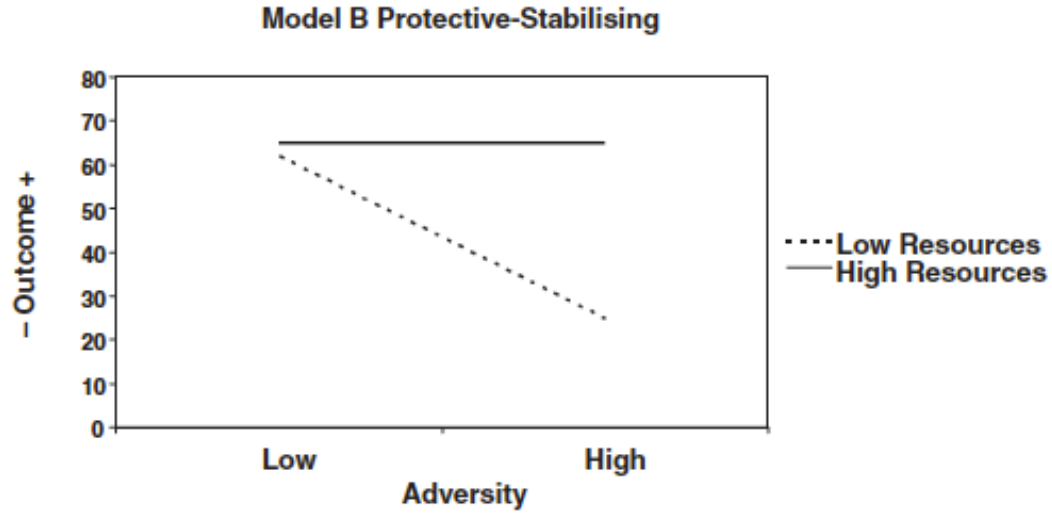

FIGURE 1.2

[6] Figures 1.1-1.3 from (Windle 2011:160).

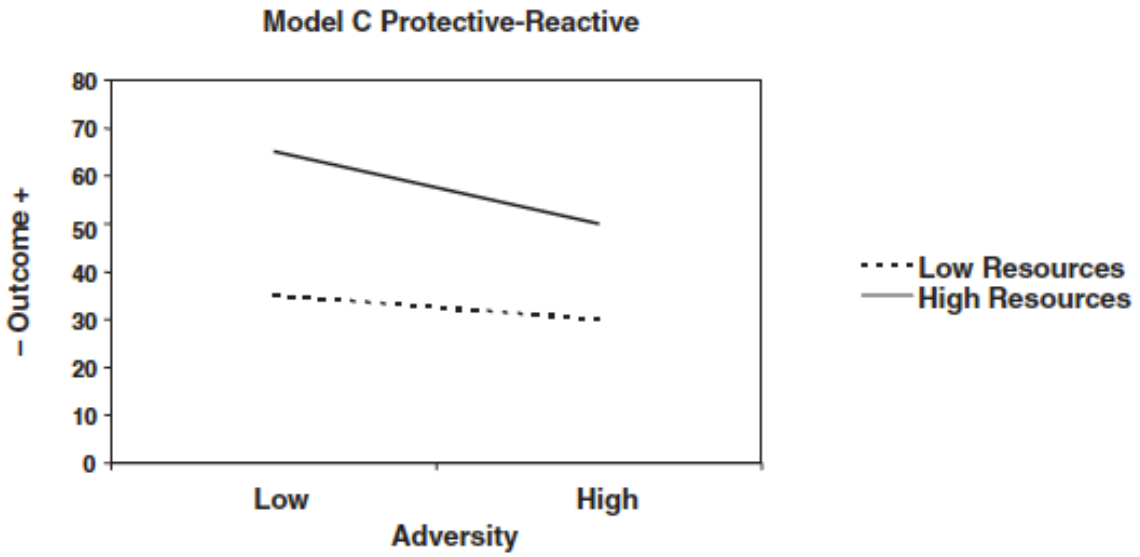

FIGURE 1.3

The protective models show how risk is related to the resilience outcome. In particular, they display the way in which assets or protective factors mediate risk to achieve a less negative outcome, or, alternatively, a positive outcome (Windle 2011:159). The interactions of these factors are complex, and Luthar (1993) has suggested further refining this model into two categories in order to capture the nuances. The 'protective-stabilizing' model suggests that a stable outcome is possible in spite of increasing adversity while the protective factor is present. Alternatively, the 'protective-reactive' model displays that the protective factor provides a better outcome, but to a lesser extent when the risk in higher (Windle 2011:161).

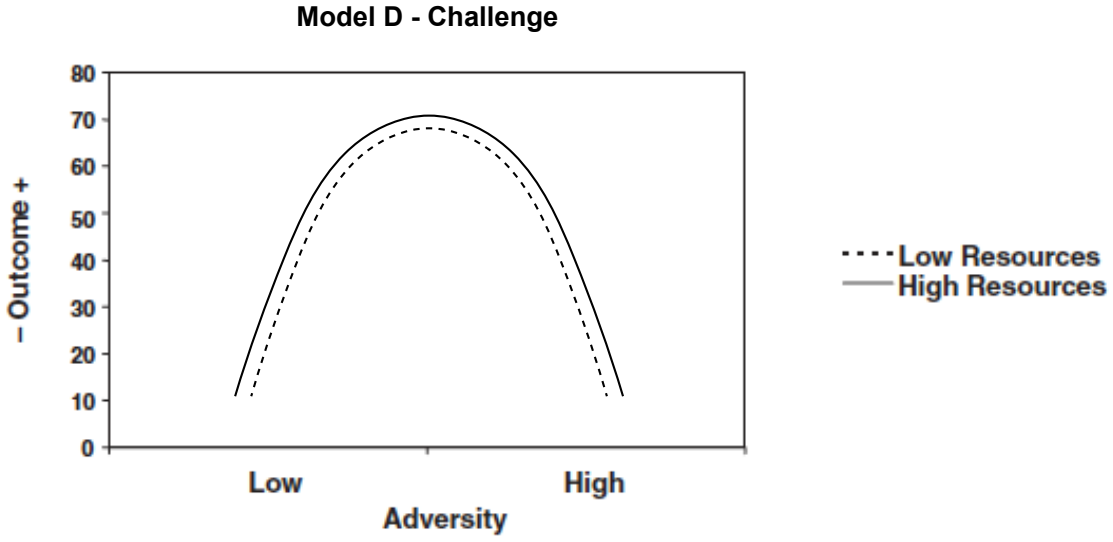

FIGURE 1.4

The final variable-based model is the challenge model. This model explains the relationship between a risk factor and the resilience outcome on the basis of a curvilinear relationship where low and high levels of risk result in a negative outcome while moderate risk is associated with more positive outcomes (Windle 2011:161).[7] This model expresses the possibility that moderate levels of adversity can help individuals become more resilient, though further longitudinal studies are needed to confirm this.

Person-focused Approach

The person-focused approach to resilience seeks to identify individuals who display positive or negative resilience outcomes among a group facing adversity and distill the factors that led to those outcomes so they may be correlated to risks or assets (Masten 2001:232–34; Windle 2011:161). Individuals are often classified in various categories, such as 'competent,' 'resilient,' or 'maladaptive' (Masten et al. 2004:1086), and groups are compared against one another and against change over time to correlate individual commonalities and differences.

The strength of this approach is that it views the individual as a whole entity rather than abstracting particular characteristics deemed significant for resilient adaptation.[8] This approach is often studied through the use of longitudinal research studies that follow individuals over the course of many years to assess continuity and change over multiple points in time.

An example of the person-focused approach is a study conducted by Buckner et al. (2003) who studied resilience among a group of at risk youth. The researchers were able to categorize youth as resilient or non-resilient and determine factors associated with these outcomes. Another good example of this type of study is the large seminal longitudinal study conducted by Werner and Smith (1982, 1992, 2001). Other studies utilize both variable-focused and person-focused methodologies in order to gain more, and different types of data.[9]

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[7] Cf. (Seery, Holman, and Silver 2010).
[8] Cf. (Mancini and Bonanno 2009; Mancini, Bonanno, and Clark 2011).
[9] Cf. (Masten et al. 2004).

Conclusions

Each of these models has strengths and weaknesses, and, while they may differ in their description of resilience, the diversity of models provides a more nuanced understanding of the concept. It is to questions concerning resilience that we must turn in order to gain a fuller significance of the concept.

Questions Regarding Resilience

As defined within psychological literature, resilience has a very specific meaning and constituent parts. And, as seen with the definitions of the term, there are variations even within this discipline. The same holds true for understanding the constituent parts of resilience.

Despite the diversity of opinion, one thing remains unchanged, "The central mission of resilience research is to use scholarship to derive 'critical ingredients' for effective intervention" (Luthar and Brown 2007:931). Resilience research has been application-oriented from the beginning.[10]

Much research has gone into attempting to determine these 'critical ingredients' yet still we are without a clear consensus on what constitutes them.[11] In the following section I will discuss several of the most important debates within resilience research and attempt, at the same time, to give a clear understanding of the constituent parts of the resilience concept. The questions I will address are:

- What type and severity of adversity or risk is necessary to precipitate resilient behavior?
- What is the nature of resilience: is it a trait, state, or process?
- What are the protective and promotive factors associated with resilience?

[10] Cf. (Werner and Smith 1982).

[11] Windle writes, "For example, Gillespie *et al*. state that self efficacy, hope and coping are the defining attributes of resilience. Dyer and McGuiness state that a sense of self, determination and pro-social attitude are the defining attributes. Whilst these constructs may be implicated in resilience, it is not clear why these specific ones were chosen whilst other, equally possible constructs (e.g. self esteem, competence) were excluded" (2011:153). Citing (Dyer and McGuinness 1996; Gillespie et al. 2007).

- What constitutes healthy functioning?

The Concept of Resilience

Resilience is a complex concept that necessarily requires more than a simple definition. There are multiple factors and levels involved which each influence the other (Windle 2011:164). Thus, our understanding of resilience must also involve multi-level analysis from multiple disciplines.

The use of the resilience concept within the field of ecology provides a helpful example for understanding psychological resilience. Just as one small change in an ecosystem, such as the dwindling population of an endangered species, can change the makeup of the entire system, so too can a seemingly small factor in an individual's life change the entire course of that life. The inner workings of these systems are not always well understood.

In the same way, the exact mechanisms of resilient behavior are still being explored. Much progress has been made in the last decades toward enabling individuals to thrive in spite of adversity, but more needs to be done. Research in the future must be multi-disciplinary and evidence-based. However, we cannot dismiss that the humanities may be able to shed some light on a subject that, at its core, is about human flourishing.

As a part of our journey to understand the concept of resilience, let us turn to the questions central to resilience research.

Adversity, Risk, and Resilience

Resilience research is differentiated from positive psychology, salutogenesis, and related concepts in that resilience specifically applies to situations of significant adversity which demonstrate risk and have the threat of a negative outcome (Masten 2001:228; Windle 2011:164).[12] There is not a consensus, however, on what level of

[12] With regards to resilience, "A key point is that it is misleading to use the term resilience if a stressor, under normal circumstances with a majority of people, would not ordinarily pressure adaptation and lead to negative outcomes" (Windle 2011:158). Citing (Roisman 2005).

difficulty constitutes adversity in a resilience context, or even whether adversity includes solely a one-time event (for example, a trauma) or describes a more continuous exposure to stress (such as a child growing up in a war zone).

Adversity, in one form or another, seems to be nearly a universal human experience.[13] Resilience, as useful of a concept as it is, only represents one possible response to hardship or extreme stress (Norris, Tracy, and Galea 2009). Unfortunately, many negative outcomes are possible as a result of different responses to adversity. How this adversity is handled differentiates a resilient response from a non-resilient response. Rutter suggests that resilience studies need to take into account all possible responses to adversity, not only supremely good outcomes (Rutter 1999).

A significant volume of research shows a connection between extreme adverse circumstances, such as abuse, and long-term negative health outcomes (Amstadter, Myers, and Kendler 2014:279; Bruce 2006; Mundy and Baum 2004). These possible negative effects include acute stress reactivity (Heim et al. 2000; Loman and Gunnar 2010) and psychopathology (Kilpatrick et al. 2003; Nelson et al. 2002).

In addressing the issue of adversity, it is necessary to point out that not all adversity is the same. Essentially, not all risks are equal (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008). Clearly, research related to stress and risk is very important to the study of resilience, but "research on resilience is not a matter of relabeling the existing body of work on risk and protective factors" (Panter-Brick 2014:440; Rutter 2012).

We must be able to develop an idea of how resilience and exposure to trauma or stress are related as this will determine not only our understanding of resilience, but also change the way we seek to inculcate resilience (Yehuda and Flory 2007:438). Many studies in the area of stress and risk studies show that humans can and do thrive despite dire circumstances and adversity.[14]

[13] Cf. (Bonanno 2004).
[14] E.g. (Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen 1984; Haggerty 1996; Kagitcibasi et al. 2009; Werner and Smith 2001).

Panter-Brick explains the relationship between risk and resilience:

> 'Risk' and 'resilience' are major conceptual paradigms currently deployed in the social and biomedical sciences. They provide different yet complementary lenses through which to understand and address the persistence of human health disparities…In matters of health, research on risk often trumps research on resilience. However, there is growing momentum to shift attention from risk to resilience in health research and practice (2014:432).

More research still needs to be undertaken in the study of resilience as, compared to risk, the connections between resilience, health, and difficulty are less well known (Panter-Brick 2014:438). This is especially true for understanding the mechanisms of how risk and adversity are overcome and/or mediated by resilience (Luthar 2006; Masten 2007; Masten and Curtis 2000; Windle 2011:164).

Definitions of Adversity

The way in which adversity is defined is especially important for resilience studies. One could imagine defining resilience in a way that would consider most human beings as resilient.[15] In this line of thinking, a foundational essay in resilience studies by Ann Masten (2001) entitled "Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development" emphasizes the ordinariness and ubiquity of resilience. On the other hand, one could also conceive of a definition of resilience that would allow for a very small percentage of resilient individuals, based especially upon how 'adversity' and 'normal functioning' are defined.

One review of resilience research found a wide variance in the percentage of those considered resilient, ranging from 25% to 84% (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008). This vast divergence is true even of studies on the heritability of resilience because of differing ways in which terms are defined (Amstadter et al. 2014:275). Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw suggest that the fluctuation of rates of resilient individuals is due to a number of factors including demographics and types of risk as well as definitions of outcomes measured. They conclude:

> Although it is not possible to arrive at a normative rate of resilience due to the substantial variability between studies on methodology and measurement, it does seem clear that there are significant differences between studies based on their degree of risk, with considerably more constraints upon resilience in the

[15] Cf. (Bonanno 2004:22).

context of multiple, high risks (2008:44).

It is clear within scholarly literature that "[t]he high functioning of individuals under conditions of no/low risk or adversity is not considered resilience" (Windle 2011:163). Nevertheless, individuals do experience varying types and intensities of adversity for variable amounts of time that require differing levels of resilient adaptation.

George Bonanno has been especially keen to differentiate between the types of trauma experienced by individuals. He highlights that resilience in the context of chronic adversity may look quite different than resilience in the wake of a one-time Potentially Traumatic Event (PTE). To describe this difference, he coined the terms 'emergent resilience' and 'minimal-impact resilience' to refer to these different adaptation trajectories (Bonanno and Diminich 2013:378).[16]

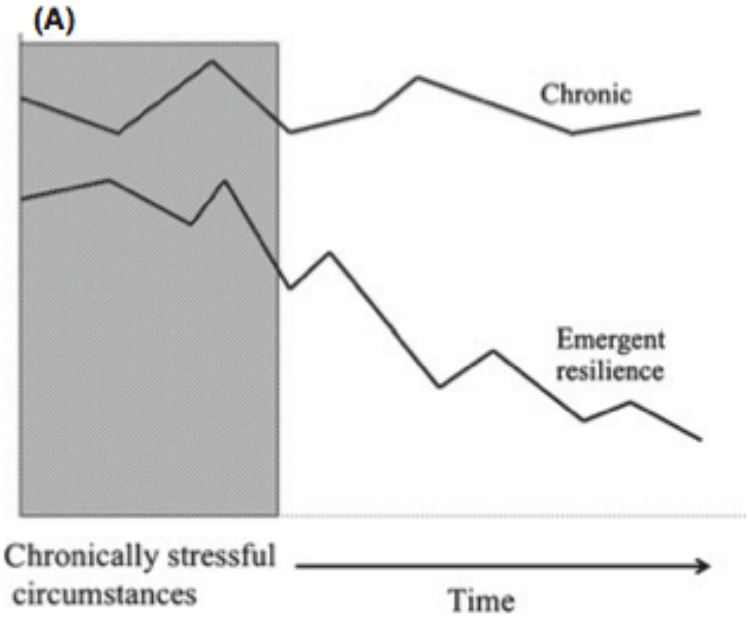

FIGURE 1.4[17]

[16] See also (Masten, Monn, and Supkoff 2011:109).

[17] Figures 1.4 and 1.5 from (Bonanno and Diminich 2013). "Graphic comparison of minimal-impact and emergent resilience. The upper panel (A) represents minimal-impact resilience as a stable trajectory of healthy adjustment following an isolated PTE, with recovery as a gradual return to baseline. The lower panel (B) represents emergent resilience as a gradual movement toward healthy adjustment following a period of struggle with chronically aversive circumstances" (Bonanno and Diminich 2013:379).

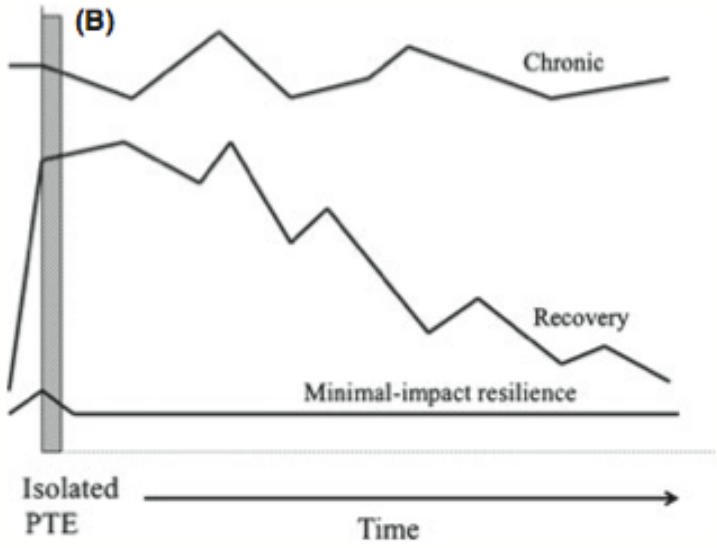

FIGURE 1.5

In addition to his research on resilient outcomes in the context of differing types of adversity, Bonanno has also done significant work in the area of adult trauma and resilience (Bonanno 2004, 2005). He has found that adversities experienced as an adult are "more likely to be isolated, but are potentially highly disruptive" (Windle 2011:155).

Conclusions on Adversity

While, as Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw have suggested, "it is not possible to arrive at a normative rate of resilience," some concrete observations can still be made regarding the relationship between risk, adversity, and resilience.

One perhaps commonsensical but nonetheless important observation is that negative outcomes are associated with higher levels of risk (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:51) as well as non-resilient behaviors (Wingo et al. 2010). This insight can be an important corrective to the tendency to generalize findings of a particular study or to inflate figures.

Additionally, research indicates that there is a "decreased likelihood of sustained resilience over time, particularly in the context of higher risk" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:47). This finding highlights aspects of the multi-variate nature of resilience: variation over the course of time and the difficulty of sustained resilience.

In line with the 'challenge' model of resilience, one conception of risk and adversity sees small amounts of risk as having an 'inoculating' effect upon an individual, preparing them to deal with adversity in the future (Kim-Cohen and Turkewitz 2012:1298). This has also been described as "the notion of 'steeling effects'" in Michael Rutter's research (Rutter 1999; Windle 2011:155). Studies show that successfully adapting to mild to moderate stress earlier in life has a 'stress-inoculating effect' that enables children to be more resilient later in life (Maier et al. 2006; Southwick and Charney 2012b:80). This is indicative of a U-shaped response rate to stress where individuals exposed to moderate levels of stress have better overall well-being outcomes than either individuals with histories of high stress or no stress (Seery et al. 2013; Seery, Holman, and Silver 2010). Resilience is greatly influenced by early childhood factors (Rutter 1999, 2000), so that it may be that resilience initiatives should be targeted towards children. In fact, Bowlby's attachment theory could be understood to undergird resilience wherein secure attachment promotes positive resilience outcomes (Svanberg 1998). Additionally, this strategy would be quite important from a lifespan viewpoint, as the psychological and social resources developed in early life mediate adaptation to adversity as an adult (Windle 2011:164).

On the other hand, it could also be argued that protection from risk is the best way to ensure resilience (Masten 2001:230). Research suggests that individuals who face significant adverse experiences in childhood have more difficulty adjusting in adulthood (Karatoreos and McEwen 2013). Additionally, one longitudinal study shows increasingly complex psychopathology as a result of multiple traumas (Karam et al. 2014). Certainly, not all risk or adversity can be prevented, therefore it is a matter of best managing that risk in addition to avoiding truly damaging situations.

Risk and adversity must be understood, not only in terms of a single or sustained event, but also in relation to intensity and time. The timing of a trauma (i.e. whether experienced in childhood or as an adult) plays a significant role in an individual's ability to respond in a resilient manner. Yet, in the end, it is the universality of the experience of risk and adversity that, in part, gives resilience applicability across diverse domains and contexts.

The Nature of Resilience

The way in which resilience is conceived of makes a significant differing in understanding the construct as well as in strategies for promoting resilient adaptation. Historically, a diversity of opinion regarding this issue was present in the social sciences, however the development of a number of related concepts has clarified the boundaries of the resilience construct.

Related Concepts

Resilience research began with conceiving of resilience as a stable personality trait that allows individuals to cope well in the midst of stress (Block and Block 1980; Leipold and Greve 2009:41; Masten 2007). Resilience research, however, quickly came to distinguish resilience from similar concepts of hardiness and ego-resiliency.

Hardiness is "a stable personality resource that consists of three psychological attributes: commitment, challenge, and control…However, the defining point which distinguishes hardiness from resilience is that it is a stable personality trait whereas resilience is viewed as something dynamic that will change across the lifespan" (Windle 2011:163).[18]

Ego-resiliency "has been used on occasion by researchers to measure resilience. It is proposed as an enduring psychological construct that characterizes human adaptability…in contrast to resilience, ego-resiliency does not depend on risk or adversity. Rather it is a part of the process of dealing with general, day-to-day change" (Windle 2011:163).[19]

Though these concepts are certainly different from resilience, many of the conceptual linkages are the same. Leipold and Greve argue that these concepts "exemplify the guiding idea that it is the individual's personality (or parts of it) that enables him or her to overcome adversities" (2009:41).

Coping, a concept related to resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, and Stein 2006), can be understood as an aspect of resilience rather than having a fundamental difference: "the

[18] Citing (Kobasa 1979; Kobasa, Maddi, and Kahn 1982).
[19] Citing (Block and Kremen 1996).

difference between coping and resilience is mainly a matter of conceptual hierarchy, rather than an empirical issue"(Leipold and Greve 2009:41).[20] More specifically, coping self-efficacy, a predictor of resilience (Benight and Cieslak 2011; Southwick and Charney 2012a), "refers to perceived capacity to successfully manage and recover from the demands of a stressful situation" (Southwick and Charney 2012b:81).[21]

Varying Conceptions

As previously mentioned, Masten (2007) describes the development of resilience research as moving from studying the characteristics (or traits) associated with resilience to the second wave moving on to understanding the processes behind them.

Some recent research views resilience as a fixed, stable personality trait (Ong et al. 2006; Silk et al. 2007) but others note that this view creates a dichotomy in which individuals who do not possess this trait are perceived to have failed (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000). Additional complexity in understanding resilience is added by the fact that it cannot be directly observed as a trait (Rutter 2007); rather, it is a conglomeration of traits leading to a particular outcome.

Others have argued more in line with the aims of the second wave of resilience research that a focus on the process of adaptation to adversity is key:

> Contrary to many proposals, this entails viewing resilience neither as a trait nor as a process explaining a phenomenon, but rather as a phenomenon needing to be explained. It can be explained, we argue, by referring to coping processes that resemble, in structural aspects, processes of developmental regulation (Leipold and Greve 2009:40).

The idea of resilience as a 'phenomenon' is insightful in many ways. It suggests that the construct is not a unitary feature of human being, but rather is *descriptive* of an outcome that is supported by other processes but dependent upon any number of individual and contextual factors.[22]

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[20] The difference being the level of difficulty experienced by the individual.
[21] Varying coping styles have also been shown to correlate with different resilience outcomes (Johnsen et al. 2002).
[22] Thus, some scholars note that "[r]esilience is not directly measured, but is inferred from two component constructs: risk and positive adaptation" (Marriott, Hamilton-Giachritsis, and Harrop 2014:18). Cf. (Luthar and Zelazo 2003).

Yehuda and Flory are more open-ended in their characterization of resilience, but also take into account important dynamics:

> Indeed, resilience can refer to either a state or trait…The trait, process, or product of resilience may each have different psychological and/or biological underpinnings that may operate quite differently in the context of other traits or states (2007:438).

Conclusions on the Nature of Resilience

Despite the initial diversity of opinion concerning whether resilience is a trait, state, or process, scholarly opinion currently suggests that resilience may be best understood as a "dynamic process that fluctuates within and across development" as opposed to "the initial perspective of resilience as a static outcome or a stable characteristic" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:52).

Ann Masten has recently also argued that this question has finally been answered: "Is There a Trait of Resilience? This perennial issue should be put to rest.[23] The answer is no. There are personality (or temperament) dimensions consistently associated with resilience, such as conscientiousness" (2014:14).[24]

Certainly, there are personality traits that influence resilient responses, but resilience is perhaps best understood in terms of a process leading to a particular outcome rather than as a trait in itself.[25] This understanding allows researchers and practitioners to focus on affecting the underlying processes that affect resilient outcomes. But what factors contribute to these processes? Resilience researchers have dubbed these 'protective' and 'promotive' factors.

Protective and Promotive Factors

Much research within resilience studies has attempted to understand the resources that individuals use to navigate adverse circumstances so as to produce a good outcome (Charney 2004; Curtis and Cicchetti 2003; Luthar 2006; Masten 2007; Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008). These resources have alternatively been called 'assets,'

[23] Citing (Masten 2012; Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013; Rutter 1987).
[24] Citing (Bonanno 2012; Lengua and Wachs 2012; Masten 2012).
[25] This debate is less well-defined in current literature and will take some time before a conclusion is reached (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335–36).

'resources,' or 'strengths' (Gillespie et al. 2007; Richardson 2002; Werner 1995) but usually they are known as protective (protect from negative outcomes despite risk) and promotive (promote good outcomes) factors (Masten 2013:579). As Gill Windle explains, "they facilitate the competence/capability that enables resistance to adversity and underlies the process of adaptation" (2011:157).[26]

These protective and promotive factors have been called "the defining attributes of resilience" (Windle 2011:164). They are important in that they enable the possibility of being taught or inculcated so as to promote resilience. In that sense, it is significant that these factors not be understood solely as descriptive terms, but also as having a predictive aspect (Hjemdal et al. 2006:195).

Generally protective factors have been categorized in three areas:

> (1) individual (e.g. psychological, neurobiological), (2) social (e.g. family cohesion, parental support) and (3) community/society (e.g. support systems generated through social and political capital, institutional and economic factors) (Windle 2011:157).[27]

Some scholars use the term 'assets' to refer to characteristics within an individual, while they name external factors 'resources' (Fergus and Zimmerman 2005). Whether internal or external, these factors are what distinguish resilience from similar concepts. In the midst of adversity multiple responses are possible; the resilient response is one that promotes a good outcome despite adversity. As Hjemdal et al. note, "Resilience is thus not the mere absence of risk, but rather the presence of protective factors or processes that buffer effects of adversity" (2006:194–95).

Quite significantly, there has been much agreement and consistency across diverse studies regarding protective and promotive factors, "suggesting that fundamental adaptive systems support and protect human adaptation and development in the context of adversity" (Masten 2013:579; Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, and Masten 2012). Southwick and Charney list some of the most common characteristics associated with resilience:

[26] Citing (Masten, Burt, and Douglas 2006).
[27] Citing (Garmezy 1991; Werner 1995).

> positive emotion and optimism, loving caretakers and sturdy role models, a history of mastering challenges, cognitive flexibility including the ability to cognitively reframe adversity in a more positive light, the ability to regulate emotions, high coping self-efficacy, strong social support, disciplined focus on skill development, altruism, commitment to a valued cause or purpose, capacity to extract meaning from adverse situations, support from religion and spirituality, attention to health and good cardiovascular fitness, and the capacity to rapidly recover from stress (Southwick and Charney 2012b:80).[28]

It should be noted that this list includes individual as well as social and community factors. Many scholars have begun to see that inculcating resilience is not as simple as increasing protective or promotive factors at an individual level. Individuals are themselves a part of larger contexts and systems, to include families, cultures, and societies, which all have a significant impact on psychological resilience. For instance, both relational connection and the emotional support provided by that connection may promote resilient adaptation (Glymour et al. 2008). Additionally, some research shows that a positive family environment in childhood is associated with resilient behavior as an adult (Bradley et al. 2013). Thus, some scholars have argued that "attempting to change individual protective factors will most likely be of little benefit because the overall context will remain the same" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:52).[29]

Nonetheless, individual protective factors do make a difference in resilience outcomes. Just as risk has a cumulative effect in increasing stress vulnerability, so too protective factors have "additive and interactive effects" that can increase resilience (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2011; Southwick and Charney 2012b:82).

The new 'wave' in resilience research emphasizes that "synergistic impact is a key feature of resilience models, and [is] a major departure from mechanistic, additive models linking functional outcomes to risk and protective factors" (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335). Thus, resilience is more than the sum total of individual protective factors. It is the outcome of a dynamic interplay of many "time-variant and context-

[28] Ann Masten gives a similar list including "attachment and effective caregiving, learning and problem solving, mastery motivation and self-efficacy, self-regulation, meaning-making systems of belief, and organizations and cultural practices that nurture these systems, such as schools and religions" (2013:579). Similarly Bonanno and Mancini cite "upwards of 13 unique and independent predictive factors" for resilience (2011:126).

[29] Citing (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000).

dependent variables" (Rutter 2012; Tol et al. 2013:455) which include the presence of protective factors. The "complexity and limitations of resilience" are evident, however, in the fact that one cannot simply create a "shopping list" of predictors of resilience (Tol et al. 2013:449). It must also be noted that these protective factors are themselves influenced by stress, with a potentially negative impact, especially at a young age (Loman and Gunnar 2010; Masten 2007:922). Introducing protective factors into an individual's life can increase resilience responses, though these interventions are probably best done at a young age because of "time-limited windows" of neuroplasticity (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2011; Southwick and Charney 2012b:82).

Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw write that caution should be taken not to generalize regarding protective factors and their resilient outcomes because resilient outcomes are greatly dependent upon variables of time and context (2008:51), Nonetheless, much can be said about the possibility of protective factors and their ability to increase the probability of a positive outcome.

The Question of Healthy Functioning

Resilience is characterized by a good outcome, variously conceived of as positive adaptation (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000) or absence of psychopathology (Nigg et al. 2007).[30] This process is also known as positive adaptation (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000; Rutter 1999), and has sometimes been referred to as 'flourishing.'[31] Closely linked to resilience is the concept of post-traumatic growth (Almedom 2005; Calhoun and Tedeschi 2006; Kilmer et al. 2014; Tedeschi and Kilmer 2005).[32] Post-traumatic growth is differentiated from resilience, however, in that it assumes an outcome of superior functioning that is dependent upon the experience of adversity (Kim-Cohen and Turkewitz 2012:1299–1300).

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[30] We must note, however, that using well-being as a measure of health—to include happiness and resilience—can be misleading (Atkinson 2011).

[31] It has been argued, however, that this term is more at home in the realm of positive psychology where the aim is good outcomes for all people rather than just those facing significant adversity (Luthar 2006).

[32] While related, these concepts are by no means synonymous. One study found that resilience and posttraumatic growth were inversely related: (S. Z. Levine et al. 2009). Cf. (Dekel, Ein-Dor, and Solomon 2012; Gilpin-Jackson 2014; Jirek 2011; Joseph 2011; Joseph, Murphy, and Regel 2012; Linley and Joseph 2011).

There is not a uniformity of opinion as to what the outcome of resilience ought to be or how this outcome is assessed, especially in regards to whether external or internal criteria should be used (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000; Masten 2001; Windle 2011:158). The goal of resilient functioning may look different depending on the circumstances and adversities that need to be overcome (Masten et al. 1999; Masten 2001; Yehuda and Flory 2007). Yet, there must be some means of differentiating resilient from non-resilient outcomes.[33]

Some have argued that resilience is characterized by a lack of psychopathology (Luthar 2006; Nigg et al. 2007; Windle 2011:155, 159). This has been challenged, however: "in the words of Almedom and Glandon (2007), defining resilience as the absence of a disorder is akin to defining health as the absence of disease" (Bonanno and Diminich 2013:381). Additionally, research suggests that resilience is more than the absence of maladaptive changes on the part of the individual; there are also positive adaptive changes associated with resilience even at a biological level (Feder, Charney, and Collins 2011:14).

Rachel Yehuda argues that a person can be resilient and still present symptoms, for example, of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Thus, for Yehuda, the presence of psychopathology does not necessarily equate to lack of resilience (Yehuda and Flory 2007). Windle agrees with Yehuda:

> Indeed, the presence of distress AND the maintenance of competence may be one of the strongest forms of resilience. The key point is that there is no necessary expectation that protection from stress and adversity should lead to positive experiences (Windle 2011:159).[34]

These are necessary correctives noting that the healthy functioning is not solely a lack of pathology, though this is certainly a large factor in healthy functioning.[35]

In reality, the question being asked is a deeper one about resilience and vulnerability. Are these concepts complementary or contrasting? Vulnerability, as defined within the

[33] While resilience outcomes are contextually-dependent to a point, there should be definable criteria for a 'good outcome' in assessing resilience.
[34] Citing (Olsson et al. 2003; Rutter 1999).
[35] This issue is taken up more fully in (Cook and White Forthcoming).

context of developmental psychopathology, "focuses on predicting and explaining causes of psychopathology" (Hjemdal et al. 2006:194). As such, it is closely related to the concept of resilience in the sense that the protective factors found within the resilience concept protect against vulnerability. It is my contention, however, that vulnerability and resilience are not necessarily contrasting concepts.[36] While this is a very important discussion, I cannot delve into it more now; this will be a point I return to later.

The Goal of Resilience

How is 'competent/normal functioning' defined? This has tremendous implications for the study of resilience. In essence, when we discuss return to healthy functioning, we must determine what constitutes health, or, at a more fundamental level, what constitutes human well-being.[37]

Karatoreos and McEwen (2013), from a scientific materialist perspective, view the goal of life as survival: "The primary function of any organism is to survive, reproduce, and ensure that its genetic material is successfully transmitted to the next generation. This is as biologically true of single-celled organisms as it is of humans." While biological survival is central to human well-being, it is not the totality. A perspective from outside of the sciences may be able to shed more light on the matter. This, again, is a question to which we must return later for further discussion.

Universality of Resilient Functioning

Resilience researchers, for the most part, are concerned with achieving 'functional outcomes' as evidenced by resilience. Yet some researchers are concerned that this emphasis takes away from the normative aspect of resilience (Panter-Brick 2014:441–

[36] Cf. (Titus 2006:14).

[37] This may be understood through relation to the narrative of a person's life. What is the goal of this narrative? Further, does the goal of the 'healthy' person differ from the 'diseased' person? For instance, what is the disabled person's current narrative, and what is the desired narrative? Is the desired narrative one of tragedy or triumph, victor or victim, or just being 'normal'? For an injured person, though not necessarily for the person with the lifelong disability, a triumph narrative of resilience through adversity could be especially powerful. I leave these questions unanswered, in part because they are particular to the individual, but also because they display the complexity of the question of what it means to flourish as a human.

42). Both aspects are important, but we must not lose sight of the substantive nature of the resilience concept and the implications of a normative conception of resilience.

Conceiving of resilience in terms of its normativity raises additional questions. For instance, should resilience be understood as a potentially universal mode of functioning? Additionally, there is the question as to whether there are degrees of resilient functioning. In other words, can an individual be resilient across all domains of life, or is resilience domain-specific? And, are there degrees of resilience whereby someone could be considered more resilient than his counterpart? If so, how is this measured?

Research seems to indicate that resilience is not a global attribute and can be confined to specific domains within an individual's life rather than extending to all domains (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:47, 52). This is especially true of children in high-risk situations, but may not hold true at lower levels of risk (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:50). It can be expected that resilient behavior will fluctuate over time (Luthar 2006:741) as studies have shown that "rates of positive outcomes differed widely depending on sample demographics, number of risks, and the number and type of outcomes" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:51). Therefore it may be best to view resilience in terms of specificity: "specific outcomes at specific time points" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:52).

Further, some argue that we ought to "define resilience along a continuum rather than as an arbitrary dichotomy" (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000). In theory, this is a good distinction to make. In practice, however, it becomes more difficult to distinguish between degrees of resilient behavior, especially as it pertains to defining terms in research and comparing studies. An attempt has been made to develop a 'resilience scale' (Connor and Davidson 2003) and, though not widespread, some studies have used this scale as a means of defining and measuring resilience outcomes (Campbell-Sills, Forde, and Stein 2009; Fincham et al. 2009; Stein, Campbell-Sills, and Gelernter 2009).

Future Directions in Resilience Research

Now that the concept of resilience has been broadly outlined and several important questions regarding the constituent parts of resilience have been addressed, I will turn to the current state of resilience research.

There are still many questions regarding resilience, especially pertaining to how resilience mechanisms, in particular "adversities, protective resources, or interventions," actually work (Sandler 2001; Windle 2011:165). As I noted previously, resilience research is now in a time of increased interdisciplinary dialogue. This dialogue, in conjunction with additional research in fields such as and anthropology, genetics, neurobiology, and sociology will greatly enrich resilience research. In this section I will draw on current resilience research from these fields as well as the fields of psychology and psychiatry, with a view better to understand human resilience.

Gene and Environment Considerations

There is an increased awareness that resilience is affected by a dynamic array of various factors, including factors of genetics and environment (Kim-Cohen and Turkewitz 2012). Scholars suggest that an individual's genetics have a significant impact on resilience, just as they do in responses to stress and trauma (Feder, Nestler, and Charney 2009:446; Southwick and Charney 2012b:79). As Southwick and Charney note,

> Research in genetics and epigenetics suggests that putative vulnerability genes or 'risk alleles' operate in a dynamic interplay with the environment and that resilience may be promoted, in some cases, by changing the biological and or psychosocial environment (2012b:80).[38]

The environment, whether physical or social, plays an important part in individual resilience outcomes: researchers state, "Resilience is not a constant but is something moulded and shaped by the physical and social environment" (Bartley et al. 2010:101). Three areas of factors are noted by Luthar et al. as developing resilience in children: "attributes of the individual child, attributes of a child's family, and characteristics of the larger social environment" (2000:544).[39]

[38] Citing (Rende 2012).
[39] Citing (Betancourt and Khan 2008).

Genetic Heritability of Resilience

An increasing number of studies relate to the genetic component of resilience. In these studies, as with all resilience studies, defining terms is a key component in undertaking research.

In clarifying resilience, one scholar suggests that "[f]rom a genetics perspective, resilience can be viewed as the degree to which the person at genetic risk for maladaptation and psychopathology are not affected" (Windle 2011:155).[40] In regards to resilience outcomes, genetically speaking, resilience could be viewed as overcoming maladaptive genetic predispositions. This still begs the question, however, about the extent to which genetics, as opposed to environment, plays a role in resilient outcomes and behavior.

Research indicates that changes in environment, such as increased social support, can protect against depression even in children who are genetically predisposed to depression (Kaufman et al. 2006; Rende 2012; Southwick and Charney 2012b:80). Even more significantly, "research shows that a supportive socio-ecological context is at least as an important—if not more important—determinant of resilience as intra-individual variables, and should thus be a central focus for interventions promoting resilience" (Tol et al. 2013:456). Some intra-individual factors are unchangeable, such as genetic makeup, whereas others are changeable. The question of just how large of a role genetics plays in resilience has been largely unanswered until recently.[41]

To measure the role of genetic and environmental factors on resilience, a large longitudinal study of 7500 twins was recently conducted (Amstadter et al. 2014). According to the researchers, the study is the first consideration of how genes and the environment contribute to resilience to adversity, and "the first estimation of the stability of the resilience phenotype and its aetiology assessed over time" (Amstadter et al. 2014:277).

[40] Citing (Luthar, Suniya S., Cicchetti, Dante, and Becker, Bronwyn 2000).
[41] See, for example, (Yehuda and Flory 2007:438).

This study had significant findings:

> Resilience was found to have a moderate genetic heritability at each wave (~31%)...Incorporating error of measurement into the model increased the estimated heritability for the latent construct of resilience (~50%) (Amstadter et al. 2014:275).

Hence, this study showed that, without adjusting for errors in measurement, resilience is mildly heritable, roughly as much as anxiety disorders. Taking into account adjustments for measurement error, resilience is described as moderately heritable, on par with depression (Amstadter et al. 2014:278). The researchers note, "a striking conclusion can be made: genetic constitution and enduring environmental influences contribute roughly equally to the latent construct of resilience" (Amstadter et al. 2014:278).

As to the way in which genetics create resilient responses, researchers have conjectures but not certainties:

> Research on adults has also documented the role of temperament and personality in determining response to stressful life events. It is plausible that shared genetic variance between resilience and these personality factors may be in play…Genetic influences may also exert their effects through a contribution to known protective factors for post-stressor response that are also moderately heritable (for example social support) (Amstadter et al. 2014:279).[42]

In addition to the relationship between genetics and environment, studies have researched other aspects of the relationship between genetics and resilience. One study looked at the genetics of gender differences in resilient outcomes and found quantitative differences (Boardman, Blalock, and Button 2008), while another study found only qualitative, not quantitative, gender differences related to resilience.[43]

Implications of Gene-Environment Considerations

As we consider the outcomes of resilience studies in the field of genetics, it is important to note that these findings have very real implications for the practical implementation of the resilience concept. This means that interventions would need to take seriously

[42] Citing (Kendler and Baker 2007).
[43] Cf. (Amstadter, Myers, and Kendler 2014). Other studies suggest that these gender differences are based on epigenetic activity (Roth 2013:1287).

the dynamic role that environmental factors play in creating and sustaining resilience instead of solely focusing on individual factors (Windle 2011:165). Additionally, researchers and clinicians must acknowledge that there is a genetic component to psychological resilience, and, therefore, some individuals will show more proclivities toward resilience than others (Nigg et al. 2007). As Michael Ungar notes, however, "development is less biologically determined than it is socially facilitated" (2011:4).[44]

The significance of environmental considerations makes clear that community factors, such as poverty, play a significant part in individual resilience outcomes. These community and social structural issues need to be addressed in order to bring about consistent resilient outcomes in adverse situations. A World Health Organization (WHO) report on resilience makes this point emphatically:

> [L]evels of mental distress among communities need to be understood less in terms of individual pathology and more as a response to relative deprivation and social injustice, which erode the emotional, spiritual and intellectual resources essential to psychological well-being. While psycho-social stress is not the only route through which disadvantage affects outcomes, it does appear to be pivotal. Firstly, psychobiological studies provide growing evidence of how chronic low level stress 'gets under the skin' through the neuro-endocrine, cardiovascular and immune systems…Secondly, both health-damaging behaviours and violence, for example, may be survival strategies in the face of multiple problems, anger and despair related to occupational insecurity, poverty, debt, poor housing, exclusion and other indicators of low status (Friedli 2009:iii).

These environmental systems are complex, making causality often hard to delineate. It is possible that some factors may predispose an individual to circumstances that mediate the risk inherent in adversity (Windle 2011:164). For example, it is clear that poverty increases the likelihood of psychopathology in children, but it is not clear whether this is specifically due to poverty itself or to the way in which poverty changes family dynamics (Rutter 1999; Windle 2011:164).

Seeing resilience through the lens of environment (sometimes called a "social-ecological model of resilience" (Panter-Brick 2014:441)) enables practitioners to help individuals utilize external resources for successful adaptation in the midst of adversity. Panter-Brick argues:

[44] Or, perhaps, these factors are on par with one another, given other research (Amstadter et al. 2014).

> In brief, focusing attention on both resources and resourcefulness helps to incorporate ecology and agency in our understanding of human pathways to health. The arrow of change still points from society to the individual: The important insight of a social-ecological model is that "changing the odds" in the environment becomes preferable to having individuals "beat the odds" stacked against them (Panter-Brick 2014:441).[45]

Because resilient outcomes are so largely affected by environment, scholars argue for an understanding of the concept that sees it as complex and dynamic, but also dependent upon variables of time and context (Tol et al. 2013:445). Because of this, they suggest that interventions need to be fitted to specific situations rather than thinking that one model could be applied universally with similar good outcomes across diverse circumstances.

Panter-Brick and Leckman argue that understanding the dynamic interaction of resilience with environment can give us a clearer picture of the normative dimension of resilience, especially with regard to "defining 'better-than- expected' outcomes" (2013:333). This means, in part, that our understanding of a resilient outcome may need to be shaped by the environment. Adding to the complexity of this concept, research in the field of genetics shows that shared environmental factors have the potential to shape outcomes in the same way that genetics and non-shared environmental factors do (Rende 2012). Certainly, additional research is needed to gain a clearer understanding of how genetics and environment interact to create resilience.

Neurobiology and Resilience

Related to genetic considerations are neurobiological understandings of resilience. Recent technological advances, such as being able to take fMRI readings while a patient is conscious, have allowed for significant advances in understanding the neurobiology of resilience (Karatoreos and McEwen 2013; Southwick and Charney 2012b:81).

It is significant that studies are beginning to correlate specific alterations in neurobiological functioning with aspects of resilience (James et al. 2013; Wang et al. 2014; Yehuda and Flory 2007:445). This fact means that researchers are identifying not

[45] See also (Ungar 2008:220–21).

only how the brain processes stress and resilient responses, but also how to better inculcate resilience.

Epigenetic Markers

Several other key neurobiological concepts are important for resilience research. One of these concepts concerns epigenetic mechanisms. This concept is closely linked to genetics and is concerned with proteins that help code the genetic sequence in DNA (Feder et al. 2011:13). A specific genetic coding is often called an epigenetic marker or a biomarker (Yehuda et al. 2013).

Recent resilience research has come a long way in understanding the role of epigenetic markers in resilience:

> It is now understood that changes in the activity of genes established through epigenetic alterations occur as a consequence of exposure to environmental adversity, social stress, and traumatic experiences. DNA methylation in particular has thus emerged as a leading candidate biological pathway linking gene–environment interactions to long-term and even multigenerational trajectories in behavioral development, including the vulnerability and resilience to psychopathology (Roth 2013:1279).

Researchers have also shown that very stressful life events can create epigenetic modifications "in genes associated with the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis (McGowan et al. 2009), which may be another mechanism through which the environmental influences exert their effect on resilience" (Amstadter et al. 2014:279). In the future, epigenetic changes may be specifically associated with resilient behavior as well as used as predictors of resilience (Yehuda et al. 2013).

Showing the complexity of human beings, these epigenetic markers both affect and are affected by context and environmental factors (Feder et al. 2011:14; Rende 2012). This has also been called "genetic sensitivity to the environment" (Rende 2012). Positively, some research has shown that psychotherapy, as a means of regulating the environment, can bring about favorable epigenetic change in individuals with PTSD (Yehuda et al. 2013:12).

Neuroplasticity

Another important concept is that of brain plasticity or neuroplasticity (Cicchetti and Blender 2006; Cicchetti and Curtis 2006; Southwick and Charney 2012b:80). This concept is significant for resilience studies because research has shown that, in some circumstances, the brain can re-enter a plastic (malleable) state in adulthood in order to mitigate the negative effects of adversity (Karatoreos and McEwen 2013). Ciccheti and Valentino explain the possibilities of neuroplasticity:

> The concept of neural plasticity offers a valuable heuristic for conceptualizing how preventive interventions may affect brain structure and functioning, contributing to resilience among individuals confronted with adversity (Curtis and Cicchetti 2003). Analogous to recovery from physical injury to the brain, neural plasticity also may involve recovery from the damaging effects of trauma and extreme stress. Adverse environmental experience can induce physiological changes in the brain, and conversely, experiences to ameliorate and safeguard against severe adversity may similarly produce physiological changes that are advantageous to the central nervous system (2007:272–73).[46]

Significantly, research indicates that physical changes to the brain, including to circuit connectivity (McEwen and Gianaros 2011), can be precipitated by the environment (Amstadter et al. 2014:279; Davidson and McEwen 2012).

Allostatic Load

A final neurobiological concept important for resilience research is allostatic load (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2011). The concept of allostasis was introduced by Sterling and Eyer in 1988 (Sterling and Eyer 1988) to describe the "dynamic regulation of secondary set-points in defense of homeostasis" (Feder et al. 2011:1–2). Allostasis has also been defined as "stability through change" (Karatoreos and McEwen 2013:338). Relatedly, allostatic load is the "damage the body incurs as a result of allostasis" (Feder et al. 2011:2; McEwen 2013).

In one sense, this terminology is a means of speaking more specifically regarding stress and the effects of stress on an individual. Some researchers suggested that the terminology of 'allostasis' provides a more positive connotation to describe 'adaptive plasticity' than the traditional term, 'stress' which has gained a somewhat negative

[46] Citing (Cicchetti and Tucker 1994; Nelson 1999).

connotation (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2011). Interestingly, 'stress' was originally borrowed from the field of engineering, just as 'resilience' was (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2011).

Future Possibilities

Much still remains to be learned about the neurobiological underpinnings of resilience. For example, further research may show how resilience mediates the effects of adversity. In addition, as specific biomarkers associated with resilience are identified, researchers may be able to predict or track trauma recovery (Yehuda and Flory 2007:438).

Diverse Social Understandings of Resilience

Another significant shift in resilience research has been a movement to understand that culture plays a large role in influencing resilience.[47] Some scholars have noted that thus far "culture is perhaps the most neglected topic in the study of risk and resilience" (Feldman and Masalha 2007:2; Panter-Brick 2014:432).

This is not to say that trans-cultural elements of resilience are not recognized, only that the culturally bound nature of the concept has often been neglected. In fact, one researcher argues that "[f]or social scientists, the grand challenge may consist of developing a grounded understanding of resilience across cultures" (Panter-Brick 2014:432).

Certainly, as previously discussed, environmental considerations, to include social context, play a significant part in resilient outcomes. For instance, participants in resilience studies in different cultural contexts emphasize diverse resilience outcomes, a fact that may be lost to researchers if they come to the study with predetermined outcome indicators already in mind (Tol et al. 2013:449).

Some research has already attempted to contextualize parts of the resilience concept within Korean culture (Kwon 2008) as well as African culture (Theron, Theron, and Malindi 2013). In these contexts, cultural paradigms, such as the shame/honor

[47] E.g. (Clauss-Ehlers 2008). Michael Ungar was the first to develop a socio-ecological model of resilience (Masten 2014:12; Ungar 2011, 2012).

paradigm, are central cultural narratives with which the resilience concept will have to interface in order to be relevant in these cultures.

These findings must be taken in conjunction with research previously discussed that indicates there is a normative dimension to resilience despite its varied cultural embodiments. Researchers have cautioned that, even taking into account the reality of socio-cultural diversity, much can still be said about predictors of resilience that transcend cultural specificity. Citing qualitative studies that spanned 10 countries, Tol et al. noted that participants identified similar predictors of resilience, having in common factors that were "a combination of personal strengths and supportive contexts (e.g. family and community supports)" (2013:449). There is still much to be said for a normative understanding of resilience that transcends, but gives unique voice to, distinctiveness.

Deeper Cultural Understandings

An emphasis on cultural variations brings to the forefront the question of meaning, for individuals, as well as cultures. Meaning, as defined by the individual or culture, has much more effect upon risk/resilience than biomedical literature has suggested—leading to difficulties (e.g. in the case of HIV/AIDS in Africa) (Panter-Brick 2014:435).

A culturally sensitive understanding of resilience gives credence to local understandings of the world and morality when determining resilience measures and outcomes. Despite the little attention usually given to meaning-making in specific cultural contexts, these factors play a significant part in creating resilient outcomes in those contexts. Meaning is closely linked to larger metaphysical and teleological narratives that the sciences do not usually address, and therefore further input from other disciplines is needed.[48]

Limitations of the Resilience Concept

As useful as the resilience concept has proven to be across a variety of disciplines, it also has its limitations.

[48] See a plea from social scientists for the importance of meaning-making in public health promotion (Wexler, DiFluvio, and Burke 2009).

One limitation that has been noted is the inability of the concept to fully characterize the experience of those who face extreme adversity (Tol et al. 2013:457). For example, one longitudinal study on the experience of sexual assault victims showed that the daily difficulties they faced were not mitigated by the protective factor of acceptance by the community (Theresa Stichick Betancourt et al. 2010). This is just one example out of many, but it demonstrates that resilience is not a 'silver bullet' that can rectify every adverse situation.

Additionally, the question of whether there is a cost associated with adaptation to adversity, especially significant adversity is significant. Ann Masten describes two types of 'prices' associated with resilience. The first 'price' is the 'scarring' and after effects of facing adversity, even despite achieving some good outcomes. She terms this the "price of adversity rather than resilience" (2014:14). Additionally, she notes that there is a 'price' inherent in fighting for and achieving resilience in exceptionally adverse circumstances (2014:14). Certainly, some studies indicate that resilient youths from very high-risk situations have long-term health issues (Werner and Smith 2001) as well as high allostatic load despite good psychosocial adaptation (Brody et al. 2013). Resilience does not come without a cost, but too often researchers do not acknowledge that cost.

Further limitations of the resilience concept will be taken up later, but, despite any limitations, I believe that it is still a very useful construct by which we can meaningfully engage human responses to adversity.

Conclusions

While resilience research is still in its adolescence, interdisciplinary dialogue and new ways of assessing resilience provide a hopeful future for the concept. The way forward certainly involves multiple systems of analysis for developing the best interventions (Masten 2011). These interventions must be based on rigorous studies that take into account specific time and context-dependent variables (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335–36). To this end, Panter-Brick and Leckman believe that

> [m]uch more interdisciplinary work can be done to connect, into a coherent framework, the neurobiology of resilience with the culture of resilience, the functional with the normative dimensions of human experience…In our view, attention to interventions with synergistic effects across multiple systems, given careful research on context-specific and time-sensitive resilience pathways, is one of the most exciting foci of research and practice in child development (2013:335–36).

We must be able to identify critical constructs for resilience and harness resources to support resilient outcomes. Additionally, we must work 'upstream' to target prevention at community and systems levels rather than focusing solely at the individual level (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:335–36). Several important studies have shown the powerful impact of such family and social interventions on resilience outcomes over the span of a lifetime (Challen, Machin, and Gillham 2014; Elliott, Burton, and Hannaford 2014; Kagitcibasi et al. 2009; Werner and Smith 2001).

Resilience must be understood for what it is: a very complex concept—a "dynamic process that varies within and across time" (Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw 2008:54) that is a result of many variables including genetics (Amstadter et al. 2014), neurobiology (Southwick and Charney 2012b), environment, and individual factors (Bradley et al. 2013).

Because of this, Michael Rutter argues that currently resilience research findings do "not translate into a clear programme of prevention and treatment, but they do provide numerous leads on clinical approaches that focus on the dynamic view of what may be involved in overcoming seriously adverse experiences" (2013:484). These prevention and treatment applications of the resilience concept are what drive the study of resilience and also what make it such a valuable concept. Research gives enough evidence to begin making intervention strategies that will have a substantial impact.

Interventions and applications of this research need to be tailored to specific contexts rather than attempting to use a 'universal model' that can be applied blindly across any context (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013:333; Tol et al. 2013:457).[49] This work can be aided by "reconceptualizing resilience in narrower, specific terms" (Vanderbilt-

[49] It is necessary to focus on stressors in the everyday lives of individuals in order to mediate between undue focus, alternatively, on trauma or psychosocial models (Miller and Rasmussen 2010).

Adriance and Shaw 2008:54) as well as by very clearly defining resilience terminology (Panter-Brick 2014).

Unfortunately, the fact of adversity as a near-universal human experience makes the study of resilience necessary. As Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw point out, however, this also gives resilience studies a trajectory for the future:

> Differences in the prevalence of resilience across the highest levels of risk, as well as discontinuity across time and domains, emphasize the difficulty of 'escaping' risk, and illustrate the need for both researchers and policy makers to target established protective factors that have been reliably shown to be associated with positive outcomes in similar samples (2008:54).

It is my hope that resilience research will continue to enable increased human well-being across diverse contexts.[50] There are already encouraging signs of progress: "There are efforts to create common concepts and tools that will facilitate building a more integrated, scalable, multidisciplinary science of resilience to address issues of global concern" (Masten 2014:14).[51] This project seeks to be another step toward this goal.

[50] For a review of research demonstrating the possibility of such psychosocial intervention, see (Tol et al. 2011).
[51] Citing (Brown 2014; Masten and Obradovic 2008; Welsh 2014).

Chapter 2: Religion, Spirituality, and Resilience

"'Tu oi Tu! I'm afraid,' Diep said, clinging to me one night after a rocket burst not far from our home. Her sharp nails dug into my thigh or arm, whatever flesh she could reach in the darkness. The house shook, and then dust from the ceiling sprinkled through the mosquito net and settle on our skin, reminding us that death was only a few feet away…

'Is your love real?' I asked God. 'Show me. Let me see your face.' Lying in bed in the darkness, I strained my eyes looking for him. I wanted to see him, to touch him, to have him hold and comfort me. I needed to feel the reality of God's love because what I feared most wasn't death, but a life devoid of his presence. In the deepest reaches of my heart, I knew that without God in creation, life wouldn't make any sense" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:176–78).

In the first chapter I introduced resilience from the viewpoint of the social sciences. In this chapter, I will continue with this strategy, however the primary focus will be the role of religion and spirituality in human resilience, again largely through the lens of the social sciences.

There is a long history of interaction between psychology and religion, at times both constructive and antagonistic (Parsons 2010).[1] Yet the mutual goal of helping human beings is a significant commonality (Paloutzian 2006). Many aspects of this relationship are beyond the scope of this chapter, nonetheless, Kenneth Pargament notes the powerful way in which psychology and religion can help individuals overcome adversity. Specifically, the psychology of religion and coping

> bridges a deep psychological tradition of helping people take care of what they can in times of stress with a rich religious tradition of helping people accept their limitations and look beyond themselves for assistance in troubling times (1997:9).

[1] Jeff Levin suggests, "That religion might have something to say about mental health, for good or bad, has been a sensitive and contentious issue within psychiatry, dating to Freud, as familiarity with the history of psychiatry attests" (2010:103). See also Don Browning's insightful summary of the current relationship between psychiatry and religion (Browning 2010:114–15). In this chapter I utilize the general term 'religion' in the functional sense used by social scientists to categorize actions and dispositions related to activities such as religious service attendance and prayer. Later I will address potential problems with such a denotation, but I begin with it as a starting point. Here 'religion' includes a diversity of faiths; later I will focus upon the significance of the Christian faith, in particular, for understanding human resilience.

Recently many researchers have attempted to study the relationship of religion, spirituality, and health through empirical means, but religious traditions have long assisted the downtrodden and help the sick (Koenig 2012).

In this chapter I will review current research on the relationship between religion, spirituality, and health as it relates to the study of resilience. But first, a word must be said about the need for this chapter.

The Necessity of this Study

Why is it important to study the relationship between religion, spirituality, and resilience? The portrait of current resilience studies within the social sciences in the last chapter is an important foundation for understanding resilience, but it does not give the full picture. We must look more specifically at the relationship between, and the importance of, religion and spirituality in the study of human resilience.

Studies indicate that religion is one of the primary ways many individuals deal with adversity. For example, a national survey in the United States found that 90% of Americans coped through religion following the 9/11 attacks (Schuster et al. 2001). Similarly, Harold Koenig notes that

> in certain parts of the United States, over 90 percent of medical patients indicate that religious beliefs and practices are ways they cope with and make sense of physical illness, and over 40 percent say that religion is the *most important* factor that keeps them going (2013:30).[2]

The importance of religion for sustaining individuals through times of adversity has been demonstrated across cultures and religions (Abu-Raiya et al. 2015; Ahmadi 2006; Büssing, Abu-Hassan, et al. 2007; Büssing, Ostermann, and Koenig 2007; D'Souza 2002; Rammohan, Rao, and Subbakrishna 2002). Because of the centrality of religion and spirituality to the human experience, these factors must be included in any understanding of human resilience. In a study addressing resilience from a theological perspective, such an understanding is all the more important.

