# WORK, LABOUR, SPIRITUAL HOMELESSNESS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

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# DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

# FUNDING

# ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relational dynamic that exists between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos, and how this relationship manifests in technically advanced societies that have undergone processes of secularisation through activity referred to as "work". Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this thesis critically examines claims made by Organisational literature that the incorporation of "religious" and "spiritual" belief in the workplace is an inherent good for the organisation and their employees' through contemporary sociological analysis of religion and the works of Weber (1905), Nietzsche (1888, 1889), Arendt (1958) and Berger (1964, 1973). Highlighting the condition of homelessness that results when previous taken-for-granted collective frameworks of belief are no longer invested with faith through which to conceive existence as meaningful or purposeful, such theoretical analysis underpins discussion of the "problem of work" identified by Berger to manifest in contexts that have undergone technical advancement and processes of secularisation. Providing historical contextualisation of the subsequent rise of soft capitalist Human Resource Management strategies, rhetoric and practices that seek to "bring life back to work" through the incorporation on (non)conceptual values, aspirations and ideals, this thesis considers what significance the nature and character of work poses in the contemporary Western UK context that is predominantly characterised by a condition of homelessness.

Adopting a nominalist, social constructivist lens, through qualitative in-depth interviews that explore the theoretical arguments raised in Chapters One, Two and Three, this thesis draws on Arendt's distinction between activities of work, works of art and activities of labour to outlines how organisationally designed roles are inherently damaging to the human condition, and particularly for those who are spiritually homeless who construct a "home" for their being within their place of employment because such activities constitute labour as opposed to work. It argues that contemporary organisations that mis-appropriate rhetoric, practices and techniques originating from metaphysical traditions and secondary institutions capitalise on the need of the human condition to construct meaning relative to material existence by making activities of labour appear to function as activities of work. Encouraging the alignment of being to organisational aims and objectives by obscuring the alienated condition of being that results when activities of labour are undertaken as opposed to activities of work and works of art by promising what most want to hear and believe, this thesis argues that soft capitalist approaches encourage human resources to break their spirit in pursuit of (non)conceptual ideals by requiring them to put their beliefs, values and desires secondary to organisational demands. Simply, the more human resources invest in soft capitalist "homes" and strive "to become" through the performance of labour, the more they cease to recognise what it is "to be" human. This thesis thus concludes that desires to attain neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" in material reality is in fact passive self-annihilation that results from (non)conceptual idolatry and slavery, and faith placed in the economic cosmos in order to cope with the loss of metaphysical homes.

**Keywords:** *the death of God, the problem of work, work, labour, Arendt, work ethics, homelessness, Berger, material being, soft capitalism, self-actualisation, self-annihilation*

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# FOREWORD

This thesis is written in reaction to the depths of my ineffable grief concerning the direction of humanity's gaze. It is written in response to the anger, despair and disappointment of those whose dreams are sold down the river of capitalism and greed, and which holds them accountable that they have not given, nor will they ever give, enough, even as their spirit breaks, and with it the love of life and innocence of being. It is written in confoundment of the willed lack of contemplation, consideration and consequences of our perceived, subjective importance. It is written in frustration of the short-sighted value humanity places in seeking to leave its mark on the world without pause to consider whether the world wishes for us to leave a mark upon it. It is written in sorrow and despair that we wilfully and purposefully do not care about the consequences of our actions as long as they benefit our short-term, subjective experience. At what cost does this will prevail? It is written out of concern for humanity, that at the end of this yellow brick road there is an illusory Oz that grows in strength through the wishful imagined dreams of a generation who thought the world was in the palms of their hands, who sought to control and master the world under the delusion of humanity's infinite importance over nature and the natural world rather than be in awe of it, and bend to its rhythms. It is written as a caution to the alluring pull of technological progress that has been strengthened and imbued with hopes and aspirations of salvation that we cannot even name or conceive concretely. If humanity is not strong enough to save itself, why do we expect technology to do it for us? A creation of humanity's play with its own mind, technology will forever be as inadequate and inept as we are in recognising the worth, beauty and vitality of the rhythm of nature and the dizzying delights and possibilities that abound in acceptance of our finitude. Perhaps it is too late. May death find me before humanity's love of the idea of itself renders even dreaming impossible.

*Deans Rough Farm, April 2018*

To all who have shared their stories with me – both on record and otherwise.

My heart cries for those of you lost in the crevices between aspiration and reality, and rejoices with those who resist the allure of illusion.

# INTRODUCTION

Of the activities that humanity participates in, there are a few that bind the human condition together across cultural, social and political boundaries as comprehensively as the activity of work. An activity integral to what it is "to be" human regardless of age, gender, and geographical location, work is one of a handful of publicly significant and recognised activities undertaken between birth and death that provides a sense of meaning and purpose to one's experience of existence. Such consideration of the significance of work to the human condition emerged for a variety of reasons. Upon finishing Undergraduate and Postgraduate study reading Religious Studies, the need to embark on employment became ever pressing. Prior to the completion of these qualifications, the question of what employment would be undertaken had not been a concern or driving motivation, however. Advice had always been to spend time doing something that brought enjoyment. As such, there was no grand career plan or ambition in mind, only the desire to spend time doing something worthwhile. Upon entering the workplace however, what became abundantly clear as time passed was that the activity undertaken was far from worthwhile. Repetitive, mundane and futile, increasingly, life became something to be wished away. Quite simply, each week was experienced as a turn on a sick and twisted carousel that never stopped, and which until retirement, the possibility of "getting off" would not be an option.

It was this experience, in conjunction with scholars in the Department of Organisation, Work and Technology, that inspired contemplation of what work "is". Previously considering work an activity undertaken purely for economic return, contemplation now turned to what work had meant historically through religious traditions. Its significance and recognition is evident in the attention religious doctrine affords "work". It is one of the few activities undertaken by humanity that has for thousands of years sparked real engagement and interest from religious traditions throughout the globe. Regarded as an activity imbued with ontological value, most religious traditions consider the performance of work as a means to fulfil one's duty, and to express one's love, of the Absolute. Simply, work is seen as a moral and ethical "good" in that its enactment provides a means through which to affirm and confirm what being "is" and how what it "is" can be known within, during and beyond material existence, both to humanity, and the perceived Absolute. Bound to this enactment are expectations of a given social, cultural, geographical and historical collective. For example, activities of work in South Asian societies have traditionally been understood as inherently good through religious frameworks of Hinduism and Buddhism wherein work symbolises fulfilment of one's dharma (duty), the result of positive and negative karma accumulated during previous lives within the cyclical system of samsara. Even societies whereby religious traditions have been placed secondary to systems of human governance in contemporary contexts, such as China, or where processes of secularisation have taken place, such as Japan, the significance of activities of work remain bound to cultural ideals of respect, veneration and

pride relevant to ancestor and generational reverence. That is to say, work remains valued as an ethical and moral "good" despite the decline of overt, traditional forms of religiosity.

