

Outline of Chapter 2

- I. Changing Paradigms Affecting the Study of Spirituality
 - A. Historical paradigmatic shifts in ontology and epistemology
 - B. Modern paradigmatic shifts and current spiritual research
 - C. Other paths, other possibilities
- II. Transcended Rhetoricity as a Paradigm for Research
 - A. The current underlying rhetoric of spirituality
 - B. From rhetoric to rhetoricity
 - C. From rhetoricity to a paradigm of Beyond
 - i. A transcendent paradigm
 - ii. Epistemologies of a transcendent paradigm
 - iii. Methodologies of a transcendent paradigm
 - iv. Axiologies of a transcendence

Rhetoricity extends Aristotle's discussion of rhetoric in terms of oral persuasion (argument) and considers Corder's (1985) claim that we, by virtue of being, are an argument for existence and that we live surrounded by persuasive forces. Rickert (2013) drew on Heidegger's concept of *dasein* to discuss ambience, *a priori affectability*, and of a "background as a cradle to human interaction" (p. 161). In similar manner, Davis (2010) drew on Burke's (1974) thoughts of our being part of an unending conversation to posit *originary (or preoriginary) rhetoricity*. (pp. 40-41)

Discussions of *originary (or preoriginary) rhetoricity* and of *a background as a cradle* suggest the possible working of a reality beyond/outside of our closed/isolated system. This transcendent reality both causes rhetoricity and the cradle in which it and we are rocked and enables our response to it. Indeed, this transcendent reality may be the realm of what we term the spiritual. (p. 42)

Such a paradigm allows for the possibility of revealed knowledge, in addition to discovered, constructed, and interpreted knowledge and it is based on the concept that the researcher is a tool in the service of a greater knowledge. (p. 49)

Burke, K. (1974). *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Davis, D. (2010). *Inessential solidarity: Rhetoric and foreigner relations*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

MacDonald, G. (1963). *At the back of the North Wind*. New York, NY: Schocken Books. (Original published in 1871)

Mertens, D. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Paul, J. L. (2005). *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Rickert, T. (2013). *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

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Toward a Spiritual Research Paradigm: Exploring New Ways of Knowing, Researching, and Being Jing Lin, Rebecca L. Oxford, and Tom E. Culham, Eds. (2016, Information Age Publishing)

Chapter 2: 'Out of the everywhere into here': Rhetoricity and Transcendence as Common Ground for Spiritual Research (pp. 25-53)
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None of us chooses the hour or the place
or the circumstances of our birth. We do not choose
our parents, our ethnicity, our native language, our physical features,
or our non-physical characteristics.

We come from, as the 19th century Scottish writer George MacDonald
(1871/1963) mused,

"out of the everywhere, into here" (p. 263),
but that here—not *the* here—is different for each one of us,
and this difference is what we have in common.

We belong to a humanity that is perpetually
in media res—each of us is born into the middle of others' stories
and others are born into ours—into Kenneth Burke's (1974) "unending
conversation," so to speak (pp. 110-111).

Many, if not most of us, also sense we also are born into a larger story,
the origins of which lie beyond. Beyond what we can't quite say,
but humanity has expended much effort in seeking to know
and to articulate answers to the questions of
where we come from,
why we are here,
how we should live,
and what it all means.

Table 2.1 Changes in Western Conceptual Models From the Classical Period to Present Day