[2] Cf. (Ehman et al. 1999; Hamilton and Levine 2006; Lim 2015).

Some scholars argue for the uniqueness of religion and spirituality. For them, these factors are categorically different than other resources used for coping (Emmons 1999; Pargament, Magyar-Russell, and Murray-Swank 2005; Schnitker and Emmons 2013). If true, these claims suggest that religion and spirituality have a unique contribution to make in human beings' ability to adapt to adversity (McCrae 1999). To more fully investigate these claims, the current social scientific research concerning the relationship between religion, spirituality, health, and resilience must be assessed.

Social Science Research

Many studies indicate associations between R/S, health, and resilience (Agorastos, Huber, and Demiralay 2014; Koenig and King 2012), suggesting that religion may promote resilience (Kasen et al. 2012). In particular, some of these benefits may be attributed to the encouragement to a healthy lifestyle found in many forms of R/S (Tovar-Murray 2011). Because resilience research deals with the question of how individuals return to a state of health, much of the research on the intersection of religion, spirituality, and health is relevant to this study.

Research in this area has increased significantly in recent years, bringing with it a significant amount of data regarding this relationship (Koenig et al. 2012; Levin 2010). Because of this, a complete overview of this research in this limited space is not feasible. There are, however, some significant points that I will highlight. I will begin by addressing the relationship between religion, spirituality, and resilience more generally before delving into more specific aspects of this relationship.

Correlations between Religion, Spirituality, Health, and Resilience

Recently, many researchers have attempted to understand the relationship between R/S and health, to include studies significant for understanding resilience. Harold Koenig compiled a list of studies relating to religion, spirituality, and health from 2000-2010. His review includes more than twenty-one hundred quantitative studies during this time period, which he estimates to be approximately 75% of the total available research (Koenig et al. 2012:9). He notes that the number of qualitative studies on the intersection between religion, spirituality, and health is too numerous to include in his

already massive, more than 1,100 page, tome. Tyler VanderWeele (2016) provides a more concise and critical summary of the extant research on religion and health that both takes into account past research and suggests helpful possibilities for future study.

This research suggests both positive and negative correlation between religion, spirituality, and health. As a meta-analysis of this research has shown, contradictory results may merely be a function of differing definitions of key terms (Hackney and Sanders 2003). Thus, it is possible that R/S can both enhance and detract from resilience, as a function of human well-being, but a more nuanced understanding of various aspects of R/S is needed in order to demarcate the relationship between these concepts.[3]

Research Findings

Positive Correlation

A number of studies indicate a substantial positive correlation between R/S and physical health, mental health, and overall human well-being (Koenig 2012). Jeff Levin notes that research has shown that the "weight of evidence, on average and across studies, suggests that religion, however assessed, is a generally protective factor for mental illness" (2010:102). Koenig agrees that most studies examining the correlation between R/S and health have found a "significant positive association" (2013:35).[4] Some evidence suggests, however, that this association is more significant between R/S and mental health than R/S and physical health.[5] Such associations have held true

[3] Vanderweele et al. (2016) note that the cross-sectional nature of most studies assessing the relationship between religion and health does not provide information to determine causality within this relationship. Further longitudinal studies are needed to clarify this. Yet, even in the case of longitudinal research, such as Vanderweele et al.'s discussion of the relationship between religious service attendance and depression, causality is not always clearly defined and may in fact move in both directions. This indicates that the evidence presented in this chapter should be considered suggestive of a generally positive relationship between religion and health rather than clearly definitive of this conclusion.

[4] Cf. (Wong, Rew, and Slaikeu 2006).

[5] Cf. (Johnstone et al. 2008).

across the domains of a variety of types of disease, as well as over the life span, and in many different social contexts and populations (Levin 2009:78).

These conclusions are not without their critics, however (King et al. 2013; Sloan 2008). This is, in part, because not all evidence points to supremely positive outcomes and associations. As an example, one meta-analysis of studies regarding the relationship between religion and depression suggested a mild inverse association, where positive religiosity only slightly ameliorated depressive symptoms (Smith, McCullough, and Poll 2003).[6]

Such studies attempt to show correlation between R/S and health through focusing on measurable outcomes across a number of different health-related areas. Yet, many other studies show that R/S patients are less likely to develop depression or depressive symptoms (Braam et al. 2004; Chen et al. 2007; King et al. 2007; Koenig 2007, 2013:36; McCullough and Larson 1999; Miller et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2003), but if they do experience depression they are able to recover more quickly (Koenig, George, and Peterson 1998). Thus, it may be appropriate to say that religion both protects individuals from depression and acts as an aid in recovery (Ronneberg et al. 2014).[7] Additionally, there is ample research to suggest positive correlations between R/S and longevity of life, quick recovery following major surgery, and lack of substance abuse, among other indicators of health (Koenig et al. 2012).

Significantly, research indicates that the positive effects of religion and spirituality can be most clearly seen in situations of significant adversity (Agorastos et al. 2014; Kim 2008; Koenig, Larson, and Larson 2001). This makes the study of the relationship between R/S and resilience even more pertinent.

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[6] Some divergence in study findings—such as a cross-sectional study that found a correlation between religiosity and depression (Lupo and Strous 2011) as opposed to a similar study conducted among participants of another faith tradition that yielded opposite results (Vasegh and Mohammadi 2007)—suggests that additional factors are at play here, perhaps to include the religion of participants.

[7] As mentioned above, these findings are not universal (Smith, McCullough, and Poll 2003). The evidence of the majority of studies strongly suggests that religion protects from and helps in recovery from depression, but studies such as that by Maselko et al. (2009) suggest that this relationship is complex with no clear one-to-one correlation.

For example, studies suggest the benefits of R/S for cancer patients (Balboni et al. 2007; Holt et al. 2012) as well as for preventing suicide (Cook 2014) where, among other factors, religious worship attendance can act as an independent protective factor against suicide (Kleiman and Liu 2014; Rasic et al. 2011). Other studies indicate, more generally, the protective nature of R/S against suicide (Dervic et al. 2004; Greening and Stoppelbein 2002; Lester 2000; Lubin et al. 2001; Rasic et al. 2009; Thompson, Ho, and Kingree 2007). Studies also suggest that R/S provides resources significant for coping with severe and/or chronic pain (Büssing et al. 2009; Harrison et al. 2005; Keefe et al. 2001; Riley et al. 1998; Smith et al. 2009; Wachholtz, Pearce, and Koenig 2007; Wiech et al. 2008). Significantly, research demonstrates that R/S resources are particularly important for those whose difficulties are beyond the scope of modern medicine to help (Koenig 2002).

Negative Correlation

Not all research has shown a positive correlation between religion, spirituality, and health, however. In particular, several studies indicate that *struggle* with religious beliefs, especially toward the end of life, can be detrimental to health (Fitchett et al. 1999; McCann and Webb 2012; Pargament et al. 2001; Pirutinsky et al. 2011; Webb et al. 2011).

Additionally, greater religiosity/spirituality has, at times, been associated with higher levels of obsessive-compulsive traits (Agorastos et al. 2014). Some studies found that individuals who held spiritual values as important—such as the search for meaning and understanding adversity in life—had higher incidence of most psychiatric disorders (Baetz et al. 2004, 2006).[8]

[8] Pargament (1997) suggests a 'stress mobilization theory' as a way to account for the seeming negative outcome associated with religious coping. Pargament suggests that the negative outcome is due to the cross-sectional nature of such studies in which individuals turn to religion in the midst of adversity as a means of coping. This creates an apparent positive correlation between religion and distress. If these individuals were studied in a longitudinal manner, he suggests, religiosity would be found to correlate with reduced distress. Several studies seem to confirm this theory. Cf. (Hebert, Dang, and Schulz 2007; Koenig 2007; Pargament et al. 1994).

As with the positive correlation of religion and spirituality, these factors affect various groups differently (Norton et al. 2008). Thus, what may create a positive outcome for one group may produce the opposite effect in another. This type of differentiation is evident relating to gender differences in more than one study (Abdel-Khalek 2014; Cokley et al. 2013; Ganga and Kutty 2013; Kim 2008). Hence, one must take into account the negative impact that some aspects of religion may have on specific segments of the population, such as those of different races or cultural backgrounds (Arnette et al. 2007; Cokley et al. 2012; Haidt, Koller, and Dias 1993; Hickman et al. 2013; Levin, Markides, and Ray 1996; E. G. Levine et al. 2009; Lun and Bond 2013),[9] or sexual orientation (Harari, Glenwick, and Cecero 2014; Longo, Walls, and Wisneski 2013).

One scholar argued, however, that many of the negative correlations between religion, spirituality, and health are a result of distortions of these concepts rather than a reflection of their true nature (Levin 2009, 2010). While this may be true in many circumstances, there could also be situations where a negative correlation is an accurate reflection of a core religious belief.

Conclusions on Correlations

While a majority of studies on the relationship between R/S and health indicate a positive correlation, these findings are not universal.[10] Perhaps R/S, broadly defined, may be expressed either positively and negatively. What is needed, then, is a more nuanced understanding of R/S that enables detailed analysis and research.

In fact, some researchers are beginning to do this type of nuanced work. One group of researchers found that spiritual struggle (anger at God) led to negative outcomes while positive religious coping led to positive outcomes (Trevino et al. 2010). Other scholars focus upon factors involved in negative spiritual coping (Ano and Pargament 2013).

[9] See, for instance, studies relating to R/S and health in populations of African Americans (Arnette et al. 2007; Boyd-Franklin 2010; Holt et al. 2012; Lewis 2008) and Hispanics (Guinn and Vincent 2002; Hunter-Hernández, Costas-Muñíz, and Gany 2015).
[10] In fact, some studies received mixed results. Cf. (Baetz et al. 2006; Harris et al. 2008; Trevino et al. 2010).

This differentiation between aspects of R/S is important for a clear understanding of the relationship between these constructs and health outcomes.

Something more needs to be said regarding the differences between religion and spirituality, both as they are construed in popular culture and in current research, so that the relationship between these constructs and health can be more clearly delineated. While it is not the purpose of this study to fully address this issue, conceptual clarity necessitates that religion and spirituality should be differentiated as both theoretically and practically distinct.

Differences Between Religion and Spirituality

Because certain aspects of R/S may promote well-being while others may detract from it (Tovar-Murray 2011), we must carefully delineate between these two concepts and constructs associated with them. Religion and spirituality are distinct and should ultimately be understood as an independent, though related, concepts. There are many reasons for understanding these as separate concepts, but one of the primary reasons is that many individuals in Western society today would conceive of religion and spirituality very differently.

Additionally, this distinction is important for resilience research more specifically because some aspects of spirituality may correlate with resilience whereas aspects of religion may not, or vice versa (Casey 2013:31). Both scholarly and colloquial usage of these terms are important for gaining a more complete understanding of their similarities and differences and therefore both must be addressed.

Scholarly Usage

Though scholars have traditionally understood religion and spirituality as being interconnected, this understanding does not necessarily still hold true (Casey 2013:23). Importantly, the understanding of spirituality as separate from religion is quite a new phenomenon (Hill et al. 2000:57).

A significant increase in scholarly interest in 'religion' and 'spirituality' in recent years has not led to a scholarly consensus on definitions for these terms, however (Piedmont et al. 2009). This lack of agreement has led to less precise research, an inability for research on these subjects to be integrated into larger theoretical models within the social sciences, and, at times, contradictory research results (Agorastos et al. 2014; Piedmont et al. 2009).

Because "spirituality and religion are complex phenomena, multidimensional in nature…any single definition is likely to reflect a limited perspective or interest" (Hill et al. 2000). With this in mind, some research has achieved promising results through using multivariate analysis to assess the relationship between religion, spirituality, and other concepts within the field of psychology (Henningsgaard and Arnau 2008).

Religion can be described as the "search for answers to existential questions about life, death, and other ultimate concerns" (Kirkpatrick 1999:941), or, alternatively, as "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (Pargament 1997:32). Pargament et al. argue that religion may be unique in human experience:

> Many social scientists have tried to explain religion by reducing it to presumably more basic psychological, social, or physiological processes…there is something unique about religion in and of itself…religion may be: (a) a unique form of motivation; (b) a unique source of significance; (c) a unique contributor to mortality and health; (d) a unique form of coping; and (e) a unique source of distress (2005:680).

Other scholars have not seen the same 'uniqueness' with regards to spirituality. For example, Craig Ellison (1983) suggests that spirituality is both universal and uniquely expressed in individuals where it can provide purpose and meaning. Thus, for Ellison, spirituality is an aspect of common human existence in a way that religion is not. Chris Cook defines spirituality with slightly different emphases:

> Spirituality is a distinctive, potentially creative and universal dimension of human experience arising both within the inner subjective awareness of individuals and within communities, social groups and traditions. It may be experienced as relationship with that which is intimately 'inner', immanent and personal, within the self and others, and/or as relationship with that which is wholly 'other', transcendent and beyond the self. It is experienced as being of fundamental or ultimate importance and is thus concerned with matters of meaning and purpose in life, truth and values (2004:548–49).

Note a common suggestion of spirituality as inherent to all human beings and thereby differentiated from religiosity (Del Rio and White 2012; Tanyi 2002). One scholar has even suggested that 'Spiritual Transcendence' be considered the sixth major factor of personality (Piedmont 1999). Because of this, some scholars suggest that spirituality is better suited to be integrated into scientific studies due to the possibility of removing references to a specific deity and religious practices—what they term "spiritual atheism" (Ecklund and Long 2011). Others believe that spirituality is a useful concept for scientific inquiry, but do not so fully remove it from its connection with religion (King and Koenig 2009).

This 'secularized' understanding of spirituality broadens the concept from its traditional moorings within faith communities but also adds a level of vagueness to the construct (Koenig 2008a). More and more, spirituality is viewed as being synonymous with human well-being, making it difficult for researchers to differentiate the concepts (Casey 2013:24). Thus, for some, spirituality can be separated from belief in a deity or traditional religious observance or practice, with some even suggesting 'humanistic spirituality' (Elkins et al. 1988) as a means of understanding the place of spirituality in all people, whether religious or not (de Jager Meezenbroek et al. 2012).

On the other hand, others highlight that spirituality, at its core, includes the transcendent (Cook 2013b:142) or the sacred (Pargament 1999; Pargament and Mahoney 2005) as a reaffirmation that spirituality includes something 'Other' or 'holy' even if separated from a religious tradition.[11]

These understandings will be important for our dialogue concerning religion, spirituality, and resilience. While it is clear that religion and spirituality are separate concepts, identifying their substance and relation to human practice has proven more difficult. Underwood and Teresi suggest that a spiritual person is characterized by "awe, joy that lifts one out of the mundane, and a sense of deep inner peace" (2002:22–23). These attributes, while perhaps having religious overtones, have no specific relation to

[11] For further discussion of the need for distinctive faith rather than generalized 'spirituality,' see (Pattison 2007:132).

religion. Yet, Underwood and Teresi concede that "the spiritual, for the ordinary person, is most often and most easily described in language that has religious connotations" (2002:22–23).

Piedmont et al. suggest an alternative means of differentiating religiosity and spirituality:

> Religiosity is concerned with how one's experience of a transcendent being is shaped by, and expressed through, a community or social organization. Spirituality, on the other hand, is most concerned with one's personal relationships to larger, transcendent realities, such as God or the universe (2009:163).

This differentiation between the individual and the communal is increasingly common. Similarly, Streib and Hood (2011) suggest that 'spirituality' should be understood as privatized religion rather than a distinct construct. While such a division between the social and the personal may be helpful for distinguishing between these concepts, it does not fully capture all of their differences.

At a fundamental level, the question of the relationship between religion and spirituality has theological overtones, but there are also very practical implications for how religion and spirituality are defined and measured in research. This long-standing debate will not be able to be resolved here, but some additional clarity concerning the relationship between religion, spirituality, health, and resilience will be very beneficial to this study.[12]

The Relationship between Religion and Spirituality

Fraser Watts (2014) argues that spiritual practices may be related to religion or religious traditions in three ways: 1) spiritual practices may be situated within tradition, 2) spiritual practices may be contrasted with religion, or 3) the religious origin of the spiritual practice can be ignored.

[12] The relationship between religion and spirituality has been dealt with more fully by a number of scholars. Cf. (Hill et al. 2000; Hill and Pargament 2003; Pargament and Mahoney 2005; Sheldrake 2013; Zinnbauer et al. 1997).

In particular, within the third category of potential relations, Watts notes that the practice of mindfulness, drawn from distinctly Buddhist religious observance, has become an accepted clinical therapy by secular practitioners.

But we must ask whether this distinction between spirituality and religion is a Western dichotomy, and whether other cultures have a similar differentiation (Watts 2014). We should consider that this distinction is largely limited to a Western context, giving rise to the possibility of different cultural understandings of the relationship between religion and spirituality.[13] Some scholars have noted, quite correctly, that most of the research on the relationship between R/S and health was in the context of North America (Snider and McPhedran 2014). More attention needs to be paid to the limitations of such research.

Colloquial Usage

A common refrain among many today, but especially those of a younger generation, is "I am spiritual but not religious" (Casey 2013; King et al. 2006). Streib and Hood (2011) argue that the trend toward individuals self-identifying as "spiritual but not religious" is significant and should be taken seriously. In this broad understanding, spirituality and religion are seen as different, though perhaps related. There is a sense that religion is somehow negative, exclusive, and old-fashioned while spirituality is positive, inclusive, and tolerant. While these ideas may not be said outright, they are implicit in the understanding of many in Western culture today.

The degree to which these distinctions are present in societies outside of the West is not as clear. Additional degrees of complexity may be added to our understanding of these constructs when other cultural and religious contexts are considered.

Non-Judeo-Christian Religions and Resilience

A majority of the research on the intersection of R/S and health was done in the Judeo-Christian context of the West (Snider and McPhedran 2014), but a growing body of research investigates this relationship in other religious and cultural contexts. Because

[13] Cf. (Ganga and Kutty 2013).

individuals from various religions view what constitutes 'religion' and 'spirituality' differently, a Western, Judeo-Christian understanding of these concepts may not be accurate in other contexts (Ganga and Kutty 2013). Despite such differences, a World Health Organization study indicated that R/S was significantly positively correlated with quality of life for individuals across 18 countries (WHOQOL SRPB Group 2006).

Research also suggests that individuals of different faiths respond dissimilarly in the aftermath of trauma.[14] One study of Chinese adults indicated that Christians found less significance in material things following a trauma, while the same did not hold true for non-Christians (Hui et al. 2014). Another study demonstrated a difference in the way R/S affected mental health outcomes dependent on the religion of the individual (Ganga and Kutty 2013). Conducted in India, this study involved individuals subscribing to the Christian, Hindu, and Muslim faiths and found significant differences between genders as well as religions in mental health outcomes. Using multivariate analysis, the research concluded that "religious differences are mostly explained by the behavioural restrictions and opportunities for socialisation that religion does or does not provide" (Ganga and Kutty 2013:435). This study found a positive correlation between R/S and mental health for individuals of the Christian and Hindu faiths, but a negative correlation for individuals of the Muslim faith.

Many other studies within the context of the Muslim faith, however, indicate a positive relationship between R/S and health including studies comparing the impact of religion within Christian and Muslim contexts (Büssing, Abu-Hassan, et al. 2007; Miner et al. 2014).[15]

Additionally, a number of studies in the context of Eastern religions[16] suggest that one of most significant contributions that the study of Eastern religions has made to

[14] Exceptions to this generalization could be due to confounding factors, such as a small sample population or the way in which religion was measured. Cf. (Fernando and Ferrari 2011).
[15] E.g. (Abdel-Khalek 2011; Aghababaei 2014; Aghababaei and Tabik 2013; Francis et al. 2015; Musa 2015; Nadi and Ghahremani 2014; Nguyen et al. 2013).
[16] E.g. (Davidson, Connor, and Lee 2005; Eisendrath 1997; Hui et al. 2014; Wiist et al. 2010).

psychology is through the practice of mindfulness.[17] Though not all practitioners may know it, mindfulness and meditation have their roots in Buddhism. Many secular psychologists and psychiatrists accept the practice of mindfulness as a valid therapy, in part because research shows the benefits of mindfulness for reducing stress and creating positive mental health outcomes (Ando et al. 2009; Chambers, Gullone, and Allen 2009; Ekman et al. 2005; Follette, Palm, and Pearson 2006; Pace et al. 2009; Shapiro et al. 2008; Travis et al. 2009; Wachholtz and Pargament 2005, 2008). Significantly, the central understandings of basic religious constructs, such as happiness, are different in Christianity and Buddhism, thereby having differing effects upon health (Tsai, Miao, and Seppala 2007).

Yet not all individuals consider themselves religious, or even spiritual. What impact, if any, does this belief have on health outcomes? Some scholars have begun to research the role of R/S and health for secularists (Hwang, Hammer, and Cragun 2011) which will be a very necessary effort for understanding how R/S and health are related.

More research will need to assess whether Western Judeo-Christian conceptions of R/S are transferable to other contexts. Initial evidence suggests that these concepts will have to be somewhat modified for relevance in other religious and cultural contexts. Differing cultural variables may also have a significant impact on the effect of R/S on resilience in each context.

Now that a distinction has been made between religion and spirituality, let us turn to current research regarding more specific correlations between R/S and resilience. We can now say that specific aspects of religion and/or spirituality may promote or detract from resilience independent of one another. It is therefore necessary to outline more clearly how R/S is related to health and resilience.

[17] E.g. (Bingaman 2011; Blanton 2011; Brefczynski-Lewis et al. 2007; Brewer 2014; Farb et al. 2007, 2010; Johnson et al. 2014; Lutz et al. 2014).

Religion, Health, and Resilience

Studies show that specifically religious factors correlate to health and resilience (Contrada et al. 2004; Kendler et al. 2003; King et al. 2013; Koenig 2007). Koenig notes, "Studies tell us that religious beliefs and practices are indeed associated with better coping, less depression, and greater well-being, especially in those with significant health problems" (2013:98).[18] Indeed, treatment protocols that support the religious beliefs of patients can increase the speed with which patients recover from depression and anxiety (Azhar, Varma, and Dharap 1994; Koenig 2013; Propst et al. 1992; Razali et al. 1998).

Religion can be an important factor in supporting health and resilience, therefore, and is deserving continued careful study. In fact,

> [f]or many patients…nothing is more important in helping them cope than their religious beliefs. These patients put great value and trust in their beliefs because those beliefs have helped them get through difficult situations in the past (Koenig 2013:101).

This is because religion may be understood to most specifically correlate with positive outcomes related to subjective well-being, depression and suicide, physical illness, divorce and marital satisfaction, substance use and abuse (drugs, alcohol, and smoking), and mortality (Adofoli and Ullman 2014; Lawler-Row and Elliott 2009; Matthews et al. 1998; Thoresen 1999).

Religiosity can act as a protective factor, aiding maltreated children in the ability to cope with stress (Kim 2008). The stress-buffering effects of religion can hold true for macro level societal stressors as well as for micro level stressors (Lechner et al. 2013). Conversely, a self-reported decrease in religious beliefs following a traumatic event is associated with increased psychopathology (Seirmarco et al. 2012). Thus, research indicates that religion can aid individuals in recovering from trauma. In other words, religion may be closely associated with resilience.

[18] Cf. (Koenig, George, and Peterson 1998).

Religion and Resilience

Limited research has specifically assessed the relationship between religion and resilience. As has been noted, however, many of the studies correlating R/S with health are applicable to the study of resilience.

In their chapter, 'Anchored by Faith: Religion as a Resilience Factor,' Pargament and Cummings (2010) suggest that "religion has unique effects on resilience." They argue that individuals seek four distinct benefits in religion: meaning, emotional comfort, social connectedness, and the sacred (Pargament and Cummings 2010:195). They are distinctly against the ideas, promoted by Freud and Skinner, that religion is merely a fictional psychological means of creating safety that inhibits competence and maturity. Instead, they see religion as supporting self-efficacy and cognitive reframing. Additionally, Pargament and Cummings see each of the four benefits of religion as being a possible mechanism of how resilience is supported by religion: through meaning-making, emotional stability, relational connectedness, and spiritual support and the resilience of religion itself.[19] They also see religion as a possible agent of transformation and Post Traumatic Growth (PTG).

Similarly, Faigin and Pargament (2010) acknowledge that R/S can have both positive and negative impacts on an individual's ability to be resilient. These authors especially highlight the importance of religion for elderly individuals as a means of dealing with adversity.

While many aspects of religion may affect health and resilience, some scholars have hypothesized that benefits from religiosity are largely due to the benefits of self-regulation (Aldwin et al. 2014; McCullough and Willoughby 2009). This type of self-regulation is one aspect of what has been called 'religious coping.'

[19] These are themes to which I will return at a later point.

Religious Coping[20]

Koenig defines religious coping as "the use of religious beliefs or practices to reduce the emotional distress caused by loss or change" (2013:30).[21] Religious coping can be categorized either as positive or negative. Positive religious coping involves using religion as a resource to overcome adversity and is characterized by connectedness to the Divine, meaning-making, sense of control, and comfort from relation to the Divine and others (Pargament, Feuille, and Burdzy 2011; Pargament, Koenig, and Perez 2000).

> Religious traditions offer frameworks of meaning built on symbols, rituals, and liturgies for making sense of the painful, threatening, and ultimate experiences of illness and dying. There is evidence that these frameworks are sought out, that they may affect behavior in critical decisions, and that they may provide benefits in the form of quality of life and emotional adjustment (Idler et al. 2009:145).

Alternatively, negative religious coping is characterized by using religious resources in an unhealthy manner, such as anger at God or using religious activities to distract from difficulties (King et al. 2013).[22] Negative religious coping has also been termed 'spiritual struggle' (McConnell et al. 2006).

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[20] Much research assesses various aspects of religious coping. Cf. (Ai et al. 2007; Ano and Vasconcelles 2005; Brewster 2014; Gerber, Boals, and Schuettler 2011; Kelley and Chan 2012; Knabb and Grigorian-Routon 2014; Koenig et al. 1992; Krause et al. 2001; Pargament et al. 1998; Pargament, Koenig, and Perez 2000; Wiech et al. 2008). In a provocative article, Devin Stahl (2013) proposes that modern assessments of religious coping do not measure true spiritual health, suggesting that individuals such as Martin Luther and Julian of Norwich would have failed such assessments. We would do well to keep his critiques in mind.

[21] Koenig gives examples of religious coping: "Patients may ask God to heal their health problems or to give them the strength to cope with them. They may 'turn over' their problems to God, trusting God to handle them so that they don't have to ruminate or worry about those problems. They may believe that God has a purpose in allowing them to experience pain or suffering, which gives their suffering meaning and makes it more bearable. A host of religious beliefs and behaviors like these may be mobilized to reduce anxiety, increase hope, or convey a sense of control. With regard to religious practices that facilitate coping, patients will pray, meditate, read religious scriptures, worship at religious services, go on a pilgrimage, perform religious rituals (light a candle, receive the sacraments, or be anointed with oil, for example), or rely on support from clergy or members of their church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Religious beliefs and practices are often used in these ways to *regulate emotion* during times of illness, change, and circumstances that are out of their personal control" (2013:30–31). Emphasis throughout is original unless otherwise noted.

[22] Pargament has dealt with the subject of religious coping at length (Pargament 1997; Pargament et al. 1998; Pargament, Feuille, and Burdzy 2011; Pargament et al. 2000). He and colleagues note a more extensive list of positive and negative religious coping

Positive religious coping is associated with psychological health (Pargament 2004) and decreased depression (Ahrens et al. 2010). Some studies indicate that positive religious coping after a trauma, such as openness to change and taking time for reflection, is correlated with Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) (Calhoun et al. 2000; Chan and Rhodes 2013; Gerber, Boals, and Schuettler 2011; Pargament et al. 1998) while negative religious coping is indicative of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Gerber et al. 2011; Harris et al. 2008).[23] Additionally, studies show that R/S may contribute significantly toward helping individuals experience PTG in the wake of trauma (Askay and Magyar-Russell 2009; Currier et al. 2013; Thombre, Sherman, and Simonton 2010).

If both types of coping are fundamentally 'religious,' what distinguishes the two? Is it simply a matter of outcome, or are the methods of coping fundamentally different? These questions are at the heart of understanding religious coping and its relation to health.

To gain a clearer understanding, we turn to additional research studies. One study researched how clergy who led multiple rural parishes in the U.K. used religious coping methods. This study found that the methods most frequently used were

> 'benevolent religious reappraisal' (to find 'meaning'), 'collaborative religious coping' and 'active religious surrender' (to gain 'control'), 'religious purification/forgiveness', 'spiritual connection' and 'marking religious boundaries' (to gain comfort and closeness to God) and 'seeking support from clergy and church members' and 'religious helping' (to gain 'intimacy with others and closeness to God') (Brewster 2014).

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methods: "The positive pattern consisted of religious forgiveness, seeking spiritual support, collaborative religious coping, spiritual connection, religious purification, and benevolent religious reappraisal. The negative pattern was defined by spiritual discontent, punishing God reappraisals, interpersonal religious discontent, demonic reappraisal, and reappraisal of God's powers" (Pargament et al. 1998). They also distinguish between four styles of religious coping: self-directing, deferential, pleading, and collaborative (Pargament et al. 1999).

[23] This conclusion is not universal, however. One study of deployed US soldiers found that change in religiosity prior to or after combat did not correlate with PTG (Webb 2013). Many explanations for this are possible, including that these soldiers did not experience significant combat trauma or that already religious soldiers were able to cope and resolve trauma more effectively through religious means.

These methods could all be termed 'positive' religious coping methods since they move the individual closer to personal, spiritual, and social health. Thus, a positive religious coping method could be deemed so both due to a healthy means and a positive outcome.

Alternatively, negative religious coping methods "can impede the coping process" and, while remaining inherently religious, result in a negative outcome (Brewster 2014; Pargament 1997).[24] Similar to positive religious coping, negative religious coping methods are negative both due to being a negative means and having a negative outcome. While being termed 'religious,' these coping methods could be a true reflection of core religious beliefs or, alternatively, a distortion of those beliefs.

A number of studies show that R/S coping is different than 'secular' coping and achieves different results (Burker et al. 2005; Krause 2006; Pargament et al. 1999). Following their longitudinal study of religious coping in individuals receiving kidney transplant surgery, Tix and Frazier remark that "the results of research suggest that religious coping adds a unique component to the prediction of adjustment to stressful life events that cannot be accounted for by other established predictors" (1998:420). Significantly, this study found religious coping to be predictive of future health, not only descriptive of current disposition.

A number of scholars believe that the positive correlations between religious commitment and subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and well-being cannot simply be reduced to a combination of non-religious factors such as social support (Aghababaei 2014; Ellison 1991; Ellison, Gay, and Glass 1989). Pargament et al. (1999) argue that religious coping is fundamentally different than non-religious coping. Many scholars do not support this claim, but it warrants further discussion. More specifically, what aspects of religiosity affect health and resilience, and can they be understood apart from reference to religion?

[24] As an example of negative religious coping, Loewenthal suggests that religion can have negative effects on individuals through "self-righteousness, self-importance, prejudice, authoritarianism and cruelty," as well as through "guilt, scrupulousness and shame" (Loewenthal 1995:138).

Aspects of Religiosity

Much research has centered on certain religiously-oriented factors—some externally-observable actions, other internal and self-reported—and their relationship to health outcomes. Whether assessed externally or internally, religion may work both as an environmental influence upon an individual and as a factor in shaping human behavior that influences the environment.

Religiosity, understood as an environmental influence, can have a substantial influence, even impacting down to the level of genetic expression (Bell 2011:179). Alternatively, personal religious devotion may act as a positive familial environmental factor that enables individuals to cope better with stress (Kendler, Gardner, and Prescott 1997).

Religion is a multi-faceted concept with diverse components, a complexity that makes attempts to measure the effects of religiosity on health more difficult[25] and necessitates a nuanced understanding of the concept on the part of researchers.[26] In order to measure the effects of religiosity, researchers largely have focused on external observable behaviors. In particular, researchers found that certain aspects of religiosity act as protective factors against pathology. For instance, church attendance can be protective against psychiatric disorders (Baetz et al. 2004, 2006; Ellison et al. 2001; Levin et al. 1996; Merrill and Salazar 2002; Norton et al. 2008) and be associated with lower incidence of substance use and sexual behavior among young people (Kirk and Lewis 2013).

Prayer, the subject of many studies, is associated with positive religious coping (Grossoehme et al. 2010, 2011; Koenig and McConnell 2001; E. G. Levine et al. 2009; ap Siôn and Nash 2013) as well as physical and mental health (Koenig and McConnell 2001; Lawler-Row and Elliott 2009). Interestingly, one study found that an individual's view of the God to whom s/he prayed, rather than frequency of prayer, was the most significant factor in correlating the health outcome (Bradshaw, Ellison, and Flannelly 2008). Positive health outcomes were associated with views of God as loving and

[25] Cf. (Lechner et al. 2013).
[26] Cf. (Levin 2012, 2013) in which Levin researches the effects of religion on health in Jewish populations.

personal while negative health outcomes were associated with views of God as distant and uninterested.[27]

Researchers have also investigated internal factors associated with religious devotion.[28] For instance, religion is closely associated with a sense of purpose (Francis 2013; Sillick and Cathcart 2014; Van Dyke and Elias 2007), wherein religious beliefs provide a way of interpreting reality (Koenig 2002) as a means of making the world intelligible—a coping method used by African slaves in America (Tellis-Nayak 1982). Additionally, 'surrender to God' as a means of religious coping can reduce stress (Clements and Ermakova 2012).

Some scholars make a further distinction between types of religiosity that may be important for understanding the relationship between religion, health, and resilience. This distinction is between 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' religiosity.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiosity

As an additional means of differentiating between types of religious behavior and motivation, Gordon Allport made an important distinction between what he termed 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' religious orientation (Allport 1950; Allport and Ross 1967; Genia and Shaw 1991; Hunt and King 1971). According to Allport and Ross, an extrinsically motivated person "uses his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated lives his" (1967:434).[29] Although "individuals who use their religion do so in order to

[27] Not all studies on prayer indicate a positive correlation with mental health, however (Ellison et al. 2001). As the research by Bradshaw et al. (2008) shows, this may be due to differences in individual perceptions of the God to whom prayer is directed.
[28] I will discuss internal R/S factors briefly here, but then will more fully develop these insights later in this chapter.
[29] Social scientists have tended to be most interested in characteristics associated with extrinsic religiosity (worship service attendance, prayer) without similar regard for the phenomenological experience of religious individuals themselves, many of whom place priority upon the substantive, rather than functional, nature of their religious devotion. An emphasis solely on descriptive functional characteristics of religion is shortsighted. The distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity can be significant as a critique of a simplistic claim to an association between religion and health. The fact of attendance at a worship service, for instance, does not take into account the vast array of possible internal dispositions, motivations, and effects upon each individual present at a service. More nuanced assessment of the effect of religion upon health is needed

gain other interests such as security, comfort, sociability, or status" (Pargament et al. 2005), Allport and Ross suggest that "[p]ersons with [an intrinsic] orientation find their master motive in religion. Other needs, strong as they may be, are regarded as of less ultimate significance" (1967:434).[30]

Importantly, researchers have attempted to find ways to measure degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.[31] This has led to the possibility of studying the relationship between religious motivation and various associated factors and outcomes.

As could be anticipated, beyond describing individual motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation is also a differentiator in determining health outcomes (McCullough and Larson 1999). For example, extrinsic religiosity has been correlated with negative outcomes (King et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2003) while intrinsic religiosity, sometimes termed 'personal devotion,' has been associated with low levels of depression (Kendler et al. 1997). Furthermore, Koenig notes that "[s]trong intrinsic religious beliefs and involvement in a faith community predict faster recovery from depression in patients with medical illness" (2013:98).[32] Not all studies show a strong differentiation in outcomes based on motivation, however. For instance, one study indicates that both explicit and implicit expressions of religion are associated with purpose in life and greater well-being (Francis 2013).

Various motivations in religiosity are just one complicating factor that researchers must take into account when studying the relationship between R/S, health, and resilience. A common theme in critiques of research in this field is the difficulty of measuring these constructs.

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than can be given solely by factors associated with extrinsic religiosity. Later in this project, through a more detailed analysis of particular Christian religious practice that utilizes narrative methodology, I will seek to bypass difficulties associated with merely external evaluation of Christian religious devotion.

[30] See (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993) for consideration of additional types of religious internalization.

[31] Cf. (Hoge 1972).

[32] Cf. (Koenig et al. 1998).

Difficulty in Determining Methods of Measuring Religiosity

Some debate has centered around methods for measuring religiosity, including whether the measurement of its effect, for instance upon health, is possible (Baumsteiger and Chenneville 2015; Turner 2015). Initially researchers used observable indicators of religiosity such as worship attendance and prayer to measure religious coping (Idler et al. 2009; Levin 2010; Sherkat and Reed 1992). More recently, however, scholars have proposed that the way in which an individual uses religious means to cope is just as significant as the fact of the observable indicator (Brewster 2014; Pargament et al. 2000). Additionally, scholars note problems for measuring R/S when well-being is included as a part of the measurement tool itself (King et al. 2013; Koenig 2008a). This caution is especially important as the relationship between R/S and life satisfaction may be mediated by self-reported health (Zullig, Ward, and Horn 2006).

Despite religiosity being a multi-faceted and complex concept (Kendler et al. 1997), many studies in the past only used one variable for assessing religion such as religious affiliation (Storch et al. 2004). On the other hand, understandings and measures of spirituality too often have been conflated with similar concepts such as mental well-being. In the future care must be taken to ensure measures are truly related to the concept (Casey 2013:37).

While it may be easier to measure external religious behaviors, it could be more helpful for researchers to gain insight into how R/S affects the internal workings of psychological functioning. As Jeff Levin notes,

> Features and correlates of the trajectory of inner evolvement toward perceived union with the transcendent – a decent functional definition of the spiritual process – seem to tap dimensions of life experience more germane to the struggle to maintain intrapsychic equilibrium than counts of participation in congregational events (2010:106).

Empirically measuring this type of internal disposition is much more difficult, however. Further investigations will need to explore how "attitudes, beliefs, states, or experiences" affect mental health since little is currently understood (Levin 2010). Due to current cultural understandings of religion and spirituality, this research is most likely to take place within the realm of what is termed 'spiritual.' It is to that subject which we will now turn.

Spirituality, Health, and Resilience

Spirituality may be related to health and resilience in ways that are both similar and dissimilar to the way in which religiosity is related to well-being. As has been noted, the broad manner that 'spirituality' is used lends itself to both possibilities and difficulties in research (Swinton 2001a:12–13). Additional difficulties are added by the complex relationship between spirituality and mental health (Miller and Thoresen 2003).

In conjunction with the correlates of religion and resilience, research has identified specific factors linking spirituality, health, and resilience, despite spirituality not historically having received much attention in resilience studies (Hatala 2011:30). Certainly, the concept of spirituality is broader and less well defined than the concept of religion. Still, much can be said about the relationship of spirituality and resilience.

Studies positively correlate spirituality, independent of religiosity, with health. Possible benefits of spirituality include increasing happiness (Faribors, Fatemeh, and Hamidreza 2010) and quality of life (Brady et al. 1999; Riley et al. 1998). Studies also indicate the efficacy of spirituality in reducing and moderating stress (Kim and Seidlitz 2002; Tuck, Alleyne, and Thinganjana 2006). Additionally, a study found that spiritual belief in the help of a higher power led to better mental health outcomes for stroke victims (Johnstone et al. 2008).

Research also suggests that spirituality may aid in the healing process of soldiers who experienced combat trauma (Gubkin 2016; Rinehart 2013) as well as with individuals who experience other types of trauma (Maltby and Hall 2012). One study even highlights that the stress-buffering benefits of spirituality transcend the variance of other factors such as personality and social support (Werdel et al. 2014).

Not all research indicates positive benefits of spirituality for health, however. For instance, personal beliefs associated with spirituality can be both positively and negatively correlated with PTSD independent of treatment (Zimmermann et al. 2014). While this particular study showed mixed results, other studies indicate negative correlations between spirituality and health. King et al. (2013) found that individuals

who have a spiritual understanding of life in the absence of a religious framework are more vulnerable to mental disorders.

Some scholars argue that benefits associated with spirituality are due to emotional regulation (Aldwin et al. 2014; Rosmarin et al. 2013). This is theorized because the spiritual beliefs that support emotion regulation in turn counteract mood and affective disorders (Goldin et al. 2008), enabling emotions to be fully felt and not suppressed (Gross 2002). While this may be one of the ways spirituality affects health, there are certainly many others. Robert Emmons (1999) argues that spiritual beliefs act as "an integrating and stabilizing force that provides a framework for interpreting life's challenges." This suggests that the relationship between spirituality and resilience is important.

Spirituality and Resilience

While many studies assess the relationship between religion and health, fewer specifically address the relationship between religion and resilience. This is not the case for the relationship between spirituality and resilience, however. Perhaps because of the more 'universal' nature of spirituality, a number of studies specifically assess the relationship between spirituality and resilience in addition to studies evaluating the relationship between spirituality and health more generally.

Andrew Hatala (2011) suggests a four-factor model of resilience which would include, uniquely, a spiritual component.[33] The idea that spirituality plays an important role in resilience is supported by a growing body of research (Connor, Davidson, and Lee 2003; Peres et al. 2007; Yeung and Project Air Force (U.S.) 2013). These studies cite self-efficacy, purpose, meaning, and a number of other constructs as vehicles by which spirituality supports resilient outcomes.[34]

[33] He suggests, "…it is therefore argued that there are four factors leading to resilience: (a) physical and biological strengths; (b) psychological resourcefulness; (c) interpersonal or emotional skills; and (d) spiritual capabilities. Following a transactional, organizational analytic perspective, resilience becomes the dynamic interaction between these four interrelated factors" (Hatala 2011:34).
[34] These constructs will be addressed in more detail shortly.

In addition to quantitative studies, qualitative studies have assessed the role of spirituality in resilient adaptation among vulnerable populations such as the disabled and elderly women (Clarke and Cardman 2002). The findings of these qualitative studies confirm the results of quantitative studies and provide further insight into the relationship between spirituality and resilience.

One qualitative study on the relationship between spirituality and resilience showed a strong positive correlation between the two. More specifically,

> Three dimensions of spirituality emerged: (a) a transcendental perspective expressed, as a relationship with God or a higher power; (b) sense of meaning and (c) connection with the inner self. These dimensions fostered resilience by providing: (a) a sense of protection, comfort and security, (b) a sense of meaning, coherence and optimism and (c) the opportunity for increased self-awareness and self-efficacy (Raftopoulos and Bates 2011).

This study highlights some important aspects of spirituality as well as possible mechanisms of action for spirituality's influence upon health. Because of the significance of spirituality in fostering resilient adaptation, some researchers suggest a concept of 'spiritual resilience' which is formed through the experience of enduring hardship (Clarke and Cardman 2002; Manning 2014; Yeung and Project Air Force (U.S.) 2013).[35] Based upon her study of elderly women, Lydia Manning suggests that "spiritual resilience for these women is a process where the mechanisms of divine support, purpose, and gratitude, work together to create experiences of enduring hardships over the life course" (2014:360).

Significant for the study of resilience, scholars argue that spirituality provides a unique perspective for understanding suffering and growth (Werdel et al. 2014). It is all the more important, therefore, to clarify the nature of spirituality and how it can help individuals cope with adversity.

Spiritual Coping

Similar to religious coping, some scholars suggest the concept of spiritual coping as a means of understanding responses to trauma. As with religious coping, spiritual coping

[35] Titus sees special promise for this way of understanding resilience. Cf. (Titus 2006:20–28).

may be either positive or negative with corresponding positive or negative outcomes (Gall 2006). Research indicates that positive spiritual coping can benefit patients with conditions as diverse as chronic pain (Büssing et al. 2009; Wachholtz et al. 2007) and cancer (Holt et al. 2012) through, among other things, connection with others and God.

Spiritual coping is just one means of dealing with adversity, among many others (Baldacchino et al. 2012; Kuo, Arnold, and Rodriguez-Rubio 2014). Because of the significance of the construct for resilience, researchers have sought to identify the most significant aspects of spirituality for the promotion of health and positive resilience outcomes. It is to these constructs that we now turn.

Aspects of Spirituality

Akin to the study of religiosity, scholars developed instruments to measure spirituality and its relationship to health. There are more than fifteen such assessments used to measure spirituality (Yeung and Project Air Force (U.S.) 2013).[36] Unlike religiosity, many aspects of spirituality are more difficult to measure externally. Therefore, researchers identified certain attributes associated with spirituality as a means of measuring this construct.[37]

While no consensus exists regarding the totality of factors associated with spirituality, there are a number of commonalities among scholarly accounts.[38] This lack of clarity is consistent with the diversity of scholarly opinion about the definition of spirituality as well as the significant number of unique assessments for measuring the construct of spirituality.

Scholars have identified the following concepts as being associated with spirituality, even utilizing them to measure the effect of spirituality on health and resilience. Not all

[36] Cf. (Borneman, Ferrell, and Puchalski 2010; Pargament et al. 2011; Underwood and Teresi 2002).
[37] Some factors associated with spirituality may also be related to religiosity in certain contexts.
[38] While these constructs have been listed as aspects of spirituality, many of them could just as easily have been regarded as religious constructs. For ease of categorization, primarily external religious behaviors have been listed as 'religious' while more personal, internal constructs have been categorized as 'spiritual.' The concepts, however, are not this easily distinguished in practice.

scholars would agree that each of these constructs is associated with spirituality and health, but a representative sample of research correlating the two has been included. The significance of many of these constructs will be more fully developed in following chapters.

Internally-Focused Spirituality Constructs

Research shows that a sense of purpose can play a significant role in positive health outcomes (Aghababaei and Błachnio 2014; Emmons 1999; Francis 2013; Schaefer et al. 2013; Schnitker and Emmons 2013; Sillick and Cathcart 2014; Smith et al. 2009; Van Dyke and Elias 2007). While not all discussion of 'purpose' contends with meanings of ultimate (or 'spiritual') purpose, scholars often see purpose and spirituality as related, with one scholar suggesting the concept of ultimacy as a means of differentiating ultimate purpose from more ordinary conceptions of purpose (Emmons 1999).

Also associated with the construct of spirituality, research indicates that meaning and meaning-making increase positive health outcomes (Altmaier and Prieto 2012; Ardelt, Ai, and Eichenberger 2008; Büssing, Ostermann, and Matthiessen 2005; Kelley and Chan 2012; Murphy, Johnson, and Lohan 2003; Park 2005; Park and Folkman 1997; Silberman 2005; Wexler, DiFluvio, and Burke 2009).[39] Ann Masten suggests that "meaning-making systems of belief, and organizations and cultural practices that nurture these systems, such as schools and religions" may act as protective factors for increasing positive resilience outcomes (2013:579). Additionally, research has shown a strong link between religiosity and meaning (Chamberlain and Zika 1988), a part of which may be the work of theological and philosophical understandings of suffering and evil (often called theodicies). Much could be said regarding this subject,[40] but it falls largely outside of the scope of the current project.

Some research suggests that cognitive flexibility is linked meaning-making.[41] Cognitive flexibility allows an individual to reframe his or her circumstances and emotional

[39] Purpose may also be understood to play a significant part in the meaning-making process (Francis 2013:909).
[40] For example, one researcher focused on understanding human meaningfulness in the context of nursing through the lens of Victor Frankl and Paul Tillich (Clarke 2006).
[41] E.g. (Calhoun et al. 2000).

reactions in a way that makes sense of the facts in a new way (Gross 1998). In a Christian context, this could mean 'reframing' the apparent paradox of a good God and the experience of suffering (McCann and Webb 2012; Webb et al. 2011). There is some indication that religious and spiritual coping also can take place at a community level, especially with regards to the creation of meaning through developing a community narrative (Tuval-Mashiach and Dekel 2014).

As a part of the meaning-making process, individuals may create a narrative to make sense of events, but even this narrative is substantially influenced by the belief systems that are a part of interpretation of reality. Froma Walsh argues that belief systems are the "heart and soul of resilience." She writes: "We cope with crisis and adversity by making meaning of our experience: linking it to our social world, to our cultural and spiritual beliefs, to our multigenerational past, and to our hopes and dreams for the future" (2006:49). An individual's beliefs about the world have a substantial impact on perception of the world that are significant for both the ability to be resilient and health (Tracey 2010; Wiech et al. 2008). This is evident in the power of belief to sustain individuals through difficulty and create positive health outcomes (Koenig and McConnell 2001).[42]

In this regard, hope is closely linked to belief and meaning (Ai et al. 2005). Hope concerns optimistic expectation about the future and is correlated with positive health outcomes, even among individuals with life-threatening disease (Siril et al. 2014). Hope, as an expression of belief, is especially significant in its relation to expectation. Expectation and belief can be significant for health outcomes even in non-religious contexts (Bingel et al. 2011; Goossens et al. 2005; Ploghaus et al. 1999). Additionally, hope is closely related to the constructs of purpose (Eggerman and Panter-Brick 2010; Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012; Scioli et al. 2011), peace (Anandarajah and Hight 2001), and optimism (Koenig 2002; Walsh 2006:26).[43]

[42] Even the positive re-interpretation of experience through humor may enhance resilience (Hatala 2011:37).
[43] The significance of hope for human well-being has been demonstrated across cultures and religions. For example, a cross-sectional study of hospital staff in Iran found linkages between hope, spirituality, and mental health, concluding that "hope for future

Externally-Focused Spirituality Constructs

In addition to many factors associated with spirituality primarily understood as internal dispositions, some constructs of spirituality are particularly directed towards external action while still maintaining significant associations with internal dispositions.

Research suggests the importance of self-efficacy and control for positive health outcomes as opposed to feelings of uncertainty and loss of control associated with negative health outcomes (Benight and Bandura 2004; Benight and Cieslak 2011; Jackson and Bergeman 2011; Kay et al. 2009; Mabe and Josephson 2004; McNulty, Livneh, and Wilson 2004; Ryan and Francis 2012; Watterson and Giesler 2012). Significantly, spirituality can provide a means of control, both through direct and indirect means, thereby increasing feelings of self-efficacy. Pargament et al. link religious coping methods with the construct of control. They note four types of coping methods: "sharing control with God (collaborative), relinquishing control to God (deferring), exerting control with God (self-directing), and seeking control from God (pleading)" (Pargament et al. 2005).[44] Furthermore, they found that "[c]ollaborative religious coping methods were especially linked to positive religious outcomes and greater coping efficacy" (Pargament et al. 2005).[45] It may also be helpful to understand other constructs of spirituality, such as gratitude or a sense of belonging, as mediated means of situating control within the context of relationship to God.

Also associated with spirituality, a sense of belonging—in a religious context, within a church, mosque, etc.—can be a predictor for resilience (Nuttman-Shwartz 2012; Pargament 2008; Webb et al. 2011). Some scholars argue that this correlation is due, at least in part, to the social support received within the context of the church (Harris et al. 2014; Koenig 2002; Krause et al. 2001; Paranjape and Kaslow 2010; Pargament et al. 1998). Another scholar suggests that the concept of 'social capital' is a mediator

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is positively and significantly correlated with existential well-being and motivation, devotion, and coping components" (Nadi and Ghahremani 2014:15–16).

[44] Cf. (Pargament et al. 1999). I suggest that these divisions may be analogically applied to spirituality, though the object of spiritual devotion may not be viewed as God.

[45] Cf. (Molock 2006).

between health and religion (Yeary et al. 2012), yet many researchers agree that the association of church attendance with health cannot simply be reduced to a function of social support (Koenig 2007; Lawler-Row and Elliott 2009).

Additionally, studies demonstrate that the constructs of forgiveness (Sandage and Jankowski 2010; Schultz et al. 2014; Schultz, Tallman, and Altmaier 2010) and healing (Danesh 2008) are associated with positive health outcomes. Both actions and emotional states associated with altruism, empathy, and compassion have significant effects upon positive health outcomes (Krause and Hayward 2014; Pace et al. 2009; Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken 1981; Saslow et al. 2013; Schwartz et al. 2003). This increase in health could be considered an outworking of the positive regard shown for others.

A positive sense of self is also closely linked to attachment and feelings of closeness to others and to God. Many studies show the powerful relationship between attachment and well-being (Belavich and Pargament 2002; Bradshaw et al. 2008; Cicirelli 2004; Hernandez, Salerno, and Bottoms 2010; Kelley and Chan 2012; Kirkpatrick 1998, 2012; Kumari and Pirta 2009; Maltby and Hall 2012; Prout, Cecero, and Dragatsi 2012; Schottenbauer et al. 2006; Vaillant 2012). In terms of relationship to the Divine, research indicates that beliefs about God have significant implications in regards to both an individual's attachment and health (Brewster 2014).

Scholars generally have found that morality and religion can act as protective factors in the promotion of resilience (Drescher et al. 2011; Litz et al. 2009; Luthar 2006:779),[46] but Kurt Webb argues that the relationship between religious beliefs and response to difficulty is somewhat ambiguous (2013:6–7). While those who experience trauma seek to find meaning for their traumatic experiences (Fontana and Rosenheck 2004)—many through the framework of religious beliefs in which these experiences can be understood (Overcash et al. 1996)—there is also some indication that, in certain circumstances, traumatic experiences can weaken religious faith (Fontana and

[46] Pargament and Cummings (2010) note the resilience of religion itself. In essence, they are referencing the ability of individuals to hold on to their religious beliefs despite great opposition to these beliefs.

Rosenheck 2004).[47] Potentially significant in this regard, the capacity for endurance is associated with both spirituality and health (Manning 2014; Watson 2008).

We will return to many of the concepts just discussed in future chapters as we seek to understand more clearly how theology and resilience are related. More research is needed to delineate the most significant constructs associated with spirituality as well as the relationship of these constructs to well-being and resilience. Additionally, more factors may be posited to explain the association between spirituality and health, such as humility and authenticity.

Studies Situated within Resilience Research

Some resilience research, while not particularly aimed at answering questions regarding R/S, has nonetheless displayed findings that are significant to researchers of R/S.

A number of the protective factors demonstrated to promote resilience have moral and/or religious grounding. These protective factors include elements with specifically traditional religious moorings, such as support from meaning-making religious beliefs, social support from the religious community, and self-regulation. Additional factors with R/S associations may include purpose, self-efficacy, altruism, strong role models, healthy lifestyle choices, a positive viewpoint, and cognitive reframing of adverse circumstances. One could argue that many of the foundational protective and promotive factors within resilience research have a religious or spiritual basis.[48]

Protective factors related to R/S can be found both in individual and social categories of protective factors. While much of this chapter has focused on the relationship between R/S, health, and resilience on an individual level, these concepts can also be applied in a larger system context, such as families. Scholars have researched the relationship

[47] This finding is not universal (Falsetti, Resick, and Davis 2003), but does indicate that adversity can act as a catalyst spurring an individual either toward growth or away from it.
[48] Cf. (Bonanno and Mancini 2011:136; Masten 2013:579; Southwick and Charney 2012b:80, 2012a).

between families and spirituality (Baumhover and Hughes 2009; Tanyi 2006), children and spirituality (Mabe and Josephson 2004), and families and resilience (Black and Lobo 2008). Froma Walsh suggests that family belief systems are key to family resilience, but highlights especially the ability to find meaning in adversity, maintain a positive outlook, and use spirituality to cope with difficulty (2006:26).

Cautions and Limitations

Significant possibilities exist for better understanding the role that R/S plays in aiding individuals to cope with adversity, however, there are also important cautions and limitations in this relationship.

While there is a substantial amount of research on the relationship between R/S, resilience, and health, less has been done to develop a framework within which to understand these relationships. Jeff Levin argues that more is needed than merely the collection of data:

> Until now, most scientific effort has been devoted to accumulating empirical evidence. Less effort has gone to stepping back and asking, 'But what does this mean?' Data alone do not increase understanding of a topic without theoretical models that help us make sense of said data…Identifying perspectives to explain and interpret findings on religion and mental health is thus important and timely, especially as supportive findings have been misinterpreted – on both sides of the issue (2010:102–3).

Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the social science research related to religion, spirituality, and resilience, the larger issue of a theoretical framework within which to understand this research will be addressed more fully in later chapters. The way in which research is interpreted is especially significant since "[t]he same body of research can lead to quite different conclusions, depending on the qualitative or meta-analytic strategy used to distill findings" (Miller and Thoresen 2003:30).

Similarly, a fundamental theological questioning of the place of dialogue between R/S and health has been asked by Joel Shuman and Keith Meador (2002). Through the lens of Christian theology, these scholars argue that religion should not be used in a utilitarian manner towards the goal of health. Such a use, they argue, distorts the true

nature and goal of Christianity. These warnings are very warranted, and their claims will be addressed more fully later.

Furthermore, some scholars have criticized attempts to correlate religion, spirituality and health at all (Poole et al. 2008; Sloan 2008; Sloan and Bagiella 2002; Sloan, Bagiella, and Powell 1999). These objections center on shortcomings regarding the research methodology used in many of these studies as well as questions concerning whether the concepts of religion and spirituality are merely 'baptizing' extant personality traits (Piedmont et al. 2009:164). One scholar has gone so far as to say that "'religious' phenomena may simply parasitize existing evolved mechanisms or represent by-products of them" (Buss 2002:203).

Levin (2010) agrees that many studies concerning R/S are methodologically sub-par, but he still sees these constructs as having a meaningful place in understanding human motivation and actions beyond what is understood through the constructs of personality.[49] Levin warns that most studies on the relationship between religion and health are not "richly nuanced" but instead rely on cross-sectional samples of convenience, mostly confined to American Christians. Further, for the most part, they measure only the preventative effects of R/S, not the therapeutic. Thus, Levin cautions, we must not extrapolate beyond the bounds of the particular situations the evidence corroborates (2010:106–7).

We would do well to take Levin's concerns seriously. R/S is not a panacea for all human ills, and thus care should be taken to evaluate and apply research wisely. Further research in this field must be methodologically sound as well as contextually aware. Many of these methodological issues revolve around the question of how R/S and health are related. Much research indicates that R/S are positively correlated to health and resilience but the exact nature of this relationship is unclear. Are the concepts merely associated with one another or is there a causal relationship?

[49] Significantly, Levin singles out the research done by Koenig and colleagues as being of excellent quality methodologically.

Association or Causation?

The exact mechanisms of how R/S is related to health, and thereby resilience, is not well known (Levin 2010). Furthermore, "association does not imply causation" (Casey 2013:22). Thus, some question remains as to whether R/S is simply associated with health, or whether it has a causal relationship.[50] These questions, on the basis of research methodology and logical contingency, are valid and deserve to be addressed.

Studies that are cross-sectional in nature cannot speak to the causative or predictive aspects of the relationship between R/S, health, and resilience. This relationship is very complex and cannot always be clearly demarcated. As some researchers have suggested, "[f]or some individuals, religious faith may enhance the ability to cope with negative life events, whereas for others, negative life events may result in greater religious faith" (Agorastos et al. 2014:94).[51] This suggests that, at times, negative health outcomes may be the result of negative R/S coping methods, but, in other situations individuals could use R/S coping mechanisms to overcome adversity successfully. The first situation could be attributed to negative religious coping while the second would be characterized by positive religious coping. Research suggests that if more individuals used positive R/S coping methods to adapt to situations of adversity we could expect more and better resilience outcomes.

Although attempts have been made to explain the relationship between R/S and health (George, Ellison, and Larson 2002), such attempts do not always capture the complexity of the relationship. Patricia Casey (2011) provides a helpful description of four ways that R/S and health may be related:

> While it is recognised that there is an association between mental health and religion, it is unclear if this is a causal one. It may be that those who are mentally well are better able to attend religious services, rather than religious practice itself predisposing to better mental health. A second relevant question is whether this benefit comes simply from the support and friendship that religious attendance is likely to generate…A further possibility is that the benefits may accrue from the lifestyle that those with S/R interests may lead. The benefits of moderation in using substances, the physical benefits of prayer/mediation and the associated limits on risk taking may be the main contributors. Fourthly, the

[50] E.g. (Joiner, Perez, and Walker 2002).
[51] Cf. (Connor, Davidson, and Lee 2003).

> possibility that these benefits are linked to hope, meaning and purpose generated by, in particular, religious activity should also be considered.

A number of Casey's suggestions have already been addressed, but more needs to be said regarding the fourth possibility she lists—that the constructs associated with R/S may be the means of enhancing health.

Mechanisms of Action

While much research indicates that religious behavior can be associated with human well-being, some scholars suggest that constructs related to R/S are the possible mechanisms of imparting health (Casey 2011; Levin 2009). Pargament has explicitly rejected this line of thinking, arguing that "[r]eligion may be a unique aspect of human functioning" and the effects of religion cannot be reduced to "presumably more basic psychological, social, or physical processes" (Pargament et al. 2005:680). Nonetheless, differences do exist between mechanisms of coping in religion and in spirituality (Aldwin et al. 2014).

