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Some of Peter's favourite spiritual homes include book shops, coffee shops, Moreton Island and Mount Barney. His favourite spiritual text is Michael Leunig. At other times he works with Community Praxis Co-op whilst also completing a PhD on refugee social healing. He has spent the past 15 years in community development practice in Australia, South Africa, PNG and the Philippines.

Title: We can flirt with spirituality, but can we commit?
In this paper Peter will consider some contemporary meanings of spirituality, some of the dangers of spirituality, and then how spirituality can contribute to an 'enchanted' framework of community development.

Flirting with Spirituality – Re-enchanting Community: Introduction

The writing of this paper has been a significant vehicle for reflecting on the spiritual life in my community development vocation specifically and life generally. I have spent the past few months musing on the key question: ***In what way can spirituality be a resource for us in this vocation generally and as a resource particularly to create an enchanted framework of community development?*** I am not sure that I have been able to answer it, but I will say this as part of my introduction: in the tradition of Ghandi, whatever I say 'I reserve the right to change my mind at any time'.

However, I write to you, my friends, as someone who wanted to take the opportunity to write this paper (despite not being overly keen when invited) because I am often fearful of my own shallowness; well-informed at times, but often lacking deep understanding; busy, active, but often without deep relating. I consider that I often live a life of distraction, numb and in a state of unconsciousness. So, I write with a <u>sense of</u> often being spiritually bankrupt (albeit that this might be the general human condition).

I have been a slow learner in life – I've tried to use this writing over the past few months to see if I can learn anything about spirituality, enchantment, community and to return some depth to my living, thinking and practice. In some ways the conference has been an opportunity to, in a disciplined way; put together a couple of different parts of my life - a life concerned with the spiritual, and life concerned with community.

Just a quick interlude - when did this flirtation with spirituality start for me?

Autobiographical interlude

I was awakened to the spiritual dimension of life when, due to an unfortunate and tragic accident in my family we 'lost our community'. When I was 16 my brother drowned in our back yard pool and one of the significant memories for me is that the few friends we had (as new migrants who had arrived here from the UK 2 years earlier) and family could not cope with the pain and gradually withdrew from our lives. The only person who visited our home was a woman from the local Catholic Church who read about our story in the local paper. Her support of our family led us to consider Church as a place of support and spirituality as a dimension of life worth considering.

This started a journey for me (and my family) that continues to this day. In the past 15 years, as a result of that fateful day, I

- studied 3 years at theological college trying to develop a faith based, ethically considered way of living;
- went to the Philippines in 1989 to explore 'faith and working with the poor' which awakened me to the links between faith, justice, politics and community – mainly through the experiments with Base Christian Communities in rural Philippines;
- joined up with an intentional community network movement in West End in an attempt to live a life of faith, community, and solidarity with the disadvantaged;
- moved to the New South Africa in 1994 to be a part of the post apartheid reconstruction effort.

Now I no longer consider myself a practising Christian, but still draw on the resource of that religious tradition in my life – they are part of my practice discipline.

That story reflects that for me, community and spirituality were always deeply connected. Both were about cultivating a sense of meaning, often through relationship (with God and other people), that made life simply worth living. However, my attempts to consciously integrate community development practice (not just community) and spirituality started when I wrote a paper titled 'a soulful approach to community development' in 1996 – arguing that we need to engage in our practice soul-fully – a practice of imagination that brings attention to depth.

This paper attempts to take this journey another step. My first crisis was one that saw me let go of Christianity, whilst holding onto much of what I leant from aspects of the Christian tradition. During the past few years I have hit a second crisis of 'faith'. This crisis started building up when I returned to Australia from South Africa – it was a crisis of 'belief' not so much in 'a spiritual faith', but in all faith's, including my 'faith' in community, development and social change. Why? Several quick stories: Firstly, the community I had left to go to South Africa, and now returned to, West End, had changed significantly. In some ways it changed in ways that were wonderful – Avid Reader book shop had opened, the quality of the coffee served was magnificent compared to the old days, BUT, in so many ways it had changed for the worse – so many of the poor were gone (moved on), diversity was diminished, a kind of economic development that excluded the poor and local visions of development was rampant – and still is. My crisis was sparked by the realisation that just about all the local struggles I had participated in were lost – literally every local struggle against the 'tide of so called development' was won by developers.