This is also true in the Western context, where the meaning and purpose of work has radically transformed to reflect an ethos and value system underpinned by economic interests expressed through scientific rationale and mathematical logic following the decline of Christianity. This has resulted in a rise in popularity and dependence on scientific rationale, mathematical reason, utilitarian ethics and psychological constructions of the Self to comprehend material existence as meaningful and purposeful. Representative of the cornerstones of what can be conceived as the economic cosmos, the impact this turn to material being and exclusion of being beyond material existence to the human condition is well documented (Marx, 1847, 1867; Nietzsche, 1882, 1888, 1889; Weber, 1905; Tawney, 1922; Arendt, 1958). This is not to say that religious attitudes do not continue to influence, impact and shape the way in which activities of work are rationalised as ontologically purposeful and meaningful, however. Indeed, despite the loss of Christian sentiment surrounding its enactment, work remains the activity through which most gain a sense of "who" they "are". It gives them a sense of identity and being. It Thus, though belief in traditional religions has waned to the point that Western society is not overtly religious, and many do not consider religion relevant to contemporary conceptions of being, work remains the activity through which most construct a sense of meaning and purpose regarding the experience of material existence.

Such a claim is supported by the fact that the question "what do you do?" remains one of the first questions posed to someone we meet for the first time. Many put great effort into their work. The continued importance of work is also supported by contemporary sociologists of religion, whose research surrounds the manifestation of religiosity following the subjective spiritual turn (Taylor, 1989, 2002, 2007; Heelas, 1996, 2008; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001, 2005; Partridge, 2003, 2004; Woodhead, 2016). Indeed, where scholars once asserted that the decline of public religious belief illustrated a waning of the need to explain, understand and rationalise the human condition through myth, ritual and collectively held ontological beliefs, contemporary sociologists of religion generally that the decline of traditional religion to be not so much a decline of religiosity, but a reinterpretation of what constitutes "religion" and how it manifests in, interacts with, and shapes everyday life (Gorski et al., 2014). Simply, expression of religious and spiritual belief is not bound to traditional locations, spaces, and practices. Rather, ideas, concepts and beliefs that are inherently religious and spiritual pervade the experience of life itself. As such, religiosity and spirituality evident in the West are not typically concerned with relational dynamics that do not necessarily emerge between the Absolute, humanity and the natural world, but conceptions of Self, nature and the natural world (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Woodhead, 2016). The result is that anything and everything can be considered to have religious and spiritual meaning if the individual believes it to be the case. Given this, the ubiquitous term "metaphysical" is

evoked to account for both contemporary manifestations of religious and spiritual belief regardless of faith, practice or dogma.

Identifying the gap

Whilst the subjective spiritual turn has been explored in numerous ways, most evidently in relation to the sacralisation of secular platforms such as the Internet, popular culture, New Age practices and consumer spirituality (Partridge, 2004; Bell & Taylor, 2001; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Heelas, 2008), there is currently limited discussion concerning the activity of work and religious and spiritual belief (Heelas, 2002, 2008; Grant et al., 2004; Carrette & King, 2005; Aupers & Houtman, 2006). The same can also be said regarding research concerning religious and spiritual belief emanating from Organisation Studies, which emerged as a recognised body of literature in the late 1990s. Despite the growing attention surrounding the significance of belief to organisational contexts, enquiry largely remains underdeveloped and lacking in cohesion. This is surprising, particularly in relation to Peter Berger's 1964 discussion, 'Some General Observations on the Problem of Work', where he claims that 'to be human and to work appear inextricably intertwined notions' (211). Here, Berger draws attention to the uncertainty, fragmentation, and disorder that characterises the human condition following structural changes to work ushered in by technical advancement as a result of ideological changes following the separation of the Church from the governance of society. Simply, where the meaning and purpose derived from work had previously been collectively understood through Christian sentimentality, morality and ethicality, following the decline of Christianity this was no longer possible.

The decline of belief in Christian frameworks thus results in a condition of "homelessness" whereby material existence is increasingly marked by uncertainty when moral and ethical value systems can no longer displace the responsibility of the human condition from humanity (Berger et al., 1973), and endemic within technically advanced societies that have undergone processes of secularisation. Considered a key contribution to comprehension of the contemporary human condition by sociologists of religion, the homeless mind thesis is utilised by sociologists of religion, and scholars of various disciplines, to guide understanding of the contemporary human condition following the death of God and rise of the economic cosmos in the seventeenth century (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Giddens, 2013). Concerning the present enquiry, the homeless mind thesis is significant in relation to the response of the human condition to the loss of previously taken-for-granted "homes" found in religious frameworks of belief. Giving rise to what Berger and colleagues term "secondary institutions" that provide shelter from the continuous uncertainty insecurity and instability of the responsibility now placed on the human condition to construct meaning and purpose into material existence, Berger and colleagues draw attention to the rise of secondary institutions during the 1960s countercultural

revolution. Characterised by religious and spiritual beliefs, values and perspectives, worldly activity such as work once again was imbued with ontological value.

As research undertaken by Woodhead through *The Westminster Faith Debates* (2016) outlines however, the majority of individuals in the contemporary UK context construct a home for being not within metaphysical frameworks of belief, but the economic cosmos. What is clear then is that the relational dynamic between religious and spiritual belief and economic life, and the importance this has in shaping meaning and purpose derived from worldly activity such as work is no longer either obvious or evident for many in the contemporary UK context. Rather than focus enquiry on the meaning and purpose of being through activity referred to as work as constructed by individuals whose conception of being is framed by metaphysical frameworks of belief then, this research focuses on those that can be considered "spiritually homeless". This is because though there is limited discussion of the significance of worldly activity and traditional religious frameworks of belief, there is a complete lack of academic enquiry that explores the meaning and purpose of work for those who frame their being through the economic cosmos.

Such consideration is significant, for if work remains the means through which meaning and purpose of material existence is constructed, to what extent does activity referred to as work shape conceptions of what it means "to be" in contemporary Western contexts? More than this, what beliefs, values and perspectives underpin meaning and purpose derived from work? Such consideration can be answered to an extent by contemporary neoliberalism that utilises and appropriates Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" to frame, legitimise and validate belief that the meaning and purpose of work signifies the means through which one can become "more than" one currently is, realise their latent "potentialities" and attain "self-actualisation". Termed "soft capitalism" by Thrift to describe the increasing reliance on popular 'culture, knowledge and creativity' (Ray & Sayer, 1999: 17) soft capitalism represents a shift of management focus in the past sixty years to surround the human resource to 'bring life back to work' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 58). Encouraging work experienced as meaningless, purposeless and laborious as meaningful, purposeful and significant to the experience of material existence (2002), soft capitalist approaches seek to echo developments that emerged from the 1960s countercultural revolution.