It is clear that certain psychological, social, and physical processes are associated with R/S. For instance, researchers can now use fMRI technology to understand the brain functions associated with religious belief (Harris et al. 2009; Wiech et al. 2008). Researchers suggest that "religious thinking is more associated with brain regions that govern emotion, self-representation, and cognitive conflict, while thinking about ordinary facts is more reliant upon memory retrieval networks" (Harris et al. 2009).

Belief and expectation may manipulate brain functioning, including physical brain structure (Eippert, Bingel, et al. 2009; Eippert, Finsterbusch, et al. 2009). 'Psyching' yourself up for pain relief, as a type of conditioning and learned expectation, has very real effects (Tracey et al. 2002; Tracey 2010), with negative expectation of treatment effectiveness even overriding the effects of a powerful drug (Bingel et al. 2011). This takes place in the reappraisal/reinterpretation area of the brain, and is not merely a distraction like placebo, which takes place in the brainstem.

The influence of a perceived belief of threat is significant. Anxiety actually increases the experience of pain (Ploghaus et al. 1999), but if an individual believes he can control his

pain, he experiences less pain, indicating a difference in people who have an internal locus of control versus an external locus (Wiech et al. 2006). The example of pain shows that human existence cannot be fully described or explained from a scientific perspective—for instance, the way religious meaning changes and affects biological systems. Changes in a person's value/belief system have physical consequences wherein even some pain can be reframed and reappraised. Thus, some 'mechanisms' of belief perhaps can capture what it looks like to believe, but for many there is maybe something else that is not reducible in religion (Tracey 2015).

Thus, evidence suggests that R/S utilizes neural pathways common to other processes which may themselves be the mechanisms by which R/S exerts influence on health and resilience. But what drives these mechanisms?

Some suggest that religious coping can be understood as an indirect form of control and seeking consolation (Grossoehme et al. 2011; Koenig 2002).[52] Similarly, any of the constructs associated with R/S discussed above could be seen, in a reductionist manner, as a means by which R/S can promote positive health outcomes. While this may be helpful on one level, on another level R/S must be seen as unique constructs, not simply an amalgamation of other factors.

Yet, as Kirkpatrick suggests, 'religion' "refers to such a diverse and multifaceted constellation of beliefs and behaviors that it is highly unlikely to be the product of a unitary adaptation with a single identifiable function" (1999:926). This lends itself to the conclusion that the complexity of the R/S constructs makes it difficult, though not impossible, to conclusively understand the inner workings of the relationship between R/S, health, and resilience.[53]

[52] Religion may affect health through: being a coping behavior, a social force, and a method of behavioral control, as well as through being a prosocial agent (altruism) (Koenig 2008b:54, 65).
[53] As I will further explore, a narrative approach to human being may provide a more comprehensive account of this relationship.

Conclusion

Religion and spirituality can play a significant role in enabling individuals to cope with adversity. Yet, as has been shown, these correlations are, in some cases, positive and, in other cases, negative. Additionally, whether previously acknowledged or not, many central aspects of resilience have religious and spiritual roots.

This does not mean that the nature of the relationship between R/S, health, and resilience is always clear. Gaps in our understanding of this relationship still exist. As Jeff Levin (2010) notes, most studies on R/S and health focus on prevention rather than healing. Additionally, research indicates that, while R/S may increase health and protect against disease, it does not guarantee health. Thus, it must be acknowledged that, in most cases, R/S is not *the* most significant factor in promoting health. Finally, as Levin acknowledges, "epidemiologic or social or behavioral research methods cannot tell us anything about the possibility of a 'supernatural' influence on health or the human body or mind" (2010:108). Other means are necessary to gain such knowledge.

Significant possibilities exist for enhancing well-being and promoting resilience through religion and spirituality. A theological and philosophical framework is needed, however, in which social science research is to be interpreted and rightly appropriated. As I have noted, great care must be taken to ensure that R/S is not used as merely as a means to an end, no matter how beneficial. In this regard, more theological reflection should be undertaken on this very important matter, with efforts in the next chapter seeking to aid in this work.

Now that the groundwork of social science research on resilience has been laid, let us turn to further dialogue with Christian theology on the topic of resilience.

Chapter 3: On the Edge of Mystery—Resilience Reframed

"We spent so much of our spare time worrying that, for a respite, I found my spirit yearning to be in God's presence. Something inside of me—beyond my will, beyond my conscious mind—craved a constant connection…

The longer I prayed, the more I was buoyed by an unwavering sense of assurance. Nothing in our circumstances had changed…Yet a stillness welled up inside of me, a gentle calm that made me feel as if I were a paper flower, a bougainvillea, floating down a meandering stream. Like that paper flower, I was being carried along by a force that was not of my own strength to a destination not of my own choosing. And as I bobbed along on the sparkling water, I remained vibrant and intact—with bright fuchsia petals that sent a message of joy and hope" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:9–10).

In the first two chapters I gave an account of the role that religion and spirituality (R/S) play in enabling individuals to be resilient. Social science research suggests that R/S can have a substantial effect on the ability of individuals to respond resiliently to adversity. This research provides very useful information regarding human adaptation to adversity, but it does not provide the entire picture. Something of a mystery remains in human experience—an enigma surrounding human *being* that escapes the ability of scientific analysis to capture fully. We must give attention, therefore, to the theological and philosophical foundations that lie behind religious and spiritual responses to difficulty.

In this chapter I seek to show that secular materialism's notion of reason as the sole arbiter of truth both is shortsighted and may foster negative resilience outcomes through its limited vision.[1] I will draw upon sources from a diversity of disciplines including the social sciences, philosophy, and theology. Up to this point, I have assessed

[1] We are greatly indebted to the sciences for providing insight into human resilience. This is not, however, the only avenue of insight into resilience. The secular 'narrative' of resilience, itself limited by epistemic assumptions, may take different forms. At a cultural level, it may be posited to contain the belief that life should be without difficulty. This is in conflict both with resilience research and Christian theology. The more fundamental disagreement with theology at the heart of resilience research is not about the means of inculcating resilience (where research and theology agree), but about the *telos* of resilience.

the construct of resilience largely through the use of social scientific research. As Jeff Levin (2010) notes, however, such empirical data is of little use if it is not integrated into a theoretical framework. Providing such a metaphysical grounding is largely beyond the scope of the social sciences but is necessary for any meaningful application of their research findings. What is to be done, then, with research findings on human resilience and the role of religion and spirituality in adapting to adversity? How is this research to be integrated into larger understandings of the world and practically implemented? correspondingly

It is my contention that the discipline of theology can provide a framework within which R/S and its effect upon resilience and human well-being can be understood.[2] In part, this is because a social scientific conception of resilience may limit understanding of individuals' ability to respond resiliently to adversity.[3] Dialogue between theology and the social sciences on this subject will provide additional insight as well as practical application. The results of this dialogue, however, may be surprising for both parties.

Additional questions must be answered, however, in order to enter into this dialogue: Should the resilience concept as understood through the social sciences be accepted

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[2] I understand theology to be the study of the triune God that has continuing practical implications for the community of God (the Church). No monolithic understanding of 'Christian theology' exists, however. Clearly, varying accounts of what constitutes 'Christian theology' may lead to diverse implications for a theological understanding of resilience. While many emphases could be drawn out in assessing human resilience, I have attempted to highlight Christian theological doctrines that would be embraced by all Christians who hold to the canonical Scriptures and historic Christian creeds: principally the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. My perspective as an Anglican minister certainly may be apparent at times, but I have hoped both to maintain the distinctive voice of each theologian with whom I engage and to provide a broadly 'ecumenical' Christian theological assessment of resilience.

[3] This limitation has not as much to do with the methodologies of the social sciences as it does with the assumptions underlying those methodologies. The assumptions underlying much social scientific enquiry, by excepting the possibility of supernatural influence, create a correspondingly incomplete view of the world. As became clear in chapter 2, R/S may exert considerable influence upon resilience outcomes; therefore any 'thick' understanding of such influence must not only take these factors into account, but also give credence to the testimony of many individuals who claim to have been influenced, in various ways, by the supernatural. With this in mind, the methodologies of the social sciences, whether emic or etic, can be compatible with R/S worldviews when naturalist materialistic assumptions are excised.

uncritically and in totality? Can a truly Christian perspective on resilience be compatible with social science? As already indicated, much research suggests that R/S can be beneficial to health and well-being. But are the aims of social science research and the Christian faith the same? Moreover, is it appropriate to use religion as the means to the temporal end of human flourishing? In order to understand these and other significant questions raised by the intersection of theology and social science research on the topic of resilience, we must gain a fuller account of the nature of human existence and its ultimate *telos* (goal).

Why a Social Science Perspective is Incomplete

In *Children of Crisis*, his landmark study of African American children in the American South during the turbulent 1960's, Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles suggests:

> It must be clear by now that the closer we look at human behavior, the more nonpsychiatric influences must be summoned to 'explain' what turns out to be a rather complicated and not always obvious connection between the life of the mind and the life of the world. Those two lives, be it remembered, are but convenient abstractions to aid our thinking about an *intensely shared continuity* that actually exists (1967:364–65).

The social sciences are limited in scope. They are an attempt to investigate the nature of social reality (Bryman 2012:409), and in so doing to understand the world. The social reality studied by social scientists is one part of the '*intensely shared continuity*' described by Coles—but it is only one aspect. As Coles suggests, additional means of enquiry are needed to understand the complex nature of human existence.

In this effort we must note that social scientific enquiry, or any other method of enquiry for that matter, is not value-neutral (Cook 2013a:9). Each is part of a context and has a history. John Milbank goes so far as to argue that supposed "'scientific' social theories are themselves theologies or anti-theologies in disguise" and the assumptions upon which they rest are themselves questionable (1990:3).[4] Though some may claim impartiality for scientific enquiry, it is just as subject to biases as any other

[4] While such an assessment is helpful, in one respect, it may also be too dichotomous in its characterization. See also (von Balthasar 1994:61) for discussion of the competing assumptions between Christian theology and philosophical systems and (Prickett 2002:50) for discussion of the necessarily mediated nature of human knowledge.

methodology: social science research methods are not neutral, but rather are intricately tied to the social scientist's view of reality (Bryman 2012:19).

Social scientific research is not, *per se*, associated with one particular theoretical basis or methodology. The philosophies of instrumentalism, naturalism, and constructive empiricism and their emphasis on observable phenomena are often associated with scientific enquiry but do not form the sum total of all philosophies of science (Segal 2006:320). Thus, there is room for the social sciences to move beyond merely physical phenomena to intangibles such as beliefs or emotion. Many schools of thought within the social sciences, however, do not accord the same value to these phenomena. In Milbank's assessment, for Max Weber, "religion, art, traditional organic communities – do not for this view really belong to the realm of the factual at all; instead they belong to the 'irreal' realm of valuation, and they exist primarily as hidden, subjective forces" (1990:84). In this valuation, many scholars merely relegate religion to the "Kantian sublime" (Milbank 1990:104).

Particular theoretical frameworks, such as philosophies of science, are apparent in social science research methodology. Though not specifically tied together, quantitative enquiry often has a bent towards naturalism (Bryman 2012:50). Alternatively, qualitative research is more aligned with constructionism and a phenomenological epistemology (Bryman 2012:36).[5]

A simplistic account would contend that quantitative social science research can provide raw data regarding the nature of reality (as perceived through the instrumentality of method), and qualitative research can provide a richer account of this reality (Bryman 2012:408).[6] Yet, each of these methodologies is limited by its underlying materialistic naturalist assumptions that place the human being as the subject, object, and starting point of enquiry, and therefore do not allow room for input

[5] Bryman notes, however, that these "connections are not deterministic" (2012:614).
[6] Even given this distinction, Bryman argues that the line drawn between quantitative and qualitative research and their associated epistemological and ontological assumptions is not always as defined as is often suggested (2012:614ff).

from outside of this closed system.[7] This is problematic. As physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne notes, "Science by itself is not enough even to describe the pursuit of science itself" (1996:2). To gain a fuller account of reality, one must allow for input from sources outside of the sciences as well as input from outside the hegemony of human knowledge.

Questions of Epistemology[8]

In many ways, the inability of the social sciences fully to explain human experience has its basis in questions of epistemology.[9] While this is a much larger issue than I can address here, essentially, most modern epistemologies are concerned primarily with 'knowledge *that*,' or propositional knowledge.[10] Such epistemologies leave no room for non-propositional knowledge that is not reducible to 'knowledge *that*' such as relational knowledge of persons (Stump 2012:51). Stump summarizes what is at stake here: "Theories of knowledge that ignore or fail to account for whole varieties of knowledge are correspondingly incomplete" (2012:59).

Beyond this, some scholars believe that differing ways of viewing the world have a biological as well as psychological basis. Neurologist Iain McGilchrist suggests that the different ways the hemispheres of the brain process information not only represent, but also determine two ways of knowing the world.[11] This distinction is primarily between focused attention (left hemisphere) and open attention (right hemisphere), or, in other

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[7] This claim, while somewhat reductionist in regards to social scientific enquiry, nonetheless is based upon the naturalistic assumptions inherent in much of such research. Cf. (Titus 2006:77). These same emphases are apparent in approaches to resilience (Aranda et al. 2012:549).

[8] Interestingly, concern with questions of epistemology falls very much in the so-termed 'left-brain' and 'Dominican' categories suggested by McGilchrist (2010) and Stump (2012), respectively.

[9] See (Green 1998:10–27) for a history of theological epistemology from the standpoint of Green's assertion that imagination and religion are inextricably linked.

[10] Charles Taylor convincingly argues that modern epistemology acts as a 'closed world system' that excludes the possibility of input from the transcendent (Taylor 2007:59–65).

[11] Indeed, it is reductionist to imply that particular brain functions are confined to a particular part of the brain, yet, according to McGilchrist, still, there are "pervasive and consistent differences between the hemispheres, existing at many levels" such that it is possible to speak broadly of such a divide (2010:32–33).

words, between the self and what transcends the self (McGilchrist 2010:25). The left hemisphere is more adept at focused attention, the type of problem solving that is so important to scientists (McGilchrist 2010:25). He explains the differences between the hemispheres in this way:

> [E]ach hemisphere attends to the world in a different way—and the ways are consistent…[T]he right hemisphere sees things whole, and in their context, where the left hemisphere sees things abstracted from context, and broken into parts, from which it then reconstructs a 'whole': something very different. And it also turns out that the capacities that help us, as humans, form bonds with others…are largely right-hemisphere functions (McGilchrist 2010:27–28).

The difference between the hemispheres extends beyond how they process information:

> These two aspects of the world are not symmetrically opposed. They are not equivalent, for example, to the 'subjective' and 'objective' points of view…These are not different ways of *thinking about* the world: they are different ways of *being in* the world (McGilchrist 2010:31).

Essentially, McGilchrist explains, "the brain is—in fact it has to be—a metaphor of the world" (2010:9). Therefore, these "different ways of *being in* the world" have significant implications for conscious lived experience as embodied human beings. This is especially true when an entire culture prizes one way of knowing over another. With McGilchrist I believe that the myopic view of the world promoted in Western secular society is a significant factor in diminishing the capability of its members to be resilient (2010:6). Others have also suggested a dichotomy of epistemologies in Western thinking. In a similar vein to McGilchrist, Eleonore Stump explores the differences between analytical and intuitive ways of knowing (corresponding to McGilchrist's right and left-hemisphere thinking patterns) through the typologies of the Christian historical figures of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic, respectively (2012:39ff). As an analytical philosopher, Stump notes many of these same difficulties in the abstraction of intuition from analytical thinking:

> In case the thing being characterized is not amenable to crisp definition and precision, then, paradoxically, the vague but intuitive Franciscan approach will be more accurate than the Dominican approach, whose search for an unavailable accuracy will result in carefully patterned mischaracterization (2012:41).

Thus, it is possible that the highly prized scientific analytical way of understanding the world is not always the most accurate or helpful method of enquiry. This would

especially be the case for investigations regarding persons, rather than things (Stump 2012:47). Yet, Stump is careful to note, it is best to see these "approaches not as competitors but as allies, each with something to contribute to and correct in the other" (2012:62). Perhaps left-brained, 'Dominican,' ways of perceiving the world have held sway too long, to the detriment of individuals in Western society. There is a place, then, for a re-emphasis of right-brained, 'Franciscan,' understandings of reality, of which religion may play a large part.[12]

Religion as a 'Thicker' Account of the World

Both McGilchrist and Stump point to two very different ways of processing information and experiences. McGilchrist suggests that religion is particularly important for 'right-brained,' empathetic, 'thicker' types of knowing (2010:6). While a more analytical approach is prized in society today, the contextualized framework afforded by the arts and religion can provide, among other things, meaning to human experience. A worldview that is based solely on naturalistic assumptions—that does not accept what cannot be analytically understood—does not allow for this other significant way of knowing.[13]

Furthermore, a theological viewpoint has the capacity to see the world more fully than the diminutive view of naturalistic secularism (McFadyen 2000:6ff; Watts 2002:9). As Polkinghorne argues, the discernment of value, the existence of beauty, and moral and ethical imperatives all point to a reality that exceeds the physical domain.[14] Therefore, "theistic belief is more comprehensive and fully explanatory than atheism can manage to be" (Polkinghorne 2006:66). Similarly, John Swinton suggests that there is a need to

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[12] This is not to say that there are not distinctly left-brained, 'Dominican,' elements to religion—certainly they are manifold!—only to argue that Christianity, at its core, has to do with issues of the heart, most notably, love. E.g. Matthew 22:35-40; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

[13] Alvin Plantinga suggests that naturalism is a 'quasi-religion' which offers an alternative 'master narrative' to theistic religion, one which also seeks to answer "deep and important human questions" (2011:311). Because of this, these worldviews are fundamentally at odds with one another.

[14] Additionally, Stump argues that "knowledge of the ultimate foundation of reality, knowledge of morality, and knowledge of the good life are all best understood as knowledge of persons" as opposed to analytical knowledge (2012:47). I will return to this appeal to *personal* knowledge in the following chapter.

expand the empiricist viewpoint to include views of the world that include the spiritual (2001:13).[15] This is because a worldview that only allows for 'mechanical causality' necessarily excludes any non-mechanical causality, and in the end this must lead to a solely mechanistic understanding of the world (Lukacs 2014).

Thus, while we may distinguish between an empirical ('thin') description and the examination of the meaning behind an event (a 'thick description')[16]—as the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods has already alluded to—such a distinction would be rejected by some scholars.[17] It may be helpful not just to speak of religion as providing a 'thicker' account of reality, but as actually a different way of *being* in the world.[18] This new way of being in the world finds its basis in that which is *extra nos*, the Divine Word.

The 'In-Breaking' of Divine Reality

If religion is what it claims to be—an 'in-breaking' of the divine into the world—then it does not just provide a 'thicker' account of human action, it provides information about human experience that cannot be obtained through natural means.[19] Coles relates: "Since hate, indifference and timidity are psychological qualities, [the psychiatrist] expects psychological explanations usually to account for their origins. Sometimes they can; but very often they cannot" (1967:376). Coles suggests there are constructs beyond

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[15] Some scholars suggest turning to spirituality in general for universal principles or 'virtues' that can be applied across religious boundaries (Cf. (Gill 2006:8, 210)). While many useful insights for resilience research may be gained in that way, this study will confine itself to studying the particularity of the Christian tradition.

[16] See Geertz's seminal work, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' (1973). Significantly, Segal notes that Geertz "does not pit an interpretive approach against a scientific one" (2006:19).

[17] Robert Segal chides those he terms 'religionists' for attempting to categorize the social sciences as merely "functional, reductive, and explanatory" while religious accounts of the same phenomena are considered "substantive, non-reductive, and interpretive" (2006:313). He concludes that, because of what he sees as the priority of the epistemological primacy of social scientific enquiry, religion and the social sciences are essentially incompatible if they are to remain true to themselves (Segal 2006:317).

[18] Cf. (McGilchrist 2010:31).

[19] Here, in part, I am arguing against an 'epistemological flattening' of accounts of reality that expresses all action—to include religious experience—solely in terms of human action. See (Root 2014) for more on this subject.

the reach of social scientific inquiry that nonetheless affect what is studied by the social sciences. These 'beyond the reach' constructs most certainly include realms understood through theological enquiry.

But for many, any attempt to study supernatural effects falls outside the bounds of social science since, "it is not possible to state a valid theological process that might mediate any 'effects' that might occur" (Paloutzian 2006:248). This assertion falls in line with the underlying assumptions of naturalism that undergird scientific enquiry and exclude the possibility of supernatural influence.[20] Such a worldview is an overarching ontological assessment of reality (Leidenhag 2014) that has become the predominant paradigm within the social sciences as well as within broader academia (Slife, Starks, and Primosch 2014).[21] Yet the 'secularity' that divides the 'natural' from the 'supernatural' and denigrates the latter is unknown to "the whole of human history outside the modern West" (Taylor 2007:57).[22] As Milbank bluntly puts it: "Once, there was no 'secular'…The secular as a domain had to be instituted or *imagined*, both in theory and in practice" (1990:9).[23] Still, there are attempts to 'normalize' or 'naturalize' such a viewpoint that scholars "cannot see…as one, historically constructed, understanding of human agency among others" (Taylor 2007:57, 69). In the end, this

[20] There are, for instance, many "lingering positivist and materialist assumptions" in resilience research (Titus 2006:81).
[21] Andrew Hatala summarizes the developments that "relegated illness and healing primarily to a physiological framework with limited attention to social, moral or political dimensions" (2013:257).
[22] Charles Taylor continues, "This kind of clear demarcation was foreign to any other civilization in history. There have always been distinctions between, for instance, the sacred and the profane, higher beings and worldly beings, and so forth, but in the 'enchanted' worlds that humans have inhabited in earlier times, these two kinds of reality were inextricably woven…The natural/supernatural distinction implies a great sorting out, in which the 'natural' becomes a level which can be described and understood on its own. This is the precondition for going the further step, and declaring this the *only* reality" (2007:59).
[23] Alastair McGrath agrees: "Allegedly neutral, transcendent or 'objective' disciplines—such as the social sciences—are in reality no more than *narrated interpretations of reality* which possess no privileged status permitting them to judge or police others" (2002:118–19).

'closed' paradigm leaves a disenchanted reality in which only what can be rationally explained exists.[24]

Since the *a priori* assumptions and methodologies of these social scientists are grounded in a naturalistic understanding of the world, they are limited to discoveries and accounts of reality—to include resilience—consistent with these frameworks.[25] But naturalism does not have a monopoly on truth. If, as Taylor suggests, 'natural' and 'supernatural' phenomena are not divided, but instead are woven throughout the fabric of existence, this will have significant implications for conceptions of resilience. In such a case, the 'in-breaking' of divine reality into the world is not a side issue for resilience, but may get at the heart of what enables humans to respond resiliently.[26]

Science: Moving Beyond Naturalism

Some accounts of science have moved beyond strictly modern naturalistic assumptions. Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) provided a new way of thinking about rationality in which some scientists "no longer presuppose a qualitative distinction between scientific and non-scientific rationality" (Clayton 2007:99).[27] Utilizing similar reasoning, many religious scholars have embraced postmodernism because of its rejection of 'modern' and 'scientific' understandings of the world (Segal 2006:322). Such attempts to move beyond modernity have both potential possibilities and downfalls, however.[28]

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[24] For an assessment of the meta-narrative that science attempts to tell of the world, see (Harrison 2015:180–97).

[25] See (Slife and Richardson 2014; Slife, Starks, and Primosch 2014) for more on the questioning of the presumption of naturalism in the social sciences. Thomas Nagel's (2012) critique of naturalism is especially significant.

[26] Titus, likewise suggests that in order to understand resilience properly "we need a basis of philosophy of nature, philosophical anthropology, ethical theory, and prudent reflection in order for normative science to interpret and integrate descriptive observations" (2006:98). He utilizes Aquinas' virtue theory to provide this added perspective.

[27] I will soon address Kuhn's theory more fully.

[28] I will address Paul Ricoeur's understanding of language, in particular, more fully in the next chapter. As momentous as Kuhn's model was, it failed to see the unity of rational thought as continuity across paradigms.

The postmodern assessment of reality acknowledges that, because our knowledge and ability to know as human beings is necessarily limited, imagination and humility are needed in the pursuit of truth rather than simple deductions of logical truth via a mechanistic model (Lukacs 2014).[29] While different ways of knowing exist, as McGilchrist and Stump note, epistemologies are not strictly divided between the scientific and the religious. Since Kuhn's seminal work, philosophers of science have begun to acknowledge that the scientific endeavor includes many non-rational elements, such as the imagination (Green 1998:44–45). Others, like Michael Polanyi, have recognized scientists' need for community and intuition in their scientific endeavor (Mitchell 2006:15).

Moreover, philosophers are beginning to suggest that the differences between science and religion may not be as great as was once suggested (Green 1998:44). Alvin Plantinga argues that the primary conflict lies between naturalism and theism, not science and religion: "there is superficial conflict but deep concord between theistic religion and science, but superficial concord and deep conflict between naturalism and science" (2011:265).[30] One could say that it is not science itself whose account of reality must be reassessed, but rather certain naturalist and modernist interpretations of science.

Thus, for those who subscribe to this revised view of science, the distinctions I have drawn may not be as defined as for scientists of a more naturalist orientation. Whereas "the boundary between science and religion represented *the* fundamental boundary of the modern period," the destruction and transgressing of boundaries defines postmodernism (Clayton 2007:93). Such an understanding gives rise to the possibility of constructive dialogue between religion and science.[31] Clayton notes a new phase of the religion/science dialogue: "recognition of common properties" (2007:98). This understanding of science may give credence to the inclusion of divine action in social

[29] For an account of the nature of human knowledge with which I have much affinity, see (Smith 2009).
[30] Peter Harrison (2015) provides a very insightful extended treatment of the history of the relationship between science and religion, concluding, much the same as Plantinga, that *interpretations* of these disciplines are in conflict, not the disciplines themselves.
[31] For an account of this relationship amenable to my own, see (Murphy 2006).

scientific understandings of resilience. Still, there remain important divisions between the two fields. For many within these communities of thought the generalizations of epistemological division remain true, which precludes any attempt at a meaningful dialogue between religion and science. Some remain entrenched in understandings that divide into questions of: 'How?' (science) and 'Why?' (religion) (Clayton 2007:98).[32]

Science, Theology, and Social Science Methodology

Despite the appearance of an epistemological and methodological divide between science and religion, I contend that this distinction is not as great as it is often made out to be.[33] In fact, the shared pursuit of truth, mediated by human experience, unifies these disciplines.

Human knowledge is particular and situated within the contingency of human experience. Thus, the very act of understanding involves interpretation. Hans Frei posits: "I do not think that the concept 'fact' is theory-neutral." He further contends that this term is "not privileged, theory-neutral, trans-cultural, an ingredient in the structure of the human mind and of reality always and everywhere" (1993b:211). In agreement with Frei, Paul Ricoeur suggests: "we find ourselves forced to re-work our conventional concept of truth, that is to say, to cease to limit this concept to logical coherence and empirical verification alone" (1991a:12). The 'scientific' conception of truth as extending only to what is empirically verifiable is too limited to encompass the complexity of human existence. Humans experience things that are not empirically verifiable; further, even those things that can be scientifically validated are not fully understood solely through this means of enquiry.[34]

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[32] Against this view, citing Kuhn, Green suggests that there is no epistemological dichotomy between religion and science. Rather, both are varied expressions of the imagination (1998:45). While this viewpoint could be helpful, it does not seem to represent the self-understanding of large portions of the scientific community.

[33] This is a much larger topic than can be fully considered in this short space. However, the compatibility of scientific and theological epistemologies and methodologies is important for this project as a whole. For a more fully developed argument of this thesis utilizing Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, see (White 2017) or, for a book-length treatment, see (Reynhout 2013).

[34] Gerard Loughlin suggests that science matches scientific theory against data that is "always already theory-laden" rather than against reality itself. Thus, "[s]cience matches theory-stories against observation-narratives." Loughlin continues, "Whatever the case

While it is the case that the natural sciences can assess a reality that is 'out there,' the social sciences must contend with subjects who are also interpreters:

> the social sciences, it appears, remain distinct from the natural sciences: while the latter are characterized by a 'single hermeneutic'—an interpreting agent explaining a non-interpreting world—the social sciences are characterized by a 'double hermeneutic'—an interpreting agent now attempts to explain the actions of 'objects of study' who are themselves *also* subjects involved in constructing their own interpretations of the world and of the experimenters themselves. As Anthony Giddens (1976:158) notes, the social scientist faces 'a pre-interpreted world where the creation and reproduction of meaning-frames is a very condition of that which it seeks to analyze'" (Clayton 2007:95–96).[35]

I suggest that this common interpretive framework for reality—and, significantly, meaning—is what makes dialogue between science and theology possible. Further, similar methodologies may be used in both disciplines. Just as theologians exegete texts, social scientists like Clifford Geertz, utilizing Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy, seek to 'exegete' culture, including religion (Segal 2006:318–19).[36]

The contingent nature of human knowledge, however, does not necessitate the impossibility of knowledge altogether.[37] Rather, it suggests the impossibility of *perfect* knowledge. Whereas modernity demanded impossible perfection and purity,[38] Smith proposes the beauty of imperfect, situated, and particular human life, as providing a counter-narrative that provides freedom, individual expression and dignity (2009:20–21). This is, he argues, the logic of the Gospel that is most evident in the Incarnation—an embracing of contingency and particularity (2009:35). Each of these ways of

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with science, Christian truth has never been a matter of matching stories against reality. It has always been a matter of matching reality-stories against the truth: Jesus Christ" (1999:23). I will more fully address the use of narrative to understand reality in the following chapter.

[35] Cf. (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:486).

[36] Cf. (Milbank 1990:121, 127). In the next chapter, more will be said on the basis for such an interpretive 'move.'

[37] This, what James K. A. Smith calls "timid postmodernism," posits the impossibility of universal knowledge (2009:8–9).

[38] Interestingly, Derrida's "timid postmodernity" has the same demand for perfection.

thinking, Smith proposes, is based upon a fundamentally different logic or system of meaning.[39]

But, if human knowledge is always particular, what means of communicating truth beyond particular circumstance exists? Metaphor, as a method of communication, can be understood as a model of understanding in both theology and science that enables this possibility (Soskice 1985:99). [40] Soskice argues, however, that "if there is to be any valuable comparison of models in science and religion it must be one with realist assumptions" (1985:107).[41] In this regard, "models and metaphorical theory terms may, in both the scientific and religious cases, be reality depicting without pretending to be directly descriptive" (Soskice 1985:145).[42]

Metaphor, then may be reality-depicting while still allowing for the contingency of human experience. Kuhn's theory, which proposes the history of science to be composed of various epochs ('paradigms') of thinking, makes use of this type of metaphorical thinking. This theory is important not for a claim to non-foundationalism—for it could be said that Kuhn replaces one epistemological foundation with another—but rather because it displays the modern emphasis on reason as one epistemological paradigm among many possibilities. To use Smith's terminology, each epistemological approach is a 'logic' for discerning truth in the world.

The logic of an epistemology based on the scientific method, stunted by a secular naturalistic worldview, presents one way of being-in-the-world, but this is a diminished world incapable of fully describing human experience. Recent understandings of the scientific endeavor as containing metaphoric and imaginative elements, however, make

[39] This is what, Smith notes, John Milbank terms a '*mythos*' and conforms to Kuhn's 'paradigm' (2009:10).
[40] The issue of whether and how metaphors can be used in science and theology is much larger than I can deal with in this space. Let it suffice to say that a supposedly 'non-scientific' mode of discourse such as metaphor may in fact be at the core of scientific enquiry. Kuhn's 'paradigms' are instructive in this regard. Cf. (Green 1998:50).
[41] I will address this 'critical realist' viewpoint at a later point.
[42] Beyond being beneficial for understanding the nature of knowledge in both science and religion, metaphorical thinking may also be useful as a method of enquiry in both disciplines. I will address this more fully in the next chapter.

a 'thicker' notion of human being as well as dialogue with the humanities more conceivable.

Thus, scholars should see science and theology as complementary rather than in opposition to one another. In practice, because of the difficulty of empirically measuring internal spiritual dispositions (Levin 2010), other means of investigation, such as narrative methodologies and techniques more at home in the humanities, are appropriate for this study.

Maintaining Differences and Opening Dialogue

In the end, despite having accounts of reality that may be regarded as compatible with one another, many of the underlying assumptions, epistemologies, and goals of science and religion are different. Not all these differences are problematic, however. Though some claim that divine action is not a proper object of study for the social sciences, this does not mean that such action does not exist or is not important. Further enquiry, therefore, is required—and perhaps enquiry of a different nature. I suggest that the social sciences would benefit from dialogue with disciplines such as theology that approach the world from a different standpoint.[43]

The common pursuit of truth unites science and theology,[44] but each pursue this goal differently. Take, for example, the case of understanding responses to death:

> Science and religion both attempt to mitigate the pain [of death] in their different ways. Science provides us with information and gives us a means to change what can be physically changed. Religion helps us to deal with what cannot be changed and with what can be alleviated only by changing the human heart (Rudd 2006:400).

While this understanding displays a bit of a modernist dichotomy, it also shows that these ways of viewing the world are not incompatible, only that they describe the world

[43] Don Browning also suggests that science can learn from theological understandings of the world (2010:5). I am not here advocating for the assimilation of theology into the social sciences nor vice versa. I am suggesting that dialogue between the two disciplines may be mutually beneficial. Questions of methodology will be addressed more fully later in the chapter.

[44] According to Plantinga, Albert Einstein describes a proper scientist as a "real seeker after truth" (2011:267).

through different means. To be sure, in some versions of each worldview—what Ian Barbour (1997) terms 'scientific materialism' and 'Biblical literalism'—anything outside a certain epistemology is deemed false *a priori*. While I take some issue with Barbour's choice of terminology, his point remains clear: some worldviews remain incompatible with one another. This does not have to be the case for Christianity and science, however, and has not been the case for much of the history of dialogue between the two (Hauerwas 1986:65–69).[45] Polkinghorne notes:

> Christian theology has always resisted a Manichaean opposition between God and the world, believing that the universe is God's creation and that, in the Incarnation of the Word made flesh, the One by whom all things were made became a participant in the history of the world (John 1: 3, 14). As a consequence, Christian thinking at its best has always sought to be in a positive relationship to all forms of human knowledge, including science, without allowing itself to become distorted by an improper submission to the restricted protocols of purely secular argument…neither science nor theology should make the mistake of supposing that it can answer the other's proper questions. Nevertheless, there has to be a consonance between the answers that each gives, if it is indeed the case that there is a fundamental unity of knowledge about the one world of created reality (2006:57).

The unity of the created order provides the possibility for dialogue across the spectrum of disciplines. One discipline, by itself, cannot give a complete view of the multifaceted nature of reality. Thus, social science—or any other discipline for that matter—needs outside input to provide a more complete picture of reality. The aims of the social sciences by themselves are too small to capture the totality of human experience.

Therefore, we must maintain differences between the disciplines while at the same time acknowledging commonalities that enable informed dialogue. While Polkinghorne suggests that the unified nature of reality presents the possibility for shared discovery, I contend that it is not merely the created order itself, but the triune Creator, through creative, revelatory, and sustaining action, who provides the key for understanding the unified nature of reality.

[45] Interestingly, Plantinga argues that it was particularly the Christian understanding of the world as knowable and governed by universal laws that allowed empirical science to flourish in the West, a development found nowhere else in the world. "This," he says, "is no accident: there is deep concord between science and theistic belief" (2011:266).

Towards Knowledge of the Divine

Knowledge of reality is therefore *personal* knowledge and existence is relational at heart (Stump 2012:47).[46] For the Christian, therefore, to live a life of faithful witness in the world requires wisdom, which must certainly include an impassioned commitment to the triune God. Robert Song suggests that the social sciences have a role to play in this venture:

> Only as Christians begin to comprehend some of the broader social and cultural dynamics which are liable to shape them as inhabitants of the modern world will they also be able to discern more fully in the light of Christ what virtues and practices are required of them if they are to be truthful witnesses. Part of this understanding — though only ever a part — can be drawn from engagement with the work of social scientists, both at a detailed empirical level and at the grander level of social and cultural theory (2007:402).

Thus, the social sciences can provide valuable insights into the nature of social reality, but their insights, including about the effects of R/S upon health and well-being, are only partial. While the understanding provided by the past two chapters are important in their own regard, the Christian must journey on to theological enquiry and the plumbing of depths of knowledge to which no social scientific method can reach. In so doing, one may return with insights into the nature of reality and human existence that could not be gained otherwise.

Example: Resilience and the Limits of Social Science

Worldview, Beliefs, and Resilience Outcomes

When faced with the insufficiency of a naturalistic social science worldview to describe human resilience, where does one turn? Some social scientists have begun to appreciate the "value-laden dimensions of resilience" (Panter-Brick 2014:443) and their effect upon resilience outcomes, even without reference to the supernatural. This area has been left untouched for far too long by resilience researchers. It also presents an interesting predicament. Research indicates that an individual's beliefs and worldview affect resilience outcomes (Bonanno and Mancini 2011:127), yet the social scientist has

[46] For a discussion of why personhood is integral to human being, see (Spaemann 1996).

no way of assessing the normativity of beliefs or cultural practices within a naturalistic framework, only the ability to acknowledge that they exist. Slife et al. (2014) have examined the difficulty this poses to an anthropologist studying and attempting to describe a non-naturalistic culture.

Yet, referencing Arthur Kleinman's book (2006), Panter-Brick notes the significance of morality and values in aiding individuals to cope through difficulty: "As Kleinman beautifully argued, 'what really matters' is the moral dimension of human experiences where people live a life of great uncertainty and danger" (2014:442). But a naturalistic worldview has little basis on which to make sense of the meaning or value of morality in the first place (Polkinghorne 2006:65–66). Still, the 'value-laden dimensions of resilience' may contain moral or cultural components that are significant for culturally sensitive resilience interventions. As Panter-Brick argues: "We see that a critical analysis of normative values in cultural, political, and historical contexts is essential to guard oneself against superficial views of resilience" (2014:443).

For example, research by Panter-Brick on HIV/AIDS in Africa highlighted the need for resilience studies to incorporate beliefs about the supernatural into their framework for research. Scholars realized that individuals' morality and religious beliefs affected the spread of HIV/AIDS in ways that were unexpected. As Panter-Brick summarizes: "In short, understanding the risks of HIV/AIDS has necessitated an understanding of cosmology as well as sexual practice" (2014:435). Thus, R/S, as understood individually and culturally, has more impact upon resilience than has often been acknowledged. The lack of this understanding has led to difficulties in research within the social sciences (for instance, in the study of HIV/AIDS) (Panter-Brick 2014:435). While culture—including the morals and values within a culture—can have a significant effect on resilience outcomes, there must be some means of identifying a transcultural moral framework that moves beyond utilitarianism. Without such a framework, understandings of R/S will remain at the level of description rather than pre-emptively identifying factors inherent to R/S that promote resilience.

Many social scientific accounts of resilience seek epistemologically to "flatten" experiences to the naturalistic level solely of scientifically-verifiable human experience. Such an understanding, however, does not do justice to the objects of study—whether

individuals or cultures and their beliefs—nor does it fully explain the experiences of individuals, many who claim to have had experiences of a transcendent reality.

Towards a Holistic Approach

A more holistic approach to resilience, therefore, is necessary in order to fully describe the phenomena at work in human adaptation to adversity. This description must move beyond a purely naturalistic understanding of the world. But, if, as has been suggested, a naturalistic understanding of resilience is insufficient for describing the ability of individuals to adapt to adversity, what are the characteristics of an alternative understanding of the concept? Furthermore, what place do religion and spirituality play in this 'reframed' understanding? Certainly, an account of resilience that includes religious and spiritual understandings is more fully explanatory than one that withholds such factors.

The spiritual has been sidelined in most modern psychological studies of resilience due to the current prevailing biopsychosocial paradigm of health psychology (Hatala 2013:258). But, against this common paradigm, Andrew Hatala (2011) suggests that a more holistic perspective is needed to capture the intricacies of the human person: a biopsychosocial-spiritual understanding of the human person. Similarly, McEntee et al. (2013) argue that current models of human flourishing do not take into account the influence of spirituality. This omission is a significant misstep, as much research indicates that religion and spirituality do indeed play a large role in health and flourishing.[47]

The call from some social scientists for a spiritual component to social scientific understanding of human beings is not without precedent. Sociologist Hans Mol noted that "religion defines man and his place in the universe" (1976:x). His experiences in a Nazi prison camp in World War II led him to believe that mere intellectualism did not provide a significant enough basis for survival in that environment (Mol 1976:xiii).

[47] See Chapter 2.

Similarly, Victor Frankl's experience of imprisonment in a concentration camp showed him the power of transcendent meaning making systems of belief (Frankl 1964).[48]

'Natural' Resilience and 'Christian' Resilience[49]

I have suggested that the social sciences alone cannot provide an adequate framework to capture the profundity of human beings' ability to adapt to and thrive despite adversity. Furthermore, it seems that many assumptions held within the Western world, and the scientific naturalism that undergirds it, limit exploration of the world. In so doing, these assumptions reduce individuals' ability to adapt resiliently. What now must be made clearer is the different trajectory and *telos* (ultimate goal) of resilience for the social sciences and Christian theology.

The differences between theological and social science accounts of reality often play themselves out in assumptions regarding resilience; for example, in the question regarding the goal of resilience. This question is essential to understanding the construct since resilience is incoherent as a concept without reference to a goal (*telos*). The very term connotes within it a movement toward, and a direction of that movement.[50] But what is the object of that movement? And is this *telos* the same for social scientific understandings of resilience as well as for theological understandings?

Here, then, the difficulty inherent in this concept is apparent. If the goal of resilience is a good outcome (Rutter 2013:474), a further question must be asked: Whose good? Is the goal the good of society, the good of the individual, or some other good? What is one to

[48] It is suggestive that these calls for understanding human nature as containing a spiritual component came from those who experienced significant adversity in life.
[49] 'Natural' resilience could also be termed 'mundane' (of this earth), 'finite,' or 'temporal' resilience. 'Christian' resilience, on the other hand, is not 'holy' or 'sanctified' resilience as such. Rather it is a conception of the construct through the lens of the Christian Story for the people of God. I am by no means trying to provide *the* Christian understanding of resilience, only *a* Christian way of understanding the concept. Others, coming from different Christian traditions and utilizing theological resources from these traditions, may evaluate resilience quite differently than I do.
[50] For example, a resilient object returns to its original shape after being misshapen and a resilient tree springs back to its initial position following the winds of a storm.

do when these goods come into conflict with one another?[51] For instance, the resilience concept has recently been critiqued as being merely a tool of society to produce better workers or members of society (Anderson 2015). Thus, some see the goal of human resilience as societal flourishing. Alternatively, for the psychologist, the *telos* of resilience usually lies in the good outcome of individual 'positive adaptation' (Luthar, Suniya S. et al. 2000; Rutter 1999) or lack of psychopathology (Nigg et al. 2007). Thus, for the psychologist, individual flourishing is paramount.

It seems that many scholars within the social sciences have been content to carry on research using the same assumptions made by most researchers within the field and fail to question the underlying *telos* of resilience. Though some ecologists queried regarding the goal of resilience: 'Resilience of what to what?' (Carpenter et al. 2001), these scholars were working in the realm of natural science, not social science. In the social sciences these questions have only recently begun to be addressed. Take, for instance, the comments by Ann Masten:

> Defining positive adaptation involves implicit or explicit value judgments or criteria about desirable adaptation.[52] Such judgments are influenced by cultures of science, as well as sociocultural and historical context. Evolutionary biologists may be concerned with reproductive fitness of the population, while child psychologists may be focused on individual competence in age-salient developmental tasks. Global research on competence and resilience indicates both commonalities and variation in these criteria.[53] Research in more diverse societies highlights the variation in interpreted meaning of similar experiences and the profound role of culture in shaping exposures, responses, and expectations of children in adversity[54] (2014:13).

By way of example, the significance of differing ways of defining the goal of resilience is apparent in the *telos* neurologists Karatoreos and McEwen subscribe to resilience:

> The primary function of any organism is to survive, reproduce, and ensure that its genetic material is successfully transmitted to the next generation. This is as biologically true of single-celled organisms as it is of humans (2013:337).

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[51] See (Evison 1990) for discussion of these issues in relation to the discipline of psychology.
[52] See (Masten 2001).
[53] Citing (McCormick, Kuo, and Masten 2011; Ungar 2012).
[54] Citing (Eggerman and Panter-Brick 2010; Masten and Narayan 2012; Ungar, Ghazinour, and Richter 2013).

This belief, embedded within a naturalistic worldview, will have a significant effect upon these scientists' understanding of resilience. Given the impact that worldview has on resilience outcomes, it would not be difficult to say that the *telos* of resilience they envision would affect not only the way in which they personally adapt to adversity, but also their assessment of the methods others use to adapt. Essentially, the assumed *telos* of resilience has an enormous impact on one's conception of the construct, potentially leading to vastly different outcomes.

'Christian' Resilience

Because the goals of naturalistic social science research and theology are different, it is no surprise that persons influenced by these ways of thinking would have differing understandings of resilience. For the Christian, the reality of the divine necessarily breaks in upon understanding of the *telos* of human being, and thereby human resilience. The goal of the Christian life, and therefore the goal of resilience for the Christian, is the glorification of God through the furthering of the Kingdom of God.[55] Thus, resilience, for the Christian, must be understood through the paradigm of the Kingdom of Heaven. As opposed to an approach directed by social science assumptions, John Swinton and Harriet Mowat argue that, for the Christian, "there is an end or *telos* that transcends all particular forms of action. This *telos* constitutes the primary purpose and meaning of human life and the eschatological horizon of the practical-theological enterprise" (2006:257).

The paradigm of the Kingdom of God offers a different *telos* and therefore a different way of being-in-the-world. I suggest that, for the Christian, because of this a distinction needs to be made between what I am terming 'natural' resilience and 'Christian' resilience.[56] In many senses and in many applications, 'natural' and 'Christian' resilience would appear to be the same. But in very significant instances, these constructs may differ greatly.

[55] E.g. Matthew 6:33.
[56] Craig Steven Titus similarly distinguishes between resilience and 'spiritual' resilience (2006:97).

Throughout the rest of this project I will attempt to draw out some of the distinctions between these views of resilience while, through theological reflection, also bringing to light implications for a 'natural' and 'Christian' understanding of resilience. At the same time, social scientific conceptions of resilience will critically assess theological understandings of the construct.

'Kinds' of Resilience: Consonance through Creation

Though I am emphasizing the distinction between 'natural' and 'Christian' resilience, there is also a significant sense in which 'natural' resilience cannot be separated from 'Christian' resilience. Because God is the Creator, the maker of resilient bodies, spirits, and systems, any 'natural' resilience inherent in the created order is a result of God's sustaining hand, and therefore both 'natural' and 'Christian' resilience are ultimately attributable to divine goodness. Since the object of social science's study is the created order, including societal constructs shaped by human involvement in creation, a robust doctrine of creation does not allow 'natural' resilience fully to be bifurcated from 'Christian' resilience.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *Ethics* (1992/1993), provides insights that may elucidate our discussion. Bonhoeffer's distinction between penultimate (*vorletzte*) and ultimate (*letzte*) goods and, similarly, between natural life (*das natürliche Leben*) and the life imparted through justification (*Rechtfertigung*) in Christ can prove useful for the discussion at hand. Rather than setting each dyad (penultimate/ultimate, nature/grace) in opposition, Bonhoeffer acknowledges a place for each: "the Christian life means neither a destruction nor a sanctioning of the penultimate…The penultimate is swallowed up in the ultimate, and yet it is still necessary and it retains its right so long as the earth continues" (Bonhoeffer 1993:110, 118). The ultimate—that which pertains salvation in Christ—takes precedence over all else for Bonhoeffer. The penultimate—that which is necessary for life in this world and provides the conditions needed for, yet is not itself the ultimate—has an important, though not final place for the Christian. In regards to resilience, the penultimate could be understood to correspond to 'natural' resilience while the ultimate, being dependent upon the gracious salvific work of God in Christ, is akin to 'Christian' resilience.

For Bonhoeffer, the penultimate is also the natural: "that which, after the Fall, is directed towards the coming of Christ" (1993:121). The natural, then, has an important, though secondary place in the world. It preserves, enables, and directs towards the ultimate, yet also "implies an element of independence and self-development." In Bonhoeffer's thought, "[t]hrough the Fall the 'creature' becomes 'nature'. The direct dependence of the creature on God is replaced by the relative freedom of natural life" (Bonhoeffer 1993:121). The Fall subjected creation to the 'freedom' to be independent of God, but thereby also separated creation from the fullness of life found in God: the ultimate *telos* of creation. This relative freedom of the natural world could lead some to regard it independently from God, but, for Bonhoeffer, this would be a misstep. Instead, "[t]he natural is the form of life preserved by God for the fallen world and directed towards justification, redemption and renewal through Christ" (Bonhoeffer 1993:122).

Natural life, though not reliant upon the creature's direct dependence upon God, is still 'preserved by God,' and thus has inherent life-sustaining capabilities. Bonhoeffer recognizes in nature something akin to what might be termed 'resilience':

> The natural is the safeguarding of life against the unnatural. It is in the last analysis life itself that tends towards the natural and keeps turning against the unnatural and bringing about its downfall. This, in the last analysis, is what underlies the maintenance and recovery of physical and mental health. Life is its own physician, whether it be the life of an individual or the life of a community; it wards off the unnatural because the unnatural is a destroyer of life; only when life itself is no longer able to offer the necessary resistance do the destructive forces of the unnatural carry off the victory…the natural endures and prevails by its own inherent strength; for life itself is on the side of the natural (1993:124).[57]

The natural, then, has an intrinsic resilience within it. While being itself penultimate to God's final *telos* for the world, this strength nonetheless is attributable to the sustaining work of God. This alone, for Bonhoeffer, provides impetus for hope:

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[57] For Bonhoeffer, the "unnatural is that which, after the Fall, closes its doors against the coming of Christ" (1993:121). Here, natural life, however, is not itself the ultimate *telos*: "Life which posits itself as an absolute, as an end in itself, is its own destroyer…Life in itself, in the strict sense of the word, is a void, a plunge into the abyss; it is movement without end and without purpose, movement into nothing…God desires life, and He gives life a form in which it can live, because if it is left to itself it can only destroy itself" (Bonhoeffer 1993:125).

> In this context there is a solid basis for that optimistic view of human history which confines itself within the limits of the fallen world…We are referring here to an entirely immanent optimism, one which is entirely rooted in the natural…It remains a hope which is not altogether without foundation, but which is purely immanent and is therefore never certain (1993:125).

Hope based upon the natural is 'within the limits of the fallen world'; for a more robust hope, one founded upon the ultimate, more is needed. Further, additional the relationship between the penultimate and ultimate needs to be more clearly delineated.

For both of these concerns, Bonhoeffer suggests one answer. He regards ultimate hope as well as the reconciliation of the divide between the ultimate and penultimate as being found only in Jesus Christ (1993:108).[58] Indeed, Jesus Christ is true reality, in whom God and humanity are reconciled (Bonhoeffer 1993:106). The unity of human and divine in the body of Jesus Christ—by being the point of convergence of penultimate and ultimate, nature and grace—enables the reconciliation of these dyads in the being of the One who comprises reality (Bonhoeffer 1993:186). Thus, "[i]t is in relation to Christ that the fallen world becomes intelligible as the world which is preserved and sustained by God for the coming of Christ" (Bonhoeffer 1993:116). In Bonhoeffer's thinking, the whole of the world can only be understood in relation to Jesus Christ, in whom both the reality of God and the reality of the world are revealed (Bonhoeffer 1993:167). Bonhoeffer is very clear on this point and its significance for all human knowledge acquisition:

> The world, like all created things, is created through Christ and with Christ as its end, and consists in Christ alone (John 1.10; Col. 1.16). To speak of the world without speaking of Christ is empty and abstract. The world is relative to Christ, no matter whether it knows it or not (1993:179).

Thus, the unity of the created order in Christ means that social scientific and theological quests for truth do not have to be at odds with one another; rather the objects of their study and the quests themselves are united in the domain of God's sustaining love in Christ. Creation itself, through the continuing work of the sustaining Redeemer, enables a unified quest for knowledge wherein nature prepares the way for Christ. Indeed,

[58] Bonhoeffer writes: "The ultimate has become real in the cross, as the judgement upon all that is penultimate, yet also as mercy towards that penultimate which bows before the judgement of the ultimate" (1993:109).

> All things appear distorted if they are not seen and recognized in God. All so-called data, all laws and standards, are mere abstractions so long as there is no belief in God as the ultimate reality…Any perception or apprehension of things or laws without Him is now abstraction, detachment from the origin and goal (Bonhoeffer 1993:162).

The relation of the world to its *telos* in God provides the proper perspective from which sense can be made of the world and all that is in it. For Bonhoeffer, the world is a sphere unified in Christ and any attempt to divide it into separate domains is to do violence to this reality. The division of the world into two spheres—the sacred and profane—is problematic because, indeed, there is no reality "outside the reality that is in Christ" (Bonhoeffer 1993:169):

> There are not two realities, but only one reality, and that is the reality of God, which has become manifest in Christ in the reality of the world…The reality of Christ comprises the reality of the world within itself. The world has no reality of its own, independently of the revelation of God in Christ (Bonhoeffer 1993:169-170).

Any attempt to denote a reality outside the reality of Christ, with an alternative way of coming to know truth, is to take away from the centrality of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the world. Resilience—whether 'natural' or 'Christian,' and whether investigated using the methods of social science or theology—must finally be understood in relation to the God who creates and sustains life. Such a claim is radical in the face of the modern materialistic assumptions of much science, but it nonetheless undergirds a historic Christian vision of the world. The coherence provided by such a vision enables continuity of insight across diverse domains of enquiry into the world, including the nature of human resilient adaptation to adversity.

To add to the social scientific account of resilience, then, we turn to dialogue with Christian theological sources that attest to "the reality of God, the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer" (Bonhoeffer 1993:161).

Possibilities in Christian Theology

I believe that, beyond the contributions of religion and spirituality in general to resilience, the Christian faith, in particular, has significant explanatory power for this concept. It is in the particularity of the Christian faith that it has potential for insight

into resilience. Therefore, it should not be reduced to the 'lowest common denominator' with other religions so as to make it more palatable for secular consumption.[59] The Christian theologian, speaking from within the Church, has answers to offer the world that can be found in no other place.

Despite these possibilities, it is clear that there are also very real differences between the social science conception of 'natural' resilience and this theologian's idea of 'Christian' resilience. As displayed by Karatoreos and McEwen's proposed goal of resilience, 'natural' resilience could be characterized by the adage 'survival at any cost.' As opposed to this, 'Christian' resilience must be primarily concerned with the goals of the Kingdom of Heaven: loving God and loving others.[60]

Thus, Christian theology and theological ways of viewing the world are not 'at home' in a naturalist way of viewing the world. This presents both unique possibilities and unique challenges (Hauerwas 1985:39–40). For instance, the naturalistic presuppositions inherent in many social science accounts of the world do not allow for insight to be garnered from sources attesting to non-scientifically-verifiable phenomena. At best, certain anthropological insights from the theological undertaking may be appropriated to garnish ideas already firmly fixed in naturalistic presuppositions. Any true integration of theological insights into the social sciences would require the acknowledgement of the possibility of divine influence.[61]

As I detailed in the last chapter, religion (generally conceived) may increase resilience through, among other things: providing a positive worldview, meaning and purpose, psychological integration, hope and motivation, personal empowerment, a sense of control, role models for suffering, guidance for decision-making, answers to ultimate questions, and social support (Koenig 2006:38–42). Christianity, as a particular religion, should be understood to increase resilience outcomes in ways similar to those listed here. But theological reflection is needed not only to understand how these 'benefits'

[59] Cf. (Hauerwas 1985:23–25) and (Vanhoozer 2007:32).
[60] E.g. Matthew 22:36-40.
[61] Though many social scientists remain firmly planted in naturalist assumptions, others maintain alternative viewpoints.

are adopted, but also whether these 'benefits' are the appropriate aim of the Christian faith in the first place. In the process of such theological reflection, we will uncover additional insights and understandings that may both confirm and challenge social science research.[62]

Resilience, for the Christian, must be understood through the lens of the Christian Story.[63] From the perspective of this study, the Christian faith is not an addendum to the study of resilience; nor is it interchangeable with other faiths or reducible to spirituality or components thereof.[64] I contend that the Christian faith can provide an account of what lies at the heart of human resilience.

Sources of Theological Insight

The Judeo-Christian tradition is replete with texts encouraging resilience as well as stories of those who have been resilient through their faith.[65] Christian resilience, however, must be understood primarily through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.[66] These are the paradigmatic events of the Christian story and thereby, for the Christian, become symbols of the Christian life and the means of participating in God. In this way, they not only are viewed as historical realities, but also as representations of and the means by which life comes to the Christian: through dying and rebirth. This understanding is central to a Christian conception of resilience, yet 'Christian' resilience cannot be equated with these events.

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[62] Indeed, the impact of the Christian faith can only be partially measured by the social sciences. The changes brought about by participation in the Kingdom of God (such as salvation) cannot be measured by the modern social scientist. Cf. (Cook 2012:228).
[63] This will be the focus of the next chapter.
[64] See Michael Jensen's helpful discussion (2012:25–26). Significantly, in terms that will prove important in the following chapter, for the Christian, identity cannot be moved to the sidelines or otherwise explained away by non-religious factors (Jensen 2012:184).
[65] By way of example, Isaiah 40:28-31 and Hebrews 11 are two such texts.
[66] Andrew Root suggests the "death-to-life, life-out-of-death paradigm" of the *theologia crucis* as the unifying theme of Christian practical theology (Root 2014:83). I will further develop this theme in the next chapter.

Several authors have written specifically on the intersection of resilience and Christian theology.[67] The most significant of these works is *Resilience and the Virtue of Fortitude: Aquinas in Dialogue with the Psychosocial Sciences* by Craig Steven Titus (2006). This book evaluates social science resilience research in light of Thomas Aquinas' virtue theory, and in particular the virtue of fortitude, and provides a thorough and compelling analysis. Also important is M. Jan Holton's *Building the Resilient Community* (2011) which focuses on lessons learned about resilient faith communities garnered through her work with the 'Lost Boys' of Sudan.

Other works have been undertaken such as *Resilient Pastors: The Role of Adversity in Healing and Growth* (Allain-Chapman 2012), *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told us about Surviving and Thriving* (Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie 2013), and *The Resilient Pastor: Ten Principles for Developing Pastoral Resilience* (Searby 2015). These books focus mostly on the application of resilience principles to pastors and are therefore more practice-oriented than theoretical. Additionally, several articles have explored the theme of resilience from a theological perspective. Jim Dekker (2011) suggests that theology might help reveal what God is doing through situations of adversity in the lives of youth. Carrie Doehring (2015) posits that resilience primarily consists of spiritually integrating moral dilemmas.[68] David Bosworth (2011) suggests the biblical King David as a model of resilience, and, more generally, Siang-Yang Tan (2013) attempts to survey resilience and post traumatic growth from the perspective of a Christian psychologist. In similar fashion, scholars have written on the intersection of theology and concepts closely related to resilience, such as post traumatic growth (Yun 2011),[69] trauma (Beste 2007; Desmond 2012; McGowan 2009; Rambo 2010b), and hope (Breitbart and Heller

[67] Others do not specifically address the concept of resilience, but use the term in a theological manner. For instance, Cardinal Avery Dulles wrote *The Resilient Church: The Necessity and Limits of Adaptation* (1977) to address issues that the Roman Catholic church was facing following the Second Vatican Council. Dulles encourages Roman Catholics toward embracing a church that is rooted in history and tradition yet that is adaptive as to the means of furthering the Kingdom of God on this earth.
[68] While this certainly can be a significant portion of resilient adaptation, I do not believe that it encompasses the entirety of the concept.
[69] Joanna Collicutt McGrath (2006) fascinatingly suggests the concept of post-traumatic growth as a means of describing the growth of the early church.

2003; Kwan 2010). Though these studies do not specifically address resilience, their insights will be beneficial and have implications for the current study.

To date there has been little comprehensive theological evaluation of resilience, the assumptions undergirding the concept, or the possibilities for constructive dialogue between the social sciences and theology on this subject. This project aims to further a broader discussion toward that end. For this effort, I will enter into a dialogue with philosophers, theologians—medieval and modern—and biblical texts.[70] I will aim to integrate theological insight with social science and philosophical perspectives in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of resilience. To appreciate further the possibility of a theological assessment of resilience, I must also address the challenges that such a view presents.

Challenges Accorded by a Christian Understanding of Resilience

While the Christian faith presents many possibilities for enhancing understandings of resilience, it also poses several significant challenges to social scientific understandings of resilience. Of primary importance is the way in which the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ challenge 'secular' conceptions of resilience. Because Jesus Christ died an early death without ever producing physical progeny, in many senses he could represent the antithesis of resilience, as defined by secular naturalists.[71] Furthermore, his teachings promote seemingly non-resilient behavior, such as willfully forsaking claim to one's life.[72] From a naturalistic worldview the life and teachings of Jesus do not make sense—and rightly so. A different perspective is needed in order to make sense of the radical reshaping of the world in Christ.