Secondly, the Tampa crisis sparked a flurry of activism that again, those of us who were refugee advocates lost – 34 people still sit in Nauru detention centre (as of September 9th), their lives wasted, and many of my friends from Afghanistan, Iraq etc., have lived terrible lives of despair here in Australia separated from family not knowing their future. Sure there has been some sense of victory during recent months with some relaxing of the hard line policies of both sides of government – but it is a bitter victory considering the realities of the cost to people's lives; and

Thirdly, the day John Howard called us 'the Mob' as we marched in protest against the Iraq War – yes a celebration that for the first time in history masses of people marched before a war started – unprecedented on a global scale – but meaningless really when we watch the way state and other non state actors dismissed us!

So I entered a crisis, of the overwhelming power of some of the following contemporary trends of our society – trends that I quickly would like to outline so we can locate our consideration of spirituality in the context of our challenge, trends that make sense of the causes of my second crisis of 'faith':

Firstly the trend of what Leunig calls 'gunk': of materialism, nihilism and literally 'bull-shit' made concrete with the juggernaut of 'development' – this power that overwhelms local community's sense of what they are, their vision of life.

Secondly of the rise of what Bauman (2004) calls the 'security or garrison state'. Many social commentators argue that the state has been in a legitimization crisis for some time. Over the past decades the legitimacy of the state has been provided by its social contract with citizens. You and I have been willing to allow the state to regulate our lives within a contract that ensures in return we will receive universal social benefits (health, education, a pension etc.). However, that social contract is now under question, or at least under contest. The state therefore needs another justification for its existence in regulating our lives. For many social commentators security is the basis of a new contract. The state cultivates what Furedi (2004) calls a culture of fear infused with increased stranger danger, a sense of increased risk (at a time of great safety, prosperity and health), and then offers security in return for regulation;

Thirdly of the ascendancy of the panacea of a therapeutic culture mediated by pharmaceutical and psychological industries that determine to reduce social problems to psychological problems – a trend that undermines people's sense of their strength and social solidarity to tackle social problems via social solutions.

……and so I've stumbled along in writing this paper because in many ways I am still in this crisis. I feel overwhelmed by the gunk, the security state and a therapeutic culture. What is our way forward in building a community world in the light of such tends, when there is a sense of fragmentation, a sense of winding back so many of the advances struggled for through the second half of the 20th century?

So basically, without wanting to sound melodramatic I would argue, as have many others, that we are in the fight of our lives – you, me, our generation, to reverse the trends that see the demise of democracy and the ascendancy of double think (Orwell) and duck speak (Watson). We will have watched over the destruction of our unions, our IR systems, progressive tax regimes, the social welfare state ……

This paper is an attempt to consider the way in which spirituality might provide some wisdoms or signposts in 'engaging' with this personal and potential cultural crisis: is spirituality a relevant resource, or is the fact that we are asking this question in itself a retreat into what Francis Wheen (2004) calls 'Mumbo Jumbo' that is indicative that we have lost our social hope? We have lost social solidarity and social hope so we retreat into discussions of spirituality.

So I stop and pause – I ponder Leunig and the wisdom of others in attempting to write this paper and ask myself the following 3 questions that attempt to answer the key question of whether spirituality can be a resource for us in this vocation and in creating an enchanted framework of community development:

Q1: How do we make sense of this idea of spirituality, or put another way, what are the various discourses of spirituality that are available to us in our flirtations?

Q2: What are the tensions and dangers within the various discourses of spirituality that we need to be alert to?

Q3. What does this all mean for us in our community development practice?

1.   How do we make sense of this idea of spirituality, or put another way, what are the various discourses of spirituality that are available to us in our flirtations?

In the past, and I would argue still in the present, people draw on different traditions or discourses of spirituality <u>as part</u> of their social and cultural matrix of intelligibility and meaning. Spirituality, however we might want to define it (and I am not going to do that) is part of the domain of people's lives – ***maybe a perspective*** (usually described as 'other' than a material, scientific or secular perspective – i.e. it is a sacred or spiritual perspective, or other than the peripheral issues – taking us to the spirit or essence of something), or a ***set of processes*** or a ***set of practices*** (usually dancing, eating, ritual, storying, ceremony, prayer, meditation) that enables people to make sense of their world, enabling them in some contexts (such as war and deep suffering) to survive, to live with pleasure, pain, gods, adversity etc. In many ways it is part of the domain of people's lives that is about morals (scary word because we increasingly link it to moralism), or judgements (scary because we associate it with judgementalism) or ethics.