Evoking questions of ultimate concern previously the domain of religious frameworks of belief to encourage efficient and productive performance, there are, however, numerous concerns that surround soft capitalist approaches, however. A system of governance still in its infancy in that the extent of its reach is still being explored and expanded, there is currently a lack of research from either Organisational or Religious Studies. There is thus need for research that 'critically and systematically deconstructs emic rhetoric to document how precisely spirituality is socially constructed, transmitted and reinforced in the spiritual milieu and how, and why, and with what consequence it is introduced in

the workplace' (Aupers & Houtman, 2006: 219). From scholarship that has been undertaken, however, it is argued the focus and emphasis of soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques revolves around the performance of the activity in question without regard for the specific nature and character of the activity. This is in contrast to the developments of the 1960s countercultural revolution however, wherein the specific nature and character of activity was considered central to the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's "authentic" being. Indeed, the 1960s countercultural revolution encouraged work to be seen as the means through which the collective human condition could be transformed by individuals' undertaking activity inherently meaningful and purposeful to their subjective being. When attention is paid exclusively to the performance of worldly activity without regard to its nature and character however, how does this effect the human condition? Does worldly activity, whose nature and character is inherently meaningless and burdensome to the human condition, enable the human condition to live a meaningful and purposeful life? If not, what can be said of the belief that the performance of such worldly activity is meaningful and purposeful, and the implications this has to the human condition?

Consideration of the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity, and what the nature and character of activity can tell us about humanity is at the forefront of Hannah Arendt's work *The Human Condition.* Despite the key contributions this text provides in terms of comprehending the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity in shaping the perspectives, beliefs and ontological position of the human condition, however, such insights have largely remained peripheral to academic enquiry emerging from Religious Studies and Organisation Studies. Thus, by drawing on Arendt's philosophical contemplation, this thesis seeks to explore to what extent can this neglect of consideration of the significance of an activity's nature and character can be considered an oversight that has severe consequences to the human condition. In particular, this thesis seeks to consider why the nature and character of worldly activity is seemingly neglected and obscured by soft capitalist approaches. More than this, however, what can its neglect tell us about the contemporary human condition?

Research aims and intentions

Given the large chasm that represents the gap in the literature underpinning this research, the construction of the research questions was  difficult. Construct a question too broad and the research would be meaningless given the limited scope a Ph.D. thesis has. Construct a question too focused, however, and the broader context runs the risk of being neglected, and thus the sentiment and significance of enquiry, lost. Furthermore, this thesis draws on two disciplines where there is a lack of literature to frame this research. To construct a question from a position representative of one disciplinary domain runs the risk of neglecting consideration and perspectives of "the other". In attempt

to navigate such complex terrain, the first research question adopted a historical approach in order to contextualise enquiry of contemporary religiosity and the meaning and purpose of work within the broader historical, social and cultural landscape:

> Following the decline of faith in traditional forms of organised religion, what significance does metaphysical belief pose to the activity defined as "work" in the contemporary UK?

Following such attempts to map the terrain as much as possible within the scope of a Ph.D., the empirical aspect of this research also sought to remain broad in its exploration of the dynamic relationship between worldly activity, metaphysical belief, and the economic cosmos. Formulation also required a focus that was broad enough to contribute both to the disciplines of Religious Studies and Organisation Studies. At the same time, questions posed needed to be concentrated in order to generate in depth consideration of the chosen themes. Thus, the second and third research questions sought to consider how soft capitalist approaches adopted by contemporary corporations to improve employee performance affect the human condition. Concerning the second research question, this was formulated in line with Arendt's discussion surrounding activities of work, works of art and activities of labour in order to consider the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the construction of meaning and purpose of material existence despite the apparent disregard encouraged by soft capitalist approaches:

> What significance does the specific nature and character of worldly activity have to the construction and conception of being in technically advanced, secularised contexts following the subjective spiritual turn?

Whilst the second research question formed the basis of Chapter Three, the third research question sought to build on insights generated in Chapter Two and Three to bring together their theoretical insights, and draw together this thesis as a whole. As such, the third research question was not formulated until empirical research had begun. Despite this, the rationale for its formulation in part came before the research process began through a conversation with an esteemed colleague, who referred to this research as an exploration of the capitalism of spirituality. A phrase that was unclear and unfamiliar to the researcher upon embarking on this research journey, it was not, however, a phrase that was forgotten. Rather, it made increasing sense as time passed, the empirical data collection was conducted, and the focus of this research to surround spiritually homeless minds rose to prominence. Thus, as the data analysis unfolded, the third research question emerged:

> To what extent can soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices, and techniques be considered to signify the capitalism of spirituality, and what are the implications to the human condition in technically advanced, secularised contexts?

<u>Chapter Overview</u>

In response to the research questions, this thesis is structured as follows. Chapters One, Two and Three provide a comprehensive literature review. Chapter One considers the dominant perspectives concerning the significance of metaphysical belief to work evident within organisational literature. Chapter Two then introduces perspectives found within sociological analysis of religion. Finally, Chapter Three brings insights from Chapters One and Two together through theoretical consideration of Arendt. Specifically, Chapter One draws attention to the emergence of literature concerning religion and spirituality during the 1990s. In particular, attention is to the emergence of workplace spirituality, which advocates the implementation of rhetoric, practices, and techniques that encourage faith and belief to manifest within organisational settings to enhance workplace performance and productivity. Such discussion is balanced with literature typically referred to as critical workplace spirituality to provide a counter argument to such approaches. It is argued that workplace spirituality reduces metaphysical belief to revolve around material concerns, and commodifies the human condition for organisational aims and objectives. Misappropriating metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques, critical workplace spirituality demonstrates how belief and faith facilitate the mobilisation of human resources by management and leadership circles. Representing nothing more than an instrument employed to achieve efficient and productive performance, critical workplace spirituality literature highlights the increased homogeneity of employees through practices that promise the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" being. Contrary to sociological analysis of religion, however, critical workplace spirituality literature does not question the validity of organisational contexts, aims and objectives that draw on faith, belief and questions of ultimate concern. As such, this discussion is followed by consideration of some of the differences that exist between the approaches, expectations, and agendas regarding study of metaphysical belief emerging from Organisation Studies and Religious Studies. In particular, attention is drawn to insider-outsider theory. It is posed that an insider's approach adopted by much organisational literature encourages confirmation bias toward preconceived and dominant philosophical assumptions and perspectives held as "true" in contrast to outsider approaches that question preconceived and dominant philosophical assumptions and perspectives. As such, it is argued that workplace spirituality and critical workplace spirituality unquestioningly present secular organisational contexts as the legitimate setting for questions of ultimate concern to the human condition to be posed, which compounds the reduction of metaphysical concerns to the material world. Given this, Chapter One argues that it is only through adopting an outsider's approach to the object of study that a balanced, objective and considered appreciation can be attained.