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[70] In so doing, I will not be attempting a 'biblical theology' of resilience of the type described by David Kelsey (1975:24). Rather, primarily in chapter 6, I will be drawing on scripture as insight into the transformative purposes of God for this world, past, present, and future. In this way, my use of scripture would fall more in line, though not fully, with what Kelsey terms 'rendering as an agent' (1975:39) in which scripture is conceived of as the agent whereby humanity can encounter God. I differ from Kelsey's construal of this position in that I would maintain that scripture retains an inherent, communally affirmed, as well as functional authority. A position closer to my own is that advocated by Stephen Fowl (1998:6–9).

[71] E.g. (Karatoreos and McEwen 2013).

[72] E.g. Matthew 10:38-39; Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 9:23-25; Luke 14:26-27.

These tensions are exacerbated in the case of understanding resilient adaptation because Christians are exhorted to follow the example of Christ and view the world through the paradigmatic events of Christ's life.[73] This raises several important questions: Since Christians follow a Savior who was crucified, could the pursuit of life and flourishing, as conceived of in worldly terms, be at odds with it (Shuman and Meador 2002:102–5)? Moreover, what does it mean to follow a God who, even in heaven, maintains the scars of his suffering and looks like a Lamb who was slain (Shuman and Meador 2002:117)?[74] What implications does this have for understanding suffering and resilience? Finally, given that self-sacrifice is the norm for the Christian, one could ask whether resilience (secularly construed) is even a proper goal for the Christian?[75] As von Balthasar suggests, the teachings of Christ do "…not mean that every single Christian must suffer bloody [bodily] martyrdom, but he must consider the entire case as the external representation of the inner reality out of which he lives" (1994:22). Could it be that the Christian narrative reshapes how individuals understand human well-being, and therefore resilience? If there is such a thing as 'Christian resilience,' then, what does it look like?

I will address these questions over the course of the coming chapters in order to give a more adequate account of a Christian understanding of resilience. These reflections may also provide a critique of social scientific views of the concept in a way that can mutually enrich both disciplines. Rather than weakening the concept of resilience, I believe that such reflection will strengthen and enrich understandings of how humans adapt to difficulty. What must be assessed now, however, is how insights about resilience can be integrated across disciplines.

[73] E.g. Romans 6:4-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-32; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:24.
[74] Revelation 5:6.
[75] See (Jensen 2012:3–7, 99).

Integration: Questions of Methodology

Insights from the Social Sciences

The integration of insight across the disciplines of theology and the social sciences is not as straightforward as it might seem at first glance. Some would argue that such a dialogue is neither possible nor desirable.[76] Others suggest that it is possible, but differ about how it should be accomplished.[77] For this study, I draw upon Paul Ricoeur, who suggests the possibility of "a genuine interconnection of science and religion, on the edge of mystery" (Ricoeur 1984a:xi) where each discipline has a voice that is "at once distinct and complementary" (Ricoeur 1984a:xi).

Beginning, as in this study, with research from the social sciences has provided insight into resilient adaptation to adversity. However, the identification of ways individuals respond resiliently to adversity does not mean that we can proceed from there to understanding the material causes of this adaptation. In this dialogue, social scientific understandings of resilience are beneficial because they provide one means of describing human life, particularly at one locus of possible human interaction with the divine: adversity. The social sciences, rightly construed, can provide much insight into human adaption to adversity. This insight must be understood as one set of insights into the world rather than as fully explanatory itself. Thus, social science research should be placed in relation to a theological understanding of the nature of reality. What now must be attended to more closely is the role of divine action in human response to adversity.

Practical Theology and Divine Action

Practical theology as a discipline attempts to explore the relationship between divine and human action in the world. Swinton and Mowat define practical theology as "critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the

[76] E.g. (Segal 2006).
[77] See, for instance, Stephen Pattison's 'critical conversation' model based on Paul Tillich's critical correlation model (2000), Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's 'Chalcedonian' model (1995), and Andrew Root's 'Christopraxis' model (2014).

practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world" (2006:6). The relationship between divine and human action is fundamental to practical theology and has significant implications for a theological understanding of resilience.

Some believe, however, that practical theology has become too focused on human action to the detriment of attention to divine action. Andrew Root suggests that

> Practical theology has been able to create rich projects on human action in relation to church life, society, and pastoral practice. But these fruitful articulations have not always sailed practical theology into the deep waters of exploring divine action, therefore missing, in my mind, the generative and problematic nature of practical theology…[D]ivine action, if we are to contend that it is real—that is, a reality—is a transcendent mystery (2014:ix).[78]

Attention to divine action does not diminish the realm of human action. Indeed, it brings more clarity to it.[79] Rightly conceived, all Christian theology is practical and has 'real world' implications. Thus, relevance to human lived experience proceeds from the being of God which expresses itself through action, rather than from a human starting point.[80] It is the task of the Church—and therefore also of the theologian—to "speak about God, and…to take on the further task of criticizing and revising its speech about God, asking what Christian utterance can and should say today" (White 2009:112).[81] This task can only be accomplished because God continues to be at work in this world shaping lives and advancing the Kingdom of God.[82]

Thus, I contend that divine action is not only possible, but also has very real implications for the daily lived experience of those facing adversity. That is to say,

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[78] Similar cautions regarding the loss of the centrality of divine action in practical theology have been given by Stephen Pattison (2007:245, 257).
[79] Root suggests that attention to transcendence and divine action is immensely practical since divine action results in "distinct experiences with God that [individuals] believe are concrete, lived, and *real*. These very experiences direct their lives in formative ways…These experiences are bound in a reality that they claim is beyond them, a reality that transcends them, but which is nevertheless *real* to them and real in the most practical way" (Root 2014:x).
[80] Cf. (Bonhoeffer 1996:84–85) and (Root 2014:93).
[81] Citing (Barth 1936:3, 16).
[82] Root calls this 'Christopraxis,' "the continued ministering presence of Christ" (2014:xii).

divine action meets human experience in a way significant for resilience. Such a 'superempirical' viewpoint starts from "the possibility that the transcendent referent of human spirituality is *real* rather than simply *functionally* present" (Swinton 2001:84).[83] While it certainly is possible that some so-called 'encounters' with the divine are figments of the imagination, a total dismissal of the possibility of divine action calls into question the experiences of many as well as the entire Christian understanding of the world. On the other hand, allowing for the possibility of divine action gives credence to the testimony of many who claim to have experienced God and to have been changed.[84]

Christian resilience, if it is to be truly Christian in any sense, must include a conception of divine action. Because of this, we must also allow for an understanding of how divine and human action relate in the context of human resilience. While this relation is ultimately mysterious, some observations can be made about it. Examination of different manifestations of this relationship will be the subjects of future chapters.

Methodologies of Integration[85]

Such an undertaking, however, must be done with 'fear and trepidation.'[86] We provide "human epistemological 'best accounts' of an ontological reality of divine action, of how the eternal breaks into time and does so in concrete, lived experience" (Root 2014:59).[87] Our 'best accounts' are by nature fallible and must be embraced with humility, acknowledging our limitations as human beings. Because of our fallible understanding, insights taken from the social sciences certainly can and should critique

[83] Indeed, belief in God as a reality as opposed to belief in God as a myth makes a difference in health outcomes (Testoni et al. 2016).
[84] See, for instance, those interviewed by Root (2014:35ff) and Susan Shooter (2012).
[85] I would agree with Fraser Watts' assessment that "there is no radical incompatibility" between theology and psychology (2002:7) as well as Tillich's assertion that "[t]here is no conflict between faith in its true nature and reason in its true nature" (1957:80). But, as Watts notes, the disciplines are quite heterogeneous. Therefore, I would suggest that a social science account that is rooted in naturalistic assumptions may provide insight but cannot be fully integrated with a theological account of the world at a fundamental level. One should also keep in mind the cautions given by van Deusen Hunsinger on the 'asymmetrical' relationship between the disciplines due to the radical alterity of God's being (1995:xi–xii).
[86] What F. LeRon Shults call "apophatic humility" (2006:498).
[87] Thus, for Root, ontology takes precedence over epistemology (2014:15).

theological understandings of scripture and tradition. These critiques, however, remain at the level of hermeneutics, not fundamental content.[88] Of primary importance, the radical in-breaking of Jesus Christ as revealed in the narrative of scripture, provides the basis for the faith of the people of God.

Thus, both theological and social scientific understandings can be brought into question, though the primacy of revelation as a norm is held. Questions of hermeneutics, textual interpretation, and theological understandings are open to criticism, but not the ultimate reality of the in-breaking revelation of God. The fact of revelation makes it primary; notwithstanding the necessity of interpretive frameworks, which are fallible and in need of critical judgment. Experience, reason, and tradition are needed in this task.[89] What is clear is that the assumptions inherent in naturalistic social science theory at odds with *prima facie* theological truths, such as the possibility of divine action, are to be rejected.[90]

While others doing similar research on the intersection of theology and psychology have used a mutually critical correlation methodology, such as those proposed by David Tracy (1975), Don Browning (2010) and Stephen Pattison (2000),[91] I will take a different path. Referring to the integration of Christian ethics and moral psychology, Don Browning summarizes the mutually critical correlation methodology: "Christian ethics must critique these psychologies at the same time that it learns from them" (2006:3). With Swinton and Mowat (2006:77–97) I acknowledge many of the benefits of such a methodological model, but also recognize the danger in giving the same priority to human knowledge as to revelatory knowledge. As Swinton and Mowat ask, "Can the social sciences *really* challenge theology at a fundamental level" (2006:83)? If so, this would seem to give epistemological priority to the social sciences. Alternatively,

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[88] See Root's critique of the revised critical correlation method (Root 2014:273–76).
[89] Wesley's quadrilateral may provide insight here. Cf. (Thorsen 2005).
[90] Don Browning suggests that "*contemporary moral psychology can contribute to Christian ethics, but only when it does its research with competent pre-scientific or pre-empirical understandings of morality*" (2006:2). He continues: "moral psychology must build its empirical work on pre-empirical philosophical and even theological assumptions" which is possible because "Western philosophy and theology have been investigating human behavior for centuries" (2006:6).
[91] E.g. (Doehring 2010; Hogue 2010; Miller-McLemore 2010).

building on Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's 'Chalcedonian' model of integration (1995),[92] they propose a model which maintains critical dialogue but also the primacy of the Divine Word. Their model makes needed changes to Hunsinger's 'Chalcedonian' model by suggesting the core principles of hospitality, conversion, and critical faithfulness for interdisciplinary dialogue (Swinton and Mowat 2006:91–94). Finally, any model of integration that is adopted must both respect and preserve distinctions between disciplines while also synthesizing insights garnered from multiple disciplines (Hunsinger 1995:69, 75). Such distinctions are necessary to ensure disciplinary boundaries and to provide proper rules for interdisciplinary dialogue.

Within the interdisciplinary field that studies the intersection of theology and psychology, several models for integration have been proposed. Fraser Watt's suggestion of psychology and theology as 'complementary perspectives' is helpful in this regard (2002:8–10). Additionally, Crystal Park and Raymond Paloutzian (2005) suggest that the disciplines of psychology and the study of religion may be integrated with the social sciences using two key models: a multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm[93] and religion as meaning-making model.[94] Titus uses Stephen Pope's critical appropriation model for interdisciplinary insight. This model allows each discipline to sharpen the other, yet also provides the possibility for them to be synthesized (Titus 2006:93).[95]

[92] Van Deusen Hunsinger bases her model on Karl Barth's theology (1995:62–66).
[93] This model "recognizes the value of data at multiple levels of analysis while making nonreductive assumptions concerning the value of spiritual and religious phenomena" (Emmons and Paloutzian 2003:395). Similarly, Hatala suggests a methodology he calls "multilevel integrative analysis" which attempts to "dismantle conceptual borders between nature and nurture, biology and psychology, or science and spirituality" (2013:259).
[94] E.g. (Park 2005; Park and Folkman 1997; Silberman 2005).
[95] Titus notes, "Even if these scientific methods focus on different specific domains of human action, we need an overarching perspective that integrates and synthesizes the others…Within such a critical appropriation perspective, the next question involves how a theological approach elevates and completes psychosocial observations, information, and explanations" (2006:93–94).

Phronesis and Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Dialogue between disciplines (such as this study attempts), is not superfluous, rather it is a necessity for properly understanding the world.[96] As Root notes, "[r]eality itself pushes us into and out of such interdisciplinary conversation" (2014:284). This dialogue cannot be accomplished without a preliminary set of 'ground rules,' however. These rules help to dictate the terms and shape of the conversation. John Milbank suggests "the possibility of theology as a meta discourse" by which other disciplines can be understood (1990:1).[97]

For Milbank, any attempt to synthesize Christian theology with 'secular reason' is fraught with danger in which Christianity "may be perversely compromising with what, on its own terms, is either deviancy or falsehood" (1990:23). Here the lure of power and the complicity of some within the Church in supporting worldly power structures and presuppositions based in human understanding stand as warnings to those who would do likewise. Alasdair MacIntyre suggests, "the secular world must accept Christianity on its own terms and not on the terms of a secularized universe" (1981:130). As opposed to worldly power structures and belief systems that prioritize human power and rationality, Milbank proposes the idea "of theology as itself a social science, and the queen of the sciences for the inhabitants of the *altera civitas*, on pilgrimage through this temporary world" (1990:380). [98] In this view, theological accounts of the world stand as

[96] Green writes, "The uniqueness of the revelation to which Christians bear witness is best served, not by trying to immunize it against criticism by isolating it conceptually, but rather by freely exploring its manifold relations with other human phenomena" (1998:40).

[97] As I suggested earlier in this chapter, this is in opposition to using the meta-narrative of naturalism as a basis for enquiry regarding the nature of the world. In this regard, Alister McGrath suggests that ontology of the created order allows "the Christian narrative to be seen as a meta-discourse which *intentionally* seeks to embrace all human life and activity" (2002:110). Yet, we must be careful to distinguish between a naturalist epistemology, which is a necessary aspect of the scientific method, and a naturalist ontology.

[98] While these assertions are helpful in suggesting the primacy of the Divine Word, they must not be seen as precluding the possibility of mutual dialogue between disciplines, something that Milbank may tend towards. Alastair McGrath shares these critiques of Milbank (McGrath 2002:119). These views must be tempered by an attention to the fallibility of human knowledge—a point I will highlight through engagement with Paul Ricoeur's philosophy. Ricoeur's philosophy is especially suited, Boyd Blundell argues, to

the basis for understanding all aspects of life. Such a perspective is founded in the historical specificity of the Christian faith and the divine in-breaking into the world of Jesus Christ. This is understood, Stump argues, through the biblical narratives that together constitute a meta-narrative—a story within which all experiences of life, including suffering, and God can coexist (2012:22).

Yet founding accounts of reality in the Christian faith does not remove the Christian to esoteric realms of indifference. Instead, all other aspects of the world begin to fit into their proper place as a result of this primary move.[99] Kevin Vanhoozer suggests that various disciplines should be thought of in terms of "distinct activities and 'mission' statements." For Vanhoozer (dealing specifically with the fields of philosophy and theology), these disciplines

> pursue two distinct yet variously related missions, each concerned with, among other things, clarifying, providing guidance and truth-telling—in short, with the search for wisdom and understanding…What we have here are two distinct yet related discourses: the philosopher (and genius) says how the world goes; the theologian (and apostle) says how the Word goes. The discourses are related because each ultimately pertains to understanding the real world in which humans dwell and seek to live well, yet they are also distinct: the one works with universal human experience, the other binds itself to the authority of the canonical Scriptures that attest Christ (2007:35).[100]

Christian theology must be defined by and grounded in scripture, which provides the narrative of God's action in this world, yet be informed by accounts of reality provided by other sources. Such an approach is grounded in the community of the *ecclesia* and finds expression through Christian *praxis*. This *praxis* could also be understood in terms of the Aristotelian conception of *phronesis*, practical wisdom.[101] Integration between

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enable the engagement of theology with other disciplines in an era where theology is no longer regarded as "the queen of the sciences" (2011:127).

[99] Thus, C.S. Lewis' statement, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else" (1962:165). Significantly, Lewis' statement is the summation of comments regarding the integration of theological and scientific truth.

[100] Vanhoozer draws upon Kierkegaard for the examples of the genius and apostle. Vanhoozer sets up a dichotomy between these archetypes or, in other words, between the recipient of natural knowledge and the recipient of revelation (2007:34).

[101] See (Walton 2014) on the use of *phronesis* in practical theology. Care must be taken, Martha Nussbaum suggests, to note the limits of *phronesis*, especially in relation to tragedy (2002:265).

scientific and religious understanding lies in "*experience*" (Ricoeur 1984a:xi), that is, phronetic application within the person. Thus, science and theology can be integrated in the *person* who acts with practical wisdom.

Christian *Phronesis*

I suggest that a Christian conception of *phronesis*, practical wisdom, can act as a unifying concept in the pursuit of truth through both theology and the social sciences.[102] Wisdom from each discipline provides both insight into the nature of reality as well as practical implications for real life. The common pursuit of truth does not ensure lack of conflict, however. Where there is disagreement it becomes necessary to assert the primacy of theology's meta-narrative in this dialogue; from epistemological presuppositions to practical application, wisdom is required in the pursuit and integration of truth across disciplines.

This emphasis on Christian *phronesis* is not unlike David Ford's suggestion of Christian wisdom as an overarching hermeneutical principle for theology (2007).[103] Indeed his claim of "theology as wisdom" has much in common with Vanhoozer's conception of *phronesis* wherein the practical wisdom of Christian *phronesis* gains insight not only from theological sources, but from all of reality and the disciplines that attest to it (Vanhoozer 2007:50).

This understanding allows disciplines to complement rather than detract from one another in their pursuit of truth (Vanhoozer 2007:52–53). Yet the theologian and scientist go about the task of coming to know differently; the theologian speaking on the basis of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and the scientist and philosopher "by reflecting on the whole of human experience and seek[ing] to reach transcendence 'from below'" (Vanhoozer 2007:52).

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[102] Here I am advocating an approach similar to Jeremy Begbie's method for integrating insight from music and theology. He suggests, that "when music advances theology…it does so first and foremost by *enacting* theological wisdom" (2000:5).

[103] Significantly, Stump notes that "insight or intuitiveness…and wisdom…are the main excellences" of 'Franciscan' knowledge (2012:56). This is akin to Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), which has been re-appropriated by Shults (2006), among others.

In the same way, I would argue, the concept of Christian *phronesis* provides a way forward for interdisciplinary dialogue which affirms the priority of revelatory insight yet also highly values insight from other sources, such as the social sciences.[104] This understanding also characterizes wisdom as both communal and practical. Furthermore, it begins to transcend the modern/postmodern and analytic/Continental philosophy divides (Vanhoozer 2007:44) and can include both 'Dominican' and 'Franciscan' types of knowledge. Christian *phronesis* has as its *telos* the ultimate flourishing found in the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God. It works towards "the *salus* of the individual; the *shalom* of the community; the glorification of the *shema* or name of God" (Vanhoozer 2007:46). These goods constitute the proper *telos* of Christian *phronesis* and of Christian resilience.

As with Milbank's use of theology as a meta-discourse, the 'ground rules' of interdisciplinary dialogue are framed by the in-breaking of God into the world. This is not an appeal to 'doctrine' in an abstract sense—Vanhoozer contends that Christian doctrine in itself is a form of *phronesis*—rather this is an appeal to a Person: "Jesus is the clue to transcending boundaries between philosophy [and, I would add, science] and theology because it is through an examination of his life that we come to understand the drama of universal history and the being-in-act of God" (Vanhoozer 2007:50). Thus, Jesus Christ makes interdisciplinary dialogue possible: "for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created…all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."[105]

Phronesis is, at its core, about practical application.[106] That is to say that a philosophy or worldview cannot be abstracted from the practical living out of its principles (Hadot 1995). This was just as true for the ancient philosophers as it is for modern scientists—

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[104] Vanhoozer suggests that this discussion must be understood "in terms not of faith versus reason but of rival forms of *phronesis*" (2007:44). Browning also suggests *phronesis* (what he calls 'practical reason') as a means of integrating insights across disciplines. His use of the concept, however, falls within his mutually critical correlation methodological framework. Cf. (Browning 2006:17–22).
[105] Colossians 1:16-17, NRSV.
[106] Shults suggests a "soteriological passion" inherent in transformative Christian wisdom (2006:499).

what an individual believes has significant impact on everyday life, including resilience to adversity.

Conclusions on Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Mikael Leidenhag suggests that a recent trend among theologians has been "to naturalize and reinterpret the task of theology and the nature and function of religious language." Yet this pragmatic, naturalist understanding is not helpful for the task of theology (Leidenhag 2014). Similarly, both Coles (1990), as a psychiatrist, and Milbank (1990:101), as a theologian, offer significant and insightful critiques of theologians who adopt sociological assumptions as starting points for their theology.

As I have claimed, if one begins with the assumptions of social science, one will be locked into methodologies and conclusions limited by this outlook – a worldview some claim as ahistorical and empirical but that in actuality is closely linked to the philosophical developments of the Western world (Harrison 2015). Alternatively, Milbank suggests theology as a meta-discourse within which productive dialogue can take place.[107] Additionally, in lieu of a hermeneutic of suspicion, Milbank advocates "a 'meta-suspicion' which casts doubt on the possibility of suspicion itself" (1990:102).[108] As we will see with Ricoeur, such a reaction against the nihilism of 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is justified; this approach would require a re-ordering of many current Western philosophical assumptions but may be necessary for further fruitful enquiry.

In the end, the complexity of human existence is a mystery. It may take an alternative to scientific naturalism to lay hold of it. Finally, the theologian has something to say about reality which neither the philosopher nor the scientist can. As Shakespeare noted,

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[107] In Milbank's view, science plays an important, though secondary role: "there can be no 'science' of the entire social system in its every aspect. Nevertheless, science *can* comprehend the points at which all the sub-systems function in relation to each other, the supposed level of 'society' itself" (Milbank 1990:109).

[108] Milbank continues: "Religions, characteristically, involve 'eccentric' customs, attachments to particular times and places, constant repetition of the singular. It is the spurious claim of sociology to be able to master, through a superior metadiscourse, this eccentricity, singularity and repetition" (1990:104).

'There are more things in heaven and earth…/Than are dreamt of in your philosophy' (Hamlet Act I, scene V).

Questions and Cautions

Religion/Spirituality as Operationalized Therapy

Despite the possibilities for understanding resilience through the lens of Christian theology, we must also note the cautions and limitations present when we consider the suitability of theological dialogue with the social sciences. For instance, we must consider the appropriateness of using or encouraging religion as a means of increasing health (Knapp, Lemoncelli, and VandeCreek 2010).[109] Should R/S be understood simply as a tool at the disposal of the practitioner? Some researchers have attempted to operationalize constructs related to R/S in this way with a demonstrated positive correlation to health and increased attendance in the context of growing churches (Ellsworth and Ellsworth 2009, 2010). At many levels, however, it is theologically problematic to utilize R/S for purposes external to the constructs themselves. Richard Sloan, a critic of the attempt to incorporate R/S into healthcare, suggests that we must consider the moral and ethical implications of asking people to change their deeply held religious beliefs for the sake of faith (2008:258). Significantly, this is very similar to the critique given by theologians (Shuman and Meador 2002). At the same time, we must acknowledge that R/S has important implications for human well-being. Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) and Stanley Hauerwas (1986) suggest that a theological view of human nature provides much needed insight into medical practice, especially in regards to medical ethics. Swinton (2000) suggests that the medical model is incomplete for explaining the phenomenon of mental illness and providing care for those suffering from it. Could there be a way forward that embraces the possibilities of faith in medical practice yet also safeguards that use against distortion?

Wendy Cadge (2013) argues that this is not simple a question of *whether* we should use R/S in the promotion of health, but *how* it is already being used by healthcare professionals. Thus, these questions are not about theoretical situations, but about how

[109] Many of these cautions have been addressed more fully in (Shuman and Meador 2002).

to best equip and guide those who are already doing this kind of work. In this regard, these are not just questions of 'What works to promote health?' but also 'Why?' and, more importantly, 'With what implications?' [110] We cannot mistake the goal of the Kingdom of God as ultimately being the promotion of finite individual human well-being, humanly understood. Certainly, the greatest good for humankind is the advent of the Kingdom of God, but temporal individual human well-being may be a byproduct rather than the main *telos* of the Kingdom.[111]

Simplicity Versus Complexity

As I argued in the last chapter, the preponderance of evidence suggests that R/S can play an important role in promoting resilient outcomes in adverse circumstances. Yet this does not give the entire picture.[112] The simple claim, 'Religion/spirituality helps to reduce depression'[113] does not give full credence to the experience of thousands of Christians who currently struggle with depression despite a strong faith.[114] Nor does it give full voice to scripture,[115] or the experience of saints throughout the ages.[116] We must give voice to those within our faith communities who deal with depression and hear their pain without trying to provide a 'quick fix' (Swinton 2001:93–96, 112–34).

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[110] Swinton and Mowat provide helpful insight on this matter: "The key thing in this understanding is not that the practice brings particular benefits to individuals or communities (although it may do). The important thing is that the practice bears faithful witness to the God from whom the practice emerges, and whom it reflects, and that it enables individuals and communities to participate faithfully in Christ's redemptive mission. Thus the efficacy of the practice (the good to which it is aimed), is not defined pragmatically by its ability to fulfil particular human needs (although it will include that), but by whether or not it participates faithfully in the divine redemptive mission" (2006:22).

[111] See (Shuman and Meador 2002).

[112] The tendency to simplify rather than recognize the complexity of resilience must be resisted: "We can therefore neither equate the resilience perspective with statistical psychosocial research on resilience nor all research findings with reductionistic or deterministic approaches. Complementary efforts in resilience research seek to remain more open to spiritual-religious experience, attempting to provide 'thicker' accounts of human experience" (Titus 2006:82).

[113] For which there is some evidence; see Chapter 2.

[114] E.g. (Greene-McCreight 2006).

[115] E.g. The Psalms of Lament.

[116] E.g. St. John of the Cross.

What can be said, then? Does R/S promote resilience? Does it lead to health? The answers to these questions cannot be reduced to a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. The answer is much more complex and will involve a deeper exploration of the nature of human experience. I believe that Christian theology may prove explanatory for experiences of adversity and for resilience to adversity. This source of meaning, however, cannot be reduced to simple truisms. The way God works in this world is mysterious and wonderful—including the way in which suffering can be endured and even transformed. What we must avoid, therefore, is a simplistic and generalized assessment of the role of R/S in resilience that reduces religious input to 'belief' that encourages a person and helps him or her get on well in life. Instead, Christian theological understandings of resilience must be deeply rooted in the knowledge that all of life is grounded in and comes through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, this understanding must be specifically related to the historical events of his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Anything less cannot truly be considered Christian theology.

Resilience Reframed

Resilience, then, must be 'reframed' in order to understand it coherently from a Christian theological perspective. This does not mean that social scientific understandings of resilience should be jettisoned, only that their limitations should be acknowledged. At the same time, the challenges presented by incorporating insights from Christian theology into a concept that is at home in the social sciences are marked. The difficulty of this dialogue does not discount the potential insights to be gained through it, however.

How, then, can resilience be 'reframed' so as to incorporate insights from Christian theology? Following Stump, I suggest that we must pay closer attention to forms of knowledge other than analytic knowledge. This may also include new ways of approaching knowledge and new understandings of human personhood. While these approaches may not describe the totality of what it means to be human, in many cases it can provide clarity of a different sort than analytical exploration (Stump 2012:41).

This journey will include evaluation of experiences of the transcendent that give insight into the true nature of reality (Underhill 1912:142) but are unavailable to many social scientists due to their insistence upon naturalistic presuppositions. In order to understand effects upon resilience outcomes, more must be said about personhood and the identity of the Christian, especially relating to the use of narrative to create meaning and construct identity.

Conclusion

I contend that much can be gained by putting the social scientific concept of resilience in dialogue with Christian theology. In order to do this, however, we must forge a way for integrating insights from both disciplines. This means that we must clarify assumptions and methodologies so as to provide the best account of the resilience concept. I believe that an interdisciplinary approach based on Christian *phronesis*, practical wisdom, and expressed through narrative can best take into account the multiple disciplines needed to arrive at a richer description of resilience.[117] This perspective is needed as an alternative to the reductive naturalistic assumptions inherent in much current resilience research. Finally, although this thesis is not directed towards creating specific protocols for strengthening resilience, some specific practicalities will emerge through putting the concept in dialogue with Christian theology.

Is a Christian conception of resilience compatible with a social scientific understanding of the concept that is grounded in naturalistic materialism? Yes and no. In the sense that 'natural' resilience is an expression of the goodness of the created order: yes. To the extent that participation in Christ increases finite human flourishing, it may also have relevance for the study of resilience. On the other hand, the goals of 'Christian' resilience and 'natural' resilience are different. To the extent that penultimate temporal flourishing supplants or diminishes ultimate human flourishing in the Kingdom of God, then it is to be rejected, even if it could be supposed to contribute to human flourishing. How are we to navigate these intricacies? I believe that further theological reflection on

[117] As with any methodology, there are strengths and weaknesses. The potential limitations and complications associated with this method will be addressed more fully in the next chapter.

the topic of resilience provides the best way forward, with particular attention to the disclosure of meaning through narrative and the relational connection inherent in narratival conceptions of human identity.

Chapter 4: Paul Ricoeur on Narrative and Personhood

"It was the spring of 1975, and my country was on the cusp of an historic political cataclysm…All around me, people were tense and anxious…I was beyond tears. Beyond fear. Yet I wasn't ready to surrender to some futile fate. I was consumed by a sense of urgency…

Thousands of people were surging against a wide metal gate, trying to get inside the embassy compound…Before we knew what was happening, we were swept up in the frenzy …We…scrambled up the gate and onto the platform, oblivious to the barbed wire that was stripping the clothes from our backs and puncturing our skin…we turned our backs on the frenzied mob and hurled ourselves onto the grass inside the American Embassy compound…Despite our desperate situation, I felt a strange calm. I wasn't the least bit nervous…With each passing minute, I felt more and more certain that God was about to act.

Suddenly, in the midst of the crowd and the confusion and the darkness, I saw everything around me with luminous clarity. It was as if I had tunnel vision, where objects appeared larger than life and seconds seemed to last forever…It was then that I noticed the other gate…no one was lined up behind it…The plan was risky—perhaps crazy—but something prompted me to take a chance…Everything was happening so fast—we just kept running…we scrambled up the iron steps and onto the embassy roof.

There, in front of my eyes, was a flying machine…As the chopper pulled away from the embassy roof, I couldn't resist the temptation to look outside…Outside it was raining fire. Bright, burning bullet tracers, from rifles ben on bringing down our chopper, crisscrossed the night sky. The streaks were so close I could almost touch them…But I knew I was safe" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:5–6, 8–9, 14–17).

In the previous chapter, I suggested the naturalist ontological framework undergirding much social science research is not entirely adequate for understanding the complexity of human resilience to adversity. In this chapter I seek to lay an alternative philosophical and theological foundation for understanding resilience, primarily through reflection on the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. Two aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy in particular are especially relevant for understanding resilience: Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology—which suggests the power of language to create new ways of being-in-the-world—and Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology—which proposes that knowledge of the self is possible through relation to the Other. First, a few words must be said about the utility of narrative for understanding the world.

Narrative

Dissection versus Narration

To a degree, the scientist—including the social scientist—must create distance between herself and the object of study in order to better understand it.[1] However, such abstraction puts the social scientist above and removed from what is being studied.[2]

This 'abstraction'[3] can be quite helpful, as shown in the case of identifying significant contributing factors to resilience. There is also a sense, however, in which abstraction is not beneficial. In such a case, the sum of the parts is not greater than the whole.[4]

While abstracting and dissecting the resilient person to determine effective causes of resilience is valuable, in the end the resilient person must be considered as a whole rather than a set of abstracted parts, as in the case of determining particular characteristics correlated with resilience. That is to say, it is the person (or the community, organism, etc.) working together as an entirety that functions resiliently, not only one part.[5] Hence the resilient individual should be considered as a person *qua* person. Further, an individual's resilience is perhaps best understood as a story: this happened, which led her to do thus and so, with the result of her current situation. In significant ways, understanding a person's response to trauma may be best accomplished through narrative.[6] As R. Ruard Ganzevoort notes, through narrative:

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[1] Milbank argues that "to ascribe meaning is the same as giving a narrative account of antecedents, and a description in terms of final goal and purpose" (1990:249).
[2] The use of narrative and other qualitative methodologies seeks to bridge the gap between subject and object.
[3] This is the term that Stephen Crites (1971:308) also uses.
[4] Similarly, Ricoeur suggests that "on the one hand, alienating distanciation is the attitude that renders possible the objectification that reigns in the human sciences; but on the other hand, this distanciation, which is the condition of the scientific status of the sciences, is at the same time the fall that destroys the fundamental and primordial relation whereby we belong to and participate in the historical reality that we claim to construct as an object" (1991c:75).
[5] While his ascription of mind functions to particular parts of the brain is potentially problematic, McGilchrist does assess this correctly. He writes that "[i]ndividuals are, after all, *Gestalt* wholes: that face, that voice, that gait, that sheer 'quiddity' of the person or thing, defying analysis into parts" (2010:51).
[6] The use of narrative for understanding religious coping responses is quite well established. E.g. (Ganzevoort 1998b, 1998c).

> we directly access the person's process of attributing meaning to events and of construing a meaningful framework for dealing with his or her life experiences. Instead of trying to isolate and objectify factors, we acknowledge the fact that spirituality and coping are personal constructions of meaning…[Additionally] the narrative approach facilitates a hermeneutical interpretation of the interactions between the person's meaning system and the framework offered by the spiritual tradition in which (s)he might be positioned (2009).

The 'thicker' account of human being through narrative also highlights the difference between knowing a person and knowing information.[7] As we explored in the last chapter, modernity could be said to be obsessed with the rational pursuit of analytical knowledge to the exclusion of other forms of knowledge—with damaging results.[8]

This dysfunction extends beyond merely scientific ways of thinking about the world to include detached philosophical enquiry. For Evelyn Underhill, this type of thinking is

> stultified by the exclusive intellectualism of its own methods: by its fatal trust in the squirrel-work of the industrious brain instead of the piercing vision of the desirous heart. It interests him, but does not involve him in its processes: does not catch him up to the new and more real life which it describes (1912:15).[9]

Thus, a more holistic method of enquiry is needed to delve into questions of human existence and flourishing. Through narratives of concrete experience the complexity of life can begin to be grasped. Narrative gets at the 'heart' of resilience because resilience cannot be reduced to possessing a set of abstract attributes. Rather, resilience is about the *experience* of adversity and the *adaptive response* of the whole person to that adversity. This most certainly includes 'intangibles' such as belief and emotion that are not easily 'dissected.'

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[7] Stump also makes the distinction between knowledge *about* persons and *knowing* a person (Stump 2012:53–56). See below for more on this subject.
[8] This too, McGilchrist correctly assesses. See his comments (2010:6) as well as my further assessment later in this chapter. Gerard Loughlin describes modernity as "the idea that humanity is the maker of its own destiny, of progress toward technological and social utopia" (1999:6) and the quest of modernity as "the telling of a master story with scientific rigour" (1999:8).
[9] It was not customary for writers in previous eras to use gender inclusive language. For the sake of the integrity of the text, I will not alter it. In my own usage, I will alternate between gendered pronouns.

Possibilities in Narrative Understandings of Resilience

Researchers of resilience have found narrative to be a particularly useful form of enquiry into the way individuals successfully navigate adverse circumstances.[10] Narrative has proven useful to occupational therapists in enabling their patients to move beyond trauma (Mattingly 1998) and in projecting a narrative of recovery that is more likely to be actualized (Goldstein, Kielhofner, and Paul-Ward 2004; Johnston et al. 1999; Price et al. 2012). Narrative based approaches to therapy have been used successfully with children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Africa (Mwenisongole 2010) and veterans of war (Stepakoff 2007). Similarly, the narrative coherence of one's life story has been shown to be positively correlated with posttraumatic growth in young adults (Jirek 2011).

Others have also found narrative helpful as a means of healing and resolving traumatic experiences (Hautamäki and Coleman 2001; Niederhoffer and Pennebaker 2005; Walton 2002). One study showed that deliberate rumination and reflection on traumatic experiences is significantly correlated with Post Traumatic Growth (Stockton, Hunt, and Joseph 2011).[11] It could be suggested that rumination and reflection are integral aspects of the narrative processing of traumatic events and therefore could be associated with the process of PTG.

Michael Ungar is among the social science resilience researchers who suggest the utility of narrative for understanding resilient responses to adversity. He proposes building 'narratives of resilience' as a means of helping youths become more resilient (2004:196). Because individuals face adversity within the context of life experiences which may be hermeneutically interpreted, narrative can be a useful tool for understanding and successfully navigating adversity.[12] These benefits hold true across

[10] The following examples represent attempts within the social sciences to use narrative approaches for both understanding and enriching human experience. Such attempts begin to move beyond the problems associated with modern secular scientific assumptions that were noted in the previous chapter. For a further exploration of the role narrative may play in clinical practice that takes into account spirituality, see (Cook, Powell, and Sims 2016).

[11] See also (Bosson, Kelley, and Jones 2012).

[12] Paul Ricoeur's philosophy (to be addressed shortly) provides an explanation for why this may be the case.

varied cultural contexts. In many cultures, storytelling is a highly valued norm and a common form of corporate coping and healing. This norm may well make discussing difficult experiences more acceptable, even bringing to light disparities in power dynamics and empowering those who are marginalized (Ganzevoort 2012:218, 222).

The Need for Narrative Understandings

Narrative can provide a needed corrective to reductive tendencies within analytic ways of thinking. Stump, herself an analytic philosopher, argues that "what is missing in analytic philosophy can be gotten from narratives" (2012:38). Furthermore, she suggests that "there are things we can know that are philosophically significant, but that are difficult or impossible to know and express apart from stories" (2012:40). In many disciplines, even within the social sciences where narrative and qualitative methodologies are widely used, it is still necessary to reemphasize the use of narrative as a foundational epistemological philosophy and way of understanding the world, not merely a methodology. As Milbank notes, "the selection of the right stories told the right way becomes *the most central concern* of philosophy" (2015:225).

Here we must clarify that 'narrative' itself should be understood broadly, as only one aspect of semantic expression out of many that share common features. To this end, we will use the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur to explore how metaphor, and language itself, mediates experience. I will focus in this chapter on how a narrative approach to human experience and personhood can be beneficial for conceptions of resilience. Because of the benefits of using narrative for understanding positive adaptation to adversity, it may provide insight into resilience.[13] First an overview of the use of narrative in recent theology is needed.

Narrative and Theology

Many within the discipline of theology have recently appropriated narrative as a methodological and epistemological framework. This may be, in part, due to an acknowledgement that the Christian scriptures are themselves comprised of many texts

[13] Others have suggested the importance of narrative in religious coping. See, for instance, (Ganzevoort 1998b, 1998c; Kleinman 2006; Stump 2012).

in the narrative genre, but also because scripture as a whole can be construed in terms of narrative: the narrative of Divine Salvation History (Loughlin 1999:8). In this vein, Rowan Williams notes, "Theology…tells the story of how the world becomes inhabited by God, 'how God transforms flesh…by creating living relationships with himself'" (2007:3). Such an emphasis on theology as a narrative discipline has not always been the case, however.

In various eras of Christian history an emphasis on correct dogma was paramount, which served as a necessary corrective to denials of seminal Christian doctrine. In the West, approximately the past 50 years have seen an increased acknowledgement of the personal nature of Christian formation. Coupled with developments in Western philosophical thought, this brought the need for narrative and phenomenological accounts of Christian experience to the forefront of scholarly thought.[14] This 'narrative turn' took place across a variety of disciplines in the second half of the twentieth century and was precipitated, in large part, by the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur (Ganzevoort 2012:215).

Ganzevoort suggests several benefits for the use of narrative in theology:

> [N]arrativity underscores the parallels of written texts and meaningful human action…[thus] a narrative perspective can serve as a meta-theoretical framework. It may help us understand the connection between theology and social sciences and the discussion of contesting approaches within both worlds… [and therefore] a narrative perspective has a strong potential for interdisciplinary communication and research. Third, taking a narrative turn involves a hermeneutical stance, in which the individual biography and religious construction are valued over general descriptions and statistical averages. From a theological point of view, this is called for if we want to do justice to voices of the oppressed and the unheard…[thus] a narrative approach has the advantage of proximity to the object of investigation (1998a:24).

Clearly then, a narrative methodology affords significant benefits in a study such as this. In part, this is because "concrete and specific narratives of real people," such as we will

[14] Scholars have taken the insights of narrative theology in a number of different directions, with some emphasizing the constructivist dimensions of narrative and others seeing it primarily as explanatory of traditional Christian dogma (Ganzevoort 2012:218–19). But Alan Jacobs (2003) criticizes some narrative theologians for being more concerned with the narrative structure of religious traditions than the narrative structure of human lives.

encounter later, can challenge hegemonic understandings of the world (Ganzevoort 2014:15).

Semiotic communication, including narrative, may be beneficial at an even more fundamental level for theology. Garrett Green argues that narratives can be a means knowing God in the world (1998:126ff). Janet Soskice goes beyond this to suggest that metaphor, as a particular form of language, is necessary to enable speaking about God at all.[15] The one who would attempt to speak of God without the use of metaphor, she argues, must realize that "attacks on the meaningfulness of his metaphorical language are, in fact, attacks on any of his attempts to speak of a transcendent God." This is because metaphor is the "principle means" by which we speak about God due to the infinite qualitative difference between God and humanity (Soskice 1985:x). Thus, in significant ways, our knowledge of God is mediated by semiotic means, including, for Ricoeur, language.

It follows, then, that a robust understanding of language can better enable us to speak about God and actuate faith in meaningful ways.

Recent Use of Narrative and Theology

The marriage of narrative and theology is not new. Narrative has been used theologically in various capacities, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, for millennia (Ganzevoort 2012:214; Graham, Walton, and Ward 2005:78–80; Loughlin 1999:x).[16] Some questioned the 'staying power' of such a union more than 25 years ago (Hauerwas and Jones 1989:1), yet theologians continue to find narrative a powerful means of theological enquiry given current societal, intellectual, and cultural trends, and, more primarily, given the narrative nature of the Christian Gospel.[17] This topic has been widely written upon and debated for many years, so I will merely provide a broad

[15] I will address the connection between metaphor and narrative later in this chapter through the lens of Paul Ricoeur's philosophy.
[16] Loughlin includes Augustine and Aquinas among those whose theology is "narrativist in character" (1999:x). Ganzevoort adds Bonaventure to this list (2012:215).
[17] E.g. (Loughlin 1999; Stump 2012). While the Christian Gospel may be expressed propositionally, it is founded in the narrative accounts of Christ's life.

survey of the subject, focusing particularly upon the narrative philosophy of Paul Ricoeur.

In a highly influential and controversial 1971 article, philosopher Stephen Crites suggested that 'story' is integral to who human beings are and the way in which they experience the world.[18] For Crites, "the fact that people speak some language is no historical accident. It is a necessary mark of being human…[and therefore] the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative" (1971:291). Such a thesis has significant implications for how human beings and their experiences are understood. In regard to religion, Crites suggests that 'sacred stories' have deep significance attached to them: people "awaken to a sacred story, and their most significant mundane stories are told in the effort, never fully successful, to articulate it" (1971:296). While not writing as a theologian himself, much of Crites' argument was deemed significant by many 'narrative theologians.' Thus, Crites' thesis, "stories give qualitative substance to the form of experience because it is itself an incipient story" (1971:297), takes on added significance in a theological context.[19]

All human experience is shaped by narrativity and narratival form and, for Crites, the meaningfulness of human experience is intricately tied to one's perception of the meta-story (Crites 1971:307). In his thinking, a significant aspect of the narrative quality of experience is the narratival structure of memory. In his thinking, memory gives experience coherence by making one aware of the succession of moments and being able to "abstract coherent unities from this succession" rather than seeing events as disconnected and unrelated, leaving one "locked in a bare, momentary present" (1971:298).

Crites' article presents theologians and philosophers substantial possibilities for understanding human experience, suggesting a connection between personal, sacred, and cultural narratives (Graham et al. 2005:63). Alternately, Hans Frei suggests that the

[18] The extent to which Crites drew from Ricoeur and similar philosophers is unclear.
[19] Crites recognized the limitations of his argument, particularly that his argument is circular, yet concludes that "in the end it has only the explanatory power of this particular circle to commend it" (1971:297).

basis for all theology is the particular story of the Bible: "For Frei, the scriptural story comes first and last; we have no need of anything more" (Loughlin 1999:67). Thus, while still utilizing narrative, Frei suggests the primacy of understanding the Christian faith as a story (Frei 1993a:43). With Karl Barth, Frei opposes much modern theology "in advocating a diametrically opposed theology, one that seeks to fit the world into the story of God rather than God into the story of the world" (Loughlin 1999:34).

Frei indicates that "narrative is not an accidental form for the expression of Christian faith in Jesus Christ." Rather, "faith in the person of Jesus" necessitates belief that "his identity as God's Christ is given in his life, death and resurrection, and that can be given to us only in story" (Loughlin 1999:67).[20] For Frei, "Jesus *is* his story" (Frei 1993a:42). Frei's reading presupposes the possibility of what he calls 'realistic narrative'—the ability to read the text without reference to any prior literary theory or philosophical category (1974:13). Kevin Vanhoozer challenges him on this point, arguing that some prior understanding of how 'realistic narrative' is generally construed is necessary (1990:164).[21]

Thus, two 'camps' within narrative theology have emerged;[22] one which takes as its starting point human experience—what Vanhoozer calls 'mediating' theology—and one which takes scripture alone as its starting point—which Vanhoozer terms 'Anselmian' theology. As we shall see, Vanhoozer suggests Paul Ricoeur's narrative philosophy as a possible mediation between these two poles.[23] Similarly, Loughlin distinguishes

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[20] See (Frei 1993a:35, 43).

[21] I largely agree with Vanhoozer's assessment of Frei, although Loughlin's use of Erich Auerbach and his idea of "a unique narrative form, suited to a unique subject" as a way of coherently explaining Frei's 'realistic narrative' is insightful (1999:73). Also insightful is Frei's later dismissal of 'realistic narrative' as a non-prior category of discourse and subsequent embracing of the communal reading of the Church as norm for interpreting scripture (Frei 1993b:16–17; Loughlin 1999:78–79). It should be noted, however, that such a method still requires the use of a prior category of understanding. Frei's attempt in all of this is to ensure the priority of biblical authority. He does this in part through divorcing it from any appeal to human meaningfulness (1974:128–30). This, to me, seems unnecessary. Why, for instance, should it not be the case that the biblical text is all the more humanly meaningful *because* of its authority, not *despite* it?

[22] Cf. (Duffy 2009:12).

[23] Thus, Ricoeur's own assessment of how his philosophy can mediate between these two positions, a benefit of which, he suggests is due to his philosophical hermeneutics:

between 'textualists'—such as Mark Taylor and Don Cupitt—and 'narrativists'—such as George Lindbeck and John Milbank—primarily based upon narrativists' concern, with not only the fact of a story being told, but also *what* story is being told (1999:18).[24] Thus, he suggests that Lindbeck and Milbank are orthodox Christian theologians because they see the subject matter of the Christian story as being of primary importance for narrative theology.

I have much affinity with Loughlin's position and the claim that all of theology must be grounded specifically in the Christian story and scriptures rather than beginning from human experience.[25] I would suggest, however, that such distinction could place a strict dichotomy between theological and philosophical assumptions that is, ultimately, not possible. At some level, philosophical assumptions will always be present in theology. Rather than viewing this as a problem to escape, this can be seen as a function of the nature of enquiry into truth in this world. Of course, we must also address issues raised by the conjunction of theology and philosophy, in this case particularly issues with the ideology of narrative theology.

Difficulties with Narrative Theology

Narrative theology has been associated with constructivist views of reality. As I have shown above, this is not always the case. However, certain emphases within a narrative and hermeneutical epistemology are able to provide a balance to a naïve foundationalist view of reality. While narrativist understandings of the contextual nature of reality can be helpful, as a Christian theologian intent upon the primacy of the Divine Word, I must also acknowledge that God is prior to and outside of language. As Loughlin notes, "one of the things that we know *in* language is that there are things *outside* language. Though words are used to talk about things, we can use them to talk about things other than

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"This specific manner of responding to the first task of hermeneutics offers the signal advantage, in my opinion, of preserving the dialogue between philosophy and the human sciences, a dialogue that is interrupted by the two counterfeit forms of understanding and explanation I reject" (Ricoeur 1991a:18–19). Frei was critical of Ricoeur, but whether his assessment of Ricoeur's philosophy was justified is another matter (Frei 1993b:16).

[24] Loughlin suggests: "this is the central problematic that narrativist theology poses to the Church…do we start from the Word or the world?" (1999:83).

[25] See Loughlin's very helpful comments (1999:79).

words" (1999:23). Of primary importance, then, is the ability to speak about the Triune God as the real referent of our language.

I contend that a purely postmodern[26] non-foundationalist perspective, in addition to being problematic for Christian theology, does not adequately address the challenges of human resilience to adversity,[27] nor is it capable of creating and sustaining the meaning necessary to navigate significant distress.

Scholars have both affirmed and criticized recent narrative theology. One Evangelical scholar suggests both of these responses are necessary when addressing narrative theology (Fackre 2001). Another scholar emphasizes the limits of the use of narrative in theology (Griffiths 2001). One of the most significant critiques of narrative theology comes from Francesca Murphy and concerns the denial of realism. She suggests narrative must be used carefully in theology; its use does not necessarily equate to a denigration of realism, but it can too quickly take center stage. Her thesis is that an emphasis upon the methodology of narrative in narrative theology "slides into the place of content or subject matter" with the result being that "God *is* a story" (2007:1).[28] She seeks to relate several modern narrative theologians to the theology of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth. Interestingly, however, she notes,

> My aim is not to show that narrative theologies are in or out of line with Thomas' or Barth's writings but that, far from bending theology back to the shape of biblical revelation, they intensify the angular rationalism to which contemporary theology is culturally prone (2007:6).[29]

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[26] Jean-François Lyotard suggests that "postmodernism is what happens when master stories lose their appeal and become incredible" (1984:xxiv). As cited in (Loughlin 1999:9).

[27] Loughlin notes that in postmodernism "[w]e have to make up our own individual, little stories. We have to be our own story-tellers, our own little masters. And this is something good, something to be happy about; or so the story goes" (1999:9). Further, he suggests that "[t]he chief problem with textualist theology is that it is not textualist enough. It tells us that there are only stories, but it tends to obscure the fact that in that case, textualism also is only a story; and it tends to obscure the fact that it is a nihilist and not a Christian story" (1999:17). This issue will be further addressed in the discussion of Paul Ricoeur's philosophy.

[28] Murphy, at the same time, acknowledges that many narrative theologians would be at odds with her way of characterizing narrative theology (2007:17).

[29] Murphy argues that narrative theology, despite its efforts, remains foundationalist in nature (2007:36, 63, 80).

While I admire Murphy's commitment to preserving the real referent of Christian theology, I do not think that she succeeds in correctly assessing narrative theology as a whole.

Interestingly, Murphy does not address Ricoeur in *God is Not a Story* (2007) despite his significant impact upon understandings of narrative and narrative theology.[30] I contend, she misconstrues narrative theology itself, in part by failing to address Ricoeur, but also more generally.[31] This may be seen in her characterization of narrative theology: "Narrative theologies conceive the Trinity in a modalistic way because, without plenal, self-giving truth, one must have a modalistic notion of the *person*—the person as a self-begetting, autonomous substrate which only *appears* to engage with others" (Murphy 2007:307–8). This is not only fundamentally untrue of Ricoeur's conception of the person, but also misconstrues Ricoeur's narrative theory.

There are other dangers associated with narrative theology. Ganzevoort suggests "narrative approaches run the risk of becoming too cerebral, verbal, and cognitive." Thus, narrative approaches should seek to "include rituals, practices, and physical and emotional movements" in order to counterbalance an epistemology "which may give undue preference to verbal knowledge" (2012:222). It is my hope, with emphasis on imaginative reasoning found in Ricoeur's philosophy, we will bypass this danger and embrace all aspects of the human person.

Despite the difficulties with a narrativist approach, I believe there is much utility in this way of understanding the world, and thereby also for understanding resilience.[32] For these reasons, narrative will be woven into the fabric of the argument throughout this

[30] Ricoeur is only mentioned in passing and in relation to another scholar's use of him (Murphy 2007:149).
[31] Ricoeur's thinking is different in significant ways than Murphy's portrayal of the theologians she addresses. This is evident in contentions regarding language (2007:23, 34, 80), personhood (2007:27, 30), and time (2007:329).
[32] I am not suggesting that all theology should be narrative in method, only that such a method may provide a necessary counter-balance to some current tendencies in modern Western culture. Additionally, I will not address all aspects of narrative theology, only those relating to Paul Ricoeur's philosophy.

thesis, both as illustrations and as a means of forwarding the argument itself. Since adversity is intensely personal, an investigation into how adversity is overcome will require use of personalizing (rather than analytical and detached) methodology. Thus, narrative is central to understanding resilience. This is, in part, because the construct of resilience is a metaphorical concept. While its use in the physical sciences lies firmly within the bounds of physical properties of material, its use beyond that context constitutes a metaphorical extension of meaning.[33]

In this way, it is my contention that narrative can be a means of deeper knowledge of God and of the world. Purely analytical exploration will not garner the insights needed to gain a full understanding of the intensely 'lived experience' of adversity and resilience in the midst of that adversity. Therefore, narrative can provide a 'thicker' account of human experience than detached scientific enquiry. Further study in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur may thus provide insight into the possibilities of narrative for understanding human resilience to adversity.[34]

Paul Ricoeur's Narrative Philosophy

Why Ricoeur?

I believe that Ricoeur's philosophy is significant for understanding human resilience for several reasons: (1) the primacy of language and narrative in his philosophy, (2) his understanding of the relationship between narrative and time, (3) his conception of the creation of meaning through 'emplotment,' (4) the forward-looking and hopeful nature of his philosophy, (5) the application his philosophy finds in *phronesis*, and (6) his narrative conception of human personhood.

[33] See the history of the resilience concept in the introduction.
[34] There are certainly many philosophers and theologians with whom I could dialogue on these points. Rather than surveying a number of scholars on these topics I have chosen to delve into Ricoeur's thought for several reasons: 1) focusing on one scholar instead of many facilitates clarity of thought and argument, 2) Ricoeur addresses at length both conceptions of narrative and personhood, 3) he has a strong emphasis on the utility of language, 4) his philosophy is centered on the power of hope, 5) his philosophy has strong connections to the Christian faith.

Ricoeur's Life

Paul Ricoeur was born in Valence, France in 1913. His mother died when he was an infant and his father was killed in World War I less than two years later. He was raised by his grandparents and educated as an 'orphan of the state.' He studied philosophy at the University of Rennes and the Sorbonne prior to teaching philosophy, a career interrupted by the outbreak of World War II, in which he served as a French Army officer and spent a five-year stint as a prisoner of war in a German POW camp.[35] He went on to hold professorships on both sides of the Atlantic and had a long and successful career until his death in 2005 (Reagan 1996:4–51; Wolin 2005). Ricoeur wrote widely in the field of philosophy. His 'hermeneutical phenomenology'[36] has been important in shaping much philosophical and theological thought,[37] though he sought to address particular situations through particular texts rather than creating a system of thought (Vanhoozer 1990:279). While the significant corpus of his work[38] will not allow me to address all aspects of Ricoeur's thought, I will focus primarily on his philosophical understandings of narrative and personhood.[39]

Ricoeur's Philosophy[40]

Ricoeur's work marks an attempt to move beyond the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' advocated by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud (Capps 1984:26–27).[41] As opposed to Sartre,

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[35] It may be that Ricoeur's life experiences of adversity precipitated many of his philosophical emphases, making him an especially useful conversation partner for the topic of resilience. Cf. (Duffy 2009:17; Reagan 1996:2, 126).

[36] Cf. (Ricoeur 1991a:12).

[37] For instance in the discipline of theology, Ricoeur has had a significant influence in philosophical theology (Fodor 1995; Stiver 2001, 2012; Vanhoozer 2007:43–45), practical theology (Browning 2002, 2010:17–25), and biblical studies (LaCocque and Ricoeur 1998; Ricoeur and Mudge 1981; Vanhoozer 1990).

[38] Ricoeur wrote more than 30 books and more than 500 articles in his lifetime (Ricoeur 1994:611–735; Wolin 2005).

[39] In so doing, my focus will be on how Ricoeur's narrative philosophy affects our understanding of human action rather than its specific implications for the interpretation of texts. Cf. (Capps 1984:33–37).

[40] Ricoeur wrote in both French and English. In assessing Ricoeur's French works I will primarily use English translations since most of his work has been translated into English and is widely available. Where beneficial, I will clarify Ricoeur's thought by referencing the original French.

[41] Within the constraints of the current project I will be unable to fully address Ricoeur's critiques of these scholars.

Ricoeur asserts the meaningfulness of history and the desire to exist are connected with faith.[42] Ricoeur suggests "[b]eyond the wastelands of critical thought, we seek to be challenged anew" (1962:193) and he pursues this aim through attention to the role language and texts play in mediating human experience. Narrative, for Ricoeur, is fundamental to meaningful human existence, suggesting substantial implications for human resilience. He remarks:

> We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on its full force when we refer to the necessity to save the history of the defeated and the lost. The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative (1984b:75).[43]

Thus, for Ricoeur, narrative has a significant place in the quest to understanding resilience and human adaptation to adversity. Indeed, it is "the privileged means by which we reconfigure our confused, unformed and mute temporal existence" (Ricoeur 1984b:xi).

Philosophical Tenets

The Mediation of Language

To understand the possibilities afforded by Ricoeur's philosophy, we must explore his claims more generally in regards to language. For Ricoeur, "it is *language* that is the primary condition of all human experience" (1991a:16). Thus, there is no unmediated *cogito*—Descartes' 'I think therefore I am'—whereby one can gain immediate access to being (Ricoeur 1981c:106). Instead, language mediates human experience and being, or, as Vanhoozer puts it, "[i]n Ricoeur's work, telling mediates being and time" (1991:43).[44] The text is the medium through which language is interpreted; hence, the significance of hermeneutics in Ricoeur's philosophy.

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[42] The connection between the Christian faith and meaningfulness is not strong for much of Ricoeur's career, though there are glimpses of it in his early work and, to some extent, in his later work. More will be said on Ricoeur's intellectual journey later in this chapter.

[43] See also Ricoeur's essay, "Toward a narrative theology: Its necessity, its resources, its difficulties" (1995g).

[44] I will return to the significance of this assessment.

At the same time, Ricoeur regards language as polysemic (having multiple meanings). As Donald Capps suggests, for Ricoeur "a text may have meaning in relation to the immediate situation and at the same time mean something more than this" (1984:20). In this way the polysemic nature of language creates the possibility of language disclosing a new 'world' (Ricoeur 1991c:86). While, Ricoeur argues, language on the whole has world-disclosing capabilities, the particular form of language known as metaphor has the same ability on a smaller scale.[45] For Ricoeur, metaphor shatters and reshapes our experience of reality through the dynamic power of language. Hence, Ricoeur's refrain, "'Symbol invites thought' (*Le symbol donne à penser*)" (1962:193). Poetic language gives rise to the possibility of more than is subjectively experienced, and ultimately this becomes a new way of seeing, as well as a new way of being-in-the-world (Kearney 2004:53).

This new 'world' is possible because "language is oriented beyond itself. It says something about something" (Ricoeur 1984b:78). Language traditionally is held to refer to a reality outside itself; a referent. "Ricoeur insists that to speak of possibility is to refer to an integral aspect of being: to *what might be* or to *what is not yet*" (Vanhoozer 1990:8). Thus, poetic discourse "does not directly augment our knowledge of objects" but rather creates a new understanding of the "referential function" of language: one that has a referent in the possible, thereby freeing language to have a 'surplus of meaning' (Ricoeur 1981c:101). It is this 'surplus of meaning' that will be significant for Ricoeur's assessment of hope and possibility.

Yet the power of language, for Ricoeur, lies not only in *disclosing* new ways of being, but also in imaginatively *creating* new ways of being-in-the-world through narrative.[46] Thus, philosopher Richard Kearney can speak of the "ontological paradox of *creation-as-discovery*" in Ricoeur's thought (2004:53). Ricoeur expresses this paradox succinctly: "Through the recovery of the capacity of language to create and recreate, we *discover* reality itself in the process of being *created*…Language in the making celebrates reality in the making" (1982). For Ricoeur, narrative has the power not only to interpret, but

[45] See (Ricoeur 1973:106, 1991d:53).
[46] This power is made possible through the imaginative creation of new structural schema for making the world intelligible (Ricoeur 1984b:ix).

also to configure. Vanhoozer has called "Ricoeur's great discovery about narrative, its configurative dimension" (1991:39). This creative power does not merely remain in the realm of potentiality, but finds actuation in reshaping a reader's outlook on the world. Hence, "metaphorical and narrative statements, taken in hand by reading, aim at refiguring reality, in the twofold sense of *uncovering* the concealed dimensions of human experience and of *transforming* our vision of the world" (Ricoeur 1995b:47).[47] The configurative nature of narrative will prove important in our assessment of the role of narrative in resilience.

