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# An Exploration of Subjective-Life of Spirituality and Its Impact

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**Abstract:** This paper contributes to the discussion on how morality may be uncertain when life orientation changes, for instance, from religious belief to spirituality. Accepting the ‘subjectivation’ thesis as a key concept in understanding the contemporary world, the spiritual realm is treated as a site on which the subjective turn has made a tremendous impact. That turn is investigated particularly in a comparison between “subjective-life” spirituality and “life-as” religion. Then, this paper asks what happens to morality when people’s religious belief disappears, changes, or evolves into spiritual experience. Educational practices are also viewed as a resonant field where the subjective turn has impacted on morality. The context of this paper refers to the subjective turn, as explained by *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*. Then, the comparison of “life-as” and “subjective-life” is expressed according to their diverse values. Finally, the conclusion deals with the crucial points of morality in subjective life. In this regard, it is stressed that ‘subjectivation’ is a feature of our time, and presenting a remarkable challenge in the realm of values. Since their orientations are different, ‘subjective-lives’ have a different disposition in morality than the mode of “life-as”. Although it is impossible to generalize concerning whether or not spirituality is moral, nevertheless, it is expected that there will be challenges for religious education when dealing with spirituality.

**Keywords:** morality; spirituality; religion; religious education; life-as; subjective-life

## 1. Introduction

The *subjectivation* thesis is one of the key concepts to understand the contemporary world [1]. Subjectivation means that discovering and articulating their own identity has now become a matter for subjects that is clearly self-referential rather than being settled by external realities such as traditional law or nature [1] (pp. 81–82). Drawing on that work, Heelas et al. [2] explained the rise in holistic practices in western societies. Their study states that “western societies’ increasing focus on the importance of individual subjective experience and on the quality of that experience means that spiritualities focused on ‘the truth within’ are more likely to thrive than those premised on moral codes emanating from a higher being” [3] (p. 559). Heelas develops the idea with the concept of ‘subjective well-being culture’, expressing the encouragement of western people to discover their ‘true selves’ and their unique qualities: “The assumptions and values of subjective well-being culture—the importance of subjective life; the positive, ‘can-do’ way it is envisaged; the theme of exercising autonomy to develop, express and celebrate who you really are—are writ large in the holistic milieu” [4] (p. 64). In this context, “subjectivation is considered as a reflexively experienced state of recognition, giving meaning and ‘totality’ to the subject, the subjective space occupied by the subject need not be prepared by the subject himself” [5] (p. 168).

The spiritual realm where holistic practices are experienced is also a pregnant one in regard to how the subjective turn has made a tremendous impact. This impact might be investigated particularly

in comparison between “subjective-life” spirituality and “life-as” religion, namely self-directed spirituality and externally validated religion. Religion is used in Heelas et al. to express commitment to a higher truth that is ‘out there’... and exclusively related to specific externals. Whereas, spirituality is used to express commitment to a deep truth that is to be found within what belongs to this world [2] (pp. 5–6). However, in their context, “subjective-life” spirituality and “life-as” religion are not always identical as the culture uses the terms spirituality and religion. There might be, for example, a religious spirituality, that is subjective in the sense that it involves intense experiences. But, that is, at the same time, objective in the sense that it is focused on something which is external to and higher than the self [2] (p. 5). Heelas et al. in *The Spiritual Revolution* describe the subjective turn as “a turn away from life lived in terms of external or ‘objective’ roles, duties and obligations, and a turn towards life lived by reference to one’s own subjective experiences” [2] (p. 2).

In their study, to understand why spirituality takes part instead of religion in culture, Heelas et al. framed a theory based on an empirical research conducted in Kendal (a town with 28,000 inhabitants in the Lake District of England). In Kendal, two kinds of sources for data gathering were exploited, on the one hand the Christian congregational domain of Anglicans, Evangelicals, and Methodists etc. as of representing the religious (The list of the “congregational domain” included in the research of Heelas et al. [2] is available online: <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fss/projects/ieppp/kendal/>), and on the other hand the self-oriented holistic milieu that includes yoga, Buddhism, Alexander technique groups, homeopathy, reiki, massage, etc. as of representing the spiritual [2] (p. 13) (How religion and spirituality are defined, bordered, and treated in Heelas et al. [2] has been criticized on the grounds that, for example, why are Yoga and Buddhism included in the authors’ holistic milieu while they are living religious traditions [6]). In their conceptualisation, religion is something that tells you what to believe and how to behave, so it is then related to obligations [2] (p. 3). According to the findings, 7.9% of the Kendal inhabitants were found to be involved in the congregational activities, while 1.6% participated in holistic activities, in an average week. The numbers suggest that the percentage of people in congregational activities still has superiority over those who are in the holistic realm. However, the congregational domain is declining, whereas the holistic one is growing [2] (p. 40). These authors then extended their findings for the UK and USA with consistent results, but also admitting that the available evidence only indicates a possibility [7]. Even though it is not argued that there has been a complete subjective turn towards spirituality, it might be the start of a revolution [2] (p. 149).