Ultimately it is a way of imagining the world – hence I will often use the notion of a 'spiritual imagination' – as a way of contrasting with a secular or material imagination.

We would be mad to ignore these parts of people's realities – people's lives are infused with deeply spiritual imaginations articulated and acted through perspectives, practices and processes that undermine any secular, scientific or material hegemony. In fact to ignore it would be to do violence. Some of my research work on healing for Sudanese refugees within Australia links people's resiliency, or capacity to exercise agency, that is, to act with personal and collective power, to the integrity of their sense of meaning and intelligibility - refugees who make sense of their settlement and suffering through a clear matrix of meaning, which often includes a spiritual and religious tradition, are stronger, more able to exercise agency than those who have no meaning.

So if we ignore people's realities, particularly their spiritual or religious realities – as they define it, as they draw on it to make sense of their world, then we undermine their resilience, their resource for agency... we do violence to them.

So we must engage spirituality as people define it in their lived reality.

However, globalization has impacted profoundly on this meaning making process linked to the domain of spirituality - we have no idea of what tradition or complex weavings of traditions people are drawing on to make sense of their lives, and this increases the chances that almost every interaction is a complex intercultural one where there is an increased chance of communication and relationship breakdown, and this increases the challenge for some collective process of making meaning and intelligibility of the world.

However the key point I want to make now is that spirituality is a key part, a growing part of people's lives in their lived communities. We must be in-tune with this……In engaging with people's spirituality is not to accept it - some people draw on a tradition of spirituality that makes sense of the complexity of life through a cultural and social matrix which has an internal logic of violence towards others – Zionism is an obvious example – so I am certainly not advocating acceptance, simply engagement. And to the credit of the conference organizers we are engaged with some of the deeper currents of our own meaning making processes in this profession.

However it is time to move on from the complex question of definition – let's now consider the various contemporary **discourses** of spirituality that are strong in our communities (and there are many more – these are just a taste):

- There are myriad discourses that explore spirituality as a way of imagining the world as something other than just material. We see a growing disillusionment with materialism. Some of the Australia Institute's research (Hamilton 2005) on the increasing phenomenon of downshifting seems to be one of the greatest indicators of this trend. In Clive Hamilton's books Growth Fetish' and 'Affluenza' the quiet revolution of 'downshifting' (whereby 23% of adults between the ages of 30 and 60 have changed their lives in a way that has involved earning less money) is described as a key indicator of the spiritual revolution going on in our midst. And it seems to be gathering momentum – people are rejecting the values of the market.

- The New Age movement flourishes – people are looking for a narrative to create meaning. There is a space for experimentation - it might be individually oriented and lack collective tradition, but it is there, growing – it is at the centre of the market explosion in spirituality.

- A part of the environmental movement grounded in eco-spirituality is strong – emerging on a number of fronts, from within traditional religions and outside – a spirituality centred in nature. The environmental crisis is at the heart of a significant resurgence in discourses of spirituality. I remember years ago reading a book Millennium, written by Jacque Attali, former advisor to the then French President, Mitterand, arguing the case that the only hope for the planet was both re-tribalization, (that is, the re-building of communities), and the return of the sense of the sacred that would ensure some sense of limits in every dimension of life. The notion of sacred is central to many discourses of eco-spirituality and is a key dimension to building sustainable communities.

- There is also the phenomenon of the strong growth of spirituality in the form of religious fundamentalisms – the Christian Pentecostal movement grows rapidly, vastly outstripping traditional Churches. (eg. Hillsong – of which Peter Costello and Bob Carr are members. In parts of this movement we see a similar discourse to that within the religious moral majority in the USA – conservative and yet radical – politically active on some issues (abortion, Intelligent Design curriculum etc.), and politically silent and withdrawn on social issues.

- Spirituality also seems to be a resurgent concept in the light of processes of secularization within Western nations and communities. This resurgence seems to

reflect a growing dissatisfaction with a secular imagination. An over stated secularism lead to nihilism, materialism and other dissatisfactions. Authors such as Thomas Moore have argued that in many ways 'today the sacred is camouflaged in the secular' (Moore 2004, 36) in terms of ritualized sports etc., but as spirituality gains credence within our language there is less need to camouflage. Leuing's popularity would be an indication of a private, personal spiritual life within a significant population of Australians that is indicative of dissatisfaction with a totally secular imagination.