In order for communication to take place through the text there must be some means by which narrativity can be understood and ordered. For Ricoeur, the 'notion of plot' provides the means by which narrativity can "mark, organize, and clarify temporal experience" (1991a:3). Ricoeur develops this idea, which he calls 'emplotment' (*mise en intrigue*), to emphasize the significance of the placement of events within a narrative structure.[48]

The 'world of the text,' for Ricoeur, indicates "that what is finally to be understood in a text is not the author or his presumed intention,… but rather the sort of world intended beyond the text as its reference" (1981c:100). This 'world' can interact with the 'world' of the reader, thereby disclosing new potentialities for lived experience. The meaning of the text does not devolve into random arbitrariness, nor is it dogmatically defined, according to Ricoeur (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:211). Instead, the dialogical relationship between text and reader creates the possibility of meaning. In this way, for Ricoeur, *"[n]arrative…is the sole means by which human being-in-time is made intelligible*" (Vanhoozer 1986:5).

It must be noted that, for Ricoeur, the text itself serves to provide the proper distance needed to make meaning intelligible through the differentiation of 'distanciation' (Ricoeur 1991c). This feature of Ricoeur's thought sets him apart from those, such as

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[47] Ricoeur also notes the guiding principle of his *Time and Narrative*: "l'œvre en toute *configuration* narrative s'achève dans une *refiguration* de l'expérience temporelle" (1985:9), 'the work in any narrative *configuration* finishes in a *refiguration* of temporal experience.'

[48] More will be said about this subject shortly.

Husserl and Gadamer, who suggest strictly subjective phenomenological accounts of human experience. 'Distanciation' provides Ricoeur with the means to move beyond the tyranny of the ego and its all-encompassing priority.[49]

Narrative and Time

Ricoeur purposefully encompasses the diverse types of narrative, to include historical and fictional, as well as narratives using mediums other than language (Ricoeur 1991a:2).[50] He does this by appealing to their common reference point of time:

> My basic hypothesis…is the following: the common feature of human experience, that which is marked, organized, and clarified by the act of storytelling in all its forms, is its *temporal character*. Everything that is recounted occurs in time, takes time, unfolds temporally and what unfolds in time can be recounted…By treating the temporal quality of experience as the common reference of both history and fiction, I make of fiction, history, and time one single problem (Ricoeur 1991a:2).

Time is the feature that holds together disparate types of narrative, including the narrative of human existence. Through story-telling, the experience of natural chronological time can be changed into *human* time (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:463). For Ricoeur, what is at stake in discussions of narrative is the very meaningfulness and "temporal character of human experience" (Ricoeur 1984b:3). In Ricoeur's account of 'emplotment,' time provides the means by which events within a narrative are made meaningful.

'Emplotment' and the Creation of Meaning

For Ricoeur the 'emplotment' of events in one's life within a greater on-going narrative can create meaning.[51] Ricoeur draws upon Aristotle's *Poetics* for his idea of the

[49] I will address these issues more fully later in this chapter.
[50] In this regard, music could be said to have a 'narrative' structure. Music itself, like story, is only intelligible as a series of connected 'events' (notes) across time through a certain patterned existence that not only gives individual notes added significance, but also creates a melody.
[51] Notice Ricoeur's own conception of 'meaning': "I am here giving the word 'meaning' a very large acceptation which covers all the aspects and levels of the intentional exteriorization which makes the inscription of discourse possible" (1973:94).

'emplotment' of events within the structure of a narrative (1984b:31–51, 1991a:3).[52] In this understanding, a life experience is not an isolated event, but is given 'sense' through a narrative that includes past, present, and future. Inasmuch as events are temporally 'emplotted' within a narrative—that is, placed in relation to other narratival elements in a plot—they become meaningful within the context of that narrative. In this way, for Ricoeur, narrative "is that work which renders experience significant, humanly meaningful. Without the work of narrative, experience would be only successive occurrence, one thing after another. Through the work of narrative it is given structure and form" (Loughlin 1999:139).[53] Narrative can make individual events meaningful through emplotment within a larger narrative unfolded through the medium of time. Alternatively, if the understood narrative emplotment changes, the meaningfulness of events within that narrative also changes.[54]

Ricoeur posits that "the plot transforms the events into a story" (1984b:66).[55] The plot is what gives coherence to events as they are experienced in the present, as the past is remembered, and as the future is anticipated. By 'emplotting' events within a narrative one is already in the process of giving external meaning to those events.[56] As previously noted, for Ricoeur, this process involves not only discovering meaning, but also creating it.

Beyond creating meaning, 'emplotment' also serves to unify and integrate diverse elements of a narrative. Reagan notes in particular the significance of the integration of "diversity, variability, and discontinuity into the permanence in time" (2002:15).

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[52] In *Time and Narrative*, Volume I, Ricoeur forms a dialectic between an Aristotelian emphasis on creating order out of disorder through *mythos* (plot) and Augustinian acceptance of unfulfilled desire (1984b:4). This dichotomy serves as the basis for Ricoeur's development of his idea of 'emplotment.'

[53] See also (Capps 1984:14; Ricoeur 1991a:4).

[54] This creates the possibility of a 'counter-narrative' in which a broken narrative may be restored. There is a danger, however, of imposing a new oppressive meta-narrative rather than enabling an individual to develop her own restorative narrative.

[55] Ricoeur argues that "[w]ith narrative, the semantic innovation lies in the inventing of another work of synthesis—a plot. By means of the plot, goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action. It is this synthesis of the heterogeneous that brings narrative close to metaphor. In both cases, the new thing—the as yet unsaid the unwritten—springs up in language" (1984b:ix).

[56] As Ricoeur suggests, "to narrate is already to explain" (1984b:178).

Through 'emplotment' once unintelligible and even opposing elements can be reconciled into a coherent whole. Ricoeur details the three ways that plot synthesizes. It brings together diverse events into a unified story: "In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession." Additionally, plot synthesizes heterogeneous factors such as "agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results." Thirdly, emplotment synthesizes the temporal aspects of narrative (1984b:65). Emplotment is the means by which abstract and diverse aspects of a narrative are made coherent, generating the possibility of meaning.

Loughlin concludes, emplotment "is the means by which life is rendered humanly significant" (1999:142).[57] The creation of meaning for human beings through narrative is one of the most substantial of Ricoeur's projects.[58] This ambitious claim is possible because, for Ricoeur, meaning can transcend particular contexts and have 'durable' and even 'omnitemporal' relevance in new situations (Ricoeur 1973:102–3). This feature makes Ricoeur's philosophy particularly promising for understanding human resilience.

Orientation toward the Future and Possibility

Ricoeur's philosophy is future and possibility-oriented. It is characterized by a "passion for the possible" (Vanhoozer 1990:6) [59] that is expressed through the "notion of *narrative hope*" (Vanhoozer 1990:8).[60] The mediation of the text actuates hope: the text "frees us from the visibility and limitation of situations by opening up a world for us, that is, new dimensions of our being-in-the-world" (Ricoeur 1973:96).

Thus, the text and reader have a dialogical relationship. Ricoeur suggests that the text 'interprets' the reader in addition to the reader interpreting the text. That is, the reader's understanding of the world can be shaped and changed through the act of

[57] Ricoeur himself notes, "Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (1984b:52).
[58] Some have suggested that Ricoeur's early life, especially the losses of his mother and father at a young age, informed his subsequent philosophy and search for meaning (Graham, Walton, and Ward 2005:64).
[59] This is a phrase that Ricoeur borrows from Kierkegaard. Cf. (Ricoeur 1981a:160).
[60] E.g. (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:490).

reading. This presents opportunity for the world of the text to speak to the 'world' of the reader and thereby open up new ways of seeing and being in the world that could not have been comprehended prior to this encounter. The text "enlarges the reader's situation into a world that also transcends his or her own immediate situation" (Capps 1984:17). The possibilities that such a claim presents for our understanding of means of inculcating resilience are substantial.

Poetics and Human Possibility

Vanhoozer describes Ricoeur as a "philosopher of hope" (1990:6) because, for Ricoeur, hermeneutics unlocks new possibilities through its ability to create new meanings out of given meanings (Kearney 2004:39). Ricoeur focuses on poetic language as best displaying the 'surplus of meaning' possible through language. Within poetic language, Ricoeur suggests metaphor and narrative as the supreme examples of semantic 'passion for the possible': "Metaphors offer different ways of seeing the world; narratives present different ways of seeing human being in the world" (Vanhoozer 1990:8).

Referring to the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' that dominated the modern age, Ricoeur suggests, "The same age develops the possibility of emptying language and the possibility of filling it anew. It is therefore no yearning for a sunken Atlantis that urges us on, but the hope of a re-creation of language" (1962:193). Thus, it is *hope* that drives Ricoeur onward in his philosophical endeavor—hope in the possibility of human *being* accessed through the mediation of language—to include the texts that record human existence (Vanhoozer 1990:7).

Ricoeur desired to find a place for meaning in a world that, in many ways, had lost the hope of this possibility.[61] For Ricoeur, this hope lay in the potential provided by the narrative construction of language and the 'surplus of meaning' provided by poetic discourse. These means, however, are inextricably tied to *time*. Ricoeur goes to great

[61] Certainly, Ricoeur's personal experience of loss in two World Wars could have led him down the same path of nihilism and hopelessness, a situation he described as "the latent defeatism of a public opinion weary of war and in search of alibis for its flight from the problems of the modern world" (1965:95). In contrast, Ricoeur's hermeneutical turn came as a means of critiquing the critical spirit of the modern age (Lowe 1981:394).

lengths to show how time and the related concept of memory serve to create the possibility of meaning. Following Ricoeur, Kearney suggests that "without the backward look a culture is deprived of its *memory*, without the forward look it is deprived of its *dreams*" (2004:87), or, as Ronald Kuipers puts it, Ricoeur's philosophical contribution is "turning memory into eschatology" (2011:3). Ricoeur proposes that narrative is a 'working out' or a 'working through' of what is remembered through the 'configurative' process of emplotment and the subsequent 'refiguration' of life which is effected through this narration (Kearney 2004:160). Here Ricoeur builds on Augustine's account of time and memory in his *Confessions*: "by entrusting to memory the fate of things past, and to expectation that of things to come, we can include memory and expectation in an extended and dialectical present" (1984b:11).[62] The coherence of past, present, and future on the continuum of time enables narrative to mediate human being, and thereby create meaning.

In contrast to Heidegger, Ricoeur suggests that human being is oriented towards life rather than death (Vanhoozer 1990:19–37). For Ricoeur, human existence centers around the positive impulse to *be*, which is more primary to the self than fear, and which consists of substance instead of nothingness (Vanhoozer 1990:6). Thus "the 'central intuition' of Ricoeur's philosophy is that human existence is *meaningful*. There is a 'surplus of meaning' over meaninglessness" (Vanhoozer 1990:6). Furthermore, for Ricoeur, human being is itself potentiality—it is always oriented towards possible ways of being-in-the-world. This 'surplus of being' is integral to human existence and is the basis for hope—there is more than 'what is,' there is also "what *might be*" (Vanhoozer 1990:7).[63]

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[62] Significantly, Janet Soskice suggests that, "as one who finds himself *before* texts and finds himself to be first a *listener* to texts who then turns to their *applicatio*, Ricoeur is following the steps of one of the earliest and best students of Christian philosophy, Saint Augustine" (2004:79).

[63] Here Vanhoozer ties Ricoeur's thought to Aquinas: "This understanding of hope is similar to that of Thomas Aquinas. According to Aquinas, there is hope only where the subject intends something which is (a) good (b) in the future (c) attainable only with difficulty (d) possible" (1990:15). Referencing (Aquinas 1965), vol. XXI, 1a2ae, Q. 40, Arts. 1-8. Similarly, David Ford suggests that Aquinas' and Ricoeur's thought are compatible "not least through [their] use of wisdom as an integrating concept and [their] contemplative focus on God for God's sake" (2007:214), noting that Matthew Levering (2004) draws a similar comparison. Ford suggests that Ricoeur primarily uses

Story and Human Possibility

The possibilities inherent in human being exceed the ability of normal human communication systems to convey. In Ricoeur's thinking, narrative and poetic language are essential because there is always more to reality than can be described in a conceptual system. Story is able to capture what is lost in a conceptual description (Vanhoozer 1990:285) because it is, itself, a form of metaphor that falls in the category of 'poetic discourse.'[64] Thus, Ricoeur seeks to add to his theory of metaphor a psychological understanding of imagination in which 'seeing-as' corresponds to a semantic notion of 'saying' (Kearney 2004:52).[65] 'Seeing-as' can thus become "the revealer of a 'being-as' on the deepest ontological level" (Ricoeur 1984b:xi) which is possible because metaphor "introduces the spark of imagination into a 'thinking more' (*penser plus*)" (Kearney 2004:52).[66]

The realm of the poetic encompasses both "metaphorical utterance and narrative discourse" (Ricoeur 1984b:xi). For Ricoeur, the new way of being-in-the-world projected through story has the potential for real praxis: the "world of the text that intervenes in the world of action in order to give it a new configuration or, as we might say, in order to transfigure it" (1991a:10).

Ricoeur suggests that "[f]iction and poetry intend being, not under the modality of being-given, but under the modality of power-to-be" (1991c:86). Further, "[b]eing-affected in the fictive mode is therefore incorporated into the self's being-affected in the 'real' mode" (Ricoeur 1992b:330). This, to some extent, is the function of literature:

> The role of most of our literature is, it seems, to destroy the world…the abolition of a first-order reference, an abolition effected by fiction and poetry, is the condition of possibility for the freeing of a second-order reference, which reaches the world…at the level that Husserl designated by the expression

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wisdom in his philosophical and theological undertakings to mediate between and balance disparate elements (2007:217).

[64] The sentence and story are simply larger forms of the metaphor but work following the same rules.

[65] This speaks to Ricoeur's regard for the imagination as a faculty of seeing and even creating new ways of being-in-the-world. See (Ricoeur 1978a:207–8).

[66] Citing (Ricoeur 1978a:303).

> *Lebenswelt* [life-world] and Heidegger by the expression *being-in-the-world* (Ricoeur 1991c:85–86).

Poetic language's semantic referent is not the first-order reference of scientific discourse, but rather a referent truer to reality whose description in language is possible by being freed from the constraints of this type of referent.[67] The ability of story to accomplish greater clarity in description through releasing claim to realistic description is an irony and paradox that is not lost to Ricoeur.[68]

To capture what lies at the heart of resilience, more is needed than abstracted scientific enquiry into the human being. An epistemological approach that provides insight into potential interior motivation of the human self is needed. As I have suggested, narrative is a useful tool for gaining such insight. Yet, the necessary correlation between the correspondence of a narrative and the reality of historical action within historical discourse delimits the possibilities of potential 'worlds' projected by the text. Instead, a narrative not tied to what *has* happened, but rather to what *might* happen enables a further understanding of human being. The genre of narrative presents exactly this opportunity. For Ricoeur, "it is within an interpretation that a second-level reference, which is properly the metaphorical reference, is set free by means of the suspension of

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[67] For Ricoeur, "metaphor is a way of redescribing the world and…therefore, poetic language has a referent. In short, if a metaphor destroys the possibility of a literal meaning, it also destroys the possibility of a referent for the sentence. But this opens up the possibility that metaphorical meaning creates a new referent, a new world of the text" (Reagan 1996:43) citing (Ricoeur 1978a:216–56).

[68] Ricoeur suggests that "the most extreme paradox is that when language most enters into fiction—e.g., when a poet forges the plot of a tragedy—it most speaks truth because it redescribes reality so well known that it is taken for granted" (1981c:101–2). Vanhoozer suggests: "In Ricoeur's thought, both poet and historian are at the service of the believer. We need both visions and visible testimonies in order to renew our imaginations. The poet creates visions of worlds replete with meaning and possibilities; the historian discovers actual testimonies to the transforming power of these visions" (1990:280). In the next chapter, the example of Julian of Norwich will be both historical and visionary. History and fiction, through connecting us to memory and hope, make us aware of and connect us to the possibility found uniquely in human being (Vanhoozer 1990:281). In many ways, this understanding mirrors David Kelsey's conception of remembering redemption (history) and anticipating redemption (fiction), which, for Kelsey, are both functions of the imagination (2005:97). See also an essay by Chinua Achebe entitled 'The Truth of Fiction' (1989), what Titus has called 'imaginative proximity' (Titus 2006:184–85), and (Stump 2012:36).

the first-level reference" (1978a:221). This is possible because of the distance between symbol (language) and referent.

Poetic language figures significantly in Ricoeur's thought precisely because of its ability to display potentiality. As such,

> poetic language is par excellence that which effects what Aristotle…called the *mimēsis* of reality. For tragedy imitates reality only because it re-creates it by means of a *muthos*, a 'fable,' that reaches the profoundest essence of reality (Ricoeur 1991c:86).

This reality is accessed, however, not merely through detached philosophical enquiry, but through the praxis of human action (Ricoeur 1984a:xi).

Ricoeur and Phronesis

Ricoeur suggests that narrative has *phronesis* as its goal rather than primarily being oriented towards itself.[69] His is "a philosophy with an essential practical orientation" (Agís Villaverde 2012:10).[70] As Loughlin notes, it is "[t]hrough story we learn about the possibilities of human action, fulfillment and happiness" (1999:145),[71] but Ricoeur further articulates that narrative must find its end in action rather than mere speculation.

Ricoeur understands texts and human action to have an analogous nature in which actions function like texts and therefore may also be interpreted and practically applied (Ricoeur 1973).[72] He proposes that, in the same way that texts can have meaning, human actions have meaning and 'systems of meaning.' Thus, for Ricoeur, narrative is a

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[69] Ricoeur writes, "What counts here is the way in which everyday praxis orders the present of the future, the present of the past, and the present of the present in terms of one another. For it is this practical articulation that constitutes the most elementary inductor of narrative" (1984b:60).

[70] Cf. (Stiver 2001:209–10).

[71] Cf. Ricoeur's discussion of the role of mimesis in praxis and the close links between ethics and poetics (Ricoeur 1984b:45–47; 241). See also Heather Walton's suggestion for *poesis* to enlarge our vision of *phronesis* (2012, 2014).

[72] For instance, Ricoeur writes: "If, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated" (1984b:57). Here Ricoeur finds affinity with anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz (1973). See also (Capps 1984:19, 33–37).

"hinge…for understanding human action" (van den Hengel 2004:130) wherein the interpretation of texts as well as actions, moves towards appropriation and making truth 'one's own' (Ricoeur 1973:114).

This emphasis, evident in Ricoeur's earlier works,[73] became more prominent in his later work, particularly in regard to the praxis of ethical action. When asked why he added a section on ethics to the Gifford Lectures he gave late in his career, he replied: "I always felt that there was a missing link in my exploration of the anthropological problem, since I may say that my philosophy is a philosophical anthropology. So it needed this expansion in the ethical direction" (Reagan 1996:118). He continued, "to narrate action is to provide paradigms for action…So the narrative here is taken as a transition between description and prescription" (Reagan 1996:119). Thus, utilizing Ricoeur's understanding of human action, narrative is able to provide a means for understanding resilience, but also a paradigm for practical application.

Personhood

Lastly, I suggest Ricoeur's narrative philosophy shapes understanding of *personhood* in ways that have significant implications for resilience. Shortly I will turn to an account of Ricoeur's thought on personhood, but first a 'detour' is needed in order to explore Ricoeur's relationship to theological realism and its implications for resilience.

Situating Ricoeur

Ricoeur as a 'Mediating Thinker'

Ricoeur has been called a 'mediating thinker' (Lowe 1981:389; Vanhoozer 1990:5)—an apt description for a philosopher whose writing spans multiple disciplines and also mediates between varying methodologies of interpretation (Vanhoozer 1986:1). Yet this dialectic has a surprising benefit: his thought resists "all forms of methodological

[73] E.g. "Already in 1956 in an article entitled 'Négativité et affirmation originaire' Ricoeur identifies the Other, the radically other, as the reason for a practical orientation for his philosophy" (van den Hengel 2004:130) citing (Ricoeur 1956:119). The significance of the Other in Ricoeur's thought will be addressed more fully later in this chapter.

reductionism" (Vanhoozer 1986:3).[74] In reality, Ricoeur's 'field-encompassing' method necessarily draws upon several different disciplines in order to provide an adequate account of narrative (Vanhoozer 1986:3).

Alternatively, Ricoeur could be said to mediate between a different dialectic: that of suspicion and hope (White 1991). Ricoeur, at one level, follows in the footsteps of Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer in advocating a hermeneutical phenomenology. Yet, he diverges from these philosophies by insisting 'distanciation' and objectivity are necessary aspects of the search for truth. Thus, Ricoeur advocates a 'critical hermeneutics' or a 'hermeneutical realism' (Browning 2010:22) that provides substance for hope while leaving room for doubt. In this regard, Ricoeur imitates the attitude of Augustine of Hippo whose prayerful meditation in *Confessions* he approvingly quotes, "These are tentative theories, Father, not downright assertions" (1961:XI, 17).[75] Charles Reagan suggests that "[f]or Ricoeur, the task of philosophy is to avoid the skepticism that doubts everything while at the same time abandoning the ideal of total certainty" (2002:8).

This must lead us to address the question of 'reality' in Ricoeur's thought. This, too, is a place of mediation for Ricoeur. Vanhoozer asks, "Is reality of our own making or is it there, silent, waiting to be discovered? Here too Ricoeur wishes to mediate: idealism and realism need not be construed as opposites, for…the imagination, through its inventions and creations, discovers the real" (1990:11). Because of the complexity and significance of this issue I will explore in more detail.

Critiques: Ricoeur and Realism

For some, Ricoeur's 'mediating' philosophy is problematic in that it is not connected with either a firm realism or idealism. Vanhoozer notes, "[t]he substantive problem in

[74] Vanhoozer suggests that "Ricoeur wishes to combine the resources of the literary critical and structural approaches for determining *meaning* while at the same time preserving the extra-linguistic reference of the text or its claim to *truth*" (1986:3).
[75] As cited in (Ricoeur 1984b:9). Soskice notes, "When we ask, 'how can we name God?' the discourse of philosophy meets the discourse of prayer…This 'address to the other' by these mystics is more than a pious preamble—it is a recognition that the possibility of speaking of God comes from God" (2004:80).

Ricoeur as we have presented it may be focused in one pointed question: is the Christian possibility 'real' or 'ideal'?" (1986:311). I believe that Vanhoozer is right in his final assessment that Ricoeur does not provide a definitive answer. Ricoeur's tendency to mediate, which serves him so well in reconciling 'seemingly irreconcilable' methodologies and philosophical positions, may be a weakness when it keeps him from "appropriately" mediating realism and idealism (Vanhoozer 1986:i). In fact, this mediation between realism and idealism is central to his hermeneutical 'detour.' For Ricoeur, "no form of theology can claim a sacred status or an extra-hermeneutical prerogative or a direct road to God without accepting the detours through the linguistic condition which all humans *nolens volens* share" (Jeanrod 2004:53). In Ricoeur's thought, the hermeneutical process always mediates access to 'reality.'[76] Even knowledge of God is limited by our ability to speak of God.[77] Ricoeur proposes an "*ontological vehemence*" regarding the referent of language, suggesting that "language expresses being, even if this ontological aim is as though postponed, deferred by the prior denial of the literal referentiality of ordinary language" (1992b:301).

The hermeneutical detour is not the only aspect of Ricoeur's thought that affects his assessment of the realism/idealism divide. Ricoeur also redefines truth and reality itself "in terms of actuality and possibility" (Vanhoozer 1986:10). This emphasis is seen in his 'passion for the possible' that finds expression in the 'surplus of meaning' of poetic discourse and moves beyond the immediate referential ability of the text. It also finds its expression in Ricoeur's understanding of the person as a capable agent (soon to be addressed). In this way, Ricoeur attempts to move beyond and redefine traditional philosophical claims to realism or idealism by describing the realm of the possible as an actuality between the real and ideal.

While there is much potential in this understanding, perhaps Ricoeur does not fully escape the dichotomy he seeks to avoid. Ricoeur does declaim the "impossibility of

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[76] Here, however, it is important not to confuse "notions of truth and reference in theological language with notions of meaning and use" (Wallace 1990:106). For more on the relation between world of text and real world, see (Reagan 1996:107).
[77] A similar sentiment is echoed by some theologians of the *via negativa*, though the conclusions these theologians reach is different from that of Ricoeur, for reasons I will discuss shortly.

absolute knowledge" (Ricoeur and Mudge 1981:152)[78] and "warn[s] us again against any attempt to establish an epistemological—or ontological—foundation in the manner of Descartes or Husserl" (Reagan 2002:27).[79] He is not as concerned with questions of ontological reality as he is with philosophical anthropology and the *telos* of meaning for human existence (Lowe 1981:400).[80] Peter Kenny suggests that "it is important to acknowledge that Ricoeur's thought is not based on radical suspicion, but rather on the assumption of the positive givenness of meaning" (2004:99).

Ricoeur, indeed, does emphasize the gift of meaning over and against a hermeneutic of suspicion. This creates tension with apophatic understandings of reality, yet this emphasis is consistent, in my opinion, with Christian theology. Such claims fit squarely within Ricoeur's understanding of the hermeneutic nature of reality and human experience. Narrative theologians claim the system from which reality derives its meaning is the narrative of God's story. Defining the limits of this system of meaning, however, is important.

Ricoeur acknowledges the limits of hermeneutical constructivism: "if it is true that there is always more than one way of construing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal… The text is a limited field of possible constructions" (1973:108). Ricoeur's non-foundationalism is not a 'free-for-all' that allows for any truth claim. Still, he suggests that a text may have more than one possible meaning. How, then, is truth to be known for Ricoeur? How is the 'vicious hermeneutical circle' overcome? Ricoeur proposes a process of dialogue whereby a form of validation can be achieved in which "[i]t is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them, and to seek for an agreement, even if this agreement remains beyond our reach" (Ricoeur 1973:108).[81]

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[78] Additionally, Ricoeur contends that the hermeneutical nature of human knowledge means that "knowledge cannot become total. It is condemned to remain partial, fragmentary, insular knowledge" (1991b:268).
[79] Cf. (Ricoeur 1992b:299).
[80] For more on Ricoeur's conception of ontology being based in action see (van den Hengel 2004:130–31).
[81] For more on how Ricoeur suggests choosing between conflicting interpretations see (Reagan 1996:104).

This dialectical process seeks to leave room for mystery and the finitude of human knowledge. In this way, Ricoeur's non-foundationalism is closely connected to the 'passion for the possible' displayed in an inherent bent towards the utopian. Yet, not all utopian visions are beneficial,[82] so how is one to determine the validity of an idealist vision? For Ricoeur "the social imaginary is liberating to the degree that its utopian forward look critically reappropriates its archeological backward look, in such a way that history itself may be creatively transformed" (Kearney 2004:87).[83]

At first it seems Ricoeur stays firmly within the bounds of reason as the authority regarding truth. However, he seeks to reinterpret the way 'reason' assesses the *logos* of Christ through "a more complete and more perfect activation of reason" (Ricoeur 1981a:157).[84] This reinterpretation begins by being 'alogical' precisely because the 'excess of meaning' Ricoeur is trying to capture exceeds the capability of humans to comprehend.[85] This excess finds its basis in the Resurrection of Christ as the reason for hope. He suggests that the "Resurrection surprises by being in excess in comparison to the reality forsaken by God" (1981a:165)—creating a new logic of surplus based in the Resurrection (1981a:166).[86] Does such an interpretation move beyond the difficulties Ricoeur is trying to avoid? For Ricoeur,

> the hermeneutical circle becomes vicious if there are no objective and explanatory procedures in the hermeneutical process. Without these it is essentially intuitive and thus becomes a vicious circle because it traps us as readers in our own subjectivity (Capps 1984:26).[87]

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[82] I contend that the basis of the Gospel narrative in reality, far from being a side issue, is integral to the possibility of meaning and connection that support resilient adaptation. These are *real* rather than *imagined* connections.
[83] Regarding the *critical* appropriation of utopian vision, see (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:485).
[84] Cf. (Mudge and Ricoeur 1981:32).
[85] In this regard, Ricoeur's early work follows Kant and has close affinities with Karl Barth's theology in recognizing the limits of reason (Kenny 2004:96). Yet, even later in his career, he railed against the 'hubris' of thinking that reason alone can provide answers to the significant questions of life (Junker-Kenny 2004a:179) citing (Ricoeur 1996:298). See also (Ricoeur 1981a:165).
[86] Here Ricoeur acknowledges his debt to Jürgen Moltmann. Cf. (Vanhoozer 1990:282).
[87] This process also introduces 'critical distance' into the engagement between text and reader. This, for Ricoeur, is price worth paying for the 'world-disclosive' power that such reading provides (Capps 1984:26).

One possibility for escaping this 'vicious circle' is "to identify the structure of the text's system of meanings" (Capps 1984:26), with Ricoeur's logic of the Resurrection perhaps functioning as a system of meaning. Some scholars, however, do not see a need to appeal to a meta-narrative as a way of escaping this vicious cycle.[88] Ricoeur's own way for moving beyond this impasse is an appeal to 'testimony.'[89]

Possibilities: An Alternative to Realism or Idealism

Janet Soskice suggests that, for Ricoeur, "[t]he only world which is of importance is the 'world' entered into and shattered by the parable, a pre-eminently existential world. By implication, questions of reference are unimportant" (1985:98).[90] In Ricoeur's thinking, the ability of the text to disclose meaning and new ways of being-in-the-world dwarfs any other concerns. Similarly, Soskice suggests that for many thinkers the power of an idealist interpretive model lies in its ability to describe the emotive or affective power of language. But, she suggests, "[t]his is not so far from the empiricist position as might at first be thought…Both the Christian empiricist and the Christian idealist must see the theist's models at best as useful fictions" (Soskice 1985:147). This is because, in any case, the ability of humans to speak about God lies in metaphorical second or third-order referents rather than in direct description (Soskice 1985:148).[91]

For Ricoeur, there is another possibility besides a positivist ontology of substance (Ricoeur 1981c:101)—there is also an ontology of reference (van den Hengel 2004:128–29).[92] This 'ontology of reference' opens up the realm of the possible as a reality and an alternative to realism or idealism. While the poetic, for Ricoeur, is able to disclose the realm of the possible, it is only 'testimony' that is capable of giving

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[88] Cf. Peter Kemp's argument as discussed in (Kearney 2004:172–73).
[89] Ricoeur's assessment of the place of 'testimony' in the search for the absolute comes close to anchoring his philosophy in a realism. Cf. (Ricoeur 1981c:111–12). For the significance of testimony to the biblical witness and Christian theology in Ricoeur's thought, see (Ford 2009:172–73). This insight will prove significant as we turn to Julian of Norwich's 'testimony' in the next chapter.
[90] Vanhoozer notes the ability of language to display possibilities of existence: to create schemas which function as models for seeing parts of the world that cannot be described literally (1986:217).
[91] For Soskice, God is the real referent of theological speech, but community and tradition are needed to properly discern affirmations about God.
[92] Citing (Ricoeur 1978a).

ontological 'proof' of its existence: "Instead of any claim to absolute truth, [Ricoeur] reminds us that attestation is a level of belief and confidence based on 'testimony'" (Reagan 2002:27). Thus, "the mode of Christian life is a wager and a destiny" (Ricoeur 1995f:263). In Ricoeur's thought the reality of contingency necessitates the activation of faith. While Ricoeur maintains that a 'leap' of faith is necessary for the Christian, I suggest that this 'leap' is not divorced from the realm of the real.

Assessment

Vanhoozer addresses at length whether Ricoeur's philosophy is compatible with theological realism. Ultimately, Vanhoozer worries about what he sees as confusion about the priority of theology and philosophy in Ricoeur's thought (1990:276).[93]

Yet, Vanhoozer suggests Ricoeur avoids the pitfalls of other modern theologians by claiming that: it is the world of text that transforms, not the word of address; it is a *world* that is revealed; and the world of the text, such as Gospels, is a possible world (Vanhoozer 1986:217–18). Vanhoozer concludes, "In sum, the world of the Gospel narratives for Ricoeur is an *imaginative* world, a *revealed* world, a *possible* world" (1986:218).[94] He continues, "It is our opinion that the weaknesses of Ricoeur's hermeneutic philosophy are not fatal; rather, their cure is implicit in Ricoeur's own thought" (1986:307).[95]

Vanhoozer's assessment carries an additional warning: "But in celebrating metaphor and narrative as forms of *creative* discourse, the degree to which language *discovers* the real is accordingly diminished" (1986:308). Rightly so, there must be a balance between

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[93] On these tensions in Ricoeur see also (Graham et al. 2005:67) and (Williams 1986). Interestingly, James Fodor accuses Ricoeur of "residual positivism" (1995:209). Cf. (Stiver 2001:212).

[94] Vanhoozer references (Ricoeur 1978b:237).

[95] Vanhoozer suggests that Ricoeur should be more careful in distinguishing criteria for locating the referent of possible hope in reality as opposed to 'utopias.' His 'passion for the possible' perhaps led him to a weighted focus in his dialectic philosophy that is problematic for Christian realism. However, Vanhoozer continues, "I do not believe that this weakness in Ricoeur's hermeneutic philosophy is a fatal one; indeed, there are indications that Ricoeur's performance of his mediation does not live up to his prescriptions" (1990:278–79).

Ricoeur's insight into the creation of meaning and the anchoring of meaning in reality. This has very real implications for resilience and whether the hope of resilience amidst adversity is based in a clever ruse or in reality. Are the possibilities for human resilience idealist, realist, or something else altogether?

I believe the reality of the referent of language and meaning is necessary to anchor and sustain language itself. In the end, Christianity must be seen not just as a 'cipher' for human experience and possibility, but as rooted within reality itself—something to which Ricoeur aspired, but may not have realized (Vanhoozer 1990:282).

Ricoeur is happy to remain in a place of mediation that is, for him, a place of faith. While I do not think this is ultimately a tenable position, I believe it is compatible with a theological realism. Let us now explore Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology which, for me, presents the possibility of becoming a theological anthropology.

Ricoeur and Personhood

In addressing personhood in relation to Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, special emphasis will be given to a foundational understanding of Ricoeur's account of personhood and its significance for human resilience.[96]

Knowledge of Reality as Knowledge of Persons

As I have previously suggested, a worldview shaped strictly by naturalist epistemology is not fully explanatory of human resilience. I suggest an account of knowledge that includes, broadly speaking, at least two differing types: analytical knowledge and knowledge of persons.[97] It is my contention that knowledge of persons is often downplayed in modern Western understandings of knowledge, with substantial implications for human resilience.[98]

Knowledge of reality as knowledge of persons is a theme discussed at length by Eleonore Stump (2012:47). She typifies these two ways of knowing through the

[96] Ricoeur's conception of narrative identity has also recently been suggested as useful for application in Christian Education (Lunde-Whitler 2015).
[97] In this I will be following Eleonore Stump (2012) and David Ford (1985).
[98] E.g. (Strauss 1992).

examples of Francis and Dominic. She gives priority to Francis' way of knowing and suggests that the "ultimate foundation of reality for Francis (*typologically understood*) is thus also personal, and for that reason knowledge of it will be a knowledge of persons" (2012:46).[99]

Analytic knowledge, which seeks to 'redescribe' and analyze, could be construed as destructive knowledge. Alternatively, knowledge of persons could be understood as non-reductive, exploring the person as a whole (Stump 2012:57).[100] In this way, I would suggest, knowledge of persons and narrative knowledge are alike.[101] Thus, as opposed to analytical knowledge, Stump argues that "knowledge of the ultimate foundation of reality, knowledge of morality, and knowledge of the good life are all best understood as knowledge of persons" (2012:47). As an example, one may know *about* a person without *knowing* the person.[102]

Such personal knowledge transcends cultural, societal, religious, and ethnic divides. The ubiquity of this type of knowledge is especially significant when we consider the experiential knowledge of suffering and its implications for resilience.[103] Hence, it may be said that suffering itself is best understood on the basis of personal knowledge (Stump 2012:61).

What significance does this distinction have for understanding resilience? Resilient

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[99] Ricoeur suggests that belonging is at the heart of knowing and being able to know (1991b:264–69). F. LeRon Shults similarly contends that relationality is primary to knowledge of reality (2006:494).

[100] Both analytic and personal knowledge are necessary to describe the totality of reality. Here I emphasize personal knowledge largely because I believe it has been downplayed in Western society to its own detriment.

[101] Or, perhaps, narrative is a means of understanding personal knowledge. I will unpack this assertion further throughout this chapter.

[102] Stump suggests that "Francis's ministry…is grounded in his personal response to a personal call from a suffering incarnate deity" rather than an analytic decision (2012:45). Vanhoozer, however, understands the agency of speech to be fundamental: it allowed him "to view the person in relational terms without collapsing personhood into relations" (2015:151).

[103] Arthur Kleinman comments in his book, *What Really Matters*, "In this book I am making the case for facing up to our existential condition as what really matters. Underneath the huge varieties of cultural meanings, social experiences, and subjectivity, there is a shared condition of being human that centers on experiences of loss, threat, and uncertainty. That is ground zero in our moral lives" (2006:231).

adaptation cannot simply be understood through 'knowledge that' (Stump 2012:49): a series of propositions, attributes, or characteristics which together may promote resilient outcomes. Rather, resilience is best understood as being founded upon personal knowledge—it is the person as a whole rather than an isolated 'protective factor' who acts, in resilient and unresilient ways, in an environment primarily understood relationally. What, then, can be said about the resilient person, and why ought we think in terms of personhood?

I suggest that knowledge of reality is knowledge of persons primarily because God has revealed Godself in the person of Jesus Christ.[104] Christian theology holds that God is a unity of three persons—the triune Godhead.[105] Thus, Christian theology contends, God is not merely an idea, but is a Being who relates to the world and its inhabitants—in particular, human beings. While this does not do away with the need for knowledge *about* God, this knowledge serves a relational purpose—drawing creatures into participation in God.[106] Relationality is thus imminently tied up with personhood because a relationship consists of interactions between *persons*, not merely analytic *knowledge*.[107] Because God is a Person, we too, as creatures made in God's image, understand ourselves as persons.[108] The primacy of God's personhood thus also necessitates understanding human beings fundamentally as persons. This will certainly

[104] See also (Lash 2007:142) on knowledge of God and the world as personal knowledge. Ricoeur's thinking is similar. Note Barth's influence on Ricoeur: "The kerygma is not first of all the interpretation of a text; it is the announcement of a person. In this sense, the word of God is, not the Bible, but Jesus Christ" (Ricoeur 1981b:54).
[105] Shults (2006) suggests that the Trinity is the basis for understanding the person and also creates the possibility of interdisciplinary dialogue. For more on the implications of a Triune understanding of the Godhead for the relational nature of human persons see (Swinton 2012:158–60) and an alternative viewpoint (Kilby 2000, 2005). While these arguments provide insight into human being, in depth discussion of this contention is beyond the purview of the current project.
[106] Loughlin notes that we cannot avoid propositional knowledge in knowing persons (1999:180). In like manner, Francis Watson argues that "[w]e cannot know God without knowing about God; knowing about God is a necessary although not sufficient condition for knowing God" (1994:388).
[107] Swinton similarly regards personhood as a relational concept (2012:139).
[108] David Kelsey notes: "God alone, [Barth] insists, is a 'person' in the proper and unqualified sense of the term. However, men may be called 'persons' by analogical extension of the term" (1975:46) citing (Barth 1936:272), Vol. II, Pt. 1.

include a broader understanding of the human being than a purely analytical understanding, to include a relational component.[109]

The distinction between analytic and personal knowledge, according to Stump, enables us to move beyond foundationalist epistemologies (2012:48–49). Such a view is helpful and presents a distinct possibility for escaping some critiques of modernity. Yet, at some level, analytic knowledge is needed to gain knowledge *about* a person beyond simply relational experience (Watson 1994:387–89). Thus, Stump may not be able to totally bypass critiques of foundationalist epistemologies.[110]

Personhood and Resilience

I contend that 'personhood' is an important concept for understanding human resilience to adversity.[111] In order to understand resilience, I have argued, individuals need to be considered not as a set of abstractions, but rather as a unified whole. This unified whole is what I would like to term a 'person.' In Christian history, the concept of 'personhood' has significantly influenced Western philosophical thought more broadly. *Persona* (person) was a significant term for Augustine, who linked the nature of human personhood to a Trinitarian understanding of God (Milbank 1990:96).[112] However, despite a long history of the concept, a narrative understanding of personhood is quite new in the realm of philosophy as well as in use by modern psychologists (Browning 2010:123).[113]

In this project, I will focus on narrative identity, especially Paul Ricoeur's conception, for its insight into human resilience. Ricoeur is one of several modern philosophers and

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[109] Root declares that "reality is fundamentally relational" (2014:220–21). Shults ties this reality to the Trinitarian Godhead (2006:501).
[110] See also critiques of narrative theology's view of the persons of the Godhead and accusations of modalism in (Murphy 2007:307–8).
[111] In this regard, Swinton differentiates between the designations 'human being' and 'person' which, he says, are not synonymous (2012:111).
[112] Further discussion of the use of *persona* in early Christian doctrine, especially pertaining to the relationship between members of the Trinity, is beyond the scope of the current project.
[113] See Swinton's very helpful short history of modern understandings of 'personhood' (2012:122–25).

theologians who construe human personhood and identity in terms of narrative.[114] For Alasdair MacIntyre, personhood "resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end" (Loughlin 1999:212).[115] A narrative construal of personhood has many benefits—one of the most important of which is that it allows for the role of teleology in determining selfhood (Jensen 2012:9). Here, Calvin Schrag notes that "…the self that has nothing to remember and nothing for which to hope is a self whose identity stands in peril" (1997:37).[116] Through memory and hope the individual gains meaning for the present (Crites 1971:302).

Narrative identity can be understood to put the experience of the present within the broader context of one's life story: past, present, and future. Hans Frei goes further, suggesting his understanding of narrative identity can be summed up in his description of Jesus: "Jesus *is* his story" (1993b:42).[117] While this is an extreme, and perhaps problematic description, it does follow that "[n]arrative identity is unsubstitutable; it cannot be given to someone else. There are no two people of whom the same narrative can be told" (Loughlin 1999:73). Thus, it is possible to say that a person is uniquely known through his story.

Ricoeur on Personhood

Ricoeur most fully described his philosophical anthropology in *Oneself as Another* (1992b). For Ricoeur, the concept of the 'person' is a "primitive concept, to the extent that there is no way to go beyond it, without presupposing it in the argument that would claim to derive it from something else" (1992b:31). As was already highlighted, philosophical anthropology was the goal of all Ricoeur's work (Reagan 1996:118; Vanhoozer 1990:7). To this end, Ricoeur is among those who would posit that "a

[114] Jensen notes that, "In addition to Ricoeur, thinkers attracted to a narrative view of identity include": Alasdair C. MacIntyre (1985), Marya Schechtman (1996), and Charles Taylor (1989) (Jensen 2012:8). Additionally, Don Browning also sees the utility of narrative conceptions of identity for the integration of the fields of psychology and theology (2010:123–25) and David Ford (1985) suggests the primacy of story in creating a Christian identity.
[115] Here, Loughlin cites (MacIntyre 1985:205).
[116] As quoted in (Jensen 2012:8).
[117] Murphy (2007:1) as well as Watson (1994:387–88), I believe rightly, suggest that this is problematic. Perhaps it is better to say that Jesus is a Person who has a story and, as we shall see, is also an Other who can help constitute persons and their stories.

person's identity has a narrative form, that a human 'self' is constituted by story" (Loughlin 1999:211). This is because, in part, the world-disclosive possibilities Ricoeur describes "can only be gotten at through the story of human interaction…accessible through the different perspectives ('guesses') listeners bring to the story" (Capps 1984:93). Furthermore, for Ricoeur, narrative is a means of self-understanding precisely because of the potential found in poetic modes of discourse: "[t]he adequate self-understanding of man is dependent on this third dimension of language [the poetic] as a *disclosure of possibility*" (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:490).[118]

In Ricoeur's thinking, understanding of personhood is not self-apparent (contra Descartes),[119] and therefore he takes a 'detour' through hermeneutics to achieve this insight (Mudge and Ricoeur 1981:13).[120] Here the model of the text is the means of getting at a philosophical anthropology that expresses the fullness of potentiality Ricoeur sees in humans. Thus, in Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy, "the structure of text has a revealing function toward the structure of existence of the self" (Mandry 2004:65). The theme of human potential, what Richard Kearney names a "*phenomenology of being able*" (2004:167), is continued in Ricoeur's understanding of personhood. Ricoeur, then, understands human beings primarily in terms of potentiality. This is being (*Dasein*) oriented towards life rather than towards death (as with Heidegger). Ricoeur, also in contrast to Heidegger, takes the 'long route' to understanding human being. Instead of being (*Dasein*) that is grasped directly through understanding, Ricoeur holds that this knowledge is mediated through language.[121]

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[118] Ricoeur is reticent to ascribe any particular ontological being to the self (Reagan 2002:26).

[119] Ricoeur notes that "there is no self-understanding that is not *mediated* by signs, symbols, and texts; in the last resort understanding coincides with the interpretation given to these mediating terms" (1991a:15), further advocating an "indirect style of a hermeneutics of self, in stark contrast to the demand for immediacy belonging to the cogito" (1992b:17).

[120] Jensen writes, "For his part, Ricoeur introduces his philosophy of the self as means of bypassing the stand-off between the Cartesian idea of the posited cogito and its Nietzschean (and, subsequently, postmodern) undoing. In Thisleton's opinion, Ricoeur's achievement is 'to undermine equally the autonomous self which commands the centre of the stage in high modernity and the reduced, de-centred self of postmodernity'" (2012:7) citing (Thiselton 1995:78).

[121] Ricoeur notes that "discourse and the work of discourse [are] the *mediation of self-understanding*" (1991c:76).

Discourse is primary to Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology. The self dialogically engages with the Other towards its own discovery and creation. This too is based in Ricoeur's theory of language. Ricoeur suggests, "Whereas language is only the condition for communication…it is in discourse that all messages are exchanged. In this sense, discourse alone has not only a world, but an other—another person, an interlocutor to whom it is addressed" (1973:92). An understanding of 'personhood,' reflexively known, draws extensively from Ricoeur's narrative philosophy and textual hermeneutics.

Ricoeur does not only hermeneutically interpret texts. He also sees the self as hermeneutically understood through the Other—Ricoeur's conception of a person outside of the self.[122] Thus, for Ricoeur, even the self must be interpreted. This suggests that the self is understood mediately through language and constituted in relation to the Other, thereby being reliant upon both for its being (Kearney 2004:33).[123]

Ricoeur's understanding of personhood can provide a substantial corrective for many Western cultural conceptions of the person. For "it is only by means of the distancing of the self from its original ego that the interpreter can hope to recover a new sense of subjectivity: enlarged, decentred and open to novel possibilities of self-interpretation" (Kearney 2004:32).[124]

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[122] For Ricoeur, self-identity is "inextricably bound up with a concept of the other and the relation between the self and the other" (Reagan 2002:4).

[123] Vanhoozer helpfully summarizes: "Ricoeur's philosophy seeks to understand human being (What is man?) and thereby to achieve self-understanding (Who am I?). But the meaning of human being is gained only through interpretation of texts (including meaningful action) which attest to human existence. Philosophy is henceforth 'hermeneutic.' *Lego ut intelligam* — 'I read in order to understand.' I attain self-understanding when I grasp the range of my possibilities. This self-understanding may be transformed when in reading I confront the 'world of the text' and apply to myself the existential possibility, the way of living and being in the world, which a given narrative displays…Ricoeur's narrative theory thus stands at the crossroads of his philosophical anthropology and his hermeneutics" (1990:17).

[124] These claims are strikingly similar to the statement of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Luke concerning the self: "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?" Luke 9:24-25, NRSV. For more on finding reality as an unexpected gift see (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:461).

Some suggest that Ricoeur's attempt to move beyond the self-constituted person was motivated by his Christian presuppositions—including Luther's conception of sin as *cor curvum in se* (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:203; Lowe 1981:388).[125] In this Ricoeur would be in agreement with many other Christian thinkers, such as Augustine, who similarly eschewed "a view of personhood as 'selfownership'" (Milbank 1990:401).[126] Additionally, like Ricoeur, Augustine believed that human beings know themselves through knowing others (Soskice 2004:90–91). It is to a fuller discussion of this reflexive knowledge that we now turn.

Sameness and Otherness

Ricoeur uses the Platonic categories of the 'Same' and the 'Other' in both his *Time and Narrative* (1984b) and *Oneself as Another* (1992b) as fundamental concepts for his philosophical anthropology (van den Hengel 2004:121). In Ricoeur's thought, identity has two meanings that are dialectically related and mediated by "permanence through time": identity as *sameness* and identity as *selfhood* (Reagan 2002:13).[127] The dialectic is essentially between quantitative and qualitative aspects of identity—that is to say, it is a way to establish "a form of permanence in time that is a reply to the question 'Who am I?'" (Ricoeur 1992b:118). Reagan provides a summary of Ricoeur's thought:

> So the dialectic of sameness and selfhood has two poles: character, where sameness and permanence of dispositions constitute selfhood; and promising, where selfhood is maintained in spite of change, or in the absence of sameness. Ricoeur thinks that narrative identity is the mediating concept (2002:14–15).

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[125] Ricoeur notes, "It was in fact Karl Barth who first taught me that the subject is not a centralizing master but rather a disciple or auditor of a language larger than itself" (Ricoeur and Valdés 1991:473). Richard Kearney argues, "In short, Ricoeur praises narrative understanding—where one represents oneself as another—to the extent that it serves to liberate us from narcissistic interests without liquidating our identity. In so doing, it generates a basic act of empathy whereby the self flows from itself toward the other in a free variation of imagination" (2004:174).

[126] Annie Barthélémy notes regarding Ricoeur's anthropology: "Le self n'est ni narcissique, ni autosatisfaction, ni repli sur ce qui serait le noyau intime de la personne, le self est attestation de soi, une attestation fragile mais confiante" (2015:434); 'The self is neither narcissistic, self-satisfied, nor withdrawn into that which would be the intimate core of the person, the self is attestation of itself, a fragile but confident attestation.'

[127] Ricoeur suggests that narrative identity is found "dans la dialectique de l'ipséité et de la mêmeté" (1990:167); 'in the dialectic between individual identity and sameness.'

For Ricoeur, a person is both dynamic and stable throughout time. The narrative identity of the individual holds together these diverse elements. Personhood, then, is located in the narrative dialectic between sameness and selfhood as played out over the course of time (Reagan 2002:15).[128] Metaphor, as a means of understanding narrative discourse, also mediates the Same and the Other and enables the relationality of belonging (van den Hengel 2004:127).[129] Sameness and Otherness could be understood in theological terms as related to the loss of the self and displacement by the Other (van den Hengel 2004:123). The Other is not completely distinct from the self, but rather is part of what determines it.[130] Charles Reagan proposes that for Ricoeur "[o]therness does not come from outside selfhood, but is part of the meaning and the ontological constitution of selfhood" (2002:28). Thus meaning is given to Ricoeur's paradoxical phrase "oneself as another" (Ricoeur 1992b:327) because one's self is constituted in relation to the other.[131]

Partly enabling this understanding of the self is Ricoeur's concept of 'distanciation.' Without distanciation, human beings would never be aware of belonging to anything greater than themselves, for it is distanciation that creates the 'historical character' of consciousness (Ricoeur 1981c:107). The dialectic inherent in distanciation also creates the possibility of social relations between persons as well as the differentiation of body and self. Thus, the self must be understood as a unified whole, but a whole individual

[128] For an example of how Ricoeur's narrative conception of the self may be useful in aiding individuals to heal in the aftermath of trauma, see Alexandre Dubuis' (2015) research with burn victims.
[129] Regarding poetic language, of which metaphor is a type, Ricoeur suggests, "My deepest conviction is that poetic language alone restores to us that participation in our belonging-to an order of things which precedes our capacity to oppose ourselves to things taken as objects opposed to a subject. Hence the function of poetic discourse is to bring about this emergence of a depth-structure of belonging-to amid the ruins of descriptive discourse" (1981c:101). Here Ricoeur borrows the language of 'belonging-to' from Gadamer (Ricoeur 1981c:106).
[130] Alastair McFadyen similarly suggests that both the human person and conception of the 'self' are founded upon social relations (1990:70). McFadyen's account has much in common with Ricoeur's and my own.
[131] See (White 2009:5–6) for more on Ricoeur's conception of the hermeneutic self and similarities between the philosophical and theological anthropologies of Barth and Ricoeur.

whose being is mediated to the outside world by the body.[132] For Ricoeur, "the phenomenological concept of a 'lived body' [is] the intermediary between action and agent" (Reagan 2002:13).

It is to the agency of the self in Ricoeur's thought that I now turn.

Agency and Victimhood

Integral to Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology is the belief that a person is an agent who fundamentally has the power to act (Reagan 2002:12).[133] For Ricoeur, narrative identity and action are connected (Reagan 2002:6). Thus, an action itself has to do with the 'who'—the person who is able to act.[134] But personhood and its concomitant potentiality to act are given from without as "the gift of the Other" with life thus is lived on the basis of God's gracious gift (van den Hengel 2004:131–32).[135] Ricoeur argues that an understanding of human *being* through narrative identity must include "not just acting but also suffering, hence characters as agents and as victims" (1984b:xi).[136] Here the importance of 'role' is clear for Ricoeur. For him, narrative identity includes both agents and victims, both acting and suffering (Ricoeur 1992b:144–45).[137] The narrative

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[132] Hughes' (2001) description of individuals as 'Situated Embodied Agents' is helpful here.

[133] See (Ricoeur 1992b:101). Yet the self cannot be identified with action or equated with the ability to act (Jensen 2012:125). As Swinton rightly notes, equating action with personhood is problematic (2012:126–30).

[134] Vanhoozer suggests, "Ricoeur uses the category of narrative to speak of the self's identity, which does not belong to the category of events or facts but of action. The self is essentially not so much a 'what' as a 'who': an agent with a cohesive history of its speech and actions" (2007:45).

[135] For further discussion of the dynamic between autonomy and dependence in Ricoeur's thought, see (Ricoeur 1996).

[136] It is important that Ricoeur includes suffering as well as acting in his account of personhood. He writes, "Suffering is not defined solely by physical pain, nor even by mental pain, but by the reduction, even the destruction, of the capacity for acting, of being-able-to-act, experienced as a violation of self-integrity" (1992b:190). Significantly, this demonstrates a change in Ricoeur's terminology. In the middle of his career Ricoeur proposed an understanding of personhood that includes "not just acting but also suffering, hence characters as agents and as victims [*victimes*]" (1984, p. xi). Soon after, he began instead using the term *patients*, that Kathleen Blamey translates 'sufferers' (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 144). This could be a result of the significant effect that the unexpected death of his son in 1986 had on Ricoeur, after which, as evidenced by his change of terminology, he included suffering as a vital aspect of personhood (Reagan, 1996, p. 64).

[137] Cf. (Reagan 2002:15).

praxis of sorrow allows the individual to empathize through the imaginative power of narrative (Kearney 2004:173). Hence, Kearney suggests:

> What Ricoeur claims is that narrative understanding provides us with *both* a poetics *and* an ethics of responsibility in that it propels us beyond self-reference to relation with others (via analogy/empathy/apperception). This extension of the circle of selfhood involves an 'enlarged mentality' capable of imagining the self in the place of the other (2004:173).

Thus, narrative, for Ricoeur, mediates description and prescription of action through a type of listening (Ricoeur 1992b:114).[138] This is listening not only to the narrative of the Other, but also a listening—and therefore reception—of the gift of the self. This, Ricoeur argues, is the 'summoned self' (Ricoeur 1995f). The primacy of the Divine Word is evident in this way of knowing the self through its reception as a gift—a reception that puts an end to endless human searching:

> Ricoeur argues for a change of perspective that puts an end to a pursuit which proves to be unsatisfiable…The only way out of this logic of reciprocal exhaustion is to focus on the 'capability of receiving the gift.' In the 'act of receiving…the giver is recognized' (Junker-Kenny 2004a:168).

As will become apparent, the identity of the giver—the Other—is critical.

Memory and Self

Because the self is a gift received in time, remembrance of how and when this gift is given becomes crucial to self-understanding. For Ricoeur, "[o]ne's very selfhood is not an autonomous construction but rather a gift of language and literature" (Vanhoozer 1990:275). This gift must be received, but the act of reception includes both reflection and interpretation. Ricoeur notes:

> [R]eflection must become interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world. That is why a reflective philosophy must include the results, methods, and presuppositions of all the sciences that try to decipher and interpret the signs of man (1970:46).[139]

Self-understanding is a process of gaining insight through the mediation of language and the Other. This process takes place in time and therefore the self has an integral temporal aspect (Ricoeur 1984b:29). This is particularly significant in what Ricoeur

[138] Cf. (Reagan 2002:13).
[139] This hints at the necessity of utilizing a variety of methodologies in exploring human existence and resilience to adversity.

calls the archeology and teleology of the self, or put another way, human remembrance and hope.[140]

Thus, memory (or archeology of the self) is the organ for providing the substance of the narrative identity of the self. However, it also creates the trajectory for the teleology (and thereby hope) for the individual. In Ricoeur's thought, then, both history (memory) and poetry (possibility/hope) display human potentiality through archeology of the self—represented for Ricoeur by Freud—and teleology of the self—represented by Hegel. These "stories and histories" inform the individual's present reality and move her toward the possibility of hope (Vanhoozer 1990:281). Maureen Junker-Kenny suggests that memory plays an important part in creating self-esteem because

> it functions in reconstructing the sense of the unity and life plan which forms a person's vision of her life as flourishing. The narrative identity of a life is constructed through the selection of significant memories which explain the present position and guide future choices (2004b:22–23).

Ricoeur's work moves towards a deeper understanding of the human being with the ultimate goal of finding meaning in human existence.

Anthropology and the Search for Meaning

Ricoeur's quest for a philosophical anthropology "is at the crossroads between 'words and deeds,' or a 'semantics of action and desire'" (Reagan 2002:30) wherein the core theme is a search for human meaningfulness (Ricoeur 1974:449). In fact, for Ricoeur, the ability to decipher meaning in a text is, at its heart, also fundamentally about finding meaning in human existence—the 'surplus of meaning' found in poetic texts, then can lead to an abundance of human meaningfulness that is evidenced in hope (Vanhoozer 1990:279).

Vanhoozer suggests that

> the whole point of Ricoeur's correlation of philosophical anthropology and hermeneutics is to help us see that the meaning of life is a gift. Our self-understanding is a gift of language—in the beginning was the Word. Ricoeur insists that the subject is not its own maker but receives and recovers itself thanks to the mediation of language…This is Ricoeur's 'second Copernican

[140] For more on the archeology and teleology of the self and motivation see (Ricoeur 1970:420–30, 439–62).

> revolution': we are not self-constituting but are rather constituted from without, from the Word that shapes our imaginations and therefore our existence. What do we have that we have not received? (1990:287).

We must ask how the Other is known and how the gift of meaning is recognized as truly being from the Other. Peter Kenny suggests that "[t]here is no easy way of determining if the understanding that I form from the texts is a true 'Call from Another' and not simply a response that reflects my own need and desires" (2004:107). Ricoeur, concludes the identity of the Other is ultimately not able to be determined, a situation he calls the 'aporia of the Other.'[141]

Ricoeur's search for meaning, I suggest, cannot be fully realized apart from ultimate fulfillment in God. From a Christian theological perspective, Ricoeur's 'aporia of the Other' is insufficient. In this 'aporia,' I contend theology may be able to say something where philosophy becomes silent. I propose an understanding of human personhood in which the human self is known primarily in relation to God as the Divine Other.[142]

A Ricoeurian Theological Anthropology

God as Divine Other

Following Ricoeur, I contend that personhood can be understood as a narrative construct. Rather than being determined by the self or even by society, for the Christian, personhood is constituted in relation to God.[143] This notion is contrary to much of

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[141] Ricoeur writes, "Perhaps the philosopher as philosopher has to admit that one does not know and cannot say whether this Other, the source of the injunction, is another person whom I can look in the face or who can stare at me, or my ancestors for whom there is no representation, to so great an extent does my debt to them constitute my very self, or God—living God, absent God—or an empty place. With this aporia of the Other, philosophical discourse comes to an end" (1992b:355).