Though the research of Heelas et al. is conducted on/for the Western world for which the main religious identity is Christian, their theory may not be compatible with other parts of the world where different kinds of religious beliefs and ‘none’ are dominant [6]. As other religious traditions outside of Christianity may reflect different values or the same values in a different way, it is quite possible to observe a situation where there will be varied reactions between spirituality and that tradition. However, the question of the present paper is not to examine the relationship between Christianity and spirituality, but to show what kind of uncertainty, in terms of morality, people may be in when their values changed in accord with a changing life orientation. Within that context, this study is basically conducted on the literature and the discussion is not limited to a specific country bound.

Section 2 explains the context regarding “subjective-life” spirituality and “life-as” religion by referring to *The Spiritual Revolution* [2] to understand what subjective turn is. In Section 3, the comparison of “life-as” and “subjective-life” is highlighted to show how their diverse values are presented in the literature. In the conceptualisation of Heelas et al., these are different in the sense that “life-as” is lived according to external or ‘objective’ roles, duties, and obligations (living as a dutiful wife, father, husband, strong leader etc.) while “subjective-life” is lived by reference to one’s subjective values and experiences (relational as much as individualistic: living in deep connection with the unique experiences of self-in-relation) [2] (pp. 2–3). After that, in Section 4, while the effect of that change might be observable in a different field of culture such as business or education, there is a discussion regarding the crucial points of morality in relation to the turn from “life-as”

to “subjective-life”. Finally, Section 5 discusses how this change creates a challenge for education (especially for religious education). This challenge may stem from the distinction about religious education between the old-style authoritative teaching of the facts and the focus on the abilities of child in educational provisions.

## 2. Subjective Turn of Modern Culture

Spirituality may be defined, as is accepted in this paper, as a personal or individual sense with no reference to God or higher authority rather than to organized religion or church doctrine [2] (p. 74). Many surveys have indicated that increasing numbers of people prefer to call themselves spiritual instead of religious [8]. The situation is labelled as “the massive subjective turn of modern culture” by Taylor [1] (p. 26). Heelas et al. explained it by saying that the subjective turn is a turn away from “life-as” to “subjective-life” [2] (p. 3).

The language of “life-as” and “subjective-life” is used in this paper to distinguish “life-as” religion and “subjective-life” spirituality. The former is bounded up with the modes of “life-as” which still exist in the ‘congregational domain’. Conversely, the latter sacralises “subjective-life” within what is referred to as the ‘holistic milieu’ [2] (pp. 5–8). The holistic milieu is basically to do with holistic spirituality in a way that the ‘true’ way of life is sought by seeking out, experiencing and expressing a source of significance with and through the particularities of subjective-lives. It must be stressed that the holistic milieu is highly participant-centred. Contrarily, congregational domain is commonly to do with theistic authority structures. It emphasizes “life-as” and normativization of subjectivities [2] (pp. 31–32).

As holistic milieu is highly ‘participant-centred’; when participants discover that a particular activity is not working, then it is typical for them to look elsewhere. The role of the holistic milieu is to enable participants to ‘become themselves’ by trusting their own life experience rather than to impose pre-packaged “life-as” values against participants. Instead of being guided to the certain goal, in the holistic milieu people are just shown the way. The spiritual practices of the milieu provide the opportunity for participants to move beyond traditional boundaries or habits [2].

It can be argued that being religious traditionally means of acceptance of higher authority [8] which determines what is the best for people better than they know themselves. People in a congregation can be seen as those who need to be guided by higher authority to find fulfillment. God’s purpose is made known by external authorities, tradition, and community [2] (pp. 13–17). In other words, the question of ‘what is good?’ has been already answered without any individual participation. The expectation of the good Christian/person is that he/she must obey the rule of God. This may also refer to strong ethical and metaphysical dualism [2] (p. 17) which may be characterized by the difference between creator and created, supernatural and natural, and the overreaching moral order of things versus the everyday order of things.