- For many spirituality is closely connected to the need to return to a world of mystery – indicative of a desire for something often mysterious, open-ended, but described in religious language. These are discourses that could be a reaction to a perceived failure of science to interpret, explain and re-create the world. Science cannot explain community so maybe community itself is a mystery – we feel it, experience it, but its movements are mysterious. A spiritual perspective possibly cultivates openness to this mystery. This would not be a kind of spirituality that is about escape – not Icarus flying away from earth, no, it would be a spirituality that is connected to the mystery of the transcendent, but is deeply earthy, connecting people to their emotions, their vocations, to one another.

Some final words about these discourses of spirituality: the current trend is to draw on spirituality in terms of religious sensibility to develop a deep philosophy of life. People are searching for a new life script at a time when materialism, consumerism, and ego-oriented careerism is failing to provide happiness. Me Inc. is bankrupt and people want a spiritual perspective. That is what it is for many in this day and age, people cut asunder from traditional religious – yet they still want to cultivate a spiritual life – one that enables them to develop a deep philosophy of life. Even Dr. Ian Lowe, a former Australian humanist of the year, in his recent book 'The Big Fix' (2005) argues that we need a new spiritual foundation to fill the vacuum left by the decline of traditional religions and that is being filled with fundamentalisms. He is not keen to define what he means but tentatively makes a case that some form of spiritual foundation is required for a deeply ethical life. I would argue that developing a deep philosophy or ethical life is critical for communal life – without a philosophy of life we are merely 'tossed to and fro as a person lost on the waves of the sea' – a person without wisdom or integrity.

Michael Leunig, more than any other popular Australian uses the idea of spirituality in this way – providing a spiritual language for people wanting to find another life script. Recently listening to Michael Leunig at the Brisbane Writer's Festival I was struck by how he made a case that one of the deep crises we face today within Australia is a loss of an ethical compass and a civic culture of honesty because we are experiencing what he calls a **moral trauma** – some break in our making sense of the world – a break that is essentially due to a loss of spiritual sensibility. When a national leader can use such Duck-speak as 'core promises' and 'non-core promises' and then go to Church on Sunday and pray, and the citizenry accept the idea without mass protest, you know we have a moral trauma indicative of national spiritual bankruptcy.

However, as community workers we should be excited – as a profession and a practice we are more than aware of the bankruptcy of an over-stated material and secular imagination. This new spiritual revolution that seems to be upon us provides the

possibility (and I only say possibility) of tapping into energies and an imagination that fuels the kinds of values that make community possible – a balancing of the current I-oriented to other-oriented, a re-engagement with values other than the market…… Australians such as Leunig and Clive Hamilton are at the centre of the re-emergence of a spirituality that will possibly enable a new politic.

2.   What are the tensions and dangers within the various discourses of spirituality that we need to be alert to?

Whilst getting excited about the possibilities that come with the resurgence of some spiritual discourses we also need to be alert to the dangers and tensions. In this section of my paper I have attempted to highlight a few tensions and dangers.

Firstly, a simple tension would be that of **_discourses of spirituality that liberate versus discourses that domesticate,_** or put another way: discourses that liberate - as an impetus for resistance, change, challenge and vitality versus discourses that utilize spirituality as a resource for only coping with contemporary realities. If spirituality only enables people to cope with injustice it is domesticating – if it infuses people with energies to change situations then it is liberating.

Now that tension expressed in a simple binary obscures many realities – a both/and……For example, in what way can we say that the spiritual traditions or songs of black African American slaves were either utilized for domestication or liberation – I suspect they were both……, but it can be one helpful way of illuminating the way discourses are operating in people's lives.

In contemporary Australia we could use the prism of Beck's notion of 'the risk society', in which individuals are increasingly struggling to navigate their lives through shifting narratives and meanings and how might we understand spirituality in what context? In one sense we see amazing arrays of new-age spiritualities that you could argue are part of a discourse of increased individualization – spiritualities that come as a consumer product that provide people with a resource to survive, and cope with the complexity of (liquid) modernity – and we might interpret that as a discourse that is domesticating. Or you could argue that many of these discourses of new-age spirituality are actually an impetus for change – they provide people with the resource to 'drop-out' of a society hell bent on more work, more money, and more material gain, and have provided people with the resources to resist through a quiet revolution. So this discourse of spirituality is not just about comfort and coping, but about internal revolutions which are sparking the kind of social revolution that Clive Hamilton has documented in his book 'Affluenza' linked to social processes such as downshifting. People are saying enough to a material world, and wanting to explore 'other' ways of imagining the world.