[142] This does not discount the role that other individuals play in forming the community that shapes the self. I am suggesting, however, that the person is constituted *primarily* in relation to God as the Other.

[143] Others, especially Michael DeLashmutt (2009), have suggested a similar theological anthropology based upon Ricoeur. Swinton, drawing upon Martin Buber's 'I-Thou' model of relationship, gives a similar account of personhood being based in the relation between God and the human being (2012:139–72). Likewise, in *Martyrdom and Identity* (2012), Michael Jensen proposes personal identity as being given by God.

modern Western thinking—instead of personhood being self-generated, it is given.[144] The Christian finds herself constituted (one might even say 'narrated') by God in the 'world-consuming' narrative of the Gospel. This self finds its being in the Word that God speaks to it, 'summoning' it, to use Ricoeur's term. The human person is grounded then, not in self-understanding, but in Divine narration.

In his later work, Ricoeur came close to what I am suggesting. In an essay originally given as a part of his Gifford Lectures, he describes the religious self as a 'summoned self' (Ricoeur 1995f).[145] This picks up where *Oneself as Another* left off, utilizing the theoretical structure of the 'summoned self' in the particular case of the religious self (Mandry 2004:72).

For Ricoeur, the Christian self could be understood as being summoned by God. This is, perhaps, a particular manifestation of the general principles Ricoeur puts forward in *Oneself as Another*. Since the 'summoned self' is one who has been called from outside of one's self, for the Christian, this call can be understood to come from the Divine Other, who thereby takes part in constituting the summoned self. This assertion is not unique. Michael Jensen suggests that Aquinas had a similar conception of the Christian self: "as the self promised to him by God" (2012:114).[146]

Thus, personhood, for the Christian, has significant anchor points in time: past acts of God, the present work of God, and an eschatological future in God. Hence, Hans Urs von

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[144] Mandy notes, "From a point of view in the tradition of the Enlightenment and of modern morality, the religious self as 'summoned self,' the feeling of absolute dependence that marks religious conscience, to belong to the economy of the preceding gift, all this seems to be the opposite claim for autonomy. Ricoeur's thesis is however that an understanding of theonomy as 'loving obedience' does not contradict autonomy but, after questioning its tendency to autosufficiency, sustains its effective realization of finite human existence" (2004:74).

[145] Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* is formed from these Gifford Lectures, but, at the time, Ricoeur chose not to publish this lecture (along with another) as a part of *Oneself*. See the footnote in Christof Mandry's essay (2004:68) as well as Ricoeur's own comments (1992b:24) for details about the omission of these lectures in the published volume. This may have been due both to concerns about the reception of this portion and the belief that this was merely a particular example of Ricoeur's argument more generally (Mandry 2004:72).

[146] Here Jensen cites Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II.340-3.

Balthasar can ask, "Could it be that the Christian has the unprecedented opportunity of giving form and shape to his life through an awareness or foreknowledge of its final shape, so that one could know from the very beginning who he is?" (1994:136). I contend that this knowledge *is* possible through knowing oneself in relation to the Divine Other.[147]

We do not fully know ourselves in much the same way that we do not fully know God. Human persons, "like God, are wholly mysterious" (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:216). We receive our personhood and are constituted, in large part, from without rather than solely from within. Instead of a Nietzschean self-assertion, self-denial is the norm. Ricoeur suggests, "I am not the master of my own meaning, my own sense" (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:215). Could Ricoeur's account of personhood as understood in relation to the Other be a corrective to the *cogito* of modern Western individually-defined identity?[148] I suggest that it could. This is where, for me, Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology becomes a theological anthropology. Yet, what is the basis of this theological anthropology? Ricoeur himself gives us a trajectory for discovery through an articulation of the *telos* ascribed to human existence.

God as the *Telos* of Human Existence

To tie together meaning and personhood, the two strands of Ricoeur's thought I have highlighted in this chapter, I turn to one of Ricoeur's early and little known essays entitled, 'Christianity and the Meaning of History.'[149] In this essay, Ricoeur suggests meaning is "the fundamental source of the courage to live in history," yet also is a mystery that must be attended to because "this meaning is hidden; no one can say it, rely upon it, or draw an assurance from it which would be a counter-assurance against the dangers of history." (1965:93). Meaning, in this regard, is inextricably linked to faith. This leads Ricoeur to ask,

> What authorizes the Christian to speak of meaning when he takes shelter in mystery? What authorizes him to transcend this schema of ambiguity…?...For the

[147] Other Christian thinkers, such as Augustine, have held a similar view (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:216).
[148] Indeed, Descartes' *cogito* destroys the need for community, including the community of those who have gone before—tradition.
[149] This essay was earlier published in English (Ricoeur 1952). I quote from a later edition because I deem it to be a better translation.

> Christian, faith in the Lordship of God dominates his entire vision of history. If God is the Lord of individual lives he is also Lord of history: God directs this uncertain, noble, and guilty history toward Himself. To be more precise, I think that this Lordship constitutes a 'meaning' and not a supreme farce, a prodigious caprice, or a last 'absurdity,' because the great events that I recognize as Revelation have a certain pattern, constitute a global form, and are not given as pure discontinuity (1965:93).

For Ricoeur, meaning ultimately must be found in relation to the triune God. While knowledge of God is, in the end, mysterious and beyond full human comprehension, the narrative of God's work in this world is finally understandable and capable of providing profound meaning:

> Thus, what allows the Christian to go beyond the disconnectedness of lived history and to transcend the apparent ambiguity of this history…is the fact that this history is imbued with another history whose meaning is not inaccessible to him and which may be *understood* (Ricoeur 1965:93–94).

The Christian story, as understood through the testimony of those who witness the work of God, is in itself a history that has meaning beyond its immediate context. The basis of hope for the Christian is the possibility of such meaning:

> Hope speaks from the depths of the descent into the absurd, it takes hold of the ambiguity and manifest incertitude of history and says to me: look for a meaning, try to understand! It is here that Christianity branches off from existentialism. Ambiguity is the last word for existentialism; for Christianity it is real, it is lived, but it is the next to last word. This is why the Christian, in the very name of this confidence in a hidden meaning, is encouraged by his faith to *attempt* to construct comprehensive schemata (Ricoeur 1965:95).

Ricoeur does not wish to fall into what he sees as the perils of foundationalism or the despair of existential doubt, but he nonetheless still attempts to find a place for the meaningfulness of human existence in the midst of despair. Here he is caught in the tension between the hiddenness and disclosure of meaning. Ricoeur proposes that in exploring the nature of reality one must "choose between system or mystery" (1965:95). He chooses mystery, but, for him, it is a mystery that may be engaged through faith in a larger schema that itself provides meaning:

> Faith in meaning, but in a meaning hidden from history, is thus both the *courage* to believe in a profound significance of the most tragic history…and a certain rejection of system and fanaticism, a sense of the *open* (Ricoeur 1965:96).

Yet this faith does not totally leave behind conceptual schemata. Instead, faith is suspended between mystery and certitude—a place of 'ambiguity' intersected by suffering and dialectically "situated between the rational schema of progress and the supra-rational schema of hope" (Ricoeur 1965:96–97).

The posture of the Christian, as one who lives by faith, is not one of unmitigated hope, nor is it one of existential despair. Ricoeur has highlighted the 'supra-rational schema of hope' available through his 'passion for the possible,' yet he rightly also suggests that this must be tempered by the 'disquieting aspect of history.' Amidst the ambiguity of this tension, there is a way forward. For one who lives by the promise of faith, hope requires action. In Ricoeur's thought, "religion is…an existential attitude with a fundamentally dialogic structure whose principle is love and whose logic is superabundance" (Mandry 2004:74).[150] Thus, the outworking of Ricoeur's philosophy could be expressed as: "the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6, NRSV). Ricoeur's 'existential attitude' of love is known and appropriated through the act of narration.

Resilience through Divine Narration

How does Ricoeur's depiction of Christian hope relate to a narrative understanding of theology more generally? Furthermore, how does it relate to the concept of resilience? We can build on Ricoeur's suggestion that the Christian story provides the basis for human meaning.

Many question the possibility of gaining meaning by means of master narratives, especially ones rooted in future hope. In response to "whether a society can live without eschatology," Ricoeur posits:

> Perhaps not, but we are also in a crisis of replacement eschatologies—Communism, for example—which have played this role in the post-Enlightenment period. Perhaps we are fooling ourselves by believing that the end of *these* grand narratives was the end of *all* grand narratives (1998:168).

[150] Cf. "The Logic of Jesus, the Logic of God" (Ricoeur 1995e).

There is a place, then, for a grand narrative. As opposed to the many 'little stories' found in postmodernism, Loughlin suggests: "perhaps the telling of many little stories is itself dependent on a larger tale; one that cannot be controverted because dissembled as the space in which all the little stories are told, as *telling* itself?" (1999:30).[151] In Loughlin's view, we could understand the master story of Divine action in the world as the act of narration by the triune Godhead. Put differently, the self is hermeneutically formed in relation to the Divine Other through the act of narration. This move, as with Ricoeur's conception of the self, shifts the focus from the self (and self-narration) to God (and Divine narration). Again, this could be a counter to the modern (and postmodern) reversal of religion noted by Hans Frei (1974) wherein we exchange stepping into the narrative of God for creating an apologetic for our own life.[152]

What does it mean to have a life narrated by God? How does one step into the story of God? In one sense, God narrates all that happens in the world since God is the primary cause and enabler of all action.[153] In another sense, human beings are free to make decisions contrary to God's direction. Not all human beings allow Divine input to guide their thoughts and actions. It might be said that narration by God is putting oneself under the authority and direction of God. This direction is most fully understood through the Divine Word of scripture.[154] Narration by God situates an individual narrative in relation to Jesus Christ, whose story "presents a unique way of being-in-time, of being-towards-God and being-for-others" (Vanhoozer 1986:304).[155]

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[151] Stephen Prickett argues that Lyotard's distinction between 'small' stories and 'meta' stories and subsequent denial of the possibility of any meta-narrative is, in itself, a meta-narrative tantamount to a fundamentalist approach to the world. Cf. (Prickett 2002:53).

[152] Cf. (Shuman and Meador 2002:41–43).

[153] This claim will be taken up more fully in the next chapter.

[154] Ricoeur notes that "scriptural understanding is related to the community's 'total understanding of existence and reality'" (Mudge and Ricoeur 1981:21). See also (Ricoeur 1981b:52). Similar to Ricoeur's focus on the meaning rather than the ontology of reality, for Ricoeur "The philosopher's procedure is not to confront the text with the question whether it bears testimony to 'what really happened' in the modern sense, but rather to ask what the text *means* by its assertion about the testimony it bears" (Mudge and Ricoeur 1981:22).

[155] For more on the importance of time in biblical narrative and the *telos* of the Christian self, see (Jensen 2012:112–13).

Hence, the story of Jesus displays new realms of possibility for the Christian.[156] Yet, it is not the story itself, but the Person and the historical realities behind the story that afford these possibilities. The story of Jesus is the 'meeting place' of human and divine potentialities.[157] When the narrative of God interprets the human heart, new horizons of possibility and hope are created. Just as God *spoke* creation into existence (Genesis 1), God *speaks* the being of the Christian into existence. Indeed, Christ himself is described in the Gospel of John (1:1) as the Logos (Word). Here Loughlin suggests that

> the Christian takes the biblical narratives, above all the narratives of Christ, as the fundamental story by which all others are to be understood, including his or her own story…The biblically formed narratives of Christ and his Church become the story which literally makes the world (1999:20).

In some sense, we are called to put our own stories in the context of the Divine narrative. To use Auerbach's phrase, the Bible 'overcomes our reality' because "[i]t is the only true story of the world, all other stories being at best partial renditions of the world story disclosed in the Bible…Insofar as we allow the biblical story to become our story, it overcomes our reality" (Loughlin 1999:37).[158]

The biblical story of Jesus has the power to encompass our own world and thereby, following Ricoeur, create new realms of possibility and being-in-the-world.[159] Similarly, Loughlin suggests "the idea of selfhood as narrative…allows us to better understand salvation as the reordering of the subject's story by, and finally within, the story of Jesus

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[156] Alain Thomasset suggests, "Parcourant le chemin qui est celui du Seigneur lui-même, le retraitant est invité, entre autres choses, à s'approprier par le regard, l'ouïe et le cœur, les récits évangéliques de sa vie, sa mort et sa résurrection" (2005:541). 'Following the way of the Lord himself, the contemplative is invited, among other things, to appropriate into oneself through sight, hearing and heart, the evangelical narratives of his life, death and resurrection.'

[157] Loughlin suggests, "Hauerwas is concerned that narrative should not be thought a general theological category dominating all others, for 'Jesus is prior to story'…Hauerwas continues his comment on the priority of Jesus by noting that 'Jesus' life and resurrection can be displayed only narratively'. He thus acknowledges an intimate connection between person and story; so intimate that it goes beyond prioritising one over the other. It is the *story of Jesus* that is prior to any narrative category or other conceptuality" (1999:ix–x) citing (Hauerwas 1987:190).

[158] Thus, Lindbeck: "A scriptural world is thus able to absorb the universe" (1984:117). For more on this concept as the cornerstone of Yale theology see (Wallace 1990:104).

[159] See (Milbank 1990:381) on Christian theology as 're-narration' of the previous stories in light of their relationship to God.

Christ, who is the 'what more and what else' that constitutes the good for human kind" (1999:214).[160] The question remains whether or not individuals will choose to step into the divine narrative, whose *telos* and manner of being-in-the-world run counter to self-constructed personhood.

Because this narration is the result of a dialectic relationship, it is possible to see this understanding escaping the pitfalls Ricoeur associated with "an ultimate foundation, characteristic of the cogito philosophies" (Ricoeur 1992b:21).[161] A theological anthropology based in the alterity of God, far from destroying the possibility of interaction between the human and Divine, actually preserves it. Because in Ricoeur's thought 'otherness is constitutive of selfhood,' alterity—afforded by 'distanciation'—becomes "the very grounds for relation between human persons and the divine" (White 2009:2–3).

Situating our theological anthropology in the Divine assessment of human being garners insight into human existence, to include resilience, that is not fully explainable through purely human means. This is a place of uncertainty and faith, as Ricoeur made clear, but is preferable to the alternatives of naïve foundationalism and existential doubt.[162] Jensen argues that

> Christian discipleship is a renunciation of the apparent security and pleasure of…realism precisely because it denies that it is an adequate description of the human situation. According to Christian testimony, the human situation is instead framed by the judgement and the promises of God (2012:46).

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[160] Here Loughlin is commenting on MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1985). He continues on to highlight the importance of community for personhood: "Milbank's stress on the 'repeatability' of Jesus allows us to better understand the idea that the story of Jesus is the story of each one of us, because it more forcibly reminds us that the story of Jesus is not complete without the story of the Church, and that therefore his story—his personhood or *persona*—waits upon the eschaton for its complete narration. If Jesus is the 'source, goal and context of all our lives', we can come to know him fully only through knowledge of all our lives" (Loughlin 1999:216). In regards to resilience, the 'evils' of adversity, Ricoeur suggests, are "burdens to be shared" (1992b:199).
[161] Cf. (Reagan 2002:6).
[162] See Milbank's account, which is strikingly similar to Ricoeur's at many points: (Milbank 1990:249).

I will contend throughout the remainder of this project that a conception of Christian personhood in relation to God may be a defining concept in the ability of individuals to suffer, sacrifice, and be resilient.[163] Jensen suggests the 'passive action' of the Christian martyr is displayed in allowing God to define the self (2012:107), thereby opening up the self to divine narration (2012:129). She is moving "away from the type of assertive action that is driven by idealism and self-definition" and towards 'passive action' whereby one's personhood is constituted in relation to the Divine Other, God (2012:131, 195). This has clear implications for human resilience.

I suggest that, when allowing God to narrate his life, the Christian is formed in relation to what God has spoken about him. Thus, God defines the *telos* of human being for the Christian. How is this *telos* similar or different from the *telos* of 'natural' resilience and how is this *telos* known?

I propose the narrative of the Gospel both projects the possibility inherent in human existence and serves as a guard against 'wishful thinking' (Vanhoozer 1990:9).[164]

Conclusions on Ricoeur

Ricoeur and Theology

At some level, Ricoeur's philosophy is an attempt to express the ineffable: that which is beyond the description of language and thereby a gift that can only be graciously received. He comes very close to describing Christian understanding of the world in a way that has significant implications for his philosophical anthropology.[165] Vanhoozer summarizes Ricoeur's thought in this way: "Ricoeur's philosophy approximates in style

[163] E.g. (Jensen 2012:3).
[164] I will assess the content of the narrative of the Gospel through dialogue with a biblical text in Chapter 6.
[165] Ricoeur notes that philosophy assumes that religious discourse "is not senseless, that it is worthwhile to analyze it, because something is said that is not said by other kinds of discourse—ordinary, scientific, or poetic—or, to put it into more positive terms, that it is meaningful at least for the community of faith that uses it for the sake of self-understanding or for the sake of communication with others exterior to the faith community" (1995d:35).

and content the theological virtues of grace, hope and love" (1990:287). Vanhoozer makes clear "Ricoeur is not a theologian" and suggests instead that "Ricoeur is perhaps best viewed as an apologist for the intelligibility of the Christian kerygma" (1990:284) who, not unlike John the Baptist, prepares the way for the Gospel rather than preaching it himself (1990:288).[166] By staying within the bounds of philosophical enquiry, Ricoeur necessarily excludes himself from fully proclaiming the Gospel (Vanhoozer 1990:288). Yet Ricoeur's own assessment of his task in relation to reason and theology is telling:

> If there is only one *logos*, the *logos* of Christ requires of me as a philosopher nothing else than a more complete and more perfect activation of reason; not more than reason, but *whole* reason. Let us repeat this phrase, whole reason; for it is this problem of the integrality of thinking which will prove to be the core of the whole problematic (Ricoeur 1981a:157).[167]

Some of Ricoeur's earliest work addressed theological issues,[168] but for most of his career he believed his philosophy should be separate from his religious commitments (Reagan 1996:119-120-126; Ricoeur 1992b:24), using the imagery of "an armistice rather than an alliance" (Ricoeur 1994:6). While he readily contemplated matters of religious significance later in his career,[169] he attributed his reluctance to integrate philosophy and theology to a desire for his philosophy to be taken seriously by the largely atheistic French academy (Junker-Kenny and Kenny 2004:203; Kenny 2004:93).

By his own assessment, Ricoeur was more at home with the biblical exegete than the theologian. He resisted claims to onto-theological knowledge and instead preferred staying close to the hermeneutical relation between text and interpreter.[170] "For Ricoeur, theology can only be a biblical, textual hermeneutics.[171] Theology is through and through a reflection on language" (van den Hengel 2004:124). Ricoeur relates, "I

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[166] Cf. (Ricœur 2007:107). Against this assessment, Mudge suggests that Ricoeur is primarily not an apologist, but "[r]ather, Ricoeur is trying to be sure that the gospel message everywhere has the same sense" (1981:32).
[167] Cf. (Kenny 2004:99).
[168] E.g. (Ricoeur 1952).
[169] E.g. (Ricoeur 2002:285, 2004b, 2004a:457–506).
[170] Ricoeur notes, "For the philosopher, to listen to Christian preaching is first of all to let go (*se dépouiller*) of every form of onto-theological knowledge. Even—and especially when—the word of God is involved. In this regard, the amalgamation of being and God is the most subtle seduction" (1995c:223). Cf. (Duffy 2009:11–12, 73).
[171] Van den Hengel cites (Ricoeur 1992a:19).

have always moved back and forth between these two poles: a Biblical pole and a rational and critical pole, a duality that, finally, has lasted through my entire life" (Ricoeur 1998:6). Thus, the theologian who would seek to speak in speculative language, even using Ricoeur's philosophy, risks doing what Ricoeur disdained (Soskice 2004:78).

What, then, are we to make of Ricoeur's philosophical and theological legacy? Vanhoozer suggests Ricoeur's philosophy itself is sound, but tends to favor the 'passion for the possible' provided by poetry to the groundedness of history in its implementation, thereby upsetting the balance needed for his philosophy. He proposes that "[p]oetic flights of the imagination need to be tempered by the earthbound sobriety of the historian if they are to keep from degenerating into utopian fantasies" (Vanhoozer 1990:281).[172] Thus, there is a need for grounded concrete accounts of resilience that attest to the possibilities of hope. In this regard John van den Hengel suggests using Ricoeur's philosophy as a guide for theology "would mean to give priority in our theological enterprise to the praxis of faith-life rather than to theoretical disclosure of meaning" (2004:132). The legacy of Ricoeur's thought, then, is found in the practical outworking of his philosophy. I suggest no better place for this than in gaining a better understanding of human resilience.

Ricoeur and Resilience

Ricoeur's dense thought has implications for resilience, but I must make more clear my particular reasons for engaging with Ricoeur. Of utmost significance is his understanding of how narrative can shape not only one's perspective, but also one's very self. It can display hope, suggesting relevant praxis for human resilience.

Narrative and resilience have a close relationship in Ricoeur's thought: "Ricoeur was understandably fond of citing the novelist Isak Dinesen's remark that, 'All sorrows can be borne if you can put them into a story or tell a story about them'" (Wolin 2005). Similarly, in a published interview Ricoeur suggested narrative generates a capacity to

[172] Vanhoozer notes, "Of course, the historian cannot be the ultimate arbiter of what is humanly possible, for this would remove the possibility of any new way of being-in-the-world" (1990:289).

endure suffering (Kearney 2004:158). The connection between narrative and action creates the possibility of the meaningfulness of narrative and its application to real life situations. Because "life itself is in search of narrative," human beings attempt to find meaning amongst the vicissitudes and pain of experience. Furthermore, because of the ubiquitous and overwhelming experience of sorrow for humans, Ricoeur suggests mourning is an essential aspect of narrative (Kearney 2004:159). Kearney continues,

> Yes, 'all sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them'. But these narratives that are able to make sorrows *bearable* and to make us able to endure them constitute but one element of the work of mourning…the work of narrative constitutes an essential element of the work of mourning understood as the acceptance of the irreparable (Kearney 2004:160).

Ricoeur believes "[t]here is something irreparable in human affairs." Thus, a person not only acts, but also suffers. Hence praxis must take account for sorrow,[173] yet not be paralyzed by it. The theological grace of forgiveness provides the possibility of joy by placing the past "at the right distance from the present: the past as no longer there, but as having been" (Ricoeur 2004b:15). Narrative, then, can play a significant part in properly understanding the past, present, and future in relation to their true *telos*.

In Ricoeur's thought, we noted narrative mediates being and time (Vanhoozer 1991:43). Based on this assessment, I suggest resilience is the out-working of being through the temporally-situated circumstance of adversity.[174] Personhood, therefore, is at the core of resilient adaptation. Being is mediated through time, hence resilience is known only through the narrative of human existence. This narrative, for the Christian, has as its *telos* union with God and its actuation through love. These have significance for resilience through creating meaning and connection, and their import is realized through the narration of human existence in time.

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[173] Significantly, Ricoeur added his conception of the person as one who suffers as well as one who acts following the untimely death of his son, Olivier (Reagan 1996:64).
[174] This does not mean that someone who is a 'resilient person' will always be resilient. Nor does it mean that being a 'resilient person' encompasses all that is involved in resilient outcomes (research has shown the significant effect that environmental and genetic factors play in resilient responses with the former even exerting influence on the latter). This is not to say, however, that an individual has no part to play in resilience.

Such an understanding coincides with narratival conceptions of the Christian faith and social science research on ways in which religion and spirituality provide meaning to those facing adversity. In this regard, I contend, resilience is an out-working of personhood in relation to God through the mediation of time.[175] I have suggested resilience can best be understood through attention to the whole person, rather than solely in terms of particular factors that contribute to resilience. Because human experience cannot be reduced to a sum total of experiences, nor human personality reduced merely to a set of factors, I propose the best way to conceive of a resilient individual is in terms of a 'resilient person' who is known through the narrative of her story. The person is multifaceted, but addressing the person as a unified narrative identity provides descriptive clarity and deeper insight into human resilience to adversity.[176]

Ricoeur suggests narratives 'emplot' distinct events within a story that makes sense of them. Furthermore, this narrative has a *telos* towards which it is moving. If these same events are emplotted within a different narrative, with a different *telos*, the meaning of these events changes as well. For an individual whose life events are emplotted in a 'secular' narrative, a temporal understanding of resilience will predominate. Events in this narrative could take on a very different meaning than if they were emplotted within the Divine narrative with its *telos* in the eternal.

Following Ricoeur's understanding of the 'world shaping' power of narrative, this thesis seeks to use narrative to gain insight into human response to adversity and resilience. Ricoeur suggests inasmuch as our lives are narratives, story enables us to be "better readers and authors of our own lives" by understanding the interaction between agent

[175] In keeping with the discussion above, I will primarily be speaking from the vantage point of Christian theology and therefore will be addressing Christian personhood. This does not preclude some of these insights from being applied in other contexts.
[176] In this respect, this understanding corresponds with the ecological systemic model. In this case, the individual is seen as an entire system rather than simply a conglomeration of distinct parts. The person must be understood at multiple levels of analysis (genetic, psychological, social, spiritual, etc.). This project primarily examines what I consider the 'core' spiritual aspect of the person that facilitates resilient adaptation.

and plot (Kearney 2004:171).[177] According to Ricoeur, an individual may well discover a new way of being-in-the-world through the dynamic act of reading. In this sense, when confronted with the world of the text, a new meaning may be configured from the already-existing events in one's life. Hence 'emplotting' events within a new narrative may yield a crop of hope.[178] I suggest that Ricoeur's philosophy provides the basis for believing resilience is possible. If an individual changes her understanding of herself by placing her story within the context of the Divine narrative, this new 'emplotment' of life events can create meaning whereby she can have, and act upon, hope. This is accomplished through properly situating her personal narrative within the Divine narrative.

Is it too idealistic to suggest a new narrative could provide this kind of existential change? The social science studies addressed earlier in this chapter posit narrative can aid the process of healing. But, the life of Paul Ricoeur itself is also suggestive. His philosophical musings did not originate from an ivory tower, but from one who endured the horrors of two world wars and suffered significant family trauma. His hope was to create a way for meaning to be found in human existence amidst an intellectual climate that emphasized existential despair.

Conclusion

Ricoeur provides the foundation to say it is possible for an individual's 'world' to be re-envisioned and suggests how it might take place. The narrative of the Gospel, I propose, directs individuals toward the *telos* of human being—union with God—thereby providing meaning and connection as resources for facing adversity resiliently.

I have suggested that, for the Christian, human being must be understood in relation to God. Rather than a detached, abstract encounter, this is an intensely personal encounter between the triune God and the individual whereby identity is formed in relation to the

[177] See (Ricoeur 1992b:159).
[178] Junker-Kenny argues that "[c]learly, an imagination nourished by the 'economy of the gift' would be more attentive to existential needs, symbolic realizations, and structures of hope in moral life than one raised in the order of strict equivalence" (2004a:177).

(Divine) Other. The starting point for understanding Christian resilience, therefore, is not human need, but God. God's being-in-action expresses itself in ways that are significant and directly applicable to human need; nonetheless God's being has primacy over human need: "It is the possibility that follows from the actuality, and not the other way around" (Loughlin 1999:35).

As I have already suggested, 'relational' knowledge may be even more important to resilience than methods disclosed via other means. Narrative itself is especially insightful for understanding human lived experience. Walter Benjamin suggests: "Every real story . . . contains, openly or covertly, something useful…Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom." Further, "[t]he art of storytelling is dying out because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out" (2006:364). This project seeks to regain a portion of the 'epic side of truth' of which Benjamin writes and relate it to human resilience.

A narrative understanding of resilience allows each individual life and situation to be considered uniquely, as a circumstance needing particular interventions particular to that person, time, and place.[179] Yet, it is clear there is also a need for generalized principles that can be applied across various contexts and lives. I suggest this general applicability is possible because human personhood is comprised in relation to a constant: God as the Divine Other, a relationship to which the Gospel narrative attests. Such a claim, and the possibility of hope for human resilience, is possible because of the philosophical foundation laid by Ricoeur, whose "philosophy [is] marked by a passion for existence…[rather than a] stoic resignation to living in a hostile world." In the final evaluation, "[b]ecause there is more meaning than absurdity, we can risk loving the world and those who people it" (Vanhoozer 1990:288).

To further investigate the meaningfulness of life and its relation to resilience, let us turn to an example of how the narrative of the Gospel might create meaning (through the narrative of the Gospel) and connection (through relational participation in the narrative of the God who constitutes the self), thereby influencing resilient adaptation.

[179] See (Capps 1984:7) for an example of the use of Ricoeur's narrative philosophy for pastoral care.

Chapter 5: Appropriation of the Gospel in History—Julian of Norwich and a Theology of Hope

"I fought within myself to keep my eyes fixed on the promises God had written on my heart: 'Be strong and of good courage, never be afraid, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go'…

Whatever had gone before—all the fears, all the burdens, all the feelings of being trapped and toyed with by forces beyond our control—were wiped away, replaced by an overriding sense of possibility…

For the past few months…I had been totally at peace. But now…the fear returned. I was overcome with grief…I wept…and prayed. 'Please, God, protect all your children who are suffering. Free them from fear, and give them hope and peace that you will come to save them'" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:186–87, 192–93, 198–99).

"Alle shalle be wele" Julian of Norwich

Why Narrative Examples?

Using Paul Ricoeur's philosophy as a starting point, I have discussed how narrative is able to create a 'new world' of hope in the lived experience of the individual. This hope is closely linked to a person's sense of self and identity that are formed in relation to the Other rather than in the isolation of the *cogito*. For the Christian, the self fundamentally is formed in relation to God as the Divine Other through the narrative of the Gospel.

Having laid down conceptual and theoretical ideals, in the following portion of this project I now turn to a concrete example of these principles. This example not only serves to display theoretical concepts, but also to further theological understanding of resilience. Such an example is useful because, as Ricoeur suggests, testimony is best able to disclose truth through the participatory action of witnessing (Ricoeur 1981c:105, 111–13).[1] Similarly, Hille Haker proposes:

> a person is always 'entangled in stories' which provide the current action with a temporal and cultural context…Literary life stories present in this connection a

[1] On the ability of testimony to convey knowledge through the epistemic virtue of trust, see (Stump 2014). Through trust, testimony can create the hope that something is not just possible, but possible for *me*.

> possible source of those 'convictions' which are historically and contextually anchored; they are located at the pole of ethical reflection [that]…(necessarily)…becomes practical…[T]hey create for us, the readers, the possibility of a distance to existential living which can grant us a deeper understanding of ourselves. By virtue of its narrative structure, which is also inherent in the identity of a person, literature proves to be ethically relevant…therefore, ethical theory is dependent in its reflection on the mediation of ethical-moral orientation and the narration of life (2004:152).

Literary and historical 'snapshots' of individuals, then, provide opportunities for gaining insight into the character and nature of those so described by enabling critical reflection and practical application. This, as Ricoeur suggests, is due to the similar nature of literary narrative description and narrative constructions of identity. Viewing individuals through the framework of narrative identity—in this case the narrative identity provided by the narrative of the Gospel—can give substantial insight into the resilient adaptation promoted by such an identity. Such an approach will also 'thicken' and complexify understandings of resilience in ways that are explanatory yet also paradoxical.

Why Julian of Norwich?

I use the example of Julian of Norwich, a 14th century English mystic, not only because of the content of her spiritual experiences and the context of her life, but also because of her theological reflection on hope and the love of God.[2] Reflection on Julian may be especially appropriate because, for Mitchell Merback, "the religious consciousness of the late Middle Ages" may "uncover the very foundation of human community in the shared realization that we can, and do, all suffer" (1999:150).[3] In Rowan William's view, Julian of Norwich is "a theologian of extraordinary intuitive resource,

[2] Some may be wary of the mystical nature of Julian's writing. In regard to the epistemological reliability of mysticism, Steven Katz writes: "mystical or more generally religious experience is irrelevant in *establishing* the truth or falsity of religion" (emphasis mine), however, this is to say nothing of the truth of mystical claims, which "no philosophical argument is capable of proving" (1978:22). Instead, Katz suggests, it is 'reasonable,' given the variety and seeming sensibility of those making claim to mystical experiences, to conclude that they are not "solely the product of interior states of consciousness" (1978:23). Similarly, Donald MacKinnon (1978), reflecting upon Julian's *Revelations*, proposes a stance of epistemic humility regarding mysticism since, as finite humans, our view of the world is incomplete.

[3] As cited in (Minore 2014:45).

whose…*Revelations of Divine Love*, sketches something like a whole imaginative universe centred upon the cross of Christ as the fundamental form of God's self-sacrificing love" (1990:142).

This chapter will trace the context of her life and times, the content of her revelations and subsequent theological reflection, and then relate these insights to themes drawn from Ricoeur. In so doing, the unifying cord of *phronesis* will continue to tie together insights in a manner that will produce practical application pertaining to resilience. Indeed, this may be, in part, what Julian has in mind when she remarks that her revelations of God's love provide "strength enough" for her and all of God's children to face the trials and temptations of life (LT, IV:44).[4]

My discussion of Julian, her *Revelations of Divine Love*, and questions raised by her theology will necessarily be limited. I will not, for instance, be able fully to take up broader questions of how human free-will and Divine providence are non-competitive, or discussions about universal salvation, though some see Julian's theology as addressing these issues. Nor will this chapter be primarily an overview of Julian's life, writings, and theology. There are a number of excellent works on these topics already.[5] Rather, I will explore how Julian's writings may further a theological understanding of resilience and serve as an example of the resilience afforded through the narrative of the Gospel and a relational identity founded in the Triune God.

Julian of Norwich: Her Life and Times

The woman who came to be known as Julian of Norwich was an anchorite who lived in the city of Norwich, England in the 14th century.[6] We know little of her life other than

[4] I will refer to *Revelations* in abbreviated form, referencing Barry Windeatt's translation (2015) in the following manner: Short Text (ST:page); Long Text (LT, section:page). Because of the quality of this translation and for ease of reading, I have chosen to quote from it, only referencing the original Middle English as needed for clarity.

[5] See, for instance (Bauerschmidt 1999; Jantzen 1987; Turner 2011).

[6] It is probable that even her name, 'Julian,' is not her baptismal name, but the name she took after becoming an anchoress at St. Julian's Church in Norwich (Bauerschmidt 1999:203). Interestingly, at this time Norwich was a very religious city, perhaps even "Europe's *most* religious city" (Tanner 2009:59).

the details that she, and subsequent early editors of her work, provide in the texts. Though Julian intimately reveals the details of her revelations of God's love, she dwells on them only insomuch as they serve to convey the substance of that love to her readers, not for their own sake. In the same way, she shares only those details about herself that are relevant to the disclosure of God's love, though these details are still insignificant for understanding Julian and her writings (Jantzen 1987:4–5). Thus, because of this juxtaposition of intimate details and anonymity, Grace Jantzen notes that Julian is "one of the figures of history whom we feel that we can come to know very well, and yet who simultaneously remains an enigma" (1987:3).

Julian's Context

Despite a level of mystery surrounding Julian's life circumstances, I contend that a better understanding of them will provide valuable insight into Julian's writings and their import for resilience. Julian was born in 1342 or 1343, as nearly as we can surmise,[7] and she is noted as still being alive in 1416 (Bauerschmidt 1999:209). The era of Julian's life has been described as particularly distressing. Barbara Tuchman writes that

> [t]he 14th century suffered so many 'strange and great perils and adversities' (in the words of a contemporary) that its disorders cannot be traced to any one cause…The four horsemen of St. John's vision…had now become seven—plague, wars, taxes, brigandage, bad government, insurrection, and schism in the Church…Simply summarized by the Swiss historian J. C. L. S. de Sisimondi, the 14th century was 'a bad time for humanity' (1978:xiii–xiv).[8]

A Time of Instability

Some suggest that too little has been made of the context of Julian's life experience for understanding her writing (Rolf 2014). While this may be the case, in truth there is little context that we know with certainty. Anything beyond what is found in her writings and in a few external sources is merely conjecture. But, even this partial knowledge of the context of Julian's life can be beneficial.

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[7] This is based upon Julian's assertion in *Revelations* that she was 30 and a half at the time of receiving the visions in May 1373 (LT, II:40).
[8] Citing chapter 38 in (Sismondi 1840). The original reads "*ne fut point heureuse pour l'humanité*."

For instance, it is insightful that the time in which Julian lived was one of great uncertainty and upheaval—a time that was harried by the tumult of war and the devastation of the Black Plague as well as the growth of literacy. The 14th century was a time of change, with the beginnings of modernity beginning to surface (Bauerschmidt 1999:12). Hers was a time of pockets of great spiritual devotion, but also great cultural changes. Norwich itself at the time of Julian was a thriving metropolis, surpassed in England only by London (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:39). It was a flourishing center of religious life and study (Jantzen 1987:17), yet it was racked by a number of significant difficulties.

The effect of immense cultural and political events upon the spiritual climate of Julian's day and upon Julian herself is not immediately clear, though we might conjecture that these forces did have an effect. The particulars of the difficulties during this period are important for understanding their effect at a cultural as well as an individual level.

Black Plague

The Black Death came to Norwich in January 1349, when Julian was 6 or 7 years of age (Jantzen 1987:7). This epidemic was so contagious that some felt anyone who touched a diseased person would catch it themselves. Some believed that the end of the world had come, the plague being a punishment from God (Horrox 1994:3, 95). Mass burials were necessary in a tragedy so widespread that a third of the population and half of the clergy in Norwich died (Jacob 1961:293–94; Jantzen 1987:7–8). Furthermore, the psychological toll of this epidemic, and its subsequent unpredictable outbreaks for years to come, was immense (Jantzen 1987:8). Significantly, there was a religious revival in the aftermath of the Plague, discernable, in part, by a massive increase in mystical writings, including Julian's *Revelations* (Aberth 2000:173).

War

The 100 Years War with France spanned Julian's life and had significant societal consequences throughout England, including economic and human loss (Jantzen 1987:5–6).[9] The war created considerable stress upon individuals and the national

[9] For commentary on this war, see (Harriss 2005:653; Prestwich 2007:292ff).

economy as a whole, yet also solidified a national identity (Bauerschmidt 1999:14). War was a constant societal influence, shaping the cultural landscape and mindset (Harriss 2005:175). Since Norwich was a large and wealthy city on the southeastern coast of England, we can imagine that the threat of invasion was felt keenly. This war, however, was merely the outgrowth of deeper political turmoil.

Political Upheaval

At national as well as local levels there was significant upheaval in the 14th century due to a number of factors including poor crop production, and population and economic decline (Harriss 2005:217–22). In addition to war, there was political intrigue within the monarchy (Jantzen 1987:5) and peasant revolts throughout the country (Harriss 2005:227–33). In Norwich itself there was significant political and class discord and upheaval from the end of the 14th century until at least 1415. Continuing quarrels between the rich and the common classes for the governance of the city exacerbated already tense relations (Jacob 1961:388–91, 399–400). The so-called Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was fueled by a labor shortage brought about by devastation of the Black Plague (Cantor 2002:24). The revolt led to violent upheaval around the country, including looting and even killing; churches and monasteries were not left unscathed (Jantzen 1987:8–10).

Religious Controversy

The upheaval of society was evident in the Church as well. In 1377 the Great Schism saw two claimants, one in Avignon and one in Rome, vying for papal authority and spewing 'religious' vitriol and excommunications at one another (Jantzen 1987:9).[10] Added to this, in England there were a number of movements, including John Wycliffe's Lollards, that were deemed heretical and persecuted (Jantzen 1987:10).[11] Additionally, the

[10] Cf. (Harriss 2005:424–25).

[11] The influence of Lollardy in East Anglia during the early 15th century was extensive, evidenced, in part by the prosecution of sixty men and women for heresy during a three year period (Tanner 1977:1). This also displays the serious stance that Church officials took towards heresy, with the threat of death leveled against some of those who relapsed (Tanner 1977:6). Among these heretics there was "a striking concern to bypass intermediary persons [such as priests] and things in order to reach God directly" (Tanner 1977:12). Shortly, we will see how, quite easily, ecclesiastical authorities could have been tempted to label Julian a heretic.

controversy regarding Duns Scotus and the Pelagianism of Ockham signaled the birth pains of the Protestant revolution in centuries to follow (Jacob 1961:680–82). Thus, at the time of Julian, heresy was seen as a very real threat to the Church—one which was addressed in the English Church through encouragement toward piety and affective displays of religion (Jacob 1961:298–99).

While the extent to which Julian's context impacted her and her writing may be unclear, what is plain is the magnitude of upheaval, suffering, and difficulty during this time. Within this context, many turned to the Church,[12] which served as a cultural bulwark throughout England. For most, the Church was significant in the momentous events in life—such as a birth or death—but many, including Julian, chose to relate themselves to the Church in a much more life-encompassing and radical way.[13]

Religious Life in 14th and 15th Century England

Cultural Devotion

In 15th century England the affective faith and devotion of contemplative life was often prized above the logic of discursive reasoning as a means of knowing God. This is evidenced in a number of mystical books, such as the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and a number of theologians, such as Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, aimed at obtaining just this sort of affective knowledge (Jacob 1961:685). Yet the widespread nature of the Christian religion was such that, in many sections of society, the secular and religious were nearly synonymous (Jacob 1961:662).[14]

[12] Here I use 'Church' in the same way Julian uses 'Holy Church,' to refer to the Roman Catholic Church which, at Julian's time, was understood to be the sole orthodox expression of the Christian faith in the West.
[13] John Aberth, for instance, proposes a causal link between hardship experienced during the Black Plague and the attempt to find meaning through mystical encounter with God (2000:175).
[14] See (Prestwich 2007:462–64) for more on the importance of religion to the common person.

Monastic and Anchoritic Devotion

Still, some chose to live a life of even more arduous devotion to God. Through the centuries a variety of ways to live a life specially devoted to God emerged within the Christian tradition. Many joined themselves to a monastery or convent of the Benedictine, Dominican, or Carmelite variety, or alternatively became a part of the then more recently formed Franciscan order. Others, like Julian, chose to live a solitary life as an anchorite or hermit where she "served the community by creating an enclosed space of order and purity over and against the chaos and pollution of the world" (Bauerschmidt 1999:77). This lifestyle combined elements of secular life and religious life, on the margins between the two (Bauerschmidt 1999:77–78).[15]

During the 15th century, a great regard for those who undertook a life of solitary devotion to God led to an increase in the number of individuals turning to this lifestyle. This was also true of Norwich where there were several recluses besides Julian herself (Jacob 1961:296). Indeed, Norwich during and just after Julian's lifetime had the largest number of anchorites and hermits in England (Tanner 1984:169). But, during first half of the 15th century, there began to be a decline in ability of vicarages and religious houses to sustain themselves. Some were closed and priests had difficulty finding a living wage (Jacob 1961:279).

Nonetheless, the English Church's emphasis on the personal direction afforded by anchorites and others devoted to solitude was a hallmark that was indicative of broader cultural changes within England during this time (Thornton 1963:167):

> The fifteenth century had a spiritual life of its own: but, with certain exceptions, it was not the life that flourished within the cloister as the great days of monasticism understood it…it is rather a spirituality free from, and sometimes on the defensive against, a conventual life which had become too much tied to routine and too much bound up with secular government and institutions. Monasticism…had become affected by what Professor Knowles has called 'that strange paralysis and hardening of the arteries that affected for a time the intellectual life of northwestern Europe and was particularly evident in the England of the fifteenth century': whether this was the result of the Black Death

[15] Frederick Bauerschmidt suggests that Julian's status as one who had received Extreme Unction after almost dying put her further on the margins as an "animated corpse," "a sacred intruder from the land of the dead" (1999:78).

> or of the eclipse of the papacy in the Great Schism or the strain of the French wars we are not likely to know (Jacob 1961:293).[16]

Despite the many negative forces at work during this time, one positive cultural trend is significant to mention: education of the public. In this era, as in many, education was uniquely tied to the religious establishment, both because clergy and other individuals devoted to the religious life were highly educated and because these were the persons who normally taught others (Jacob 1961:667). Thus, the status of education during the time of Julian must also be briefly addressed, especially as it relates to the role of women in society.

Women in 14th and 15th Century England

Certainly, a significant difficulty faced by Julian was discrimination because of her gender (Bauerschmidt 1999:73–76). This not only affected her ability to gain an education, but also to relate her knowledge and experiences to others. Yet, despite this discrimination, Julian used this 'disadvantage' to deepen her own and others' theological insight into the nature of God.

Education

The England of the late 14th and early 15th centuries had a growing hunger for learning to read and for books (Jacob 1961:667).[17] To be sure, many did not have great facility at reading or writing, but there was an increasing number of learned individuals, almost all of whom were male. E. F. Jacob notes,

> War-ridden England had a considerable reading public. In an increasingly literate age not only the ecclesiastics, but the knight, the lawyer, the merchant, and the trader were building up small collections. The reading of English was general, and most of the merchant class had some training in Latin (1961:663).

The growing, yet still small, learned public provides important context for Julian's *Revelations*. The genius of her work is all the more striking given her cultural context and status as a woman. Women in the 14th century did not usually have the

[16] Citing (Knowles and Hadcock 1953:48).
[17] Cf. (Harriss 2005:154–57; Tanner 2009:49–51).

opportunity to learn to read or write, either in the vernacular or in the learned language of the day, Latin.[18]

Despite having limited access to education, Julian took advantage of the resources she had, to pursue knowing and loving God. While being extraordinary for her, or any, era, Julian's spiritual maturity as a 'spiritual mother' was not completely unique. Other women at this time also experienced God in mystical ways.

Women Mystics

Julian was not alone in her struggles as a religiously devoted woman during this time.[19] Margery Kempe and Brigit of Sweden, for example, were also exemplars of faith, receiving visions and revelations of Christ's Passion and God's love (Jacob 1961:685–87). The devotion of these women is characteristic of the broader trend of the infiltration of religion into ordinary life in pre-Reformation England (Jacob 1961:687), an 'unprecedented' opportunity to engage in religious devotion (Aberth 2000:173), and an emphasis that is borne out in Julian's own life and theological legacy.

Julian's Life[20]

We do not know much about Julian's life following 1373 when she received the revelations at the age of thirty-and-a-half (Bauerschmidt 1999:203), yet external evidence suggests that Julian was an anchoress in Norwich as late as 1416.[21] One of the most significant pieces of evidence regarding Julian is Margery Kempe's record of visiting Julian near the end of Julian's life (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:35–38; Windeatt 2015:168–69). As an anchoress, Julian would have lived a life devoted to God in a solitary manner, but, rather than being isolated from society like a hermit, she would

[18] Most nuns were not literate at this time. Julian's mystical experiences afforded her a unique opportunity: "We cannot point to any conventual who had a similar role as spiritual model or mentor" (Harriss 2005:340).
[19] For a survey of the impact of female religious piety in Medieval East Anglia, see (Gilchrist and Oliva 1993).
[20] Though the details of Julian's life are not well known, it is certain that she was affected by her context, perhaps significantly bereaved by the loss both she and her community experienced.
[21] These include the wills of individuals who left property to Dame Julian (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:33–35).

have taken up residence in a small room (cell) attached to a church from which she would live a contemplative life and provide wisdom to those who enquired of her (Bauerschmidt 1999:210).

Some scholars suggest that at the time of her revelations Julian was a nun at the Benedictine monastery at Carrow. Others argue that the text only indicates she was living a 'vowed life' when this text was written, not necessarily at the time of the revelations. Hence, it is possible that Julian may have been a widow or even may have lost a child as a result of the plague (Bauerschmidt 1999:204). All such thinking is conjectural, but what is clear is that by the time of writing the Short Text, Julian was familiar enough with 'monastic hermeneutical practice' to use it extensively in her own theological reflection (Turner 2011:11).

Regarding Julian's education, due to the internal evidence of the texts some scholars contend that Julian was able not only to read and write in English, but quite probably in Latin as well (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:44). Michael Wright suggests that the odds are slightly in favor of Julian having known Latin at the time of writing the Short Text due to textual evidence for knowledge of the Vulgate and similarities between her English grammar and Latin grammar (Wright 1993:43).[22] This counter-cultural learning may have been possible given her participation in a religious community and the learning that clergy may have passed on to her. It also suggests that Julian could have had some theological training, a contention to which several aspects of her writing may point (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:43–59). Yet other scholars note that Colledge and Walsh's take on a full-fledged medieval theological training may go too far (Bauerschmidt 1999:205; Turner 2011:36).

The claims of modern scholars at first glance may seem to contradict Julian's own assessment of herself: "These revelations were shown to a simple, uneducated creature" (LT, II:40). Yet Turner notes that "her being 'unlettered' might mean almost anything

[22] In particular, Wright notes that Julian's quotation of scripture (in Middle English) follows readings in the Vulgate, and that Julian uses the ablative absolute grammatical construction, which is awkward in English but grammatically appropriate and common in Latin.

and virtually nothing. It probably meant that she was unable to read Latin off a page unaided" (Turner 2011:36).[23] Julian's claim to be unlearned is perhaps more a claim to theological solidarity with the weak than an assertion to not having any learning (Wright 1993:38). But, such solidarity may, in fact, have made her theological viewpoint less appealing to those in her own day.

Julian's Reception and Influence

During her life Julian was not overly well-known or influential, except perhaps to those in her immediate surroundings. As evidenced by the paucity of extant early manuscripts of her *Revelations*, following her death she was not widely read for many years. Frederick Bauerschmidt suggests that Julian's unpopularity in the Middle Ages was due, in part, to the difficulty of enacting the kind of spirituality she encouraged without the possibility of being charged with heresy (1999:193).[24] It was not until approximately the last 100 years that her work has come to be more greatly appreciated. Now we will turn to Julian's text itself.

Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love

Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* claims to be a record of Julian's experience of receiving revelations from God. Because of the centrality of interpretation in relating these experiences, Frederick Bauerschmidt proposes that Julian should be viewed as a theologian in her own right—one who mediated her experience of Divine revelations to her readers (1999:212). Denys Turner also advocates viewing Julian as a theologian wherein, "[t]aken as a whole, her theology is unquestionably difficult, morally demanding, intellectually complex, and resistant of simplistic solutions to dauntingly intractable theological problems" (2011:17). Further, he describes Julian's *Revelations* as "one of the most exhilarating, moving, disturbing, and inspiring works of theology in any age" (2011:xix). Julian likewise describes her revelation as "deep theology and great wisdom" (LT, LXXXVI:165). Julian's *Revelations*, in many ways, then, resists categorization, simplification, and compartmentalization. Her status as an 'outsider'

[23] Turner writes, "no scholar today doubts that Julian was formally literate" (2011:37).
[24] See, for instance, Julian's attempt to dissuade such accusations by a particular affirmation of the use of religious imagery (ST:3) in contradistinction to the Lollards (Bauerschmidt 1999:208).

from the usual channels of religious piety and power gave her a fresh perspective, yet her knowledge of and devotion to the Church and the truths it stewards sustains a continuity of thought and spirit with the narrative of the Gospel (LT, XXXII:81).[25] Here Turner suggests:

> It is less in matters of theological and doctrinal substance, and more in matters of intellectual disposition, metaphoric range, literary and linguistic style, and sheer fresh energy of thought, that the singularity of Julian's work is to be found. There is a kind of radical theological naïveté in *Revelation*—sometimes even a *fausse naïveté*—that speaks across the centuries to our own times. And therein lies a paradox. This work is in so many ways a one-off. Yet somehow it is the work's relative independence from all models of theological writing, whether of her own times or of ours, that has made it so accessible to us today—more so, it seems, than at any other time in the history of its reception (2011:17).

It is this 'fresh' voice, speaking its theological insight to our own day that makes *Revelations* especially appropriate for application in our context. Now we must give attention to the texts themselves which, in Ricoeur's terms, provide the 'distanciation' needed for the projection of meaning through the 'world' of the text.

The Texts

There are two surviving manuscripts of Julian's *Revelations*, one that has come to be labelled the 'Long Text' and the other, the 'Short Text.'[26] Only one manuscript of the Short Text, from the 15th century, is known to exist (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:1–5), while two textual traditions of the Long Text are based upon two complete copies dating from the seventeenth century (Bauerschmidt 1999:207).[27] These texts were preserved by English Catholics exiled in France, groups already on the 'margins' (Bauerschmidt 1999:207).

Scholars are fairly certain that the Short Text was written soon after the revelation, while the Long Text incorporates perhaps 20 years of theological reflection and

[25] In fact, she "operated within a well-established ['psuedo-Dionysian'] tradition of mystical theology going back to the sixth century A.D." (Aberth 2000:174).
[26] For a detailed comparison of the texts, including extant manuscripts, see (Glasscoe 1989).
[27] A manuscript from approximately 1500, dubbed the 'Westminster manuscript,' also contains excerpts from the LT (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:9–10; Cré 2011).

rumination by Julian (Bauerschmidt 1999:207–8).[28] Besides their substantial spiritual depth, these texts are important for another reason: they were written by a woman. In fact, the Short Text is the first English language work known to have been written by a woman (Turner 2011:x).

In order to understand what precipitated the writing of *Revelations*, we must first explore the experience of the revelations themselves.

The Experience of the Revelations

Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* is centered around a series of revelations[29] that Julian received on May 8, 1373 (LT, II:40). These revelations began in the early morning hours and continued until after noon (LT, LXV:139), with a final revelation on the following evening (LT, LXVI:139).[30] Further, Julian situates them within her own account of personal devotion and desire to know God more; thus, they must be understood in the context of this lifelong passion for purity of heart and devotion to God (Jantzen 1987:74).

Beyond personal belief in the love of Christ shown to her on the cross, she longed more fully to know and experience the suffering of Christ (ST:3) so as to gain deeper insight into Christ's Passion (LT, II:41). This was accompanied by a desire for the experience of bodily illness whereby she would be spurred no longer to put her hope in any worldly thing, but rather to trust fully in God (ST:4) and be purged to live her life to the glory of

[28] Indeed, Julian relates that the Long Text was recorded some twenty years following her initial revelations (LT, LI:108). She writes that the initial revelations were thus "renewed by moments of illumination and inspiration, I hope, of the same spirit that revealed them all" (LT, LXV:139). I will be drawing more comprehensively upon the Long Text due to its significance in relating not only the experience of Julian's revelations, but also her theological reflection upon them.
[29] Julian's Middle English term was 'schewynge' (showing) (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:203).
[30] There is some discrepancy in the manuscripts on this point, the alternative date being given as May 13 due to scribal-error variations of the Roman numerals (Jantzen 1987:4, 13).

God (LT, II:41).[31] She presented these two requests to God, with her continuing aim being a purposeful longing for and drawing near to God (ST:4).[32]

By her own testimony, her petitions were answered and Julian was taken ill (ST:4). In fact, she was so ill that she was given last rites. It was in this context that Julian relates that she received revelations, which she believed to have been given to her directly by Jesus (LT, IV:44). Her revelations, primarily concerning Christ's Passion, were given in three ways: "by bodily sight, and by words formed in my understanding, and by spiritual vision" (ST:34).[33] She claims to have related each of these means of communication as clearly as they were given to her, but also suggests that she was unable to fully describe those things revealed to her by means of spiritual vision (ST:34). These revelations were given plainly, at times "vivid and life-like, and horrifying and awesome, sweet and lovely" in their display of Christ's Passion (LT, VII:49), but she notes that, despite the clarity of the revelations themselves, their insights needed to be maintained by faith after the revelation (LT, VII:50). She ultimately trusts that God will enable the spiritual reception of the message of the revelations in her readers even beyond her own ability to relate the experiences (LT, IX:52).

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[31] This request may seem odd to the modern mind, but such petitions were common in Julian's time where bodily suffering was welcomed as having spiritual benefit, even being advocated in texts such as *Ancrene Wisse*, a Medieval guide for female anchorites (Bauerschmidt 1999:37). This was characteristic of a broader trend toward emphasizing the humanity of Christ and imitating him in his bodily suffering (Bauerschmidt 1999:34–36). Bauerschmidt relates, "Jesus' humanity is significant for [Julian] because it entails bodiliness, and thus the ability to suffer pain. Yet Julian goes beyond the affective tendency to turn Christ's body into an icon of *pathos*, a kind of catalyst for mediation on one's sinfulness. Rather it is Jesus' crucified body that Julian 'reads' as her revelatory text; what is primary is not the subjective response aroused by meditation on Christ's body, but the message of love that is revealed there" (1999:35–36).

[32] Julian frames this last request in terms of three wounds: "the wound of true contrition, the wound of kind compassion, and the wound of purposeful longing for God" (LT, II:41).

[33] Turner (2011:28) argues that Julian's experience was not "ineffable" in the sense used by William James. While many explanations for Julian's revelations have been given and their veracity questioned, I will take the texts at their face value as it seems Julian would have intended. I see no valid reason for discounting the *prima facie* evidence of the texts because of presuppositions external to the texts.

The Content of the Revelations

Julian's writings comprise a coherent and 'systematic' theology (Turner 2011:ix). But, Turner suggests, *Revelations* is unique in theological style and genre, without any equivalent either in Medieval times or today (2011:16). This does not mean, however, that Julian was uninfluenced by conventional methods of doing theology, nor that her theology is somehow unintelligible. Her theology assumes the integration of head and heart in the task of theology—what might be termed a 'spiritual theology' today.

Each revelation is a variation on the theme of the first showing, reminiscent of a musical piece (Turner 2011:xi), or perhaps moving in argument like a spiral rather than with the sharp linear argumentative precision of many other theologians of her day (Turner 2011:4). This difference could be attributable to her monastic context and contemplative spiritual development (Turner 2011:6–8), a spiritual upbringing also having substantial implications for the eschatological nature of her theology (Turner 2011:8).

The content of many of Julian's revelations was various aspects of Christ's Passion, which she relates in detail.[34] Yet the theme to which Julian continually returns is the love of God. This is clearly set out from the beginning: "This is a revelation of love which Jesus Christ, our endless bliss, made in sixteen showings or special revelations" (LT, I:39). It also closes out Julian's reflections, functioning like bookends for the text:

> And from the time that this was revealed, I often yearned to know what our Lord's meaning was. And fifteen years and more later I was answered in my spiritual understanding, and it was said: 'Do you want to know your Lord's meaning in this? Be well aware: love was his meaning. Who showed you this? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it? For love. Hold fast to this, and you will know and understand more of the same; but you will never understand nor know anything else from this for all eternity.'…love was our Lord's meaning (LT, LXXXVI:164).

Love, then, beyond being the content of the revelations, also is the agent of the message and the goal and reason for its message. This is evident in Julian's methodology.

[34] Cf. (Bauerschmidt 1999:46–47).

Methodology

Julian's theological style was influenced by scholastic, monastic, and anchoritic traditions and practices, though was not identical to any of them (Turner 2011:12). It seems that she was quite aware of scriptural hermeneutical practices in patristic and medieval traditions, such as the 'literal' and 'spiritual' senses of scripture, which she applied to the experience of her revelations (Turner 2011:11).[35] She notes that she has some knowledge of scholarly opinion on theological matters (LT, LXXX:159), though she did not seek to engage with it but rather restricted her comments to what was shown to her in the revelations. Additionally, she was greatly influenced by the monastic hermeneutic practice of *lectio*, or disciplined contemplation of scripture, but,

> above all, she closely follows Augustine's hermeneutical teaching in her reading of her shewings, as did the monks: if in doubt, Augustine said, as to how to read a difficult passage of scripture, the question was to be settled in favor of that meaning that was most conducive to the achievement of caritas in the Church (Turner 2011:11). [36]

Here, for Julian, love constituted the content of her revelations but also dictated the interpretation and application of these revelations. In contrast to monastic theologians, who reflected primarily on the scriptures through methods informed by the scriptures, and scholastic theologians, who reasoned from a particular theological statement (*quaestio*), "Julian's theological reflections are elicited through a process of progressive intensification and complex elaboration of particular and personal experience" (Turner 2011:x–xi). This personal knowledge consisted of the transcendent experience of God's love. In the end—especially in the Long Text—Julian's experience of the revelations themselves cannot be divorced from her interpretation of them (Bauerschmidt 1999:50). Thus, Julian's reflections upon her revelations are informed by the traditions that shaped her spiritual development, but her experience of the love of God remains at the heart of her writing.

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[35] However, Turner suggests that Julian's "*Revelation* is riddled with sic et non, with theological tensions. It is no exaggeration to say that a major part of the Long Text consists of a single enormously extended 'utrum,' a vast, loosely composed, *quaestio disputata*" (2011:11), thus generally following the manner of Medieval theological method.

[36] Citing (Augustine 1958:30): "Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbour does not understand it at all." Cf. (Fowl 1998:89–96).

Julian describes her epistemology in this way:

> Man depends on three things in this life, and by these three things God is glorified and we are furthered, protected, and saved. The first is the use of man's natural reason; the second is the general teaching of Holy Church; the third is the inner working of grace through the Holy Spirit; and these three are all from one God (LT, LXXX:158-9).

Reason, tradition (including scripture),[37] and experience all figure significantly in Julian's epistemology. The way in which these three may be reconciled, both in general and in the particularity of Julian's own experience, is a subject to which we will return.