Time Period / Influences	Structure of Western Conceptual Models
EMPHASIS ON BEYOND	
<p>BCE to end of 13th c. CE (1300-plus years)</p> <p>Patristic & Medieval Periods Classical Greek-Roman; Judaism-Christianity-Islam</p>	<p>Patristic & Medieval Periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual models based on existence of and connection to a real Beyond • Knowledge transmitted from Beyond and discerned through dreams, intuition, revelation, divination, etc., and/or discovered through observation, and/or reasoned through logic, i.e., the mystical vs. the rational • Study spiritual texts and rituals to prepare for Beyond and to explain Here-and-Now • Tensions: Eternal vs. temporal and faith vs. reason; emphasis on eternal and faith
<p>Early 1300s to early 1600s (about 300 years)</p> <p>Renaissance & Reformation: Humanism</p>	<p>Renaissance & Reformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model includes existence of a real Beyond • Knowledge discovered through observation and/or reasoned through logic, the faculties for which presupposed Beyond • Study spiritual texts and the observable world to better human society • Tensions: Eternal vs. temporal and faith vs. reason; emphasis on temporal and reason
<p>Late 1500s to mid-1800s (About 250 years)</p> <p>Enlightenment: Utopianism, Empiricism, Rationalism</p>	<p>Enlightenment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model limits Beyond to origins; real Here-and-Now • Knowledge discovered through observation and/or reasoned through logic • Ignore spiritual texts as a source of knowledge • Human reason can create heaven on earth Here and Now; spirituality irrelevant
<p>Mid-1800s to Present (About 200 years)</p> <p>Modern Era: Positivism to present philosophical boutique</p>	<p>Modern Era:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model based on subjective Here-and-Now; Beyond a figment • Knowledge discovered and/or constructed and interpreted • Spiritual texts discredited as counter to true knowledge • Spirituality pathologized as detrimental to humanity
EMPHASIS ON HERE-AND-NOW	

In examining the idea of paradigm more closely, I first note that a *generally accepted worldview* is not the same as an *exclusively accepted worldview* nor is it even the same as a *widely accepted worldview*. (p. 31)

Modern research paradigms posit reality as constructed or interpreted and only allow methods involving empiric, sensory, or mathematical information; none admit to centuries-old metaphysical means of knowing such as the use of intuition, meditation, prayer, or logical reasoning. In this chapter, I develop a foundation for inquiry by framing inquiry in terms not particular to any faith tradition but underlying each, i.e., in the conceptual terms of rhetoricity. Rhetoricity goes beyond our ability to use spoken or written language to persuade (argue) and sees existence as a rhetorical state of being. In the first part of this chapter, I discuss historic shifts in ontologies and epistemologies of spirituality (Table 2.1, p. 30), review current studies of spiritual development, and argue the need for a different paradigm. In the second part, I explore rhetoricity as a more expansive framework for research and propose a research paradigm (Table 2.2, p. 45) based in transcendent realism and conducive to the study of spiritual development and other research.

Table 2.2 A Comparison of Major Philosophical Approaches with Transcendent Realism

	Ontology (What is real?)	Epistemology (How do we know?)	Methodology (How do we find out?)	Axiology (What does it mean and ethical limits?)
Objectivist Realism / Positivism	One inherent reality; knowable through empirical means and math	Discovered by researcher manipulation, observation	Impartial/Objective researcher observes, measures, extrapolates	Decontextualized, objectified subjects, privacy, consent, minimize harm
Constructivist / Transformativist	Multiple, equally valid socially and/or temporally constructed realities	Co-creation between researcher and researched	Interactive researcher probes and explicates (power structures)	Contextualized balance; subjects benefit by knowing (social justice)
Interpretivist / Pragmatism	One inherent reality, interpreted Individually	Goal-oriented as determined by researcher	Best fit for research, as determined by researcher	Researcher's values determine purpose and ends
Transcendent Realism	Possibility of an objective reality Beyond that transcends our discovered, constructed, interpreted, and/or transformed understandings of this reality	Revealed as well as discovered and constructed; acceptance of seemingly irrational and mysterious as indicative of transcendence	Researcher practice that transcends than cognitive activity; willingness to receive revealed knowledge; co-constructed with with peers and with transcendent Beyond	Researcher used as a tool for immediate and apparent ends as well as for hidden ends that transcend this time and space
Sources: Adapted from Mertens (2010) and Paul (2005)				