With this in mind, Chapter Two adopts an outsider's approach typical of sociological analysis of religion to provide a historical account of the relational dynamic that exists between the economic cosmos and metaphysical belief as it manifests through worldly activity referred to as "work".

Grounding discussion within Weber's *The Protestant work ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), this chapter draws attention to the significance the decline of Christianity has to the meaning and purpose of worldly activity. It argues that the void of meaning that emerged has been filled by values, principles and perspectives reflective of the economic cosmos characterised by scientific rationale, mathematical reason, Utilitarian ethics, and psychology. The effect this has had to the human condition is explored through the works of Nietzsche (1882; 1888; 1889), Arendt (1958) and Berger and colleagues (1973). Inducing a state of being characterised by the mind's play with itself, Chapter Two details how the rise of faith in the economic cosmos has given way to the organisation of society and the human condition according to technical progressivism, which is underpinned by the values of efficiency and productivity that legitimise the ultimate goal to be the pursuit of profit. Simply, humanity is perceived as progressing not toward a future state of being in the afterlife but a future state of being in the material world. What results is the continued devaluation of worldly activity that sustains and preserves the human condition in the material world over generations and throughout history by enabling the expression of human experience and emotion, and growing value of activity that is considered progressive.

What results, however, is the normalisation of the condition of homelessness. A condition wherein the human condition no longer conceives of the meaning and purpose of being within and beyond material existence through shared and collective frameworks that position humanity in relation to nature and the natural world, this chapter thus explores how faith in the economic cosmos induces a condition of world alienation. As such, the second half of Chapter Two turns considers contemporary organisational responses to the condition of homelessness and alienation. Illustrating how contemporary organisations appropriate rhetoric, practices and techniques that emerged during the 1960s countercultural revolution, Chapter Two makes explicit the continued significance of metaphysical belief to the construction of meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as work. In particular, Chapter Two argues that contemporary corporations seek to emulate the secondary institutions of the counterculture by re-conceptualising organisationally designed roles through the incorporation of rhetoric, practices, and techniques derived from metaphysical secondary institutions of belief that emerged during the 1960s in order to provide a home for homeless minds. This is because secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution gave rise to what Heelas terms the self-work ethic, wherein the nature and character of worldly as significant in enabling the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires. Despite the significance attached to the nature and character of worldly activity by the self-work ethic of the 1960s countercultural revolution, Chapter Two outlines how the same is not true of soft capitalist secondary institutions. Rather, it is argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage a version of the self-work ethic that does not encourage humanity to undertake activity that enables the expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires, but activity that reflects values and principles that position the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos as central to the meaning and purpose derived from of

worldly activity. Simply, whilst soft capitalist approaches ideologically transform organisationally designed roles to reflect what most people want to hear and believe, Chapter Two alludes to the fact that ideological transformation achieved by soft capitalism does not transform the structure of work. This argument is illustrated through case studies of the Landmark Forum, and its subsidiary, The Vanto Group. In doing so, some of the contentions that surround re-conceptualisation of organisationally designed roles as meaningful by soft capitalist approaches are explored.

Given the lack of consideration Organisation Studies and sociological analysis of religion gives to the nature and character of worldly activity to the meaning derived and work ethics upheld, Chapter Three draws Arendt's distinction between activities of work, works of art and labour. A distinction that builds on the works of Hegel (1807) and Marx (1844, 1867), Chapter Three utilises insights gained from Arendt's exploration to demonstrate that activities of work and works of art are activities that enable humanity to create a home for being in the material world by transforming and transfiguring the collective human condition through the creation of use items, and transcend their condition of mortality through the creation of aesthetic artefacts that reflect human thought, emotion and experience across generation throughout history. Such transformation, transfiguration and transcendence is not possible through activities of labour, however, whose repetitive and cyclical nature and character does not allow for the sustentation and preservation of the material home constructed through activities of work, but simply the sustentation and preservation of the biological needs required to maintain life's processes. In conjunction with contemporary sociological analysis of religion and voices in Organisation Studies critical of soft capitalism, Arendt's insights are thus used to outline how soft capitalist approaches constitute the attempt by soft capitalist secondary institutions to make labour appear as work, and obscure the structural stagnation of organisationally designed roles, and the alienation that its enactment induces. Simply, by valuing the performance of worldly activity over its nature and character, soft capitalist secondary institutions make labour appear meaningful.

Indicating the incompatibility of organisationally designed roles with the self-work ethic in that the performance of worldly activity is regarded significant regardless of its nature and character, Chapter Three argues that soft capitalist approaches signify a continuation of the economic cosmos that prioritises the interests of the capitalist system over the needs and concerns of the human condition. It also argues that whilst human resources respond positively to soft capitalist approaches, that the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques constitutes a means of mobilisation of the human spirit for economic aims and objectives. This is outlined as the capitalism of spirituality, in which the performance and productivity of human resources is heightened through soft capitalist approaches that promise the attainment of in-vogue neoliberal (non)conceptual values such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" through the performance of worldly activity. As such, Chapter Three argues that the capitalism of spirituality not only induces a condition of (non)conceptual idolatry, but (non)conceptual slavery. A condition wherein human

resources willingly undertake activities of labour whose nature and character is fundamentally alienating to sustain the illusion that its performance ushers in a secure, stable and certain condition of and for their subjective experience of material existence, Chapter Three raises a number of contentions with soft capitalist practices. It poses that soft capitalist approaches extend organisational control over being that causes a condition of perpetual agitation that nullifies and reduces being. Rather than provide a home that enables the human condition to overcome the condition of homelessness induced by the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief, soft capitalist secondary institutions provide a home in the material world that is fundamentally damaging to the human condition. That is to say, soft capitalist secondary institutions merely appear to provide a home for homeless minds. Institutionalising existential separation through the cyclical and receptive activities of labour, Chapter Three also argues that human resources are trapped in a perpetual search for a home in the material world when they seek to construct meaning and purpose of the human condition within the economic cosmos.