Many people who are neither religious nor theistic continue to speak of the sacredness-of life, seek out sacred places, and call for reverence and respect [9]. This form of spirituality has become a consistent feature of modern Western culture [10–12]. If “subjective-life” spirituality continues to flourish, it is expected we will see a corresponding decline in the “life-as” mode of belief [2] (p. 6). Even if “subjective-life” spirituality does not eliminate “life-as” religion, the congregational domain is decreasing and the holistic milieu is growing. A spiritual revolution is taking place in key sectors of culture such as business and education [2] (p. 75).

Since the subjective turn has impacted upon Western culture, its values are replacing the “life-as” values. Prioritising the transcendental obligations regarding sin, guilt, and moral rules or duty appears to be becoming redundant. In contrast, increasing numbers of people are engaging in personal journeys for the purpose of discovering the sacred within themselves [7]. This shift can be observed not only in the spiritual realm, but also, for example, within the traditional values and bonds of family life. Similarly, changes in educational thinking about ‘bringing out’ the abilities of child are another impact of the subjective turn. Holistic milieu practitioners are highly ‘participant-centred’, with such a widely

used experience such as ‘child-centred education’ [2] (pp. 28, 80). “Subjective-life” culture has a strong relation with ‘individualization’ [13]. Significant numbers of the youth and young adults have rejected “life-as” values and their supporting institutions have waned. Churches, for example, as a center of “life-as” teachings, have suffered because many people are simply no longer willing to submit to their presentation of religious roles, duties, and expectations [2] (p. 112) and [14]. Even in secular institutions, those operating in “life-as” mode increasingly find themselves out of step with the times, whereas those that care for their unique subjective-lives are evolving [2] (pp. 2–6).

Briefly, “life-as” forms of the sacred, the focus of which is on a transcendent source of authority, are most likely to be in decline, whilst “subjective-life” forms of sacred which underline an inner source of authority are most likely to be growing [2]. This is the subjectivation in which self-articulated and discovered identity is praised over externally settled realities.

### 3. Differences between “Life-As” and “Subjective-Life”

The previous sections have presented how “subjective-life” is promoted in subjectivation. The purpose of the current section is to compare the different approaches that “life-as” and “subjective-life” have, due to their diversified values. Because the struggle in morality between “subjective-life” spirituality and “life-as” religion can be observed according to their comprehension of values. For spirituality, it is not a necessity to have a religious background in order to be ethical, because a certain spiritual sense may be ascribed to moral qualities of character and virtues [15]. In an experimental study, people who identified themselves as spiritual had respectively more considerable levels of moral emotions than less-spiritual individuals [16]. Furthermore, spirituality has regarded as forming the identity of a person and as a highest moral centre [17]. Indeed, that kind of understanding is coherent with the idea that spirituality is often considered as a natural form of human awareness [18] or a universal characteristic of human beings [19]. Besides, morality may also be examined in terms of a multi-construct perspective concerning spiritual involvement, beliefs, and emotions [20]. Therefore, it cannot be argued that spirituality has no moral insight [21], since the moral claim is not dependent on religious faith, but it is a demand of our humanity or rationality [9]. Inasmuch as spirituality has a different ethical base to religion, its moral also will be different.

The key value for the mode of “life-as” is conformity to external authority, while, for the mode of “subjective-life”, it is an authentic connection with the inner depths of one’s unique life-in-relation. Each mode has its own attractions for adherents [2]. In “subjective-life”, on the contrary, each individual must find his/her unique source of significance, meaning, and authority. Rather than the prepared belief system, here ‘the good life’ consists in living one’s life. The goal is not simply to become free from the higher authority, but to have the courage to find one’s own authority by searching for one’s own inner-directed life [2] (pp. 3–4). However, in the congregational domain, theistic authority structures direct how life is to be lived in accordance with higher values, and “life-as” values are sought by heeding and conforming to a source of authority [2] (pp. 30–31). Traditional religion continues to appeal to those who resist the subjective turn. It speaks their language, meets their expectations, and reinforces their values by way of externally laid-down roles and duties [2] (pp. 111–113). The point is whether traditional religious believers will continue to accept the values presented by their religions, and then manage their behaviour according to them.