Turner suggests that the record of Julian's experiences must be interpreted in light of the wider milieu of her faith content and the development of that faith that were nurtured and sustained through the everyday ministrations of the Church (2011:28–29). Although the occasion of her writing was the experience of revelation, recorded soon after in the Short Text, and subsequent reflection on that experience, recorded in the Long Text, these reflections must be seen in the broader context of her Christian formation within the Church, generally, and within her particular faith community specifically (whether that be understood as the monastic community at Carrow or as the anchoritic community that formed around her). She relates,

> But in everything I believe as Holy Church believes, preaches, and teaches. For the faith of Holy Church which I had understood before and, as I hope, by God's grace willingly observed and practised, remained constantly before me, and I never wished or intended to accept anything which might be contrary to it (LT, IX:52).[38]

Julian recognizes the importance both of the experiences of God's love she received through the revelations as well as the grounding of her faith in the teaching of the Church (LT, XLVI:99) as founded in scripture (LT, LXXXVI:165). In fact, she sees the two

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[37] Jonathan Juilfs (2010) argues that, for Julian, scripture functions as a "seed" that instigates and shapes further theological reflection—in this case of a mystical nature—rather than merely as a proof-text that keeps her theology within the bounds of orthodoxy.

[38] Here, in the LT, Julian is more careful than in the ST to reaffirm that and how her revelations fit within the purview of Church teaching (LT, XXXII:81). She affirms, "our faith is founded on God's word" (LT, XXXII:80). Perhaps this is due to objections that had been raised in the intervening years.

as unified both in their message and in their basis for providing comfort and hope (LT, LXVI:141), though a dialectical tension remains in which the two may appear to contradict at points.[39]

Style

Julian's style of writing is oral in nature, almost as if it were dictated (Turner 2011:37). The text is written in a plain and clear manner, similar to if one were to imagine Julian having a conversation with the reader.[40] This, perhaps, is what she envisioned: her texts conveying the love of God to every Christian in a simple and straightforward manner.[41] To this end she writes that the reader is not to consider the 'wretch' who received the revelations (LT, VIII:51), but rather to be spurred toward love. She continues, "I am not good because of the revelation unless I love God better; and in as much as you love God better, it is meant more for you than for me" (LT, IX:51). This same humility is continued throughout the text, highlighting both her manner of thinking and, in some measure, the aim of her record of the revelations.

Turner suggests that Julian's is a 'vernacular' theology, addressed to every Christian and written in the common tongue, Middle English, rather than scholarly Latin,[42] and aided by her anchoritic lifestyle, physically attached and dedicated to the Church but with no allegiance to any specific division of the Church (Turner 2011:14). It is as if Julian is between several different 'worlds'—considered dead to the world as an anchorite yet

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[39] Turner notes, "And though in the end she knows, and insists, that there is nothing shown to her in her revelations that is not contained in the teachings of the Church and vice versa, she admits that she cannot 'see' the one in the other or the other in the one: they at least appear to conflict. Hence, if they appear to conflict, but could not possibly do so, there is necessarily dialectical work to be done…Julian, then, is often as much puzzled as pacified by her revelations" (2011:12). Cf. (LT, IX:51-52). Julia Gatta, however, proposes that it is not so much the Church's teaching that is in tension with Julian's mystical experience as it is "her own deep sense of personal sinfulness…feelings wholly in accord with Church's teaching" (1981:177–78). Cf. (Turner 2011:22).

[40] Daniel Pinti (2006) suggests that Julian's writing is 'perichoretic' in its reticent style that invites the reader to shared construction of meaning. Pinti likens this style to Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy (2006:505–6).

[41] Julian writes, "In all this I was much moved with love towards my fellow Christians, that they might see and know the same as I saw; for I wanted it to be a comfort to them, for this whole vision was shown for everyone in general" (LT, VIII:51).

[42] This fact, in itself, could have put Julian under suspicion for heresy (Jantzen 1987:11).

still living (Turner 2011:15). Her theology and the revelations that are integral to it are all, in a sense, derived from this 'betweeness' that is itself characterized by a "resistance to easy answers" (Turner 2011:21). This style, in many respects, works in conjunction with what Turner calls Julian's 'narratival logic.'

Julian's Narratival Logic

Revelations, despite the centrality of a testimonial narrative account of the revelations, is not essentially narratival in form. Yet Turner suggests that narrative reasoning is at the heart of Julian's theological approach:

> understanding Julian's behovely include[s] some [components] that are tied up less with either logic or natural fact than with matters of individual identity and particular story. As we might put it, they are *narratival* necessities and contingencies (2011:41).[43]

Julian deploys a theological strategy that is distinctly concrete and linked to ways of understanding the world based upon a narrative plot. The 'story' that Julian tells of the world and all goings-on within it is one of the world subsumed by the love of God as known through the teaching of the Church and through her revelations. This story claims priority over and against Julian's (and our own) natural inclination toward the story we tell ourselves in order to make sense of the world—a story that does not take God's love seriously enough.[44]

Julian's narrative is a radically different narrative with a different problem, solution, and plot altogether.[45]

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[43] Kevin West (2011) similarly sees Julian's theology as narratival, expressing this narrative in terms of J.R.R. Tolkien's category of 'eucatastrophe.'

[44] See Stump's assessment of how narrative can address questions of suffering (Stump 2012:372–73, 409).

[45] Turner writes, "Julian's theology of sin, providence, and salvation…rests on implicit assumptions in philosophical theology, importantly different from, and in equally important respects at odds with, the explicit assumptions of the mass of today's philosophical literature in that field" (2011:35). I will not be able, in this short space, to give a full account of Julian's depth of theological insight. I will, however, attempt to provide the contours of her argument and their import for a Christian theological understanding of resilience.

Julian's Problem: Sin

While Julian surely experienced many difficulties in her life—including a grave illness and the other difficulties we may conjecture based upon her cultural and political context—her greatest concern was none of these, but rather sin itself, a theme to which she returns again and again throughout her reflections (Turner 2011:xi).[46] Sin, to Julian, was the greatest hindrance to God's love and therefore the largest threat to a hope grounded in the goodness and love of God.

At odds with many modern accounts of suffering, Julian identifies the genesis and locus of suffering in sin, as opposition to God. Sin itself is the problem that concerns Julian the most, not the particularities of individual and corporate human suffering, which may even have positive benefits (Kilby 2014).[47] Thus, suffering is derivative of sin, but cannot be equated to it. Julian writes,

> In this unadorned word 'sin', our Lord brought to mind everything in general which is not good, and the shameful scorn and the uttermost abnegation that he bore for us in this life, and his dying, and all the pains and sufferings in body and spirit of all his creatures (LT, XXVII:75).

Sin, for Julian, encompasses all manner of evil and suffering in the world. It is "vile" and "painful," "contrary to our fair nature" and "unnatural" (LT, LXIII:135). So, by describing 'sin' as Julian's main concern, I am also allowing for all of its derivative effects. Suffering in Julian's thought, then, may be treated analogically to evil, but also, in a concrete sense, as being derivative from evil.

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[46] Indeed, Julian equates sin and evil, presenting "the principle of evil firmly rooted in psychological as well as spiritual human reality" (Peters 1987:197).

[47] Julian writes, "And it seems to me, this suffering is something that exists for a while, because it purges us and makes us know ourselves and ask for mercy, for the Passion of our Lord is a comfort to us against all this…he comforts us readily and sweetly meaning this, 'It is true that sin is cause of all this suffering, but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'" (LT, XXVII:75). Further, for Julian, "pain is an inevitable part of the human condition…There is therefore no way to avoid suffering" (Minore 2014:61, 63). Thus, I suggest that Julian's discussion of sin may analogously be applied to human suffering.

Sin as 'No Deed': Divine Action and the Non-being of Sin

Julian firmly believes that God has made all things and everything has its being and sustaining through his love (LT, V:45). In fact, "he has made everything that is made for love—and by the same love everything is sustained" (LT, VIII:50). Furthermore, for Julian God not only sustains the world, but "he does everything that is done" (LT, XI:55) and "everything which is done is well done, because our Lord God does everything" (LT, XI:56).[48] Despite these claims Julian maintains that God does not in any way cause sin (Turner 2011:62).[49]

Julian does not seek to evade the problems that such an account presents, and has been suggested as being one of the only thinkers who allows the full weight of the Augustinian position to be felt (Kilby 2014).[50] This Augustinian account of God's sovereignty would seem to be at odds with Julian's robust account of sin. How may everything be "well done" if, in fact, one is faced with the reality of sin and suffering in the world that Julian describes? How can these two seemingly contradictory claims be made? Turner asks, "would it not seem that Julian's solution can with consistency affirm the involvement of an omnipotently good God in our free acts only at the price of denying sin's reality?" (2011:62).

In answer one could suggest that sin is merely a function of human free will and therefore God is absolved of responsibility for it.[51] This is not the tack that Julian takes. Rather, in answering this conundrum Julian draws upon Augustine's conception of sin

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[48] Julian clearly holds to a strong doctrine of Divine providence. This does not mean, however, that human history is fatalistic and determined, nor are human beings passive instruments (Turner 2011:59).

[49] She writes, "…this lack is not in God, but it is on our part; for through sin and wretchedness we have in us a wretched and continual resistance to peace and to love" (LT, XLVIII:102).

[50] Her familiarity with this theological account does not of necessity mean that she had firsthand knowledge of Augustine or Thomas. There are a variety of other ways that she could have been exposed to their theology (Bauerschmidt 1999:206–7).

[51] Turner notes, "Julian's theology is entirely based on the assumption not merely that there is no contradiction between the divine providence and the freedom of the human will, but that, more positively, our human freedom is made possible only within the creative causality of God" (2011:60). In fact, union with God creates capacity for human free action by enabling self-competency instead of victimhood or fatalism. Cf. (Turner 2011:53–60).

as privation and claims that free sinful acts are, in fact, not "something done"(Turner 2011:62).[52] Here sin is a deprivation of good rather than an entity in itself: "But I did not see sin, for I believe it has no kind of substance nor share of being, nor could it be recognized except by the suffering it causes" (LT, XXVII:75). Julian notes, "I saw truly that sin is no kind of deed, for sin was not shown me in all this" (LT, XI:56). Despite her view of the ubiquity of the effects of sin, Julian clearly maintains an Augustinian account of the ontological non-being of sin itself.

Here "Julian's meaning…seems unambiguous. And just as plainly, it seems at odds with the common experience of sin, not least with her own" (Turner 2011:62). Julian does not deny the reality of sin or the pain that it causes;[53] indeed, "Adam's sin was the greatest harm that was ever done, or ever shall be." Yet, God tells her, "'Since I have set right what was the greatest harm, it is my will that you should know by this that I shall set right all that is less harmful'" (LT, XXIX:77).

How can this be? At a metaphysical level, from Julian's perspective, God certainly is the cause of all actions, the sinful included, because he enables all that is done.[54] Sin, however, is constituted by failure and therefore is not attributable to God, but rather to the individual whose lack constitutes the privation characteristic of sin. Sinful actions are real actions with real consequences, but they are characterized by failure and privation, thereby having no ontological substance (Turner 2011:63).[55] Julian's Augustinian-Thomist account of sin enables her affirm both that God does all things but that he does not sin. The key to this is the contention that 'sinne is no dede,' but rather

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[52] Julian writes bluntly in the Short Text, "sin is nothing" (ST:11).
[53] She writes, "'Ah, good Lord, how could all be well, in view of the great harm which has come upon your creatures through sin?'" (LT, XXIX:77).
[54] Here the theological conception of concursus may be helpful for understanding how Divine and human action are non-competitive (Kilby 2014). Although much more could be said on this topic, my comments will necessarily be limited. For a more comprehensive discussion, see (Tanner 1988).
[55] Turner presents an example of a faulty installation of brake pads on his car. The subsequent failure of the brake pads is a result of his real actions, but this action was caused not by his changing the brake pads, but by a privation of skill at this task. In the same way, for Julian, God can be the cause of an action but not be responsible for it due to the nature of evil as privation (2011:63).

is a lack, a failing and thus a lack of power, not an ability. Because sin is a result of a lack of power, it is only possible to attribute to humans, not to God (Turner 2011:64).

Thus, "[t]o sin…is to attempt to write the story of an ontological impossibility. It is the attempt to make a meaning independently of God, a meaning for ourselves" (Turner 2011:65).[56] The heart of human folly, in Julian's thinking, is seeking to create a narrative that makes sense of the world independent of God. This is because sin "has no coherent narrative. Sin's stories are empty. Necessarily sin is failure. Sin has failure written into its very nature *as* sin" (Turner 2011:65).

In light of this, we must "distinguish two narratives of sin…the story that love tells of sin, and the story that sin tells of itself." Each story attempts to tell the narrative of God's work in the world, but each does so in a vastly different way. In the end, only the story that love tells of sin—the Gospel—can reconcile the narrative: "They cannot both be true, and yet both have real force and agency in the world that human beings inhabit"—thus we must choose to live in the light of the narrative that gives life through the hope of the reconciliation of all things (Turner 2011:205–6).

The account of sin given by Julian can provide a coherent understanding of the individual nature of suffering as well as beneficial insight into the corporate and structural nature of suffering. Sin, including understandings of its structural nature (McFadyen 2000), as opposed to just evil suffered, is a helpful category for discussing non-personally attributable notions of sin (Kilby 2014) and provides a coherent and systematic historically-grounded account of the broadest spectrum of human ills.

What, then, in Julian's narratival logic, is the solution to this greatest of ills, sin? It is nothing other than the love of God at work in the world.

Julian's Solution: God's Love at Work

Just as Julian's narratival logic understands the problem of human suffering differently than many accounts, so too Julian proposes a distinctive solution to this problem. As

[56] Shortly we will turn to the way in which Julian sees ultimate meaning being made: through relational dependence upon God.

already discussed, the motivation behind her solution, the driving force of that solution, and the means of effecting the solution are one and the same: love.

God's Love

God's love, for Julian, is not an impersonal force at work in the world, but an immensely intimate expression of God's being. She describes God thusly,

> I saw that he is to us everything that is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing that out of love enwraps and enfolds us, embraces us and wholly encloses us, surrounding us for tender love, so that he can never leave us (LT, V:45).

For Julian, the love of God is fundamental to human life and flourishing: truly "our life is all grounded and rooted in love, and without love we cannot live" (LT, XLIX:103). The centrality of love to Julian's thinking is displayed in the fundamental role that it takes in *Revelations*.

The type of love that Julian describes can be seen through her emphasis on a particular depiction of God: God as Mother.[57] Julian believed that the tender love of God is reflected through motherhood (LT, XLVIII:103) and indeed that Christ is "our true mother" (LT, LVII:126)—the "ground of motherhood" (LT, LIX:128). This is not to the exclusion of God's fatherhood, for "[a]s truly as God is our father, so truly is God our mother" (LT, LIX:128). Yet Julian sees a description of Christ as our mother as appropriate because he is closest to us, safeguards us, suffered to bring us into the world, feeds us with himself, and chastises us to train us in righteousness (LT, LX:130-1).

God's love for humanity is so great that "everything seems insignificant to him in comparison with his love" (LT, XXII:69). For Julian, the fundamental fact of the love of God changes everything, compelling her to view her life, the world, and all that happens in it through the lens of the greatness of this love (ST:7). This is love that is expressed

[57] This means of description is not unique to Julian. Other theologians such as Augustine (McGinn 1992:222), and Richard Rolle (Boenig 1984), and scripture itself (Deut. 32:18; Ps 131) describe God as Mother or in motherly terms. See also St Anselm's 'Prayer to St. Paul' in (Ward 1973:153–56). Cf. (Bradley 1978; Dearborn 2002).

through action, not content to maintain disinterested distance with a sin-ravaged world. How, then, does the inexpressible love of God respond to the brutal reality of sin? Julian is distinctly interested in the particularity of how Love works out a solution in the 'here and now' of human lived existence. In Julian's understanding, the solution that God effects through love has already been inaugurated, but still awaits its complete fulfillment.

Christ's Passion

Primarily, Julian understands God to be at work in the world through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. This event takes a primary place in her *Revelations* as it is central in Julian's understanding of the solution to sin.

She records that the first of her revelations comes as she is looking at a cross while lying on her sickbed. She relates that "all grew dark around me…except for the image of the cross in which I saw a light for all mankind…Everything apart from the cross was ugly to me…" (LT, III:43). Turner relates,

> [Julian's] narrative detail contains a clear general lesson. The Cross is all. The Cross is not only what she sees in her shewings. The cross of her deathbed is the condition of her seeing them. The Cross explains everything, insofar as we have an explanation of anything (2011:208).

The cross of Christ, for Julian, makes sense of the world.[58] This is not simply a man dying at the hands of Roman executioners, but love personified acting to right the ills of a sin-sick world. Thus, the cross becomes not just the expression of God's love, but *the* lens for seeing the world. Again, Turner writes,

> [The Cross] is the embodiment of her theological epistemology as such; for Julian theological knowledge itself is cruciform, and the tensions between love and death that meet in the Cross are exactly replicated in the conflicted experience of her evencristen [Christian brethren]. It is Julian's experience as a whole—her shewings, the Church's teaching, and her own human perceptions of how things are—that is internally conflicted in a complex, dialectical way. She knows by faith that those conflicts can be—indeed, that they already are—resolved: "how

[58] Frederick Bauerschmidt notes, "Julian's entire *Revelation* is a reading of that text of Christ's cross…" (1999:61). Further, "Julian chooses Jesus as her only heaven in this life, and does not offer us any infinity apart from that which is imaged in the infinite suffering, love, and bliss of the cross" (1999:63).

> *shoulde* any thing be amisse" she exclaims.[59] But if they are resolved as to her faith, they are not resolved, they are not performed, she says, as to her sight.[60] Julian's theology, then, is written, thought, lived, as by one suspended in that epistemological space between the darkness of faith and the light of seeing, as her Christ is suspended on the Cross in the space between life and death, in faith praying to his Father for a why that explains, but dying without an answer. The Cross, then, is Julian's topos: but the topos is the method, and the method is the topos (2011:22).

The Cross can make intelligible our fractured selves and unexpectedly right the narrative of our lives by beginning to make sense of all that has gone before and all that will follow (Turner 2011:206). This 'sense,' however, is only partial since the Cross is a narrative fragment—only one part of a Story that is as of yet unfinished. As a portion of that narrative, the Cross may provide comfort through more clearly delineating the trajectory of the narrative as a whole and, perhaps more importantly, revealing the character of the Narrator. In particular, the comfort that God provided to Julian was twofold—both based upon the same reality of the Passion. The Cross reveals how God stooped to humankind and their pain, thereby redeeming it.[61] Jesus displays love, care, and concern for us by not only becoming like us but also experiencing our pain. Julian suggests: "Here I saw a great affinity between Christ and us, as I understand it; for when he was in pain, we were in pain" (LT, XVIII:64).[62] Thus, in some measure, the Passion of Christ may be a comfort in distress by exhibiting the love of Jesus who suffered with humanity.

The powerful reality of Christ's love displayed through the Passion also shows the lengths to which God will go because of love for us. Julian writes that

> …our Lord Jesus…suffer[ed] for love more than all men could suffer. I do not mean only more pain than all men could suffer, but also that he suffered more pain than could be expressed or fully imagined by all those who are to be saved who ever existed from the very beginning until the last day (LT, XX:66-7).

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[59] Citing (LT, XI:57).
[60] Citing (LT, XXXIII:81-82).
[61] Julian writes, "[Jesus] wanted, for the love and honour of man, to make himself as like man in this mortal life, in our vileness and our wretchedness, as a man without sin could be" (LT, X:54).
[62] Julian, it seems, is not bothered by, or perhaps was unaware of Church teaching on the impassability of God.

Despite the immensity of the suffering Christ experienced on the Cross, Julian relates that he would desire to suffer even more for love of her if it were possible: "Then Jesus, our kind Lord, said, '…It is a joy, a bliss, an endless delight to me that I ever suffered my Passion for you; and if I could suffer more, I would suffer more'" (LT, XXII:68).[63] The significance of what she writes here is hard to overstate. As Julian relates, "love was his meaning" in providing the revelations to her, yet the words of Julian's written testament to the revelations, in the end, are too finite to relay the immensity of the love of God.

Because of this love the future is secure: all shall be well, because the same God who died such a terrible death for us will ensure that all will be well, even though how this will be is currently a mystery to us. For Julian, our response should be to be content with contemplation of Christ's passion and not try to understand the mysteries that God has not yet shown to us.

In Julian's narratival logic, the Cross of Christ begins to right the ills of sin in the world, yet it is not the culmination of God's solution. The love of God at work in the world has not yet set all things right. Julian writes: "So was our Lord Jesus set at nought for us, and we all remain in this way as if set at nought with him, and shall do until we come to his bliss" (LT, XVIII:65). Though the resurrection of Christ inaugurated a new age in the narrative of God's work in the world, the full resolution awaits a final Great Deed that will usher in the beatific vision.

The Great Deed

Julian relates that God will do a 'deed' on the last day through which "he will make all things well" (LT, XXXII:80). The exact circumstances of this deed are a mystery, but not the certainty of its occurrence: "For just as the blessed Trinity made all things from nothing, so the same blessed Trinity will make all well that is not well" (LT, XXXII:80). More specifically, we will know "why he allowed sin to come about" (LT, XXVII:75) and

[63] She continues, "For if he said that, for love of me, he would make new heavens and a new earth, that would only be small in comparison…But to die for love of me so often that the number passes human understanding, that is the noblest offer that our Lord God could make to man's soul, as I see it" (LT, XXII:69).

> At this time we shall truly see the cause of all that he has done; and for ever more we shall see the cause of all that he has permitted…marvelling at the greatness of God the maker, and at the littleness of all that is made (LT, LXXV:152).

This Great Deed will make all things right, ensuring that 'all shall be well' because of it. In narrative terms, this Deed will put all that has happened in the world in its proper context. Through this deed it will be shown how sin is 'behovely,' or fitting, despite humankind's current understanding of this as not being the case.

Sin as 'Behovely'

Julian herself did not understand why the all-loving omnipotent God allowed sin in the world, for it seemed to her (as she states, "in my folly") that "all would have been well" if sin had been prevented (LT, XXVII:74). In her revelation she received a response: "But Jesus, who in this vision informed me of everything needful to me, answered with these words and said, 'Sin is befitting, but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'" (LT, XXVII:74). Interestingly, Julian remarks that Jesus "informed me of everything needful to me," perhaps in response to doubts about the suitability or completeness of the answer. The answer she receives is '[s]in is befitting,' or in Middle English, "Synne is behouely" (Colledge and Walsh 1978b:405). The import of this answer is significant. Turner explains,

> we can understand much of the logical, epistemological, and theological force of Julian's Middle English word if we take it to bear the meanings of the Latin word *conveniens*, which Julian would have understood had she been literate in the Latin authorities of her time. In short, behovely means to Julian much the same as what conveniens means to theologians of the high medieval schools. When, therefore, Julian says that 'sinne is behovely,' what she means is that sin is conveniens, and she means it in the sense that Anselm, Hugh of St. Victor, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure would have understood it, which is, as I shall explain, roughly this—that it 'fits,' it is 'just so,' and that there is something with which it fits (2011:37–38).[64]

[64] Turner continues, "Since the time of Anselm at least, the much-debated medieval question 'Cur Deus homo?' ('Why did God become man?') raised another meta-question, 'Was God's becoming man—for whatever reason—necessary, or was it contingent?' And to the meta-question, the answer was seen to be 'neither.' It was conveniens that it should be so. The Incarnation was neither a necessity imposed upon God, nor just a divine whim. It was meet and just, conveniens—or, had you been writing in Julian's Middle English, behovely" (Turner 2011:40–41). Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 3a q1 a1.

Turner suggests that Julian's claim that human existence is 'behovely' is rooted "less [in] either logic or natural fact than [in] matters of individual identity and particular story. As we might put it, they are *narratival* necessities and contingencies" (2011:41). Thus, the solution to Julian's conundrum regarding sin is not found in broad, sweeping generalities, but in the particularities of individual lives.[65] This is because the object of God's love, and therefore the story of God's love, is not humanity in the abstract, but individual humans. Each human being's existence and the story of that existence is "neither necessary nor arbitrarily contingent" yet gains its meaningfulness from the fact that her existence is 'behovely' in the larger narrative of God's loving providence. Thus, "behovely gets its meaning only from within a narrative. The logic of the behovely is narratival" (Turner 2011:42–43).

This narratival logic is not to be equated with scientific certainty or argumentation based upon analytic logic. Rather, "[w]hat generates the expectation that the conveniens meets and fulfils is a particular story, the exigencies of a plot that just happens to have turned out in this way or that thus far and, so far as it has got, makes sense of what happens next" (Turner 2011:43–44). Further, explanations built upon scientific and narratival logic, beyond being based alternatively in universal rules and the particularity of time, differ in their power of prediction (Turner 2011:44). Science aims towards understanding of natural laws with a view towards generating predictive power in the natural realm. Narrative, on the other hand, does not create such certitude since one does not know how events—past, present, or future—may fit within the plot.[66] Indeed, in most narratives "it is only in the end that you understand. It is only then…that you see that what happened was not at all as you thought it was at the time, but that how what happened 'fits'" (Turner 2011:45).

The claim that existence is 'behovely' rests upon the logic of the narrative within which it is placed. In Julian's estimation, the only narrative that makes sense of the world as it

[65] In this regard, Turner notes that "narratives are always particular, individuated" (2011:43).

[66] Certainly, some narratives are so straightforward (such as in a badly written movie) that the trajectory of the plot is assumed. Most would agree that such simplified narrative logic is not what is at work in the grand narrative of the world, though some would not acknowledge the possibility of any metanarrative at all.

is, including sin, is the narrative of the Gospel of God's love. Here it is "Julian's case for her *substantive* claim that sin is behovely, the claim that the narrative within which sin fits is a good one, a narrative of love and compassion within human history" (Turner 2011:52) that makes all the difference. Though the claim may be made that the grand narrative of the world centers upon God's love, this does not necessarily explain *how* sin, in particular or in general, is behovely. Turner notes:

> Even if you have reason to be confident *that* a particular event within the narrative is behovely, you may not be able to see *how* it is so until the end. But in the theological case, there is no standpoint at the end. For at the end is not theology, but the beatific vision. And there is theology only because we are *not* at the end (2011:46).

Julian's narratival logic suggests that the question of the problem of sin will not be answered on a broad, sweeping scale, but in the particularities of each person's life story as it is understood at its resolution. This is why Julian does not definitively answer *how* all shall be made well, only that fact that it *will*. The specifics of how this shall be the case are known to God. All shall be well, but this will be a relational, I-Thou, resolution.[67] It is not a resolution in the abstract sense of a blanket pronouncement, but rather God individually, relationally making well the good and ill, love and sin in the particularity of each person's narrative.

This, Karen Kilby suggests, is a mystery (2017). She argues that the proper mode of belief in this eschatological hope is an attitude of paradoxically humble confidence. This means holding to the belief that all will be made well, but not applying it to particular situations—holding it unresolved. This is the tension found both in Julian and in the 'already but not yet' Kingdom of God. This tension must be synthesized in the person herself, not explained away in general. It denotes an eschatological apophaticism, not about God, but about our suffering. These represent two mysteries, the mystery of God and the mystery of suffering, and cannot be collapsed into one (Kilby 2017).

The narrative of God's work in the world will ultimately reveal that sin is behovely, but this will only fully be comprehended at the end of history. In the meantime, we only

[67] Here Stump's description of 2nd person relational knowledge is helpful. Cf. (Stump 2012:77–80).

possess a fragment of the narrative, the Passion (Turner 2011:22). As such, we must interpret our experiences through the lens of the Cross, with confident hope in the Person who bled and died for humanity and who will bring the story to its proper completion. We know by faith "that all of it is brought about by a God who in doing so devises a 'plot' whose sole meaning is 'love'"[68] where our free sinful actions are overcome by this love and where these actions "bear a meaning that no free choice of ours could ever give them" (Turner 2011:60). For Julian, then, human action has meaning beyond the intent of the actor because these actions are a part of a story that is not his own and whose ending is not ultimately in human control.[69]

Turner summarizes,

> [The] mystery of the Cross is all Julian is ever told about the meaning of sin. If sin's being behovely is made sense of by the narrative within which it occurs, and if the only narrative we are given within which the existence of sin makes sense is the Cross, then it follows that in one sense nothing is resolved: for the Cross is on the one hand the 'great deed' that the Trinity does, the deed that finally defeats sin; but on the other hand, the Cross is paradox—it is but a narrative fragment. That narrative fragment contains the whole meaning of the Godhead, the whole meaning of Creation, the whole meaning of the Fall and of Redemption, wrapped up in a single paradoxical historically dated event, the meaning of which is beyond us…Then, when that last great deed is 'performed,' we will *see*—then we will possess vision. For now we may live, and Julian may write, only a text that 'is not yet performed': we may live, and she may write, only as Jesus died, without a why (2011:26–27).[70]

In Julian's thought, humanity has hope because of the person and promise of God. The sure outcome is not simply eternal bliss in God's loving presence, which perhaps could be seen merely as escapism, but also that all that has happened in the world will be well. The narrative that she tells—but first was told to her by God—is that all things, sin included, are fitting and 'behovely' for the plot that God is orchestrating throughout all of human history. It is the ultimate plot twist by the omnipotent playwright, yet Julian is not shown *how* this will be, only *that* it will be.

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[68] Cf. (LT, LXXXVI:164).
[69] The parallels with Ricoeur's understanding of the meaning of human text and action being primarily externally given is striking. Cf. (Ricoeur 1981c:100).
[70] Cf. (LT, XXXVI:85-86).

If it is the case that 'all shall be well,' what then is to be our response in the 'here and now' of human lived experience? For Julian, two particular actions are appropriate in light of God's love revealed through Christ's death and the coming Great Deed: re-envisioning and patience.

Julian's Responses: Re-envisioning and Patience

Julian's theology does not seek to discount or discredit the awfulness of sin and evil in order to create hope.[71] Rather, Julian looks this full in the face—taking seriously the devastation of sin—yet also sees the awe-inspiring truth of the love of God for humanity in Christ.

Julian's theology, then, emphasizes the overwhelming love and hope found in God while not diminishing the experience of evil. In her context there was no need to reaffirm the reality of sin and suffering—this was the everyday reality of most individuals. What Julian had to offer, then was a voice of hope—of God with us in the midst of suffering, that 'all shall be well' despite the circumstances they experienced.[72] She believed Christ Himself revealed this message to her, but that it was a message addressed to all Christians (LT, VIII:51).

In response to the current human situation of living between the two major moments of God's action in the world, Julian advocates two courses of action: (1) a re-envisioning of the world and (2) an attitude and corresponding 'action' of patience.[73] These have

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[71] Turner suggests, "…she, as we do, acknowledges that 'ther be many dedes evil done in oure sight and so gret harmes take that it semeth to us that it were unpossible that ever it shuld come to a good end.' Nor again does her conviction that, in the outcome, 'alle shalle be wele' reduce in any measure the freedom of the acts with which we resist or submit to evil as the case may be" (2011:60). Cf. (LT, XXXII:80).

[72] Aberth contends that, for Julian, suffering reminds us, through reflection on Christ's suffering, that we are not alone in our suffering, and also provides "the opportunity for personal redemption" through the love of God (2000:176). In this way, Julian's response is to turn "suffering into a message of hope," thereby highlighting "the resilience and recovery of the human spirit" (2000:177). He concludes: "No doubt for those who lived through the horrible year of 1349, and other plague years thereafter, a faith that 'alle shalle be wele' in God's plan for the world gave them the mental and physical strength to carry on no matter how much pain and misery the Black Death wrought" (2000:177).

[73] These responses are derivative, in part, from Julian's clearly articulated encouragements toward repentance and prayer. Cf. (Maynard 2006:154–55).

substantial implications for understanding resilience and correspond to the two themes that we have drawn from Ricoeur: (1) the narrative of the Gospel can transform vision of the world and (2) human identity is constituted in relation to God. I will trace each of these themes further, utilizing the narratival logic Julian displays in *Revelations*.

Re-envisioning

A 're-envisioning'[74] of the world is necessary because, for Julian, sin and suffering can only be made sense of—be seen as behovely—in the narrative plot of the Gospel—the story that Love tells of the world. This re-envisioning creates hope as one sees the events of one's life through the lens of the transformational narrative of the Gospel, that is, through the God who is Truth (LT, LXXXII:161).[75] As Jane Maynard suggests, "*loss is transfigured when the presence of God is revealed within it*" (2006:191).

For Julian, humans need to 're-see' the world in order to gain a 'heavenly' perspective: "And in spite of all our feelings, our sorrow or our joy, God wants us to understand and believe that we are more truly in heaven than on earth" (LT, LV:121). Indeed, God "wants us to hold to this trustingly: that we may be as certain in our hope of the bliss of heaven while we are here, as we shall be in certitude when we are there" (LT, LXV:138). God desires this for us because it is "of the greatest advantage to us" (LT, LXVIII:142). Though we receive comfort through experience of transcendence (LT, LXIV:137), the truths of these experiences are held by faith and may be subject to doubt. Julian writes, "If, on account of our weakness, we fall back again into our depression and spiritual blindness and feeling of spiritual and bodily pains, it is God's will that we know that he has not forgotten us" (LT, LXIV:137). Thus, we may have hope despite the sin and weakness that causes not only our suffering but also our doubt of God's love.

The ability to re-envision one's perspective is, in effect, an imaginative transformation.[76] The Gospel narrative's ability to transform lived experience is, in essence, "imagination

[74] Drawing upon Ricoeur, this could also be termed 'narrative re-emplotment.'
[75] MacKinnon posits that Julian views the world through "a new dimension of temporality" in which "[o]ne is tempted to say that she wrote as if the future had already happened" (1978:138).
[76] The practice of imaginative mediation was an encouraged part of the contemplative life (Jantzen 1987:56–57). Other theologians regard the imagination as locus of

in service of Christian hope" (Kilby 2017). Thus, Kilby suggests that our present experience of the grace of God in Christ ought to orient us to the future hope we are assured despite present struggles. This is the struggle of all attempts to speak of God and his works in the world: the juxtaposition of confident assertions regarding the fragments of the Divine narrative that we know, on the one hand, and humble belief about what we do not know, on the other. Hence,

> [f]or Julian…the business of theology is to know what we can know in the light of what we know we cannot know, and to do what we can do without fully comprehending its meaning. For its meaning is something that only God, and not ourselves, can give it (Turner 2011:67).

Human meaningfulness, ultimately, then must be bestowed by God. As much as it is possible in the distention of current human experience, it is accomplished through the iconoclastic vision of the narrative of God's love.

The Transformational Narrative of the Gospel

If Julian suggests a reframing of our understanding is needed, what is the content of this new vision? I suggest that the narrative of God's love, for Julian, affirms that God creates, sustains, and does all things in love but that even sin is 'behovely' in the logic of this narrative because 'all shall be well.'[77]

Sin would seem to be the main obstacle to a positive resolution in this narrative. For some, Julian's claim that sin is 'nothing' would appear to devalue claims of substantive experiences of evil. To be clear, what she argues for is the ontological nonbeing of evil, not the phenomenological experience of evil as nothingness. If an understanding of Julian's life and times shows us nothing else, it displays that Julian was no stranger to suffering and the very real effects of sin. She does not deny or dismiss her own or others' suffering, but comes to see them in a different light. In fact, she comes to see all of the world as nothing in comparison with the love of Christ.[78] Her focus is turned from

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interaction with God. Cf. Garrett Green (1998:149) and Paul Avis (1999:3). Anna Minore also suggests this as an aspect of Julian's theology (2014:68).

[77] Anna Minore suggests that for Julian "one should strive for an alignment in perception between oneself and the peaceful goodness of God. This alignment will result in less pain" (2014:60).

[78] See, for instance, Julian's vision of the world as small as a hazelnut, but sustained by God's love (LT, V:45-46).

her own experience to the sufferings of Christ and his love displayed through them—a change in perspective with very real effects. This perspectival change is due not only to seeing *that* all shall be made well by the love of God, but also *how* it can be made well: by Christ joining himself to the sufferings of humanity.[79]

In Julian's thought, the narrative of the Gospel can be condensed into one word: love. Moreover, love is not merely the content of the narrative, but also the methodology and agency of the telling of that narrative. Christ's suffering brings comfort, in part because the suffering of Christ puts our suffering in perspective. Our adversity pales in comparison to God's love in that sin, and its derivative suffering, will be redeemed by God (LT, LXV:138-39). In fact, the Passion of Christ as told in the Gospel narrative opens up the possible perspective that suffering and Divine love can be coterminous.

This 're-envisioning' remains paradoxical because, though the action itself can create beneficial outcomes, the full fruition of its promise is hidden until the Great Deed. Because of this, we need patience in traversing through lived human experience.

Patience

The revelation of how all will be made well awaits the end; thus, patience is necessary.[80] The world is a place of tension—an abode of faith, not certainty, but nonetheless filled with potentiality that is recognized by faith (Ricoeur 1952:243).[81]

The need for patience and faith is clearly displayed in Julian's own experience of receiving the revelations. She relates that, following the initial revelations, her bodily sickness and sense of lack of spiritual comfort returned, leaving her much the same as before and even leading to her denouncing the revelations as delirium (LT, LXX:140,

[79] E.g. "For as long as he was liable to suffer, he suffered for us and sorrowed for us; and now he is risen again and no longer liable to suffering, he still suffers with us" (LT, XX:67).
[80] There are significant parallels here with the Christian understanding of 'Holy Saturday,' the day between Christ's crucifixion and Resurrection.
[81] Julian writes, "We are to rejoice in God and what he has revealed to us of his love, not worrying about those things he has chosen, in his wisdom, not to reveal at this time" (LT, XXX:78-9).

145). Yet she soon realized the 'foolishness' of not clinging to the truths of her revelations and lapsing into ingratitude (LT, LXVI:140).

Thus, following the last revelation, she relates, "I fixed my bodily eyes on the same cross which had comforted me before, and set my tongue to speaking of Christ's Passion and rehearsing the faith of Holy Church, and set my heart on God with all the trust and strength that was in me" (LT, LXIX:144). For the Cross shows the way of patience amidst suffering as the path of true well-being in this life:

> And our Lord very humbly revealed what is most helpful for this: the patience that he had in his cruel Passion, and also the joy and the delight that he has in that Passion because of love. And this was shown by way of an example that we should bear our sufferings gladly and wisely, for that is greatly pleasing to him and endless benefit to us. And the reason why we are troubled by them is because of our failure to recognize love (LT, LXXIII:149).

Significantly, Julian notes that a lack of recognition of God's love at work in suffering is at the root of spiritual difficulty. Love is the hermeneutical key to suffering wherein a re-envisioning of circumstances in light of love can bring about peace and patience.

Julian's disposition of patience is reflected in the very act and style of her writing. Near the end of the Long Text she writes, "[t]his book was begun by God's gift and his grace, but it is not yet completed" (LT, LXXXVI:164). Julian's theology hovers between the affirmation of known theological truths and apophaticism regarding the incomprehensible God. Precisely because of this tension she places herself in a position of patient waiting:

> Julian…systematically refuses to finish, because she intends theological incompleteness. And she intends theological incompleteness on grounds that are themselves theological…because she knows that what alone completes the theological is also what transcends its powers, namely, the beatific vision. The theologian, in short, is forced to raise more questions than she can answer, for the questions that perforce arise within the limits of theology of necessity can be answered for now only inaccessibly beyond it. Of theological necessity, then, is her 'boke not yet performed' (Turner 2011:xii).

Thus, "Julian's *Revelation* does not finish at some point where theology is supposed to end. The unending begins where all theology starts: with the divine love. That is mystery enough for her, and it is the whole of her theology" (Turner 2011:xii–xiii). The fulfillment of hope, for Julian, lies in the future, in the Great Deed which is not an action

in the abstract, but fundamentally a revealing of God, the beatific vision itself.[82] Human identity and the 'behovely' nature of each human story will only be completely known when God is fully revealed. Thus, patience awaits a more complete revelation of God.

Human Identity Found in Relation to God

Patience is lived out in the relationally-defined space of dependence upon God. Relational identity is not received in the abstract or passively appropriated; rather, it is actively received through relational dependence and an attitude of childlike dependence and trust. Thus, Julian does not advocate patience for its own sake, nor does she put her hope in a specific outcome, except as that outcome is relationally-defined. Instead, her hope is in a Person; she writes of God, "you are my heaven" (LT, XIX:65).

Julian's confidence and identity were founded in the God who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, not in an abstraction or a vague hope that good would happen. Thus, hers was a hope in a Person, not a hope in an outcome.[83] It is a relational hope, a second-person experience (Stump 2012:77) grounded in the character and nature of the Person. This is why Julian is happy to leave the 'Great Deed,' whereby all things will be made well, rather vague and undefined—her hope is not in the details of the outcome itself but in the God who will enact that outcome. The nature of God determines the nature of the outcome, and, for Julian, the nature of God already had been made immensely clear through the 'narrative fragment' of the Passion of Christ.[84]

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[82] See, for instance, "Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12, NRSV). Cf. (LT, XLIII:96).

[83] Nancy Sherman (2016) maintains that a significant difference exists between hope in an *outcome* and hope in a *person*.

[84] Furthermore, right relationship to God and God's community is integral to seeing the world correctly through the narrative of the Gospel. The importance of community undergirds Julian's theology. She writes, "And he wants us to hold fast to the faith of Holy Church and find there our dearest mother in the consolation of true understanding, along with all the blessed communion of saints; for a single individual may often feel broken, as it seems to him, but the whole body of Holy Church was never broken nor ever shall be, without end" (LT, LXI:133).

At a fundamental level, Julian believes that we will never be fulfilled or at rest as human beings until we surrender to God's love.[85] This view sees reliance upon human strength and pride as keeping us from true rest,[86] as opposed to the fullness of strength found in God (LT, VI:47). For Julian, God meets individuals at their point of need, sustains life, and encourages growth through his goodness (LT, VI:47). This is precisely because nothing less than God can truly fulfill human need.[87] Conversely, the absence of God's presence constitutes suffering in and of itself.[88]

In Julian's thought, patience can only be rightly borne if one is in right relation to the God who satisfies the human heart.[89] This is in keeping with Julian's theological anthropology and epistemology more generally. Julian suggests that there are differing kinds of knowledge of God and the self, all of which are relational in nature and require relational dependence:

> It is for us to have three kinds of knowledge: the first is to know our Lord God; the second is to know ourselves, what we are through him in nature and grace; the third is humbly to know ourselves with regard to our sin and weakness. And, as I understand it, the whole revelation was made for these three (LT, LXXII:148).

Knowledge of God and of ourselves, being the aim of Julian's revelation, is foundational to her theology and rests upon a proper relationship between the two types of knowledge.[90] Indeed, the contemplative soul "makes itself like the one that is

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[85] Julian suggests, "For until I am of one substance with him I can never have complete rest nor true happiness…he is true rest" (LT, V:45).
[86] Similarly, "When a soul has willingly made itself as nothing for love, in order to have him who is all, then he is able to receive spiritual rest" (LT, V:46).
[87] Julian writes, "'God, of your goodness, give me yourself; for you are enough for me, and I cannot ask for anything less that would fully honour you. And if I do ask for anything less, I shall always be in want, but in you alone I have everything'" (LT, V:46).
[88] She relates, "even if there had been no pain in this life except the absence of our Lord, it seemed to me sometimes more than I could bear" (LT, LXIV:136).
[89] The love of God is able to create a unity between the lover and the beloved (LT, LXV:138-39). Yet, for Julian, sin is at the core of our alienation from God. Turner writes concerning Julian: "Sin splits our sensual—that is, human, time-bound—experience away from the place within us where that continuity with God remains unbroken. Sin fractures our being and our perception into discontinuity, with the result that we misperceive both God and ourselves and set them—God and our free agency—disjunctively in opposition" (2011:29).
[90] Cf. (Stump 2012:51–53, 77–81).

contemplated and unites itself in rest and peace through his grace" (LT, LXVIII:142-43). Thus, the second-person experience of 'I and Thou' between God and self is constitutive of the identity and worldview of the individual. The individual's appropriated identity in relation to God thereby becomes the primary means of understanding the self and the world. This relationship empowers the individual through a new relational identity as the beloved of God.

Suffering has a unique role in this relationship because it provides the opportunity for God to interact with humanity in an intimate, relational second-person manner (Stump 2012:61). Thus, for Stump, suffering is not about soul-making or creating virtue, but rather about relationship with God (2012:256, 408).[91] One of the most crucial aspects of Julian's understanding of the nature of God in Christ is that God is not far off, but identifies with humans in their suffering and is personally present in the midst of the experience of suffering. It is in suffering that one is put in a position to surrender one's will to the Other in relational dependence. It is vulnerability that is the hallmark of love and the antithesis of sin; through succumbing to a vulnerable death on the Cross love triumphs through the Resurrection (Turner 2011:21).[92]

In Julian's estimation, one's relationship with God is one of dependence on the part of the human person. We are to "behave like a submissive child" running to our mother when injured or distressed: "he wants us to take on the characteristics of a child, who always naturally trusts in its mother's love, whether in joy or sorrow" (LT, LXI:133).[93] Thus, childlike dependence is the pinnacle of spiritual maturity:

> in this life we never reach any higher state than childhood, in our weakness and deficiency of strength and understanding, until the time when our gracious mother has brought us up into our Father's bliss. And then it will truly be made known to us what he means in those sweet words where he says, 'All shall be well; and you shall see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well' (LT, LXIII:136).

[91] This is where Stump's reading of Aquinas vastly differs from Titus'.
[92] Turner calls this Julian's central theological insight.
[93] This emphasis is highlighted even more in the Westminster manuscript (Larsen 2011:53).

This type of trust is founded upon the love of God wherein relational identity does not subsume or displace the individual's sense of self, but rather the individual becomes more truly herself through surrender of the 'right' to self-determination and autonomy.[94] This dialectic between belonging and distanciation lies at the heart of both knowledge of the self and knowledge of the world (Ricoeur 1991b:266–67). Further, this dialectic is primarily worked out in the everyday praxis of the individual.

Phronesis

Praxis is at the heart of Julian's theology. In fact, Bauerschmidt argues that Julian's *Revelation* is only coherent when seen as a 'script' that is performed by the people of God, individually and corporately (1999:192). This is because the love of God that is at the heart of Julian's *Revelation* is not merely consolation for the individual, but is the "social bond" that grounds the life of the community of God (Bauerschmidt 1999:36). We see in Julian similar strands of thought as we found in Ricoeur. In particular, Julian displays the importance of reinterpretation of lived experience as a means of creating meaning, detailing how the narrative of the Gospel creates hope. Likewise, Julian's theological anthropology centers around the self being known only through relational dependence upon God. The childlike trust indicative of this relationship is integral to the patience required for living in a world that awaits the Great Deed that will complete the narrative of the Gospel. Keeping in mind *phronesis* as a unifying principle, we see that these insights have very practical import for resilience. Yet the very real effects of appropriating Julian's worldview are perhaps more difficult to measure directly, both in Julian's own life and in the lives of her readers.[95]

We have very few descriptions of Julian herself (aside from Margery Kempe's brief encounter), so it is challenging to assess, apart from her own testimony, how Julian's experience of God's love impacted her life. Her own reflections, found especially in the Long Text, suggest an attitude of hope. Margery Kempe's description of Julian—as well as the later addenda provided by the editor of Julian's manuscript and the several

[94] Cf. (Ricoeur 1996).
[95] Julian's theology has been used as a system of transcendent meaning for ministry to AIDS survivors (Maynard 2006) but has not been evaluated for effectiveness in clinical settings.

patrons who remembered Julian in their wills—suggest a wise and spiritually mature woman who was looked up to by those in the community and was sought out by those from far outside of her locale.

In Julian we find a strong emphasis on maintaining the unity of head and heart in the everyday practice of prayer and worship that characterized English Christianity more generally (Thornton 1963:49). This suggests that the scope of *Revelations* is not merely for an intellectual answer to theodical questions but rather for the practical import of how the love of God, so construed, makes a difference in the daily lived experience of the reader.[96] Catherine Garrett (2001) suggests that Julian may serve as an example of the way in which mystical experience can bring healing to experiences of suffering that are beyond the reach of the social sciences.

The significance of Julian's theology, then, is to suggest a way for hope amidst great evil because of the love of God displayed through Christ. The narrative of the Gospel—displayed for Julian through word, vision, and spiritual sense and worked out through theological reflection—forms an identity in relation to God as one who is the Beloved of God. This identity expresses itself through a re-interpreted perspective of hope and an attitude of dependence upon the God from whom one derives one's very existence.

While sin is the focus of Julian's theodicy, her solutions to the problems afforded by the presence of sin in the world may analogously be applied to situations that are themselves derivative of sin. In this regard, Julian's approach to sin and her affirmation that sin is 'behovely' are significant for resilience. Here is a 'normalization' of the experience of suffering and difficulty in this world, but, at the same time, an assertion that this experience is 'behovely' in the grand narrative of God's work in the world. Hearkening back to Rutter's 'steeling effects' of adversity (Rutter 1999), this is a declaration that it is fitting, and even beneficial in some way, for sin and its concomitant suffering to be present in this world. Titus (2006) suggests as much in detailing how Aquinas' virtue of fortitude may relate to resilience. Julian's theology is significant for understanding resilience, not because she provides a final answer regarding how the

[96] This, by Julian's own account as well. Cf. (LT, IX:51).

current corrupt world can exist in conjunction with a God who is infinitely loving and powerful, but rather because she holds in tension an affirmation of God's loving involvement in the world with an acknowledgment of the unknowability of how this may be. In fact, this paradoxical embracing of aporia is itself a clear demonstration of the heart of Christian resilient adaptation—faith without sight; hope without certainty. In this way, emphasis is laid upon the personal relational trust inherent in the dependence upon God that undergirds Christian resilience rather than upon a coherent rational explanation for events that happen in the world, which may or may not always be possible or beneficial. Julian, then, can serve as a model for resilient adaptation, not only through the content of her theological insight, but also through her method of doing theology.

Cautions

Some would protest against drawing any conclusions that are applicable to the modern world from a woman who lived in such a different context—especially a woman who claims to have experienced visions from God. It is sensible to have a degree of skepticism regarding the applicability of Julian's vision of the world for today. Several points lead me to the conclusion that such application is possible, however.

As we have seen, Julian's *Revelation* was written for the audience of the "evy*n*n cristene" (Colledge and Walsh 1978a:219)—as if the revelations were given to each one (ST:9)—and so has such application implicit within it. Beyond this, Ricoeur's philosophy paves the way to suggest that, authorial intention aside, the text as it is for the reader can convey a surplus of meaning and possibility through the revelatory power of language. Thus, a document that claims to be an account of God's revelations of love to a woman named Julian, as such can exert influence upon modern readers on the basis of the externality of the text and the narrative it relates.

Further, some might argue that Julian does not give adequate attention to—perhaps even glosses over—the reality of suffering and evil in the world. How does one deal with what Marilyn McChord Adams (1999) calls 'horrendous evils'? To some extent, Julian's attitude may be a reflection of the time in which she lived. The stark realities of suffering and deprivation were the norm rather than the exception. War, sickness,

famine, plague, and strife were present everyday realities that intimately affected the lives of those in 14th century England. These were not only assumed by Julian and her audience, they were daily lived actualities. In the midst of this Julian sought to provide a voice of hope based in her experience of the love of God. This is a tension in Julian, to be sure, but also a tension in our lived experience. Significantly, Julian does not sweep the horrendous nature of evil 'under a rug'; instead she looks it full in the face and believes despite it all, that it will be made well. She does not attempt a wholesale answer for how this will be the case, but preserves the mysterious dichotomy of both the general assertion that all will be made well and the aporia of how this will be. It seems that we would do well to maintain a similar agnosticism in the face of evil—both affirming that it does not have the final word and that we do not as yet know how this will be. This affirms both the horrendous nature of particular experiences of suffering and the hope that these will somehow be redeemed in the narrative of God's love.

Conclusion

While Julian has been used as an example of positive psychology's emphasis on flourishing and well-being (Scheib 2015), such a conclusion may be short-sighted. The emphasis upon flourishing as a result of God's superabundant love is well deserved, but a lack of acknowledgement that, for Julian as well as for us, this well-being may be coterminous with very real experiences of suffering renders the final conclusion a bit vacuous. Others, such as Molly Field James (2013), have used Julian productively to understand suffering through the lens of Christian theology, suggesting a pastorally-sensitive "nuanced acceptance" of suffering (2013:192) that joyfully meets the challenge of adversity through faith while still resisting sin and the structures that support it.[97] Similarly, Jane Maynard (2006) suggests Julian's *Revelations* as a model of healing from trauma through transcendent experience.

While one could argue that Julian's assessment of how 'all shall be well' is trite, unrealistic, and utopian, it would be incoherent to argue that she was out of touch with the reality of suffering. Given what we know of Julian's life and circumstances, suffering

[97] Similarly, Gatta (1981) proposes that Julian's theology, especially her approach to sin, arises out of her experience as a spiritual director and is aimed primarily toward pastoral concerns.

was the rule rather than the exception. She wrote as a disempowered woman rather than from an ivory tower of privilege, yet she wrote as one who claimed to have had her life transformed by the love of God. Through the new relational identity she assumed, this experience empowered her to write and share the love she had come to know. One should at least be prepared to entertain the possibility of the depth of love that Julian claimed to know in Christ. While not plausible in one sense, perhaps it is just such an absurd and recklessly over-the-top love that must counteract the absurdity and nonsensical nature of much of the evil experienced in this world and the incoherent 'nothingness' of the sin that causes it. Julian suggests that God's love can provide purpose, joy, fulfilment, peace, and wholeness. It may not be too far astray to claim that resilience could be a possible outcome of this new way of being-in-the-world. Turner concludes,

> This woman—Julian—got more than she bargained for, as those commonly do who unwittingly pray for what is beyond their powers of coping. Perhaps when Julian prayed for "mind of the passion" she thought her request to embody no more than the desire for an increase in that devotional empathy with the suffering Christ that was so much the goal of late medieval meditation practice. But what she got in answer to her prayer was more a theological predicament than a mere intensification of devotion. For in these visions was contained nothing but paradox, a cacophonous discordance, that both demanded and resisted harmonic resolution. For Julian saw therein at once a revelation of an omnipotent and utterly reckless love and its apparent defeat by sin. In Christ on the Cross she saw hope, rational and theological, apparently in ruins. On the one hand, then, the Cross is her predicament. On the other, she is told that all the answer to her predicament, the only one she is to be given, is contained in that same bodily sight—the solution is in the problem. There are no further resources for an explanation, there is no place else to go other than where the problem is, in the Cross of Christ (2011:xiii).

Julian's hope is that the story, as God is telling it, will be better as a result of the twists and turns inserted by sin than if it had not included them.[98] Julian believes that, in the end, the love of God will triumph over all and right all wrongs. In the 'here and now,' however, we continue to journey in hope—resiliently, you might say—toward the completion of the story. Julian nonetheless had to bring her book to completion in the midst of her journey of life. She encouraged her fellow travelers by giving attention to

[98] Julian suggests: "And this blessedness is ours through mercy and grace—a kind of blessedness we might never have had nor known if that quality of goodness which is in God had not been opposed, for through that we have this blessedness" (LT, LIX:128).

the manner of our travel through this distended world: "Thus ends the revelation of love of the blessed Trinity shown by our Saviour, Christ Jesu, for our endless comfort and delight, and also for us to rejoice in him in the transitory journey of this life" (LT, LXXXVI:165). Such journeying is possible because "He…turns everything to his glory and to our joy without end" (LT, LXII:134).

And so, despite what may look like terribly dire circumstances, "this is what he intends: he does not want us to be too cast down on account of the sorrows and upheavals that befall us; for it has always been so before the coming of a miracle" (LT, XXXVI:86). The 'coming of a miracle' belies Julian's hope in the Author of the narrative of love, who will ensure that 'all shall be well' despite all appearances to the contrary. It is to this end that God encourages her in the final words of her revelation:

> And these words, 'You shall not be overcome', were said very distinctly and very powerfully for assurance and comfort against all the tribulations that may come. He did not say, 'You shall not be perturbed, you shall not be troubled, you shall not be distressed', but he said, 'You shall not be overcome.' God wants us to pay attention to these words and always to be trusting strongly and surely in good times and bad; for he loves us and is pleased with us, and so he wishes us to love him, and be pleased with him, and strongly trust in him; and all shall be well. And soon afterwards everything was at a close, and I saw no more" (LT, LXVIII:143).

Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* provides a prism through which the many-hued possibilities of Ricoeur's conception of the power of narrative and the reflexive self can be displayed concretely and further explicated. For Julian, this power is displayed through the narrative of God's love. The historical nature of this text lends itself to reflection upon the contextual influences implicated in writing the it. Yet the text's concreteness allows the insights contained to move beyond the bounds of time to provide insights to the reader in the present. The hope that Julian was given through God's love can thus become our hope. The horizon of her text can become the horizon of our lives, with the subsequent disclosure and creation of meaning for the reader today.

As Julian's revelations enabled a 're-envisioning' of her existence in light of the Gospel, so too may our human existence take on new meaning in relation to the God of whose love Julian testifies. The story she tells is not a different narrative than the Gospel, but a

'renewed' Gospel narrative, made particular to her and her circumstances, though enacted with 'world-projecting power' for her readers.

I will now further assess implications of a theological understanding of human resilience to adversity through constructively drawing together the various strands of thought explored thus far.

Chapter 6: Implications for Resilience

"One morning I woke up and didn't feel angry anymore…I no longer blamed God. The outward circumstances in my life hadn't changed…But those things no longer seemed so important. What was important was my relationship with God…By now, I had seen God's miracles so often in our lives…that I was growing accustomed to putting things before him with a sense of expectancy, just as I had as a child in Saigon. Day by day, I…opened myself up 'as a child' to the exhilarating mysteries of faith" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:245–47, 256).

I began this project by contemplating the majestic redwood trees of California. How did these trees survive through millennia? Several arguments are possible. Certainly, their environment is conducive to their massive growth. The genetics that predispose these trees to grow for so long also are significant. Similar argument could be made for human resilience.

Many factors could be explanatory for the fact of human resilience displayed by countless individuals each day (Windle 2011:153). In our journey thus far, we have assessed resilience through a variety of disciplinary and methodological means. This has included perspectives from the sciences—including psychodynamic, genetic, and sociological insights—as well as from the humanities—most notably from philosophy and theology. Such multi-disciplinary engagement is necessary to apprehend the complexity of human resilience. Our study has focused on the meaning and connection furnished by the narrative of the Gospel that support resilient adaptation. We gained recognition of this possibility through reflection upon the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur as a framework for a renewed understanding of resilience. This study thus provides a unique contribution to understanding resilience through assessing the construct from a narrative theological basis.[1] While not downplaying scientific accounts of human resilience, I sought to clarify and deepen these through engagement with theological

[1] By focusing upon this particular approach, I have necessarily limited the scope of my assessment of resilience. I do not believe that a narrative approach is fully explanatory or without difficulties. I have not, for instance, been able to explore fully what it means to flourish as a human being, something Titus addresses at length (2006:98). Thus, many other profitable avenues are available to assess human resilience, such as utilizing virtue theory (Titus 2006) and Stoic philosophy (Greitens 2015). These may be seen as complementary rather than in opposition to this project.

sources that question some assumptions underlying resilience. Now, the implications of this suggestion must be further explored.

Drawing Together Strands

Some researchers describe resilience purely in terms of science: genetics and environment. While the relationship of human biology (including genetics) to human resilience is becoming clearer, more than the empiricism of science is needed to assess resilience. I contend, as much research suggests, that religion can exert a substantial impact upon resilience outcomes.

For the Christian, resilience gains a new *telos* that puts the construct in a new light. Rather than being primarily concerned with biological survival, the Christian views resilience through the lens of the narrative of the Gospel in which Jesus overcomes death by going *through* it rather than attempting to *escape* it. By participating in the death of Christ through faith, the believer is united with Christ in his resurrection. This radically alters the Christian's vision of the world, through no longer seeing death—the ultimate expression of suffering and evil—as having the final word, but rather by having hope that the God who raised Jesus from the dead will also make well all other expressions of sin. Julian of Norwich attempted to portray, to the best of her ability, the unmeasurable 'surplus of meaning' she found in the Gospel of God's love, the fullness of which will only be known in the future. The patience required in the 'in-between' time is one of the hallmarks of resilience that, paradoxically, is strengthened through an acceptance of the finite and broken nature of human lived experience. Resilience in the midst of distended human experience is reinforced through the meaning and relational connection afforded by the love of God and received through participation in the narrative of the Gospel. This argument has been strengthened through attention to insights from a variety of disciplines and methodological approaches, each considered on their own terms. Now we focus on the two major themes that we have traced through this project.