Following theoretical consideration of the changing relational dynamic between metaphysical frameworks of belief and the economic cosmos as it manifests through worldly activity referred to as "work", Chapter Four provides discussion of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin this research. Adopting a nominalist ontological position to reflect the outsider's approach assumed that enables this research to treat all ontological perspectives encountered as "authentic" and "true", nominalism is particularly appropriate for the study of metaphysical belief that is inherently abstract and (non)conceptual, and which cannot be determined without doubt as "the Absolute truth". Complementing nominalist philosophical underpinnings, this research adopts social constructionist conventions. Positing that humanity constructs meaning and purpose into the experience of material existence according to the social world and cultural context in which they live, social constructionism thus enables consideration of the wider social, historical, cultural and religious context when analysing the data collected. Regarding the methodological conventions, this research adopts multiple in-depth semi-structured interviews alongside a modified Twenty-statement test. Such an approach enabled the researcher to ask further questions depending on the narratives, stories and accounts divulged by each research participant. This is because in-depth semi-structured interviews allow participants to talk for as long as is necessary. They also allow for the inclusion of previously unconsidered avenues of enquiry during the interview. Furthermore, by holding multiple interviews following the completion of a Twenty-statement test, participants were encouraged to be reflexive and reflective during the research process.

Research design that encourages reflection and reflexivity is particularly important to this research given the focus on aspects of being surrounding their activity of employment and ontological beliefs not typically considered by all prior to the participation in this research. It is also important given that the analysis chapters of this research focused on individuals who typically do not find a home for being within metaphysical frameworks of belief. Such focus was chosen because perspectives of being framed

through the economic cosmos not only represent the majority of individuals in the contemporary UK context, but because such individuals are more likely to seek employment in soft capitalist secondary institutions and undertake organisationally designed roles than those who are "spiritually homed". In order to identify spiritually homeless minds, the ontological spectrum proposed by Heelas and Woodhead that loosely categorises perspectives of being according to beliefs concerning the Absolute, the human condition and the natural world was utilised (2001). This was updated to include a further perspective identified through research undertaken by Woodhead as part of *The Westminster Faith Debate.* Thus, whilst interviews were carried out with individuals from all categories, the analysis chapters focused on individuals whose perspectives reflected the categories of "religions of humanity" and "nones".

The first of the analysis chapters, Chapter Five explores how spiritually homeless minds approach the worldly activity of work. Framing discussion through Arendt's distinction between activities of work, works of art and activities of labour, Chapter Five considers how spiritually homeless minds do not hold the nature and character of their activity as important, but the meaning and purpose they derive from its performance, and the idea of work they framed through neoliberal ideals, values and desires. As such, Chapter Five argued that worldly activity typically chosen by spiritually homeless minds depends on the extent to which its performance reflects what they want to hear and believe. What is indicated then is that the meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as work for spiritually homeless minds is to affirm the perceived significance of their subjective experience of material existence, and for this to be recognised by others. Chapter Five illustrates the lengths spiritually homeless minds go to to sustain their belief that the performance of activities of labour is inherently meaningful to their subjective experience, progression, and actualisation of being in the material world by the fact that most consider activity whose nature and character is deemed inherently worthwhile to their experience of being as "hobbies" and not activity that could, or indeed should, constitute work. Importantly, when confronting the idea that they could be labouring rather than working, Chapter Five illustrates how many spiritually homeless minds enter into a process of rationalisation and justification whereby they position labour as necessary in ushering in technical salvation of the human condition, or imbue their labour with soteriological meaning depending whether they hold beliefs reflective of "nones" or "religions of humanity" in order to avoid and obscure their estrangement.

Building on from findings discussed in Chapter Five, Chapter Six turns its attention to organisational contexts. It explores the significance of organisationally designed roles and organisational environments for spiritually homeless minds in strengthening and perpetuating conceptualisations of meaning and purpose of worldly activity to revolve around the subjective experience of material existence. Chapter Six thus poses that spiritually homeless minds are more susceptible to soft capitalist secondary institutions because they are seeking a home in which to frame, legitimise and support conceptualisations of meaning and purpose and affirm the perceived significance of material being.

Echoing what most spiritually homeless minds want to hear and believe, Chapter Six also builds on theoretical discussion raised in Chapters Two and Three regarding the utilisation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices, and techniques through organisational practices that encourage "mindfulness". In so doing, Chapter Six illustrates how soft capitalist secondary institutions capitalise of the spiritual yearning and capacity of the human condition to address questions of ultimate concern, and conceive material existence as meaningful and purpose that in reality align and mobilise human resources to organisational aims and objectives at the expense of the subject. Chapter Six thus demonstrates how the capitalism of spirituality functions as a cultural mechanism to obtain and retain competitive advantage at the expense of the human condition. Importantly, the data collected suggests that spiritually homeless minds would rather have a home that is fundamentally damaging to their being than take responsibility in constructing a coherent and cohesive ontological framework. As such, Chapter Six highlights how spiritually homeless minds willingly co-constitute soft capitalist approaches and thus the capitalism of spirituality. This is argued to be because the economic cosmos and its soft capitalist secondary institutions affirm their perceived self-importance through neoliberal rhetoric that sustains the illusion that their performance of labour is meaningful and purposeful to their subjective experience of material being.

Reinforcing arguments raised in Chapter Five that many spiritually homeless minds seek to avoid having to confront the inherently damaging construction of reality the nature and character their worldly activity of labour induces, Chapter Six draws on data collected to outline some of the consequences soft capitalist approaches have to the human condition. Simply, Chapter Six poses that whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions appears to synthesis public and private, economic and human, and collective and individual concerns that they, in reality, do nothing more than affirm public, economic and individual interests at the expense of private, human and collective aspects of being. It also argues that many spiritually homeless minds would rather break their spirit for short-term gains that sustain the illusion that soft capitalist secondary institutions have their best interests at heart at the expense of the human condition in the long-term. This is explored through the argument that attempts to "self-actualise" in reality constitute nothing more than self-annihilation, wherein by playing a game and undertaking activity that is fundamentally meaningless to their inner beliefs, values and desires in order to sustain the illusion that they will be "happier", materially and personally "better" and "self-actualised", spiritually homeless minds forget who they are, and what it "is" "to be" human. The implications of this are explored through the impact this has to younger generations. Unwilling to take risks that might jeopardise their attainment of "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation", Chapter Six explores the paralysis that characterises spiritually homeless minds. Chapter Six also suggests that many spiritually homeless minds who experience paralysis of being due to undertaking activities of labour, resent those that do not adhere to perspectives of being that they themselves invest in. This is because they perceive opposing perspectives to threaten the security, certainty and stability

they derive from faith in the economic cosmos. As such, it is argued that when the nature and character of worldly activity does not allow the expression of inner beliefs, values and desires, what results is a condition of being characterised by fear that strengthens and perpetuates "us vs. them" mentality.