As an important aspect of the moral judgement presented in the language of ‘should’ and ‘ought’ of the congregational domain; moral guidance is clearly offered in “life-as” morality, in order to help the people to move from evil to good/God, from chaos to orderly living, or from fearfulness to security. This requires a deferential relationship to higher authority as many congregational members describe the good life with terms such as faithfulness, following, fitting in, being respectful, and remaining obedient to God, scripture, and Church [2] (pp. 32, 113). Thus, it can be seen how the higher authority of a common good is characteristically committed to by the congregation. With the general acceptance of that the authorities of church are there to instruct people how to live their lives, these standards, norms, ideals, and expectations are there to be conformed to. Moreover, judging people with congregational

standards may cause them to leave that congregation by contributing to their feeling 'ill-being' rather than well-being, especially for those who are situated within the individualistic thrust of the new 'standards', the more flexible moral orientations, and the rise of a self-conscious youth culture [22]. Such moralism in the congregational domain is deeply assured institutionally in the way that individuals are told what to do by higher authority in the preaching office of the minister of religion, rather than being encouraged to look to their own research to decide for themselves [2] (pp. 15–17). This is, of course, not a simple and solid attitude over all religion/religious groups regarding the various religious understandings and individuals. This is indicated in Heelas et al. [2] for different kinds of Christian congregations like congregations of difference, of experiential difference, of humanity, and of experiential humanity (pp. 61–67). Nonetheless, by way of preaching, teaching, and rituals, the roles are more effectively and completely offered on becoming, for example, a better mother, a more Godly father, a Christian more closely conformed to Christ [2] (p. 111).

Conversely, in the holistic milieu, "subjective-life" and sacralisation of unique subjectivities are the cornerstones on which self-understanding, change, and the true life are built to form a sacred space for searching out and experiencing. With the freedom offered by the inner sacred, people are encouraged to find their path rather than being given rules about which path is better. That is different from following but requires testing what works better for the individuals' life (Just as indicated above for congregations, there is no reason to think the spirituality in a single piece.). The point I would like to emphasize is, therefore, that this space is built for personal exploration. Thus, the practice of experience, the cultivation of uniqueness, and the freedom to explore and express oneself make what is subjective in subjective-life. Namely, this is the holistic relationship with the spirit-of-life [2] (pp. 30–31, 83). Studies from the UK, suggest that the youth and young adults of today are more likely to find meaning and values in their experiences than in "life-as" orientated institutions. That is, the youth and young adults find spiritual insight in forms of popular culture which are personally meaningful and which they use in different ways [23] (pp. 88–100). In this context, clubbers' personal experience, for example, might be in deep connection with the self or a way of expressing an essential, if non-verbal, articulation of who they are. That may be seen as a meditative or mystical quality of an experience which is rarely interpreted as having 'religious' significance [23] (pp. 88–89).

"Subjective-life" and "life-as" orientations have their own satisfactions and suppose others to be 'dangerous' sites, due to the deep incompatibility between them [2] (p. 3). In such a comparison, various sides of cultural life have been affected by that turn. On the unstable place of the turn, the struggle is observed as, for instance, the expressive school of emotions has been overwhelming the disciplined family of traditional values, individual worker centred business systems are about to defeat the hierarchical structure of the old-style business, or the focus on the abilities of the child in educational provisions is accepted as more important than authoritative teaching of the facts [2] (pp. 79–80). "Subjectivities threaten the life-as mode emotions, while life-as demands attack the integrity of subjective life" [2] (p. 3). The incompatibility between these two orientations is understandable, since their values are at opposite sides against other. The struggle might be seen not only between these two mentalities, but also for one passing from one group to another. While there are many aspects of the effects of that change to examine, the next section discusses further the implications of the turn for moral thinking.

#### 4. The Morality in Subjective Life

Values take a cardinal position in determining people's daily life practices whether such practices are based on traditional morals or not. Simply put, the value of something (x) on an agent is the power of x to reinforce the agent's preference for it [24]. So values are determined as guides for decision-making and to lead in conflict about 'good' and 'bad' action [25]. One of the prime challenges of morality, however, is to identify what is the 'good' by which people can ameliorate their behaviour. The next problem should be how the understanding of goodness can be obtained. Because "life-as"



forms of the sacred are most likely to be in decline whilst “subjective-life” forms of the sacred are most likely to be growing [2], the next point is the impact of such change on morality.