Constructs Supporting Resilient Adaptation

While researchers have identified numerous factors potentially significant for resilient adaptation (Mancini and Bonanno 2009:1819), I chose to focus on a limited number of constructs in order to develop greater understanding of the theological underpinnings of resilience.[2] In addition to addressing the philosophical grounding of conceptions of resilience more generally, I concentrated upon particular narrative theological understandings of relational connection and meaning.[3]

Connection

Research suggests that resilient adaptation may be supported through relational connection. This is true for interpersonal relationships inasmuch as it is for relationship with the Transcendent. Further, through Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology, the importance of relationality for the constitution of the self has become evident. Individuals need others, then, for their very being.[4]

Relational connection is fundamentally of a personal nature and is reliant upon the supremacy of love. The personal nature of this interaction is significant for resilience. As Eleonore Stump notes, "suffering can be redeemed for the sufferer in personal relationship…heartbreak can be woven into joy through the reciprocity of love" (2012:xix). Connection enables an individual to live within the tension of a distended world because that world has become a place of intimate union despite, or perhaps even *through*, the experience of adversity.[5]

Resilience ultimately fails if it is focused solely on the individual—it must be Other and God-centric. A lack of resilience, in some sense, could be understood as connected to the

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[2] There are many other constructs and emphases that I could have highlighted; these represent what I believe are the most pertinent. Pargament and Cummings (2010) also suggest the significance of meaning, relational connection, and cognitive reframing for resilience.

[3] These areas of focus correspond to the emphasis given to "appraisal processes" and "social resources" in Anthony Mancini and George Bonanno's person-centric model of resilience (2009:1805).

[4] See (White Forthcoming) for further discussion of this point.

[5] McGilchrist suggests that we need relationship as much as we need purpose (in relation to our ultimate *telos*) (2010:174).

preoccupation with self in modern Western culture. There is a distinct lack of wonder, sense of awe, and otherness.[6] Part of modernity is an inherent self-referentialism (Song 2007:403–4) that is founded upon the cultural shift during the Enlightenment away from corporate identity to an individual focus (Heitink 1999:29). Robert Song suggests that this narcissism may be because of disconnect from Transcendent (2007:405).[7] This disconnect has significant implications for the ability of individuals to face adversity. Song notes: "The early utilitarians in the eighteenth century…bequeath[ed] to modern culture the ideal of the relief of suffering, while the deist expulsion of God from the inner workings of the universe removed any point in interpreting suffering in terms of divine providence" (2007:408). The Modern individual, then, could be said to desire relief from suffering, but through isolation is without the connection, to God and others, that might aid in resilience.

This is the paradox of resilience: a focus upon decreasing suffering and adversity in Western culture may be having the opposite effect. In fact, at the heart of this understanding is an assumption that an easy, flourishing and fulfilled life is regarded as normal human experience. This has significant—I argue, degrading—implications for the promotion of resilience. Individuals in modern society want to do away with struggle; we want life fast and easy. Yet, in an effort to avoid suffering, while at the same time seeking self-actualization, we are cutting at the root of human flourishing.

Against this, the Christian views the world as in the grip of sin and human lived experience in the world as a struggle which one day will end through God's redemption of the world.[8] Thus, Christianity provides a counter-narrative to the Modern understanding of the world as revolving around the self. In particular, a narrative of social identity provides a counter-narrative in which the individual is known and

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[6] See (Song 2007).
[7] Song qualifies this assessment, however: "In recognizing that much of modern self-identity is an entirely understandable reaction to finding oneself in a post-traditional social order, [Giddens] avoids a certain kind of moralistic response that he detects in notions of narcissism. By refusing to see people as merely passive in the face of overwhelming pressures, he can pay attention to the manifold ways in which they resist, negotiate, and survive their circumstances" (2007:406).
[8] Kearney notes that towards the end of his life Ricoeur's focus was increasingly upon "*God for others* and *self for others*" (2011:221).

constituted in relation to the community (in this case, the Church). The theological anthropology of God as Divine Other further decenters the centrality of the isolated self by placing the very constitution of the self in terms of relational connection.

Meaning-Making

The creation of meaning is also important for resilient adaptation. As detailed in Chapters 1 and 2, research indicates that the process of meaning-making is associated with purpose, hope, and positive mental well-being.[9] Further, religious understandings of the world, in particular sacred narratives, can be important in the creation and sustainment of meaning. I utilized Paul Ricoeur's philosophy to describe the ability of narrative to project a new 'world' of hope and furthered this understanding through the example of Julian of Norwich. For her and for many others the narrative of the Gospel, as attested to in scripture, figures prominently in the creation of meaning. One's experience of the present may be re-emplotted in light of the narrative of the Gospel.[10]

For the Christian, biblical narratives are "the fundamental story by which all others are to be understood, including his or her own story…The biblically formed narratives of Christ and his Church become the story which literally makes the world; it goes all the way down" (Loughlin 1999:20). Such a totalizing worldview affects all human experiences, providing perspective and meaning in the midst of life's joys and sorrows.

Ricoeur himself suggested the necessity of such a voice in today's world. He notes: "It remains a poor, disarmed word, which has no force other than its capacity to be said and heard. It rests on a sort of wager: are there still enough people who will hear this word?" Indeed, in the midst of

> the indefinite multiplication of signs in circulation in our societies,…[t]he small voice of Biblical writings is lost in the incredible clamor of all the signals exchanged. But the fate of the Biblical word is that of all poetic voices. Will they

[9] In particular, interpretation of human experience, including pain, significantly affects health outcomes (Büssing et al. 2010; Cook 2013b:147; Nygaard and Heir 2012).
[10] Relating Ricoeur to Augustine, DeLashmutt similarly claims: "Augustine exemplifies how confessional re-narration, by providing an overarching story of the self, resiliently accommodates change and can aid in giving meaning to the discordant and episodic nature of life" (2009:603).

> be heard at the level of public discourse? My hope is that there will always be poets and ears to listen to them (1998:169).

The tension in this account lies in the role of the hearer. The word of meaning—a narrative projection of a new way of being-in-the-world—exists, but will it be heard and appropriated?[11]

Through attention to the content of this 'word' as it relates to resilience, I will draw together more fully the threads of argument in ways that are suggestive of possible implications for resilience. This will involve, broadly, highlighting these two themes once again, but utilizing a different framework. I turn once again to a narrative understanding, first assessing the content of the narrative of the Gospel in relation to a scriptural passage, then developing a narrative plot based upon the implications of Ricoeur's thought for resilience.

The Narrative of the Gospel

An individual may gain resilience by the participatory relation of the narrative of her life to the Divine narrative of the Gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον). Further, this Divine narrative gives human existence a new *telos*. But what constitutes the substance of this Divine narrative?

Christians look to scriptures as witness to God's work throughout history—through the stories of the people of Israel, the life of Jesus Christ, and the Church founded by Christ. At the heart of this story is the good news (Gospel) of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

While too large a topic to fully address here, I will briefly assess how one portion of the Bible portrays the narrative of the Gospel. My focus will be primarily upon the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, proposing that participation in the narrative of the Gospel involves participation in the transformative life of Christ.[12] Michael Gorman describes Paul's thrust toward 'narrative spirituality' as "a spirituality that tells a story,

[11] Cf. (Prickett 2002:262).
[12] Michael Gorman notes: "As a fundamental category for understanding Paul, 'participation'—meaning participation in Christ, his crucifixion and resurrection, his story, and/or his present life—is now quite widely accepted" (2009:3).

a dynamic life with God that corresponds in some way to the divine 'story'" (2001:4).[13] Further, Karl Plank draws upon Ricoeur's philosophy in his description of Paul's assessment of suffering:

> Paul draws upon a language of affliction in virtually all his letters to interpret human life and the gospel he understands to empower that life. With this language he creates a textual world in which suffering persists and weakness characterizes the human lot (1987:3–4).

Paul's theological reflection, then, provides a beneficial avenue for studying resilience.[14]

There are many genres within the corpus of scripture; narrative being one of the most primary. Though Paul's letters are not explicitly narratival in genre, there is a growing consensus that Paul utilizes narrative elements in his theology (Hays 2004:48). Paul's "gospel was a narrative in continuity with Israel's story" in the Old Testament (Gorman 2009:105), wherein he uses the tool of narrative to tell the climax of the story—Christ's death on the cross—in a way that gives it special significance (Gorman 2001:75). "Paul's story of the cross, then, is a story of faith, love, power, and hope" (Gorman 2001:94).

While much could be written on what constitutes the core of the Gospel message, Philippians 2:5-11 offers an encapsulation of the key aspects of the Gospel:

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

6 who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus

[13] For Gorman, "[c]ruciformity is [at the center of]…Paul's oddly inviting, even compelling, narrative spirituality" (2001:5).
[14] Plank contends that "Paul's language of affliction takes us close to his deepest convictions, those truths which he assumes to be self-evident and which shape his perception and understanding of human life" (1987:4).

every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.[15]

Philippians 2:6-11 as Paul's 'Master Story'

Gordon Fee suggests: "Theology in Philippians first of all takes the form of story" where the story of the Gospel "is one of the primary *theological* contributions of the letter!" (1995:47). Indeed, "the ultimate urgency of this letter is *the gospel*" clearly expressed in 2:6-11 that lays the theological foundation for the letter as a whole by portraying Christ as paradigmatic (Fee 1995:228).

Gorman believes Philippians 2:6-11 operates as Paul's "master story," influencing his entire view of the world and saturating his thought (2001:88–92, 164–72, 278–80, 316–19, 357–58).[16] Similarly, Stephen Fowl suggests this passage as "the crucial climactic element of [the] drama of redemption" (2005:88). This text "reveals the narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus" wherein "Christ's divinity, and thus divinity itself, is being narratively defined as kenotic and cruciform in character" (Gorman 2009:25).[17] Significantly, Gorman engages this text in narrative terms—as displaying Christ's 'narrative identity' that can be 'narratively defined.'[18] Paul's spirituality is both cruciform and narratival, and "derives from the story of Christ narrated in Phil 2:6-8" (Gorman 2009:157) which is "the 'integrative narrative experience' of his life and thought," permeating and defining all that Paul is and does (2001:371).

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[15] NRSV.

[16] Although the particular kenotic ('self-emptying') content of this passage provides ample opportunity for reflection on the topic of resilience—and, indeed, has many resonances with other themes I highlight—an in-depth exposition of this passage is beyond the scope of the current project.

[17] In this project, my reading of Philippians coheres to a broadly Ricoeurian strategy of interpretation that is more concerned with the interaction of the text and reader than the text's process of development. I do not wish to completely side-step issues of textual criticism, but, given the constraints of the current project, see these as secondary to the meaning projected by the text. Cf. (Fowl 1998:30). Here, and throughout this project, I assume the perspicuity and intelligibility of Christian scripture from a canonical perspective. While many (including Ricoeur) have suggested that such a way of reading can present certain problems (which I am willing to concede), Ricoeur's own example (e.g. (LaCocque and Ricoeur 1998)) suggests that it is possible.

[18] This understanding is in concert with Ricoeur's thought regarding human identity.

Fee helpfully proposes:

> The fact that the future has already begun with the coming of God himself…means two crucial things for Paul: that the consummation is absolutely guaranteed, and that present existence is therefore altogether determined by this reality…[Christians] live the life of the future in the present, determined by its values and perspective, no matter what their present circumstances…what is theologically at stake in Philippians is the twin reality of the Philippians' present suffering and of the (apparent) diminution of their clear vision of the sure future that awaits (1995:50–51).

The narrative of God's work in the world through Christ, then, puts believers' lives in proper perspective. "Paul's conviction that his life mirrors the experiences of Christ, especially in terms of suffering" further highlights that "vindication follows suffering" (Bloomquist 1993:195). It accomplishes this through an expressly narrative means that is broken into two parts, verses 6-8 and 9-11 (Fee 1995:193–96).[19] The entire narrative of 2:6-11 is focused upon Christ, showing Paul's understanding of the centrality of Christ as the fullest revelation of God's nature (Fee 1995:226–28).

Paul narrates the outcome of this master story in Philippians 2:9-11, "God's vindication of the story of Christ as the story of true humanity and true divinity" (Gorman 2009:32). Thus, in the narrative of the Gospel, participation through faith in the crucifixion of Christ ensures participation in the resurrection of Christ, resulting in renewed life in the present and in the eschaton (Gorman 2009:85). The process of becoming like Christ is ongoing, necessitating hope for the future, but, paradoxically, this hope is founded in "a participation in his cruciform narrative identity and a transformation into his cruciform image" (Gorman 2009:91–92). Hence, "[i]f we know God in the cross, then we should also know that God's majesty is one of power-in-weakness" (Gorman 2009:34).[20]

Christ's exaltation at the conclusion of Philippians 2:9-11 finishes this narrative, not by diminishing the cross, but rather by understanding it as the necessary and essential

[19] Fee is especially adamant to note this passage's 'narrative character' rather than merely designating it, like many other scholars, a poetic hymn (1995:193–94). Fowl makes a similar claim (2005:119).

[20] Plank suggests that Paul depiction of "weakness" is an instance of Ricoeur's 'surplus of meaning' embodied in the symbolic representation of the text (1987:86–87). This is accomplished, in part, through a "paradoxical irony" of the juxtaposition of 'strength' and 'weakness' that provides an "enlargement of the meaning" of the terms (Plank 1987:62)

precursor to Christ's resurrection and exaltation. These narrative elements are indivisible, though the cross, for Paul, most clearly displays the character of God (Gorman 2001:87). Thus, "Paul's chief way of 'expounding' his theology of Christ crucified was to show the correspondence between Christ's death and the believing community's life" (Gorman 2001:76). This connection flows out in praxis through participation in Christ.

Participation as Phronesis

Philippians, which uses the Greek word *φρονεῖν/phronein* ten times (Fowl 2005:6),[21] has a "rather persistent emphasis on the formation of a Christ-focused *phronēsis* or practical reasoning" (Fowl 2005:123). *φρονεῖν* is sometimes rendered as 'think,' but Fowl suggests its meaning is much broader, to encompass a "comprehensive pattern of thinking, feeling and acting" (2005:6). Paul uses the imperative form of this verb in Phil 2:5, exhorting his readers to utilize the *phronesis* that "involves a common perspective on their situation and how it fits into the divine economy and the practical implications of that perspective" (Fowl 2005:89–90). [22] Thus, "the letter's most comprehensive purpose is the shaping of a Christian *phronēsis*, a practical moral reasoning that is 'conformed to [Christ's] death' in hope of his resurrection" (Meeks 1991:333).

Participation in Christ through faith, then, is enabled through participation in the narrative of the Gospel. This is not merely understanding or mental assent to the content of the narrative, but rather relational connection with God and with others in faith community.[23] This participatory engagement with the narrative of the Gospel is clearly evidenced in Philippians 2 where Christ's death and resurrection are portrayed as having immanent application in the lives of believers. This is a "*living* exegesis" of the text in the life of the faith community (Gorman 2009:104) because, "*[f]or Paul, to be in Christ is to be a living exegesis of this narrative of Christ* [found in Phil. 2:6-11], *a new performance of the original drama of exaltation following humiliation*..." (Gorman 2001:92). Indeed, Christ can serve as an exemplar for Christians, whose story provides

[21] This is almost half of the occurrences of the word in the Pauline corpus (Fowl 2005:6).
[22] Cf. (Thomasset 2005:541).
[23] It is significant that this text projects relational possibilities. Fowl suggests the Phil. 2:6-11 "sets out a concise and authoritative account of God's character and of the sort of friendship God desires for us and with us" (2005:209).

a framework for interpreting situations in their own lives (Fowl 2005:106).

Individual and communal acts of reading the Gospel can be transformational, and, in this case, could be transformative of suffering. Because Christ's death and resurrection are central to the Gospel, participation in the Gospel, in some sense, invites a participation in these very realities: "Justification is participatory and transformative, accomplished by co-crucifixion with Christ and embodied as holiness" (Gorman 2009:161).[24] Gorman claims that "an experience of the cross, a spirituality of the cross, is also an experience and a spirituality of God" (2009:1). Cruciformity, then, is theoformity—"conformity to Christ, or holiness, understood as participation in the very life of God—inhabiting the cruciform God" (Gorman 2009:1–2).[25] For Gorman, "the *telos* of human existence…[is] union with God" (2009:5).

Paul's letter to the Philippians provides an especially powerful example of engaging with suffering since it was most probably written during his imprisonment (Bloomquist 1993:193; Fee 1995:30, 34; Fowl 2005:9–10). In fact, "suffering is the occasion of the letter" and it "is primarily used by Paul as the occasion for his extended, eschatological confession of faith in God's grace manifested to servants" (Bloomquist 1993:196). The content of this eschatological hope is that "suffering is not meaningless" because Christ has been victorious. For the believer, "as in the case of Christ, suffering prefaces the inevitable vindication of the one suffering" (Bloomquist 1993:195). Hence, "in Philippians…suffering points beyond itself to vindication" (Bloomquist 1993:196).[26]

L. Gregory Bloomquist suggests, in Philippians, Christ is "the cipher in whom the experience of all God's servants is most clearly reflected" (1993:195). In fact, "there is no genuine *life in Christ* that is not at the same time…being regularly transformed into the *likeness of Christ*" (Fee 1995:227). Thus, through participation in Christ, "[s]uffering

[24] Care must be taken, however, not to fall into the trap of identifying oneself with Christ in every way—only Jesus Christ is the Savior; we are not called upon to sacrifice ourselves on behalf of the world. I will address this danger more fully in the final chapter.
[25] Gorman suggests that for the Christian "justification is by co-crucifixion: it is a participation in the covenantal and cruciform narrative identity of Christ" (2009:2).
[26] See also (Fee 1995:30).

evidences the ontological union of believers with their Lord" (Bloomquist 1993:191).[27] Yet, because Christ's suffering and death did not end in ultimate defeat, the Christian's adversity does not have to have the final word:

> For Paul…suffering is intimately connected to hope…both the inevitability of suffering and the certainty of future glory are for him *theological and spiritual necessities*. For Paul, hope is fundamentally the certainty that the ultimate fate of the humiliated, crucified Messiah will also be the ultimate fate of himself and of all others who are co-crucified with Christ…—the completion of the process of conformity to the narrative pattern of the Messiah (Gorman 2001:305).[28]

Thus, "[f]or Paul, hope…is the conviction, based on the past narrative of Christ and the present narrative of believers' experience, that the future of cruciformity is glory" (Gorman 2001:332). Suffering is not the focus of Paul's theology nor of the Gospel narrative; rather, the hope of Christ's return, the *parousia*, is its center (Gorman 2001:334).

Participation in Christ, including in his suffering, does not necessarily lead to justification of the experience of suffering. In Gorman's thinking, "*Christ's death represents not God's justification for suffering but God's identification with those who suffer*" (2001:376). Love, then, is central to the narrative of the Gospel—both in its content and in its interpretation. Gorman suggests: "Cruciform love, in a word, continues the story of the cross in new times and places" (2001:267), narrating God's love in places of adversity as well as plenty.

Cruciform love characterizes the reciprocal relationship of God and the believer as well as the believer's relationship with others. It involves a humility that "has to do with a proper estimation of oneself, the stance of the creature before the Creator, utterly dependent and trusting" (Fee 1995:188). Thus, the narrative of the Gospel provides a 'framework' for Christians to make their suffering "intelligible to each other" (Fowl

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[27] Gorman notes: "The story of Christ…unfolds in two major stages: humiliation and exaltation, death and resurrection, suffering and glory. To participate in that story, or, better, to participate in the One whose narrative identity is disclosed in that story, is to embody a similar two-stage pattern" (2009:167).

[28] I would disagree with Gorman's characterization of suffering as a necessity. It is problematic to affirm suffering as necessary. Rather, a better understanding would place suffering and redemption as contingent *narratival* necessities given the current state of the fallen world, though not necessary in themselves.

2005:227).[29] This has communal implications: "the church's life story embodies and thereby proclaims the narrative identity and gracious saving power of the triune God whom Paul encountered and preached" (Gorman 2009:172). Hence,

> a community that lives 'in Christ' (Phil 2:1-5) will be shaped like the story of Christ narrated in 2:6-8. Such a community does not simply remember and imitate a story; rather, it experiences the present activity of Father, Son, and Spirit mentioned in 2:1-13, which is formation into the eternal, unchanging image of the eternal Son of God (cf. Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18), an image manifested in the story of 2:6-8 (Gorman 2009:32).

For these reasons, I suggest this passage provides insight into the Gospel message and its implications for resilience. The narrative of the Gospel has very real and practical implications for the life of the Christian—implications concretely displayed in the example provided by Julian of Norwich. I contend that Ricoeur's philosophy is also significant for a theological understanding of resilience and, following his proposal for the text as hermeneutical model, can be expressed in a narrative framework.

A Narrative Structure of Resilience

I argued that Paul Ricoeur's philosophy can provide insight human resilience. Here I more fully develop this argument through depicting resilience in narrative terms. I suggest that resilience can best be understood narratively in relation to components of the 'plot' of resilience.

The Problem: Distended Experience

Any good story has a problem at its center—a discordance that is sought to be overcome. I suggest that, from the standpoint of Christian theology, this central problem is the distension axiomatic of human existence in the world because of sin.[30] Ricoeur upholds this view.

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[29] Indeed, Fowl argues that "one of the primary practices of Christian friendship is helping each other fit our lives into the drama of God's economy of salvation" (2005:228).

[30] See, for instance, Ricoeur's essay, "Evil: A Challenge to Philosophy and Theology" (Ricoeur 1995a) for further assessment of this point.

For Ricoeur, 'limit-situations' of discordance—"those situations—including solitude…suffering, and death—where misery and the grandeur of human beings confront each other" (Ricoeur 1981c:85–86)—are central to human experience. Human life, then, must be understood not only in light of possible renewed meaning but also in view of possible continued discordance. This, in literary terms, is the contingency of a tragic plot as opposed to the trajectory towards the happy ending of a comedy (Loughlin 1999:161). Human capability includes not only the ability to act, but, in a meaningful sense, is countered by the fundamental inevitability of suffering. There is no guarantee of a good outcome in the journey of life. Ricoeur notes that "[t]he function of the tragic is to question self-assurance, self-certitude, one's critical pretensions…[Thus] tragic symbols…speak of a 'mystery of iniquity' that man cannot entirely handle…" (1962:213–14). Ricoeur concludes that "tragic anthropology is inseparable…from tragic theology; and this latter is at bottom unutterable" (1962:213). Ricoeur is right to acknowledge the mystery that lies at the heart of understanding evil—a mystery that cannot be explained away, only narrated within the narrative and *telos* of the Gospel.

In an important sense discordance provides an opportunity for the creation of meaning, thereby having constructive utility: "Destruction…is a moment in every new foundation. The 'destruction' of hidden worlds is a positive task" (Ricoeur 1974:148). This is part of what Donald Capps calls Ricoeur's "pattern of orientation to disorientation to reorientation" (1984:44). Metaphor serves as a helpful tool in this process since it depends upon a correspondence between the known the world and the world that it projects, while at the same time also disorienting the known world by disclosing a new way of being-in-the-world (Capps 1984:108). This, in essence, is a narrative pattern. For Ricoeur, then, narrative—in particular its use of symbol (Ricoeur 1962)—is a helpful avenue for understanding evil (Kearney 2004:91–97).

Some philosophers have equated Ricoeur's emphasis on radical evil as the normal state of human being with a Christian worldview, suggesting this as a fault of his philosophy.[31] Others, like Francesca Murphy, critique narrative theology more generally

[31] Cf. (Kenny 2004:101).

without specifically addressing Ricoeur and his dialectic between Idealism and Realism.[32]

The distention of human existence culminates in the central encapsulation of sin in history: Jesus on the cross. Here the wickedness of humankind reaches its climax by killing the self-giving God; here the sin of the world is put upon Christ. This is the fulcrum of history, the turning point of the narrative plot of the Gospel.

The Plot: Paradoxical Reconfiguration

The plot of the narrative of resilience, I contend, is paradoxical and based upon an unexpected turn—the same pivot in the narrative of the Gospel. While one would expect the problem of sin, suffering, and death to be rectified through either head-on confrontation or total avoidance, the 'emplotment' of this narrative involves neither. To be sure, an individual could gain a measure of resilience through these strategies—a 'pulling your boots up by your own bootstraps' mentality or avoidance of difficulty—but, in the end, each affords only limited resilience gains.

Problematic Stories

These limited gains are because each is built upon faulty assumptions regarding the world; in particular, faulty assumptions pertaining to the nature of the human self. Following Ricoeur, an understanding of the self as being constituted in relation to the Other suggests the limited capabilities of the isolated self. A 'bootstraps' mentality gives too much credence to the powers of the self—Ricoeur's notion of the self as one who acts *and* suffers is helpful here—and too little credence to the concrete realities of sin and evil. To suggest that one can overcome any difficulty is perhaps naïve in the face of real experiences of evil.

Furthermore, the avoidance of suffering as a goal suggests that such a *telos* is both achievable and desirable. From the standpoint of resilience research, the total avoidance of suffering is not beneficial (Seery et al. 2013). Similarly, the Christian faith

[32] Interestingly, Murphy suggests that one of non-realism's flaws is "an unwillingness to *suffer* reality" or view that suffering "is a part of the way things are" (2007:307).

contends that sin is not the fundamental characteristic of the world, but nonetheless extends to all aspects of it, only being made right through Christ's re-making of the world in the eschaton. Thus, seeking to avoid this reality may be an exercise in futility.

Paradoxical Reversal

In contrast to these faulty attempts to resolve the problem at the heart of the narrative of resilience stands a different narrative. The plot of the Gospel narrative resolves the problem not by brute force nor by avoidance, but rather through participating in, and thereby transforming death and suffering.[33] This paradoxical overturning of narratival plot elements culminates in the unexpected reversal of fates through Divine Life.

This 're-emplotment' of the narrative of resilience places the construct in a novel framework. A narrative reappraisal of the world through the Gospel and the constitution of the self in relation to God as the Divine Other provide the courage to live in the world of discordance, thereby enabling resilient adaptation.

Both strategies are narratival at the core. This is in keeping with the strength of narrative to affirm and hold in tension the irreducible 'unbearable contradictions' of lived experience (Coakley 2016).

The Resolution: Awaited Redemption

Christ's death is solely one aspect of the Gospel narrative—one that is only fully understood in light of the resurrection of Christ. The two narrative elements are not understood apart from each other. For Ricoeur, discordance is dialectically countered by the ability of emplotment to create concordance. He writes, "The tragic model is not purely a model of concordance, but rather of discordant concordance. This is where it offers a counterpart to the *distentio animi*" (1984b:42).[34] Loughlin writes:

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[33] Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (NRSV).

[34] Ricoeur continues, "if reversal is essential to every story or history where meaninglessness threatens the meaningful, does not the conjunction of reversal and recognition preserve a universality that goes beyond the case of tragedy?...is not our perplexity greatest where reversals of fortune were most unexpected?...Does not every narrated story finally have to do with reversals of fortune, whether for better or

> the condition of this happy ending is the agony of Jesus on the cross…His suffering is not undone by his resurrection; it remains, like all suffering, for all time…That disconnection precedes reconnection, and that tragedy precedes comedy, as the very condition of the latter's possibility, is perhaps sufficient reason to describe the gospel story as a comedy (1999:163).[35]

Yet Christ's resurrection is not the end of the Gospel hope; the resurrection of Christ is the first fruits of the promised resurrection and renewal of all things in the eschaton. This hope is based upon faith and awaits its final fulfillment. Patience, then, is the corollary of Christian hope and necessary for resilience.

This is integral to the biblical vision of the world. Ricoeur notes that in "biblical redemption…[w]hat is noteworthy…is that the meaning proceeds from the end to the beginning, from the future to the past" (1962:214). He continues,

> the movement which in symbolic thought goes from the beginning of evil to its end seems indeed to suppose the idea that all this finally has a meaning, that a meaningful figure imperiously takes form through the contingency of evil—in short, that evil belongs to a certain totality of the real…but not just any necessity, not just any totality…the necessity appears only afterwards, viewed from the end, and 'in spite of' the contingency of evil (1962:215).

Meaning, then, follows from eschatology; hope from the object of anticipation. In the narrative of the Gospel, meaning and connection derive their significance from the promised return of Christ and the redemption of all things in the eschaton. Significant for this expectation, the "law of superabundance ['how much more' (*πολλῷ μᾶλλον*)]…is the miracle of the *Logos*; from Him proceeds the retrograde movement of the true; from wonder is born the necessity that retroactively places evil in the light of being" (Ricoeur 1962:218). Thus, the love of God, whose fullness will be known in the future, is present now, giving perspective to all that occurs.

For Ricoeur, suffering can be made sense of through *phronesis*. Wisdom

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worse?...It is these discordant incidents the plot tends to make necessary and probable. And in so doing, it purifies them, or, better, purges them" (1984b:44).

[35] Similarly, McFadyen writes, "Joy that has gone through the cross must allow the crosses of the world to stand, just as the resurrection allowed Jesus' cross to stand, worked through and with the pathological dynamics to reorient them and to draw the damage into relation to the abundance and fullness of God. God defines sin in the act of drawing it into the dynamics of salvation, by taking the damage of sin, including its resistance to healing, into Godself" (2000:211).

> joins *ethos* and *cosmos* at the very point of their discordance: in suffering…Wisdom does not teach us how to avoid suffering, or how magically to deny it, or how to dissimulate it under an illusion. It teaches us how to endure, how to suffer suffering. It places suffering into a meaningful context by producing the active quality of suffering (Ricoeur 1981c:86).

The self can transform suffering through the praxis of *phronesis*. Ricoeur suggests the purpose of the scriptural book of Job is to project such a view of suffering:

> could we not say that revelation, following the line of wisdom, is the intending of that horizon of meaning where a conception of the world and a conception of action merge into a new and active quality of suffering? The Eternal does not tell Job what order of reality justifies his suffering, nor what type of courage might vanquish it…[However] one indivisible prescriptive and descriptive order…can conjoin *cosmos* and *ethos* because it produces the *pathos* of actively assumed suffering (1981c:86).

Further,

> Job presupposes an unsuspected meaning which cannot be transcribed by speech or *logos* a human being may have at his disposal…What is revealed is the possibility of hope in spite of….This possibility may still be expressed in the terms of a design, but of an unassignable design, a design which is God's secret (1981c:87).[36]

What Ricoeur calls 'the *pathos* of actively assumed suffering' often characterizes the life of the Christian. Engagement with Christ who died and was resurrected, necessitates participation in these realities as well. Rowan Williams notes:

> Christian experience [is] growth in direct encounter with God, growth, therefore, in obscurity, pain and struggle…the roots of theology lie in such experience…Christian speculation is properly inseparable from engagement of a personal and demanding kind with the paradoxes of cross and resurrection (1990:139).

Participation in 'the paradoxes of cross and resurrection' can lead to the ability to live resiliently, patiently waiting with a hope characterized by the 'discordant concordance' of distended human experience intersected by the God of superabundant self-giving love.

[36] For an in-depth exegesis of the book of Job utilizing serious biblical scholarship coupled with Ricoeur's philosophy, see (Dailey 1994).

Applications

More than being merely an esoteric philosophical concept, resilience has very real-world practical implications. All human beings face difficulty, pain, and sorrow. Sickness, suffering, and death are realities of the world that we inhabit and therefore are realities that we must face.

But, does R/S support resilient adaptation? The answer is both 'Yes' and 'No,' depending on how 'resilience' is understood. A Christian theological understanding of resilience is not a 'silver bullet' for creating resilient individuals. In fact, from a certain perspective, the *telos* of the Gospel narrative creates outcomes that could certainly be understood as 'un-resilient.'[37] This caution does not preclude the possibility that the connection and meaning found through participation in God can create positive resilience outcomes. At the same time, the practical wisdom of *phronesis* enables such understandings to be coupled with insights from other disciplines, thereby gaining greater insight into human flourishing.

Theory Behind Practice

This project is not aimed toward particular treatment protocols, but rather seeks to reassess assumptions undergirding resilience, thereby providing new understandings and applications.

Still, any Christian theological response to suffering is a practical one; the experience of adversity is a call to action, not merely an exercise in metaphysical thought (Castelo 2012:94–95). This praxis can take many forms. I focus briefly on just two possible applications: communal support and virtue formation.

Community

The support of community is especially important in resilient adaptation, since the self is constituted in relation to the Other. For Ricoeur, evil constitutes a threat to

[37] Jesus Christ, for instance, from a purely secular materialist perspective would be considered supremely un-resilient—what is more lacking in resilience than surrendering to physical death? See Chapter 3.

community well-being, evidenced by survival of the individual at any cost: "The word *survival* is very selfish," he notes (Changeux and Ricoeur 2002:280–81).

The individual's survival, in Ricoeur's mind, can become a means of self-focus. Alternatively, suffering can bind individuals together in what Ricoeur, reflecting on his own experiences of loss, calls the "silent fraternity that is born out of equality in suffering" (1998:91). With the recent deaths of his son and his friend Mircea Eliade in mind, Ricoeur suggests that the "memory of God" is altogether different than the "too human contrast" of what is done or not done in the world. This human activity (or inactivity), in the end alike succumbs to the "merciful equalization of death and suffering" (Ricoeur 1998:91).

Community, especially among those bonded by suffering, can strengthen individuals to respond resiliently to adversity. The formation of community may aid resilience by fostering hope and creating meaning through relational connection (Holton 2011).

Virtue Formation

Also significant for resilience is virtue theory and the formative practices that create and sustain resilience. This was the topic of Craig Steven Titus' book on resilience and theology, *Resilience and the Virtue of Fortitude: Aquinas is Dialogue with the Psychosocial Sciences* (2006). Titus proposes Aquinas' virtue theory and the virtue of fortitude as a basis for understanding spiritual resilience. As Titus has extensively explored this topic, I will only address it tangentially.

Titus categorizes virtues into two groups: virtues of constructive resilience (Aquinas' virtues of initiative) and virtues of resistant resilience (Aquinas' virtues of endurance). Included in the virtues of constructive resilience are courage, magnanimity, and magnificence; the virtues of resistant resilience are patience and perseverance. Titus expansively addresses Aquinas' account of each virtue and the development of the virtues in an individual.

Resilience itself is not a virtue, but rather a description of the particular outcome of an action—a performance virtue. Resilience does not involve valuation in itself, rather its

telos determines its moral value. Indeed, resilience is a necessary quality in all virtue (Titus 2006:148).

The possibilities inherent in applications of resilience, however, does not mean that the concept is without problems.

Critiques and Limitations

I have already highlighted several limitations of the resilience concept throughout this work. Now, however, I will address more specifically several of the most substantial criticisms: narratival discordance and disempowerment. These critiques, deriving from both theological and social science frameworks, will serve to clarify a Christian understanding of resilience.

Discordance

Problem: Narratival Discordance

Though an individual may desire to re-envision his life in light of the narrative of the Gospel, what happens when he cannot narrate his experience in a 'resurrection' narrative? It is easy to imagine such situations of discordance between distended human experience and a proposed narrative of hope.

Julian of Norwich narrated a conception of human existence that views the eschatological fact of redemption as both immanent and distant. Her sincere hope in the defeat of sin is accompanied by the need for patience because of the future and mysterious nature of the resolution. The full expression of redemption attested to by the resurrection is an exception in this life; at most we catch glimpses of God's grace in places of restoration.

Solution: Patience

Because the resolution of the Gospel narrative awaits a future fulfillment, patience is necessary.[38] A narrative understanding better enables living with the distention of being unable to make tidy the splintered pieces of our existence. Julian, like Ricoeur, believed that God's love ensured the resolution of discordance, though no attempt is made to explain definitively how this will be.

The tension of the world in which we live ensures it is a place of faith, not certainty, yet it is also a place of potentiality recognized through faith. Though the death of Christ provides the content of our knowledge of God's character; his resurrection demonstrates the promise that all things will be made well (Julian's 'Great Deed'). Present experience is often characterized by what one theologian called "God's far-nearness" (Shooter 2012:134). In this experience, however, the relational knowledge of who God is (connection) and the hope that all will be made right (meaning) encourage us. Consequently, participation in the narrative of Christ's death and resurrection supports resilience in the 'in-between' period of waiting in which we find ourselves.

While Christ's resurrection is the first fruits of promised restoration, ours is still to come. We look to it in faith, exhibiting hope that is facilitated by seeing the events of the past and present in light of the certainty of the future. This perspective unlocks the potentiality of the present, allowing individuals to wait expectantly for the fulfillment of this hope. Viewing resilience through the lens of narrative fosters patience—in the process of becoming—or, what some scholars have termed the 'unfinished' narrative of resilience (Aranda et al. 2012). Narrative identity keeps in tension the person who is and the person who will be, allowing the potentiality of the present to become the reality of the future through appropriation by disciplined endurance.

Rather than seeing resilience as an abstract set of characteristics one must appropriate, we should view it through the lens of narrative identity. I suggest that a resilient person can see alternative ways of being-in-the-world through stepping into the narrative of

[38] This is not unlike Shelly Rambo's conception of the present as a Holy Saturday of sorts, awaiting the coming Resurrection in the midst of the trauma of existence (Rambo 2010a).

the Gospel and appropriating this new way of being-in-the-world through disciplined practice. We become the type of people (humble, servant of all, dependent) who can see beyond—to see where God is at work—by becoming like God because He is at work in the same ways. In the journey of being conformed to God's image, perhaps we can only understand goodness and evil by patiently living alongside them over the course of life.[39]

Disempowerment

Problem: Reinforcement of Deficit Thinking

Some social science researchers posit that Modern conceptions of resilience have the potential to support disempowerment through reinforcing a *status quo* of failure. This is most clear in the blaming of victims wherein resilience is wielded as a virtue that is either possessed or lacking (Luthar and Zelazo 2003:513).[40]

As human beings, we want to narrate a happy ending to others' suffering—even trying to absolve ourselves of responsibility to help others by suggesting their lack of resilience as their own failing, not, perhaps in part, our own. By accepting that individuals will have to deal with their own problems rather than addressing systems implicated in the promotion of evil, we are lowering societal expectation to the most vulnerable.[41]

Two political theorists, Brad Evans and Julian Reid, are especially pronounced in their reservations regarding aspects of resilience.[42] They highlight "the hidden depth of its nihilism, [and] the pernicious forms of subjugation it burdens people with" as well as "the lack of imagination the resiliently minded possess in terms of transforming the world for the better." They suggest that they "have become exhausted by its ubiquitous weight and the chains it places around all our necks" (2015:154).

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[39] See (Halik 2009). I am indebted to Martin Westerholm for his insights into this topic.
[40] This is in contrast to others who see resilience "as a counter-narrative to discourses of vulnerability and social suffering" (Panter-Brick 2014:439).
[41] I am grateful for Karen Kilby's insight on this matter.
[42] I will quote from their critique at length.

Further, they suggest that resilience "has become the new social morphology for our societies that are defined by inescapable crises of catastrophe" (2015:156).[43] Despite its relatively localized beginnings in particular fields of study, resilience, they argue, has become a new way of reasoning that is focused upon "producing new modes of subjectivity attuned to the age of catastrophe" (2015:156). They sarcastically remark, "We are all asked to think in terms of resilience. None of us can be exempt from the benevolence of its claims or the scope of its reasoning."

This is a type of thinking that entreats "the universal survivor in all of us," yet

> by wrapping themselves in a scientific mantra that appeals to the 'common sense' of our shared perception of endangerment, what we used to call positivism has been displaced by the appropriation of once critically supposed ontologies of vulnerability to leave us dangerously exposed and accepting of our insecure predicament (2015:156).

Resilience, for Evans and Reid, is the 'buzzword' of 'ontologies of vulnerability.' The "philosophical stakes" regarding resilience are high because "[b]eneath the veneer of concern…lurks a deeply nihilistic way of thinking about the very nature of what it is to live." Indeed, they argue, "Resilience has created an image of a world in which the very phenomena of violence and insecurity are assumed as natural and incontestable. All things are insecure by design" (2015:156).

This reinforcement of an epistemology of insecurity is evident in what they suggest is one of the greatest threats of resilience: the way it "demands a certain *exposure* to the threat before its occurrence so that we can be better prepared." This is a type of immunization in which we "become active participants" (2015:156).[44] Yet, in this vision of the world, our participation does not change the ultimate fate of the world: "setting

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[43] From a Christian theological point of view, this could be understood as the danger of improperly assessing the fallen nature of the world and one's role in it: repeatedly offering oneself on the altar of self-sacrifice by mistakenly seeing oneself in the place of Christ, who alone is the Redeemer of the world.

[44] Inherent to resilience, Evans and Reid argue, is that it "exposes the self to a dose of lethality to stave off something altogether more terminal…What does not kill you only makes you stronger, providing of course you are trained in the art of survival" (2015:157).

aside any utopian vision of a promissory world that may be conceived otherwise, resilience looks to the future as an endemic terrain of catastrophe that is already populated by the ruins of the present" (2015:156–57).

Most significantly, their argument extends to anthropology:

> resilience now authenticates who we are as people. Adaptability in the face of crisis emphasises our resourcefulness, our abilities to thrive in times of risk and our life-affirming qualities that refuse to surrender to all forms of endangerment…It is precisely through the promotion of ontologies of vulnerability instead of ontologies of oppression that we learn to accept that things are simply crises ridden and ultimately catastrophically fated (2015:157).[45]

Evans and Reid contend that "liberal modernity['s]…claims to improve and enrich human existence have proved to be unfounded" and, though the resilience concept is nearly "ubiquitous," its power for "emancipating" is nonexistent (2015:157). This is part of liberalism's crisis more generally—a system "that breeds anxiety and insecurity as the new normality for human cohabitation" (2015:158). For Evans and Reid, resilience "suspends life in a system of temporal purgatory – catastrophically fated unto the end" and therefore we must develop new ways of viewing the world (2015:157). This includes, significantly, an "imagination that allows us to be liberated from the entrapments of this tragically fated and subjugating condition" but also the opportunity "to rethink what a meaningful existence might entail" using "a poetic art form that enables us to critically expose the nihilism of the present and imagine better worlds to come" (2015:158).

This "demands a return to the original philosophical rupture – the poetic – to speak of a new imaginary" to re-envision liberalism's "fundamental ontology of vulnerability, which is most purposefully expressed in the context of resilience." This means "living dangerously…disavowing narratives of survivability and endangerment" and instead seeking "love [which is] essential to a new consciousness for human togetherness" (Evans and Reid 2015:158).

[45] They continue, "Such reasoning we maintained is fully compatible with neoliberalism and its promotion of risk, along with its private commitment to the care for the self" (2015:157).

Solution: Gospel Narrative as Framework

The picture that Evans and Reid paint of resilience is bleak: it is a construct that reinforces the destabilized nature of the world and disempowers individuals. While I find many of their critiques are helpful,[46] viewed from the perspective of the Christian Gospel, their account of a fundamentally unstable world goes too far. Yes, the world is broken, but it is also redeemable. To the extent that resilience disavows individuals of this viewpoint, it should be corrected or discarded.

We must move beyond a limited viewpoint of resilience to understand it as an adaptive process, supported by connection and meaning. I believe that Evans and Reid correctly assess the futility of liberalism (or of any political creed, for that matter) to address the ills of the world. In many ways, their critiques are valid and helpful. What they fail to include, however, is an account of God's activity in the world which, for the Christian, changes everything. Their proposed solution points in a hopeful direction but does not fulfill this vision. Instead of the potentially disempowering narrative of secular resilience, a Christian theological vision embraces a view of the individual as one whose identity is constituted in relation to God. As such, the individual is empowered and given a new vision of the world, not through self-sufficiency, but through relational dependence upon God and others.

A Christian view of resilience, as portrayed through the narrative of the Gospel paradoxically proclaims that one gains strength through dependence and vulnerability. This narrative encapsulates both the immanence and transcendence of God as the One revealed to Julian in the suffering Christ on the cross as well as in the triumphant doer of the 'Great Deed.' God's narration overcomes our reality, evading our attempts to categorize and figure God out (Graham et al. 2005:76). It is this story that informs our human existence, potentially building capacity for temporal resilience.

[46] In fact, much of Evans and Reid's argument is closely resonant with my own.

Dénouement

Thus, it may be that we were asking the wrong question from the outset. Rather than, 'How can individuals be more resilient through adversity?' perhaps we should have asked, 'What does it mean to be human given the broken nature of the world?' The latter clarifies the former; the general informs the specific. But, in an important sense, attention to the particularity of resilience can provide insight into human existence.

A theological assessment of the world re-envisions resilience by attesting to the God who provides abundant Life. Paradoxically, in forsaking the right to self-narration, a person may gain meaning and connection through Divine narration. This story most likely will include loss and sorrow due to the distended nature of the world, but the new 'emplotment' afforded by God's love supports resilient adaptation by ensuring that, in the end, 'alle shalle be wele.'

Human flourishing is about much more than resilience—flourishing may be a particular expression of well-being in a context of adversity, but does not define it. Because the *telos* of human existence finds meaning in relational participation in God, knowing and being known by the God who is Love constitutes the fulfillment of human being. Participation in Divine life certainly has implications for resilient adaptation to adversity, but these outcomes are tangential rather than primary. Against the view of many scientific materialists, the primary function of the human being is not to continue biological life—surely an impoverished view of existence—but rather is to be united to God in love. Such a *telos* transcends earthly contingent existence, thereby, paradoxically, making way for the possibility of a greater capacity for resilience in this life. If we understand 'natural' resilience as 'survival at any cost,' seeking foremost the survival of the individual, we could term 'Christian' resilience 'love at any cost,' seeking foremost the well-being of the Other. Paradoxically, this may also produce significant positive resilience outcomes for the individual.

The paradox of losing to gain, dying to live is at the heart of the Gospel. Hans Urs von Balthasar suggests that "to die for love of the One who died for me in divine darkness: this face-to-face encounter is one of a kind, and it characterizes…the uniqueness of Christian truth and existence" (1994:143–44). The principle of self-giving love is central

to Christian discipleship as “divine life…blossoms in the individual Christian” expressing itself in a life of service (von Balthasar 1994:133–34). Thus, the Christian “lives as one who has died and been resurrected, because his whole existence is an attempt to make a loving and thankful response to God ‘by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal 2:20)” (von Balthasar 1994:141).

This means, however, that living a life re-envisioned through the narrative of the Gospel does not guarantee positive resilient adaptation, as understood in secular terms. Certainly, the meaning and connection an individual gains through participating in God’s love may increase the likelihood of resilience, but they may also create outcomes that look distinctly un-resilient. This paradox, a part of the mystery of the Christian faith, cannot be explained away (von Balthasar 1994:126–27).

The narrative of the Gospel is not yet complete; mystery remains. Here there is no firm conclusion, but rather a continuing story unfolding in the praxis of everyday life. So, too the enigmatic ‘resilient individual‘ is yet to be located—or, rather he is an illusion—for no solitary ‘resilient individual’ is guaranteed positive adaptation. Rather, each individual must face the present moment with the resources at hand, hopeful of a positive outcome and expectantly awaiting the promised future.

Conclusion

"'He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways,' the psalmist wrote, and I had experienced this promise as an extraordinary reality.

I had been guarded. Protected. It was a reason to rejoice. But still, I couldn't help feeling sad…I had lost some of my innocence and naiveté. But I never lost my song. Since that day, the little songbird hasn't stopped singing, because I know the power of God's all-encompassing love, which writes a new song in my heart with each new day" (Sawyer and Proctor 2003:211).

The Resilience Landscape

Where I grew up in the plains of the Midwestern United States, the sky seems to go on forever. When one looks at the horizon it appears endless, stretching into oblivion on every side as far as the eye can see. It can be a daunting task to navigate, having few, if any, landmarks to guide the way or mark the passage of distance. In the journey of life, one may similarly feel cast adrift in the wilderness.

The dearth of trees in this landscape is one of the main difficulties in orienting oneself. In the introduction, I suggested the giant redwood tree as an example of resilience. In the same way that the rings of the tree tell the story of the tree's survival, I argued, the contours of a human life may be unfolded through narrative. But what if, like the fields of the Midwestern United States, there are few way-markers to point the direction? The vast, barren landscape of secular Western culture, I suggest, provides few guideposts for a way forward towards resilience.

In this project, however, I have traced the contours of resilient adaptation through attention to particular 'way-markers': the science of adaptation, the philosophical and theological underpinnings of resilience, and an example of resilient adaptation. This example, in particular, could be seen as a marker—like a giant redwood whose rings we explore in the hope of gaining insight into its adaptation. Similarly, Julian of Norwich may serve as a tree within a barren landscape, whose narrative may enable a clearer perspective on the terrain of existence.

We have understood resilience as the process of patiently enduring adversity through reinterpretation of circumstances in light of the Gospel that creates meaning and through relational connection with the God revealed in Jesus Christ. We complexified the cultural narrative on resilience: no longer can we see resilience simply as a good in itself or an amalgamation of characteristics that sustain human well-being through adversity. Rather, the narrative of resilience is significantly more complex, further understood through a theological anthropology that understands the human person as constituted in relation to the Other. While the narrative of the Gospel extends meaning to human existence, the day-to-day adversity of life in this broken world can be mollified through relational connection with the God who is described in the Gospel, and with the community created by the Gospel. Viewed in light of the Gospel narrative, both the utter depravity of evil and the possibility that it might be redeemed become apparent.

Conclusions on Resilience

I have suggested that resilience, like human life, is best understood through narration. In the final chapter I laid out a possible narration of human resilience from the standpoint of Christian theology. This narration is built upon the preceding chapters, each of which depicts human existence and resilience to adversity from a slightly different angle. This analysis led to several important implications.

Outcomes

In the introduction I noted that the Oxford Thesaurus of English suggests as synonyms for resilience: "1… durability, ability to last, strength, sturdiness, toughness…2…toughness, hardiness…" (Waite, Maurice 2004:805). And, as the opposite of resilience: "1…rigidity; fragility…2…vulnerability, weakness" (Waite, Maurice 2004:805). Following our venture into understanding of resilience, I contend that, in terms of human resilience, some of these emphases may be misplaced. In particular, while resilience is certainly reliant upon strength, this is not necessarily individual strength, but can be a strength received from outside the self. As such, resilience need not be considered the opposite of 'vulnerability' or 'weakness,' but rather can be a type of strength re-imagined through the narrative of the Gospel to a conception of strength

that includes vulnerability. In this view, the self is re-imagined in terms of relationality, and therefore the vulnerability of love.[1] The self-giving love of God in Christ serves as an example of a renewed conception of strength—one that goes *through* the suffering of death only to rise to a new kind of life. The Christian may partake in this life through the participation of faith that enables the re-imagination of the self.

Christian theology, then, can shed light on human resilience as a function of human personhood and well-being.[2] Human existence is re-imagined through the narrative of the Gospel as being relationally dependent and meaningful through participation in the love of God. This picture is at odds with many modern Western conceptions of resilience and human flourishing. I suggest that, despite a desire for human flourishing (understood as happiness), the ability of humans to be resilient through adversity stands in contrast to many current accounts of flourishing. I propose that a modern Western vision of flourishing as ease is opposed to the reality of resilient adaptation. The modern vision of flourishing suggests that the well-being characteristic of the eschaton should be humanity's current reality; Christian hope contends that this world is broken and that humanity's true destiny lies in the eschaton to come. Paradoxically, this perspective may enable greater temporal flourishing because it is more in accord with the reality of distended human existence.

Resilience Re-Envisioned

Parul Sehgal (2015) suggests that resilience is "not just the strength to stay the course but to question it." Thus, he suggests, one may ask, "Why rise from the ashes without asking why you had to burn?" Akin to this questioning, I also have not been content to accept the construct of resilience wholesale. Rather than merely attempting to carve out novel applications to promote resilience,[3] I sought to assess the underlying framework of the concept itself. Religious belief, at times in both explanatory and complexifying

[1] A similar thesis is put forward by Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo in *The Power and Vulnerability of Love: A Theological Anthropology* (2015).
[2] As Tournier noted, "'man [*sic*] in crisis situations'…reveals what he is" (1982:38).
[3] There are, as I have noted, many beneficial studies of a very 'practical' nature with emphases as diverse as creating community that supports resilient adaptation, for instance, or strategies for religious coping.

ways,[4] may be able to elucidate the processes underlying resilient adaptation, but also suggests specific concrete applications: the narrative of the Gospel can reshape experience of the world and thereby create hope; the individual truly knows herself most fully through relation to the Other. Indeed, through participation in the narrative of the Gospel, the love of God can engender human resilience by creating meaning and connection in an environment of eschatological hope. These applications are immensely practical, and involve, more broadly, accounting for the nature of human existence in the world.

The reality of evil and suffering in the world is undeniable. In the post-Holocaust era, this pervasive reality has confronted the thinking of many scholars, both religious and secular. Significantly, a Christian conception of resilience does not have to downplay the experience or reality of evil. Evil can be comprehended for what it is, while still affirming that the love of God will overcome all expressions of evil. This, in particular, was Julian of Norwich's claim: God is at work in the world, disclosing love, and sustaining hope through meaning and connection. Yet, the fulfillment of this work awaits a future day, necessitating resilient adaptation in the present.

Which Resilience?

Some individuals can thrive in adversity, poverty, and oppression, while others atrophy in apparent health, comfortable lifestyles, and relative well-being. It would seem that advocates of 'secular' resilience would favor the second camp to the first, but is it preferable? What does this say about the nature of resilience, the nature of the human experience, and the nature of the world? Could it be that adversity is, as Julian contends, somehow 'behovely'? Our journey has taken us perhaps to an unexpected and paradoxical ending in which the goal we thought we were seeking has been re-described through the narrative of the crucified and resurrected Christ.[5] There is no easy, clear-cut answer here, only the narrative fragment of the cross and belief in the resolution of all things that is prefigured in the resurrection. This enables human beings

[4] And, perhaps, this is a mutually symbiotic relationship.
[5] Perhaps, rather than viewing resilience from a place of relative ease, health, and well-being, the testimony of those undergoing adversity should be given preeminence in understanding resilience.

bound in the constraints of time to be resilient—patiently, actively, and relationally engaged in furthering the Kingdom of God.

In one sense this may look like the resilience of the secular world, but in a very different sense, a Christian conception of resilience can look completely and paradoxically un-resilient. The Christian exemplar is none other than Jesus Christ who, through dying destroyed death.[6] And so it will be for his followers, who through seeming un-resilience become resilient—through the vulnerability of love.

Resilience: When?

In the journey of life, as in Julian's assessment of waiting for the 'great deed' by which all things will be made right, patience is required. The Kingdom of God is already present in the world but not yet fully triumphant. This calls for resilience for the time-being—resilience that, for the Christian, is based upon a re-envisioning the world through the Gospel, thereby creating meaning and identity in relation to God.

At times this is a fleeting resilience—a fumbling and disjointed affair—but it is sustained nonetheless by God. This resilience is sustained, not on human effort, but by God.

Resilience: How?

Ricoeur proposes that scientific and religious knowledge are best integrated through attention to "*experience*," not merely through theoretical means (Ricoeur 1984a:xi). The lived experience of each human being is situated, particular, and ultimately mysterious. I contend that the depth of human life, especially in adversity, can best be plumbed through narrative rather than through merely abstracted scientific enquiry. Our foray into understanding resilience brings not only greater clarity to how and why individuals can be resilient, but also greater clarity to what it means to be human. In this quest, it is my hope that we have achieved "the convergence of diverse perspectives…on being in the world which give rise to a genuine interconnection of science and religion, on the edge of mystery" (Ricoeur 1984a:xi). Truly, because of the mysterious nature of the

[6] Cf. Hebrews 2:14.

human person, only an approach that takes seriously paradox can provide clearest insight and, in the end, the most helpful praxis.

The Christian Gospel does not attempt to do away with the irenic nature of human existence, caught between the extremes of distention and hope. Rather, it enables a purposive and substantial mode of existence in the 'in-betweenness' of human experience. Through the hope provided by the narrative re-emplotment of the Gospel and the identity found in relational dependence upon God, the resilient individual is enabled to live her life with patient hope.

The Limits of Resilience

A narrative 're-emplotment' of the events of one's life may indeed sustain resilience, but is it also possible that a new emplotment does not clarify, but rather intensifies the ambiguity and despair of suffering? Must all elements of a life narrative make sense and come to a satisfying conclusion?

Perhaps the answer is both paradoxical and unsatisfying in the end. Julian suggests that an ultimate consummation of our experience will, in some mysterious way, bring healing. This hope can foster resilient adaptation in the midst of life's adversities. It also calls for patience and acceptance—for the time being—of ambiguity and incomplete explanations. Such patient endurance may also foster resilience through learning to adapt and accept the tension inherent in human existence.

Narrative reappraisal has its limits however. No amount of reinterpretation can change the fact of the terrible reality of pain and suffering in the lived experience of many individuals. Rather than denying this reality, the Christian is called to acknowledge it, while appraising it in light of the greater perspective afforded by the narrative of the Gospel.

A Final Example: The Road to Emmaus

I conclude with a final example of the possibilities of the narrative of the Gospel for resilience: The Scriptural story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. I contend that

these disciples serve as an example of resilient adaptation fostered by the love of God and portrayed through the Gospel.[7] Though they had just undergone the trauma of seeing their Teacher, Jesus, betrayed and killed, they received new perspective when they met the risen Christ on the road. They thought that their hope had been misplaced, but it merely awaited the vindication of Christ's Resurrection (Fowl 2005:227). He told them the narrative of the Gospel—Salvation History—in a fresh way, enabling them to see not only this story, but also themselves and their circumstances, in a new light. This was resilience *through* difficulty rather than *around* it—a narrative with both tragic and comedic elements (Loughlin 1999:161–64): the disciples on the road to Emmaus

> do not learn that what had happened in Jerusalem [to Jesus] had not, but rather the meaning of what had happened…They learn that one ending is the condition of the other; no happy ending without an unhappy one; no comedy without tragedy (Loughlin 1999:163).

In the same way that the disciples on the road to Emmaus gained resilience through encountering Christ, so too we may gain strength to face adversity resiliently by participating in the love of God through faith. This does not mean that all experiences in this life will go the way we wish—usually quite the opposite—but this discordance is the condition of resilience. The way forward is *through* the sorrows of the world, knowing that in the end "alle shalle be wele"—not because we can escape the experience of suffering but because God is redeeming the world, including our experiences of evil, through Christ's suffering. This is, Ricoeur notes, a "theology of paradox, which calls for hope in the very depths of distress" (LaCocque and Ricoeur 1998:225).

In the conclusion to her magisterial *Mysticism*, Evelyn Underhill writes,

> It was said of the disciples at Emmaus, 'Mensam igitur ponunt, panes cibosque offerunt, et Deum, quem in Scripturae sacrae expositione non cognoverant, in panis fractione cognoscunt.'[8] So too for us the Transcendent Life for which we crave is revealed, and our living within it, not on some remote and arid plane of being, in the cunning explanations of philosophy; but in the normal acts of our diurnal experience suddenly made significant for us. Not in the backwaters of existence, not amongst subtle arguments…but in all those places where the

[7] This story can be found in Luke 24:13-35.
[8] 'Therefore they ponder the table, offering bread and meat, and God, whom they had not known in the exposition of sacred Scriptures, they know in broken bread.' Here Underhill is quoting the Breviarium Romanum (Anon 1843:322).

> direct and simple life of earth goes on…This fact of experience is our link with the mystics…our 'lovely forerunners' on the path towards the Real…Like the story of the Cross, so too the story of man's spirit ends in a garden…Divine fecundity is its secret: existence, not for its own sake, but for the sake of a more abundant life…The mystics witness to this story (1912:537–38).

Though this project has included a fair amount of what could be understood as "explanations of philosophy," the substance of what I have argued lies not in the strength of explanatory power, but in the lived experience of those who participate in the immanent love of God disclosed through the narrative of the Gospel. Its fulfillment is in *phronesis*.

Near the end of his life, Ricoeur proposed that God's power must be conceived of as connected with "the all-weakness of a love that surrenders to death" (Changeux and Ricoeur 2002:271). Elsewhere he writes: "For all God's power, God only gives Christians the sign of divine weakness, which is the sign of God's love" (Ricoeur 1995h:288). In the same way, I have suggested, we should understand resilience as a function of human existence that is dependent upon what is external to the self. Meaning, connection, and the temporal resilience that they support, are comprehensible in light of "the all-weakness of a love that surrenders to death" and the God who embodies this type of power. As Ricoeur professed on a scrap of paper found following his death:

> Survivant en sursis, je suis. Mais non [?], sans [exemption]. Je remets mon esprit à Dieu *pour les autres*. Ce lien, cette transmission a son sens au-delà de moi et un sens y est caché auquel Dieu peut-être m'associera d'une façon que je ne peux imaginer (Ricœur 2007:129–30).[9]

This is the truest perception of resilience: the weakness of vulnerable love overcomes the strength of isolation; the meaning furnished through participation in the self-sacrificing God outweighs the satisfaction of buttressed comfort. Such resilience is founded upon participation in the God who bestows hope through the narrative that attests to Love.

[9] 'I am a survivor on borrowed time. But not wholly. I present my spirit to God *for others*. This bond, this giving has its meaning beyond me and a sense hidden there to which God may make me a partner in a way that I cannot imagine' (my translation).

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