To conclude, this thesis provides a summary of the preceding chapters to present an overall metanarrative concerning the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos, and how this unfolds through worldly activity defined as work in contemporary contexts that have undergone technical advancement and processes of secularisation. It begins by making clear how the approach to research adopted is of utmost significance in that insider approaches can cause biases that go unnoticed. By adopting an outsider's approach as opposed to an insider's approach, this thesis this research makes explicit how worldly activity typically referred to as work remains the activity through which conceptualisations of meaning and purpose are affirmed and confirmed both to oneself and to the collective human condition. It highlights how metaphysical belief remains significant to the construction of meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to work. This is the case whether belief manifests overtly and explicitly through rhetoric, practices and techniques of traditional metaphysical frameworks, or covertly and implicitly in rhetoric, practice and techniques appropriated from metaphysical traditions and cloaked by neoliberal values that reflect the interest of the economic cosmos. What this research indicates then is that to construct and conceive "being" as meaningful and purposeful, humanity is in search of a home that provides a cohesive and coherent structure to frame such meaning and purpose. In particular, it is argued that the economic cosmos constitutes a religion that appeals to spiritually homeless minds who seek to construct the meaning and purpose of being exclusively in the material world.

This is why soft capitalist approaches adopted by the economic cosmos that capitalise on the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the human condition through neoliberal rhetoric and values that respond to the residual spiritual yearnings of humanity are so effective, and work so well. Such approaches reflect what spiritually homeless minds want to hear and believe, and in so doing, provide a home for those who do not find validity within metaphysical frameworks of belief through which they can conceive material existence as meaningful and purposeful. The capitalism of spirituality is effective then precisely because most spiritually homeless human resources willingly commit to the perspectives of being offered by soft capitalist secondary institutions in order to avoid having to take responsibility in constructing for themselves a coherent and cohesive home for their being. What results, however, is a normalised and accepted condition of alienation that is obscured by soft capitalist approaches through the pacification of being the results from the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques, and which is co-constituted by spiritually homeless minds. Thus, in order to retain the home they have built within the economic cosmos, this research concludes that spiritually homeless minds rationalise and justify its alienating structures and organisationally designed roles, either by perceiving

labour as necessary for the attainment of technical salvation, or by imbuing its performance with soteriological relevance.

Indeed, from the perspective of organisations of the economic cosmos, it is imperative that it successfully re-conceptualises activity that is inherently labour as meaningful and purposeful to the human condition. Such affirmation of human resources aspirations and desires by soft capitalist approaches comes at a cost to the human condition, however. This is because whilst soft capitalist approaches transform the ideology of work to re-conceptualise organisationally designed roles as meaningful to the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" self, the structure of such activity remains stagnated to the organising principles of the division of labour. Attempts that encourage the self-work ethic to manifest through the performance of organisationally designed roles of labour thus constitute nothing more than a manipulation of the self-work ethic to make it appear as though neoliberal (non)conceptual values of the economic cosmos such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" can be attained during the subjective experience of material existence. This research thus concludes that the self-work ethic encouraged by soft capitalist secondary institutions is nothing more than (non)conceptual slavery that capitalises on the aspirations of humanity by promising the attainment of (non)conceptual values idolised that can never be attained. By binding themselves tightly to conceptions of being that deny the very freedom they pursue, but which continually promise its attainment, spiritually homeless minds reinforce the condition of homelessness soft capitalist approaches of the economic cosmos perpetuate. Simply, whilst spiritually homeless minds are most susceptible to soft capitalist approaches, by affirming such approaches in the actions they willingly perform, humanity gets what it deserves. Humanity is not the victim of totalitarian governance of the economic governance and the decline of the human condition and the world of permanence and durability, but the perpetrator.

In requiring human resources to put their beliefs, values and desires secondary to organisational demands, then, the success of attempts to make activities of labour appear as work through the association of faculties inherent in the nature and character of activities of work to the performance of activities of labour highlights the continued significance of activities of work and works of art. In line with Arendtian discourse, this thesis thus concludes that the significance of the nature and character of activities of work and works of art are necessary forms of worldly activity for humanity to retain its sense of what it is "to be" human, and to sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability constructed in the material world. By failing to recognise the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the human condition, however, activities provided by the economic cosmos that constitute "work" that position humanity as master of its own condition and superior to nature and the natural world, not only alienate humanity from the world, but emphasise in particular the subjective experience of material existence at the expense of the collective human condition. This is evident through the neoliberal desires held by many in the contemporary UK context to leave their mark in the

material world and be remembered and recognised *by* the collective, rather than contribute *to* the construction of the collective world of permanence and durability through their worldly activity. Such claims are further supported by the fact that activities of work and works of art are typically categorised as "hobbies" by spiritually homeless minds in the contemporary UK context.

Simply, then, this research concludes then that through the appeal of homes provided by the economic cosmos and the organisation of the human condition through scientific rationale, mathematical logic, utilitarian ethics and psychology, the human condition loses sight of what it is to be human. It thus argues the re-conceptualisation of labour to appear as work only facilitates short-term benefits for the sustentation and preservation of the economic cosmos, such as capital accumulation without regard for the long-term consequences this has to the human condition. This is because organisational attempts to make labour appear as work instead erode the ability to recognise what it is "to be" human because the bodies of thought underpinning the economic cosmos are not centred on what it is "to be" human, but seek to understand what being is through observation, measurement and experimentation; it seeks to look at humanity from a position that is not human. Rather, "to be" human has become a hobby undertaken to make oneself feel better about the empty and vacuous state of being the economic cosmos induces and entrenches. As such, it is argued that under the belief that the performance of organisationally designed roles leads to the attainment of "self-actualisation" in material existence, belief and aspiration in neoliberal (non)conceptual values and the condition of slavery it induces can only result in self-annihilation. This is not active self-annihilation as pursued in Eastern metaphysical traditions wherein the subjective ego is annihilated and concern of and for the collective human condition takes centre stage, however (Ram-Prasad, 2001; Harvey, 1995), but a passive form of self-annihilation wherein the individual paradoxically annihilates their subjective sense of Self through willing submission, repression and suppression of their inner beliefs, values and desires. It is along such lines of enquiry that a number of considerations regarding the future are also made, as well as future directions of study identified.

Contributions

This thesis is concerned with the relational dynamic that exists between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos as it unfolds through worldly activity referred to as work. Bringing these strands of research together is in itself novel. Such line of enquiry has not received much attention, and certainly not the attention it deserves, from either Organisation Studies or Religious Studies. Furthermore, given the growing interest in metaphysical belief and the implications this has to organisational performance this research is particularly timely. Rather than adopt an insider's approach that characterises much organisational literature, however, this thesis contributes to both fields of Organisation Studies and Religious Studies by adopting an unusual approach that draws on sociological, philosophical,

anthropological and historical perspectives. In so doing, it also provides a foundation for future interdisciplinary research. An approach that captures the nuances and complexities of the aforementioned relational dynamic, the novelty of this approach is further found in the key theorists drawn upon: Hannah Arendt and Peter Berger. Both are amalgamatic authors, whose work spans numerous disciplines, areas of interest and considerations. Arguably, the diversity of their insight is in part the reason for the oversight their research often receives. Not easy to place their work, nor easy to interpret, they do not fit the neat categorisation of thought that characterises many approaches to research in contemporary academic circles. Despite this, in regard to the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos as it unfolds through the activity of work, their contributions are of extraordinary importance, and this research contributes to both fields of research in bringing some of these contributions to the foreground. Given this, this thesis anticipates contribution in terms of further, future development of insights gleaned from Arendt and Berger to both Organisation Studies and Religious Studies.