As people in ‘subjectivation’ turn inside themselves for answers and taking more control over all aspects of their life, rather than letting other sources tell them what to do or believe, naturally their moral decisions change in accordance. This is not because of the direction of the change, but because of the change itself. To characterise the change of the social presence of religion in Britain, Davie has coined a famous phrase; ‘believing without belonging’ [26], which is, however, followed by a shift from an ‘ethic of obligation’ towards ‘an ethic of consumption’ [27]. Through this change, different types of morality have been noted, in terms of how personal differences must be considered in favour of effective communication with ‘subjects’ by church services [28].

In the words of Allport [29] (pp. vii–viii), what matters is “the right of every individual to work out his own philosophy of life to find his personal niche in creation.” As Giddens indicates, the cognitive self is a crucial source of moral information [30] (p. 33) and in this analysis, reflexivity means that the self is structured through an internally referential system. The self is a ‘reflexive project’ for which the individual is continuously responsible. The moral thread of self-actualization is one of authenticity based on ‘being true to oneself’: “his first loyalty is to himself” [30] (pp. 74–80). Such explanations imply that authoritative moral resources have eroded due to the loss of the importance of tradition. As the reflexive project of the self becomes more widespread, there occurs a corresponding tension of moral questions at the centre of personal and social life [31]. Taylor argues that the sources of moral strength can no longer be seen outside of the self [11]. In the same direction, but in a different discipline, this is similar to ceasing to evaluate ‘immigrant minorities’ in regard to the normative standards of the ‘central culture’ [32]. It may not be appropriate to judge whether the immigrants feel the right emotions as a key social competence in achieving belongingness, fitness, and well-being [32]. This is to highlight the uniqueness of the person in spirituality because of his/her personal disposition through the unique experiences of self-in-relation including consciousness, mind, memories, emotions, passions, sensations, bodily experiences, dreams, feelings, inner conscience, and sentiments [2] (p. 3). Therefore, if the unique person in spirituality does not fit with “life-as” understandings, the wrong element may be the judgement itself.

The question of identity has the priority in morality; the moral appropriateness of actions and accountability is in relation to the sense of self [33]. The prominence of identity as a central concern is significant for ethics and spirituality, both of which assume that action is determined by the specific identity of the person [34]. In Fisher et al. [35], for example, it is argued that agents relate themselves to meanings, purpose, and values within the personal domain of spirituality. This intra-relatedness refers to the relationship between one and one’s own self, the integration between one’s body, mind, and spirit, which gives meaning and personal identity to one’s life. This is different from the inter-relatedness which is about the relationship between one’s self and the outside world [36]. This is not to deny social identity: ‘the ethic of subjectivity’ has a role which is evident in the value attached to self-expression and fulfillment; to doing ‘what feels right’, ‘following your heart’, and cultivating ‘emotional intelligence’. In such contexts value is attributed to ‘feeling’ [2] (p. 80). In spirituality, one of the recurrent themes is a quest for personal integration [37] (p. 125 in [34]), in which the highest value in the individual’s spiritual belief system creates an ethical orientation though not necessarily to God [34].

By focusing on values and thinking in the concepts of Heelas et al. [2], for those who live in “life-as” mode, to judge one’s actions as moral or not might be easier than for those who live in “subjective-life” (The question of ‘which one is right, better, or more valuable?’ is out of the concern.). For the “life-as” mode, the externally presented general forms of duties and responsibilities may function as ‘answer keys’ when the agent is about to decide what should be done. However, for “subjective-life” practitioners, since there is no externally defined and generally accessible set of ‘rights and wrongs’ but only subjectively experienced ‘realities’, each agent’s decision might be understood only in his or her own reality. It seems that “subjective-life” practitioners are closer to moral relativism, if it is defined as ‘the truth or falsity of moral beliefs are products of our traditions and cultural histories,

rather than objective statements based on logic, or facts about the state of the world independent of our own opinions or perspectives' [38]. That kind of mentality will be valid not only for different kinds of spiritualities but also for each practitioner. That is why the turn may be called an unstable place for morality and why morality has a stable ground in "life-as" modes.

It should be also recognized that there exists a strong relation between the increasing popularity of "subjective-life" values and non-theistic beliefs [2]. Most forms of spirituality have embedded moral perception, motivation, and identity into their system. Some are religious; some are primarily moral but presume an non-dogmatic religious background [34]. Iris Murdoch has explored the importance of moral consideration of non-theistic spirituality. When morality is found without religion in a difficult situation, why should there not be many different kinds of independent moral values [39] (pp. 55–72)?