So we become wary….. and we need to be – many of us will only flirt with the idea of spirituality without committing, because it is a complex construction. However I'll push on with some thoughts that might help in us discerning a way forward.

What are some other tensions within the discourses of spirituality?

– Other oriented vs. self-oriented spiritual discourses:

Some discourses of spirituality are totally self-absorbed, whilst others invite people to engage with others, often to move out of comfort zones to spaces of hospitality. Again, the usefulness of binaries are limited in terms of obscuring…… there are discourses linked to traditions that weave both together with a strong sense of other-oriented but within the context of self-care. But what is clear is that the discourses that people subject themselves to in ways that regulate their lives will have a profound impact on the kind of praxis utilized in response to the social trends I highlighted at the beginning of this paper in terms of the security state, a culture of fear, therapeutic culture etc. Clearly the kind of spirituality required is one that cultivates both a strong personal self that does not submit to the kind of vulnerability cultivated by a therapeutic culture, and a strong social self that is committed to an ethic of hospitality and dare I say 'love' in the face of increasing fear (considered to the opposite of love within the Christian tradition) and a commitment to the politics of human rights rather than the politics of security.

- Individual vs. collective spirituality discourses:
This tension is similar to the one above except that some discourses of spirituality not only are self-absorbed, but argue that you cultivate spirituality through an intensely personal journey. In contrast other discourses focus on the interactive processes of community that are an integral part of spiritual life. Now again, this is not to say that times of personal retreat for personal healing are not an integral part of a healthy spiritual discourse, but if that direction is not also held in tension with a spirituality that is cultivated collectively through group and social processes then it could be problematic.

- Mystical vs. prophetic discourses:
Within most religious traditions there are both mystical and prophetic strands of thinking and acting – they live in tension. When we consider diverse discourses of spirituality we can often discern quite quickly which is emphasized: a tradition that takes people into a priestly world of individual meditation, confession, personal transcendence etc., versus spiritualities that are deeply engaged with the world committed to processes of social change, social praxis and social hope. Some cultivate an ethic of withdrawal and others an ethic of engagement. Some argue that we must obey authorities and others that we must challenge authorities because ultimately authority lies beyond the realm of current constructions of legitimized authority.

To round off this section I want to simply highlight some other dangers within some discourses of spirituality. It would be obvious by now that I am making a case that some discourses are clearly dangerous, and are antithetical to a healthy community life – imagine a discourse of spirituality that ensured people were self-oriented, individually focused, mystically occupied and legitimized domesticating politics (little p and big P politics). They might be happy, but they are not going to be part of a 'community' world, or a 'justly developed world'.

Some dimensions of the kinds of discourses of spirituality that are particularly dangerous would be:

- **Fundamentalism's** – earlier this year the Griffith Review published its quarterly titled 'The Lure of Fundamentalism'. The core thesis of the many essays in that journal is that people are wanting certain and simple answers to complex questions. Quests for simple

answers and perspectives are a curse to authentic community – they will eliminate 'other' and marginalise difference. Many Australians are retreating to a form of institutional faith or spirituality that provides a neat closed system. Pentecostal, fundamentalist evangelical churches are growing at an exponential rate. The danger from our point of view is that these 'Christian communities' are not communities as we imagine them – they are closed systems, only welcoming of strangers who 'convert', communities that are unable to embrace difference, that are built on a hierarchy of accountability and control that does not facilitate individual growth and empowerment.

We cannot escape the lure of American fundamentalism – we know that conservative evangelical Christians are now a political force in USA political life – and maybe here we are seeing this movement as well (although Hugh Mackay in the Griffith Review makes a case that this will not happen in Australia). This fundamentalism creates community of all forms – religious, social, and increasingly political – mobilized for particular agendas, and this kind of community grounded in a particular discourse of spirituality we need to be careful of.

- **Disembodiment**. Such discourses disregard the experiences of suffering human life here on earth – because the 'spiritual' life, the eternal perspective is more important.

- **Religiosity** – similar to fundamentalisms – tis a form of spirituality that is often a quest for escapism. People find their safety and simple answers in the ritual, the rites, and the authority structures of most religious institutions.