More than develop a theoretical basis that contributes to future research undertaken both within Organisation Studies and Religious Studies, however, this research explores also the validity of the theoretical claims made by Arendt and Berger, and indeed further scholars such as Nietzsche and Heelas, through empirical research. In doing so, this research provides an empirical contribution to critical literature emerging from Organisation Studies that seeks to explore the significance metaphysical belief to the way in which work is conceptualised to encourage increasingly efficient and productive performance by mobilising and aligning human resources to organisational aims and objectives. The empirical research undertaken also contributes to sociological analysis of religion through the application of ontological positionalities prevalent in the contemporary UK context to explore the impact and significance of metaphysical belief to contemporary public life typically considered wholly secular, and not previously an area of concentrated study. Furthermore, interdisciplinary in nature, this thesis also contributes to academia by developing a perspective that encourages further interdisciplinary research to emerge that seeks to explore the human condition not just from one standpoint and through one aspect of being in the material world, but which seeks to comprehend the human condition holistically.

Aside from the contribution this thesis makes to academic research, this thesis has contributed to the personal outlook of the researcher. Undertaking this research was not easy on, or for, the soul. The engagement with a number of texts, some of which appear in this thesis and some of which do not, provoked contemplation, doubt and uncertainty concerning the ontological outlook and perspective of being held. It also gave rise to insight in terms of the learned assumptions and shallow regard for the significance of worldly activity, and the faculties of speech, thought and action it houses. This research ignited recognition of the naïve assumptions many of the perspectives concerning the human condition held by the researcher were, and which to an extent, remain. The empirical research and the stories of

unhappiness, vulnerability and imprisonment encountered also caused great discomfort, anger, and helplessness that furthered the dis-ease, sorrow and frustration experienced. The attempt to "pull oneself together" in denial of and resistance to the overwhelming melancholy and despair met took so much energy that the ability to think and reflect on the self-sabotage unfolding was non-existent. This was not the first time to be lost at sea, floating amongst jetsam yet unable to find firm hold to anything that might aid the search for land. Again somewhere vowed never to return, the realisation that the foundations of blind faith built on hope that had previously provided firm ground and strength to re-conceive life as meaningful and purposeful was in fact sand only amplified the dis-ease and despair encountered, and spurred fresh resistance and denial that perpetuated the downward spiral of my being. The impact this dis-ease had to the contemplation and composition of this thesis was, and is, heart breaking. The greatest grief, however, hinges on personal relationships that were devastated by the inability to recognise reality from rhetoric: the effect of wrestling with oneself in this state of mind.

Over time, and through contemplation, however, foundations built in the winter of 2005 would not have held over a lifetime. They would have eventually collapsed as that which was hoped for never came to pass. Lessons learnt had not been learnt from or learnt fully, with understanding or maturity. The melancholy, dis-ease and despair encountered as a result of this research was a necessary catalyst in enabling the recognition of a false home built on fear of past trauma and hope of future aspirations. The cage so carefully constructed in the name of self-preservation would have become in time a source of dis-ease, entrapment and burden. Through its destruction, though this thesis suffered in the wake of a mind unable to correlate its content, future publications will benefit in the clarity of understanding and lucidity of thought that can now grow in its place. The tragic breakdown of relationships serve as a necessary reminder of the dangers of not valuing, appreciating or being grateful for what one has, and of the consequences of living too much both in the future and the past. As Arendt reminds us, however, new beginnings always remain a possibility born from the human capacities of forgiveness and promises made with sincerity. Thus, whilst the contributions of this thesis to academia maybe infinitesimal, the contribution it has made to the future being of the researcher, and indeed some of the research participants as communicated to the researcher following their participation, is incalculable.

# CHAPTER ONE:
## "BRINGING LIFE BACK TO WORK"?
## AN EXPLORATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF WORK
## FOLLOWING THE SUBJECTIVE SPIRITUAL TURN

The dynamic interplay that exists between metaphysical belief and worldly activity has been subject to discussion within metaphysical frameworks of belief for thousands of years. Despite the historic importance of faith in relation to the construction of meaning and purpose of worldly activity to the human condition, and the indebtedness of the social science to the study of religion (Demerath & Schmitt, 1998), however, this dynamic has only recently become an area of exploration and consideration for organisational academics, educative circles, and organisational stakeholders. This interest is typically captured by workplace spirituality (WPS), which has since the 1990s positioned metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives as significant in shaping organisational membership (Tracey, 2012). The rise of WPS literature is mirrored in the increase of organisational cultures that present 'the organisation as a spiritual-social system composed of employees whose existential needs must be supported if the organisation is to flourish' (Bell & Taylor, 2003: 330).

Reflecting the position that 'organisational values evidenced in the culture, that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitate[e] their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy' (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003: 13), WPS posits that the inclusion of metaphysical belief within organisational contexts signifies a win-win-win scenario that encourages employees' to be 'inwardly connected to their work, fellow workers, and workplace' (Sheep, 2006: 357). This is contrary to dominant perspectives held in sociological analysis of religion, however, which considers management of the irrational, emotional and experiential (Arendt, 1958; Peters et al., 1982) as not only impossible and illogical, but contrary to the concerns of capitalism. As such, much discussion emanating from organisational scholars seeking to explore contemporary manifestations of metaphysical beliefs and the influence it wields to the achievement of organisational aims and objectives of efficiency, productivity, and profitability reflects the vacuum of research surrounding belief and the activity of work for much of the 20th century. The lack of engagement with literature emerging from sociological analysis of religion despite the relevance of organisational theory to the study of metaphysical traditions and belief (DiMaggio, 1998) is contrary to the approach adopted by this thesis. Espousing instead a sociological and philosophical approach more typical of the sociological analysis of religion, this thesis seeks to illustrate why such approaches can be considered an unsuitable for the development of understanding, analysis, and contemplation of questions of ultimate concern pertaining to the metaphysical.