Certain forms of spirituality can enable ethical considerations achieved intellectually to be lived morally. In addition, practical considerations may open up ethical debates, whereas some forms of spirituality might be against ethical, religious, or theological considerations because of their normative reflections. Personal dispositions and pragmatic results may assure the acceptability of their own spirituality [34]. As "subjective-life" focuses on the value of uniqueness, in accordance with the authority of personal experience, the ethic of unique subjectivity pervades the whole culture. The values of "subjective-life" spirituality work for those who draw on the sacred to seek sources of significance within their "subjective-life" [2].

While much contemporary spirituality moves away from explicit moral norms and principles, Murdoch [39] believes that, with the decline of traditional understandings of religion, new forms of spiritual practice must discover ways to connect the self to morality. Certain spiritual practices rely on a set of dispositions that are expected to characterize the practitioner, but it is not clear that any set of dispositions can do all the work of ethics. Although dispositions create scenarios of action, it is not clear that they can provide the explicit normative criteria to justify the action [34]. It cannot be said that contemporary spirituality has no ethical values because it lacks a religious leaning but though certain types of spirituality have assumed forms of moral decision making, some of them do not. Even though the subjective turn is taking place in modern culture, it is not about to be completed [2]. In addition, there is no reason to take spirituality as a single tradition. As a result, it might be concluded that a generalization concerning the moral trajectory of contemporary spirituality may not be possible on account of the fact that the subjective turn is not completed and the turn might be read through different spiritualities within unique individuals.

## 5. Questions and Challenges for Education in the Subjective Turn

Even if the subjective turn is not completed in society as a whole or globally (and it is still a question whether it will be completed), it is the case that a 'spiritual revolution' is taking part in the key sectors of the culture [2] (p. 75). At least, as reported in the Kendal project, a small portion of the inhabitants in that town is practicing holistic activities and the membership and participation in the holistic milieu seems set to expand in Kendal as well as in the world [2]. This paper highlights above that this turn will have an effect on morality because of changing values from "life-as" to "subjective-life". Next, I will present my reflections (rather than answers) on how that change may be represented in education, especially in religious education.

Firstly, religious education has a formal, respectably rich, history, while interest in spirituality in education is a new phenomenon [18]). Although, there are experimental and theoretic studies on understanding spirituality as an intrinsic part of the curriculum [40,41]; it is more common to find spirituality in relation to religious education [19,42,43]. Indeed, it is argued that education as an institutionalized system of schooling is unfortunately not concerned with spirituality to the extent that it may be able to serve spiritual aims [44]. Therefore, as it is for the spiritual revolution, I prefer not to say that the shift to spirituality in education is taking place in the broad sense, but that it starts. Furthermore, the concept of spirituality does not fit with the current constructs of education and religious education, especially when religious education is assured by theology, religious studies,

and the place of religion in society [44]. Grimmitt's classification as 'teaching in', 'about' and 'from religion' [45] might be helpful to exemplify this kind of unsuitability. Faith schools, for instance, that utilize religious narrative forms as a source of authoritative wisdom, may be challenged in religious education by the existence of these characteristics of children's spirituality [42]. If the religious education curriculum in a Catholic school still gives the impression that all of the students are, or should be, regular churchgoers (As an example, see the situation in Scotland with Coll [46] and Franchi [47]), it is not relevant to argue that school offers a form of spirituality in education that is relevant to the lives of pupils [43]. Even in faith schools, understanding contemporary spirituality (while it may be secular) is worthwhile in the sense that it is relevant for the pupils' needs and it informs both content and pedagogy [42,43]. Just as it is not relevant to teach religion as 'teaching in' for a plural society [48], it is not relevant to ignore contemporary spirituality as if it were not. It must be regarded that students are not (may not be) in a single faith or spirituality. Therefore, there is a need to understand and acknowledge the changed spiritual situation and to move to the more suitable form in Grimmitt's distinction.