- Spirituality could be **commodified** by the ego, and/or the market, as simply another resource to help us along in our busy lives. People adopt exotic feeling religions and only embrace their warm fuzzy bits and ignore the deeply transforming disciplines. Spirituality then becomes another 'add on', to be utilized by our egos for it's own purpose, rather than a dynamic that revolutionizes our inner world, and consequently our outer world. And this is a huge risk in our considerations – busy community workers now take on another 'requirement' to add to their busy lives!

3. What does this all mean for us in our community development practice?

We have looked at the various contemporary discourses of spirituality; we have explored some of the dangers and tensions within discourses of spirituality; but what does this all mean for us other than being aware of what is going on around us? I want to make a few points:

Firstly – it means that we need to develop a clear capacity **to discern** what kind of discourse on spirituality would be helpful and useful as part of building a community world. If Ingrid can say that we need to find our way through the 'swampy terrain' of community, then I hope that some analysis of the discourses and dangers of contemporary forms of spirituality provide some way of making sense of the muddy waters of spirituality.

We could say that the kind of discourse of spirituality that we can not only flirt with, but commit to, through processes of discernment, (maybe not on the first date, but

after some time), would be one that embraces ideas and practices that are liberating (rather than domesticating), other oriented (whilst being firmly rooted in the individual self), collectively experienced (whilst maintaining the integrity of the individual), and are prophetic (whilst recognising the need for priestly moments).

Secondly – an understanding of the diverse definitions, discourses and dangers of forms of spirituality requires of us to develop a capacity for <u>deep dialogue</u>. We need to be able to move beyond the hegemony of secular or scientific imaginations and be able to engage with deep respect the worlds of people infused with a spiritual imagination. I have been reminded of this again and again in some of my work over the past 3 years. Working in the Philippines amongst the Ibaloy people, in PNG with the Kaori tribes of the Kokoda, working with the Council's of Chiefs on various islands of Vanuatu and also in my work with refugee groups here in Australia I have constantly had to engage with people's worlds for whom a spiritual imagination is not peripheral, but is central to their matrix of meaning and intelligibility. Their experiences of community, their ways of conceptualizing their 'life projects' as opposed to 'development' are infused with a spiritual gaze. We would not be able to work with such people unless we can enter into dialogue that not only attempts to understand their world, but also remains committed to validating their world views and their spiritual perspective within the context of a globalizing neo-liberalism that would assimilate all into its own world view. Dialogue is critical for us as community development practitioners.

Thirdly – we need to develop not only capacities for discernment and dialogue, but also we need to develop some sense of the spiritual imagination ourselves – as a community of vocational professionals. Whilst I would argue that on one level spirituality is a deeply personal journey, one that requires us, as Polly has put it, to dance our own dance, I am also wanting to make a case that we, as a groups of professionals, need to find a way of balancing our secular and scientific imaginations with a collective spiritual imagination - some kind of collective dance. I suspect that our decision to have this conference is part of a process of trying to discern, dialogue and decide whether we can have a collective dance. Who knows?

However, as my contribution to this process of discernment, dialogue and deciding, I want to make a case for an enchanted framework of community development, one that is infused with a spiritual imagination that can counter-balance our overly secular and scientific imaginations. My thesis is that a spiritual imagination that enables us to develop an enchanted framework of community development is mobilized when we develop particular capacities and disciplines.

So, what do I mean by **enchantment** and what are these capacities and disciplines?
What might enchantment mean for a **framework** of CD?
What might enchantment mean for **community**?
What might enchantment mean for **development**?

In terms of the first question, firstly, I turn to one of my trusted and tried authors – Thomas Moore. For Moore enchantment 'is a spell that comes over us, an aura of fantasy and emotion that can settle on the heart and either disturb it, or send it into rapture and reverie' (Moore 1996, ix).

So I want to argue that at the heart of an enchanted framework of community development is the capacity to be **open to the magic** of spells. I am arguing that an enchanted framework of community development returns us to the magic of our vocations enabling us to be 'spell-bound' by what we are involved in. The idea of enchantment is about magic in so many ways – and it involves spells. We could take for example, the magic of love. Within the phenomenon of romantic love magic is at least part of the process that transforms the ordinary relationship into the extraordinary. When in love it seems as though a spell is cast upon us and the world is seen differently, we are captured by something 'bigger, larger' than the life as we had previously known it. In terms of our work this 'spell-bound-ness' means that our techniques, methods, analysis etc. are relegated to the sidelines *as we are captivated* by processes that are deeply extraordinary. We can't control it, we are captivated by it. When people encounter each other in community in deeply authentic ways it is an extraordinary event – it's magical and let's practice the discipline of being open to it.

Secondly, we need to be aware that our soul has an absolute unforgiving need for regular excursions into enchantment and yet our culture has become profoundly adept at explaining away all mysteries. Now I am not anti-science and anti-facts, but I am all for re-inviting the **capacity for mystery** into our work lives. This is another dimension of an enchanted framework - one infused with the spiritual gaze of mystery. As a young community worker I learnt from a man who mentored me over many years that there is 'method in the madness' of our work – it looks mad from the 'outside', but for the disciplined workers there is a clear 'method'. Well I want to add the mystery alongside madness and method. A new tri-lectic you could say: madness, method, mystery. Some deeply mysterious implicit whole is at work when community is experienced and energized – we need to be able to look beyond the immediately visible and appreciate the mystery.

The third capacity I want to mention is that of the '**creative act**'. The idea of enchantment is infused with the necessity of the creative act. Someone has to cast the spell or weave the fantasy. An enchanted framework will always be looking for those actors who are able to infuse the ordinary moment with the creative act that leads to the extraordinary. This framework enables us to celebrate what many people would argue is the deepest part of the human being – our capacity to create – it is our imaginative capacity and maybe it will locate the arts at the centre of our practice.

The final capacity that I want to mention is that of **social hope**. I mention this capacity in the tradition that understands 'hope' as the 'bringing about of possibilities that are not imaginable in current terms. It's Derrida's hope of the impossible breaking into the present. Enchantment invites us, requires of us, to believe in possibilities despite the apparent dead-ends of our analysis. I'll say more when thinking of this in terms of 'development', but at a time of reasonably deep pessimism or realism you can probably imagine how important social hope is.

So how do we re-invite the mysteries, magic, creativity and social hope into community, development and our frameworks in such a way that we imagine the world differently, are caught up in our imagination and are willing to take new risks? And how do we do it in a way that is other-oriented, collective, deeply liberating and prophetic?

I am going to argue that the key is a particular kind of discipline – it is a **discipline of the heart** that remains determined to maintain an openness to mystery, magic and the creative act, and a determination to cultivate a counter-imagination to the one 'given' by the dominant infused with social hope. I use the word discipline alongside the word enchantment purposefully – any of you who have wanted to maintain an enchanted relationship of love also know that the paradox is that there is a determined discipline required within cultivating that relationship. Enchantment is a 'spell', but the imagination that comes with the enchantment requires on-going discipline. When we started our journey in community development maybe we were enchanted – a 'spell' came over us……it did over me…… but I have learnt that to maintain the imagination required to continually engage in the work, the struggle, requires a discipline of the heart and a discipline that can draw on the kind of spiritual resources we have discerned are available – ones that can resource us in collective, other-oriented, prophetic and deeply liberating work.

So, as we move towards the end of this paper, what does enchantment, and what do these capacities and disciplines mean in terms of our framework, community and development:

Firstly what about our framework?
Consider all things are liquid, all narratives contestable and shifting – there are few meta-narratives available to humanity. Consider that community is no longer a site, but an intention and orientation, up for grabs as the 'ground shifts beneath our feet': what do we as CD workers do?

Enchantment and a discipline of heart enables us to beware of solidifying our CD framework. One of the responses to this sense of loss, a cultural malaise, is to create a new meta-narrative of 'what should be, what is'… a new ideology. Community development can become an ideology that provides us meaning and security and this is potentially dangerous and certainly disenchanting. I am not saying we do not need to be clear about our tradition, I am not saying we do not need to become sharper and more sophisticated in our analysis (and it is needed), but lets not develop an ideology – lets be disciplined in ensuring our 'framework' remains centred set, not bounded set, centred in the dream of justice and community, rather than bounded in closed orthodoxies of practice, method and fundamentalisms. Discerning and drawing on a spiritual resource provides the possibility of a deep philosophy of life that draws on the deeper wells of security than an orthodox community development ideology. The irony of cultivating a disciplined enchanted approach to our framework is that it will ensure the on-going passion of non-knowing. If we know something, and our knowing is arrived at through some sense of certainty about how we should do this work then we will lose our passion. Loss of passion evolves from being mediocre and being mediocre evolves from knowing. So let's maintain the wonderful mysteries of the spirit of our work knowing only that we dream of community and justice, we learn lots along the way, and yet maintain the passion of non-knowing.