Even though Erricker [44] supposes a radical change for the subject, including losing the exclusivity of the term 'religious' in its title; ter Avest and McDougall's extension on Grimmitt's distinction by introducing the concept of 'teaching for religiosity' [49] seems more reasonable. Their conception of religiosity should be considered closely related to spirituality [50] in [49]. Because, it is particularly articulated in relation to the child's 'ontological calling' [51]. Even though studies dealing with spirituality, not related to religious education, in educational context are respectively rare [42]; there is no reason to think that religious education is the only way for spirituality or improving morals with spirituality [52]. Spiritual development might be manifest in/through beliefs, a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, experiencing feelings of transcendence, search for meaning and purpose, self-knowledge, relationships, creativity, and feelings and emotions [53]. Spirituality, for example, is evaluated in the context of Belgium, Finland, and Malta as a means of transforming religious education for the 21st century, whereas the educational policy in the UK and Ireland considers spirituality as a whole school issue [54] (p. 296).

In practice, there are touchstones on how spirituality will be treated in religious education. It should be recognized that no form of education can be considered value-free [55] (p. 173) and that youth and young adults' spirituality tends to be individualistic, eclectic, subjective, secular, and personally constructed [43]. Then, spiritual development is the child's right, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But, rather than only seeing children's spirituality from its broadest perspective, there are many other ways to embed spirituality in education, such as school ethos, the role of the teacher, attitude towards values nurture and facility for assessment [40]. It is reported, for example, because of the lack of definite academic outcomes within a target driven curriculum, that teachers are often unwilling to implement the moral and spiritual area within their teaching [56]. Moreover, 'Western' conceptualisation of spirituality and education may not be appropriate for 'Eastern' (or other) thoughts [36]. Due to marketization and commodification (popularly labelled as McDonaldizing), for example, spiritual practices in education may be divorced from their spiritual and ethical origins [57]. Similarly, since outcome-based approaches to the curriculum may deskill teachers in their ability to discern a student's worldview and the various frameworks of meaning, it is crucial for teachers to discern pupils' worldviews in order to focus on teaching for the meaning-making of students rather than the attainment of results [42].

There is a need to recognize where to start for spirituality in education, namely giving freedom to students to reflect their ontological predisposition [42], on the grounds that religious education can lead spiritual development by serving as a way to transmit values rather than merely clarify them [58]. It does not mean that a teacher will accept all statements students make about spirituality without question, but a teacher needs to be in a situation to challenge students [40], by which children will be encouraged to think for themselves and to take personal responsibility for their thoughts and actions [59]. That is the prominent part of contemporary religious education that helps students how to



identify, interpret and evaluate contemporary spiritual and moral issues by focusing on resourcing and enhancing the basic human spirituality [41,43]. However, this approach does not fit the schools that operate with traditional religious education which may not be sensitive to the subjective turn [18,43,52]; because traditional religious education in 'teaching in' style may be seen as a teaching form of 'life-as' modes.

## 6. Conclusions

That subjectivation is a feature of our time presents a remarkable challenge in the realm of values. Heelas et al., define that experience as a fundamental clash of values [2] (p. 128). Under the shadow of the pendulum between those associated with the cultivation of unique subjectivities and those associated with having to live a targeted-life, the clash may be either acute or more managed. Morality might be seen as a comfortable and vivid place for that clash. Since their orientations are different, 'subjective-lives' have a different disposition in the moral realm than the mode of "life-as". In the former, the legitimization of the act works through subjectively experienced realities. In the latter, it is done by external authorities on behalf of and for the agent. In such a comparison, the reasoning for/against the act in "life-as" mode will be much easier, because externally validated rules, roles, or duties, are generally accessible. However, it is almost impossible to approach a generalisation of whether an act is moral or not in "subjective-life" spirituality as well as whether spirituality has morality or not. This is because of the fact that not only does each agent have a unique subjectively experienced reality in his/her "subjective-life", but also that forms of spirituality are not a branch of a single tree. Nevertheless, it is expected that morality should be underpinned for its practitioner by spirituality [39]; even if this does not have a religious background. In the same way, there will be a tension in the educational realm, especially between those schools located on different edges, just as there is between "life-as" and "subjective-life". As long as students are considered in a traditional 'teaching in' style of religious education, the challenge may not be overcome. Contrarily, 'teaching about religion' and 'teaching from religion' [45] might be more plausible to reduce the tension, as well as 'teaching for religiosity' [49]. Because, 'teaching about religion' is better placed to cater pluralism and to prevent intolerance. In addition, for 'teaching from religion', the question is to what extent, and in what ways, children and young people can gain educational benefit from the study of religion, that makes the discipline an educational study [48]. The time has come to accept the students' disposition to evaluate their subjectivities by which educational practices will not suffer from over-simple generalizations.

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