Now, what about enchantment and community life?
An enchanted framework requires the discipline of heart that enables a dialogue between the secular and spiritual imagination in terms of understanding community life? We need to affirm a secular sensibility that values all that has occurred in the evolutions of society since forms of theocracy have been overturned; but also a spiritual sensibility that accepts that at a deep fundamental level human beings are not just

purely animal, material – but are deeply spiritual and mysterious. Within the context of this dialogue we can imagine, create, and build enchanted communities that utilize the energies of both imaginations! As Ken Morris said when I asked him to read over the draft of this paper, 'poetic language', and yes it has to be – poetry is the language of enchanted communities. The spiritual imagination invoked from our discipline of the heart would awaken a sense of awe about our lives and our being together, awe at our ability to not only make war, but live lives of conscience and integrity with a deep awareness of a community that includes enemies, embraces complexity, is committed to creativity and accepts the inherent risk of stepping into the mysteries of the unknown that lies beyond the landscape of violence; it offers communal hope in the face of despair; provides a deep still place within us enabling us to love and create; it affirms the depth of our mutual connections; draws from us a spirit of journey and adventure etc. It infuses us with vitality – a vitality of not-knowing, but wanting to be involved in building a better world. Many of the stories storied in this conference have been about this kind of enchanted community life – a collective life infused with mystery, magic and the spiritual gaze.

Finally what about enchantment and development?

What might the idea of enchantment and a discipline of the heart mean in terms of our 'development agenda' embodied in social justice and social hope? Is the idea of enchantment a kind of new-age indulgence of the wealthy? Well, not if one understands enchantment in the light of the kind of discourse of spirituality I have outlined. Whilst spirituality seems to embody, for many, a deeply personal, individual, and potentially mystical activity, it also is infused with the possibility, and I have argued probability (if it is authentic) of a collective and prophetic hope and praxis. A deeply ethical imperative that cries for justice will emerge from authentic spirituality (not every day, but at least some days), one that is determined to counter-imagine a different world from the one 'given' by the powerful. A spiritual sensibility will return anger to our souls and motivate us, energize us to act. A spiritual gaze will enable us to tap into 'life projects' (as opposed to development) envisaged by many deeply spiritual indigenous peoples; it will awaken us to the need for sacredness and limits within development; it will enable us to discern the undercurrents of power and violence within our neo-colonial visions of development.

In conclusion:

I will finish my paper by arguing that I suspect unless we develop an enchanted framework of community development that develops both a deeply secular and spiritual imagination we will not find the resources to deal with the kinds of cultural, social and political crisis we are already in. As communities we face pretty significant challenges, several of which I identified at the beginning of this paper – we face a world of Orwellian double speak and Watson like duck speak, we face the spectre of the security state, and a growing culture of fear. Solutions are touted in therapeutic and psychological language undermining social solidarity and political praxis. I would say that a secular imagination enough will not be enough to help us deal with these challenges. How will we deal with problems such as over-consumption, greed, fear? I suspect it will require some deeply communal spiritual sensibility that enables us to be released from the grip of materialism, addictions and the need for pseudo-security. Global environmental justice requires a spiritual revolution alongside the structural one – again, a both/and – a secular and spiritual imagination, a spiritual and structural revolution (or re-formation – thrown in for you lovers of Luther!). I think of the kind of analysis

provided by the likes of Susan George in her most recent manifesto of building a better world. Future global and local justice – deeply connected realities – will require sacrifices that we know nothing of yet, sacrifices such that those who built the union movements of the past knew of, sacrifices that particularly those activists and community workers of the South know of, and soon we will be a part of it – because the South grows in the Northern countries! The huge challenges of this century, maybe this decade, are to challenge global actors – corporations, states, multilateral agencies - that are completely disinterested in democracy and people-centred development. That challenge will require the resources of a spiritual sensibility – one that resources us at a deeply inner personal level, and at a deeply collective level to challenge the violence of these actors without becoming violent ourselves, resourcing us to avoid becoming 'what we hate', one that enables us not to fear. I may be wrong – maybe a secular imagination and a cultural revolution is enough to do it, but I suspect not!

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