Given this, this chapter will unfold as follows. To begin, an overview of organisational interest in metaphysical belief is provided. This is because though this thesis does not situate itself within WPS debate that positions metaphysical belief as instrumentally beneficial to the attainment of organisational efficiency, productivity and profitability, it is important to provide an account of WPS in order to foster understanding of the potentially harmful situation such perspectives enable. In order to provide as comprehensive picture of WPS literature as possible in a chapter, Chapter One draws on work undertaken by Tracey, who, through his annal review, has reviewed a mass body of literature that includes reference to "religion" and "spirituality" in order to 'highlight the potential of religion as a domain of study in management and to provide concrete suggestions for taking forward research in this area' (2012: 87). To balance Tracey's overwhelmingly positive estimation concerning the inclusion of metaphysical concerns within organisational contexts, this Chapter draws upon voices within Organisation Studies that respond to claims made by WPS scholars with a critical gaze. Captured by the rubric critical workplace spirituality (CWPS), this Chapter draws on CWPS literature to highlight a number of assumptions and expectations held by WPS scholars that contradict commonly held win-win-win perspectives. Reinforcing the importance of engaging with sociological analysis of religion, this chapter highlights the limitations of much scholarship emanating from Organisation Studies. In particular, attention is paid to differences that exist between the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, expectations and perspectives that underpin literature emanating from much organisational literature concerned with "religion" and "spirituality", and sociological analysis of religion. In doing so, this chapter argues that assumptions held by WPS scholarship, and to an extent CWPS scholars, inhibit the exploration, contemplation and comprehension of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives to worldly activity referred to as "work". Highlighting the need for further critical reflection within much organisational literature that seeks to explore metaphysical belief and faith, this Chapter provides a rationale as to why the sociological analysis of religion is the most appropriate vehicle to explore contemporary manifestations of religious and spiritual belief in relation to activities referred to as work.

## Metaphysical belief: Through the lens of Organisation Studies

The idea that metaphysical belief can be utilised to secure the attainment of organisational goals is increasingly apparent across and within organisational literature, and particular management studies. Literature concerning metaphysical belief became particularly established in the late 1990s through the oft-cited work of Mitroff and Denton (1999) and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003). Such work sought to demonstrate how the inclusion of metaphysical belief in the workplace not only enhanced the way in which employees approached their work but resolves organisational issues and concerns surrounding: organisational citizenship behaviour (Tepper & Taylor, 2003); organisational transformation and work-

life balance issues (Fry & Cohen, 2008); motivation, vision, and leadership (Dehler & Welsh, 1994); and commitment, intent to quit, intrinsic job satisfaction, job involvement and organisation-based self-esteem (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). The interest in exploring the significance of metaphysical belief and its impact in the workplace was further cemented as a field of study within Organisation Studies through the creation of the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion (JMSR) in 2003. Further reinforced in the rise of special issue journals surrounding metaphysical belief as well as the growing international market of workshops and seminars that aim to enable spiritual development at work (Bell & Taylor, 2003; Tourish & Tourish, 2010), increasingly evident is how metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives are presented 'as a crucial answer to the void of meaning that exists in organisations and society at large' (Driver, 2007: 62).

Highlighting the growing inclusion and perceived relevance of the subject in organisational settings, and employees' 'quest for higher purpose, personal meaning and transcendent values' (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007: 576; Klenke, 2005), that promote integration of one's personal and life and employment (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), such perspectives are important. This is because what becomes evident are dominant perspectives held in management and Organisation Studies that suggest that 'Unless organisations become more spiritual…they cannot reap the benefits of the full and deep engagement of their employees, their so called most valuable resource... [nor can they] meet the challenges of the next millennium' (Mitroff & Denton, 1999: 7). Making apparent emerging perspectives that contemporary manifestations of "religiosity" and "spirituality" are viable objects of study (Bell & Taylor, 2003), the demand that organisations become more "spiritual" is reflected by the fact that such literature typically utilises the term "spirituality". This is because the term "spirituality" is perceived to be 'more inclusive and broader than religion [which refers] more to the institutionalised activities and definitive answers whilst spirituality is seen as more individual, idiosyncratic, based on a wide variety of traditions and open-ended questions' (Driver, 2007: 64; Ashforth & Pratt, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

The advocation of "spirituality" is further apparent in the examination of the applicability and utilisation of contemporary manifestations of spirituality in organisations by Tracey, who seeks to 'highlight the potential of religion as a domain of study in management and to provide concrete suggestions for taking forward research' (2012: 87). Hoping to move what he considers to be a crucial area of enquiry from the periphery of organisational scholarship to mainstream enquiry, Tracey basis his argument on the analysis of the inclusion of keywords such as "spirituality", "spiritual" and "religion" within twenty-one North American and European organisational journals. Despite commenting that 'the process of assigning papers to themes [is] not an exact one' (Tracey, 2012: 97), Tracey identifies what he considers to be eleven core themes of research: religion and the environment; the strategy and performance of religious organisations; organisational change; organisational culture; power, authority and discrimination; religion and individual behaviour in organisations; business ethics; comparative studies; religion and social identity; workplace spirituality; and religious ideas in secular contexts. Tracey then

categorises these themes into three areas of management and organisational enquiry. Considering the first five themes associated with literature to revolve around strategy and organisational theory, and the following five reflective of enquiry concerning organisational behaviour, Tracey considers the final theme to be concerned with how religious ideas in secular contexts are not separate to, but straddle all areas of organisational research through the social and cultural interplay.

Through this categorisation, Tracey argues that the development of scholarship interested in metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives 'call[s] into question the neat distinction between religious and secular organisational forms' (Tracey, 2012: 117). He calls for the inclusion of sociological analysis of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives within Organisation Studies, arguing that it represents an opportunity to enrich organisational scholarship. As such, Tracey outlines that the aim of management and organisational scholars exploring the significance of metaphysical belief should not be to "reinvent the wheel" (Tracey, 2012). Rather, reflecting Stark and Glock's concerns that metaphysical belief has 'seldom been subject to systematic analysis by organisation theorists [despite] the potential to gain fresh perspectives on the study of organisations' (2012: 107), Tracey encourages scholars embarking on research of the religious and spiritual to familiarise themselves with key literatures and debates evident within classic and contemporary sociological analysis of religion. As such, Tracey suggests that works by classical sociologists Marx, Weber and Durkheim, in conjunction with contemporary sociological analysis of religion, should form the basis of scholarly enquiry concerning the complexities and nuances embedded within the relational dynamic between religion and productive work, work ethics, and societal formations following the Enlightenment period (2012).

As Tracey makes clear, however, many organisational scholars know 'relatively little about the dynamics of religious organisational forms, the influence of these forms (and the values and practices that underpin them), [nor do they appreciate] broader social processes and other kinds of organisations' (2012: 89). He also comments that the opportunity sociological analysis of religion poses depends on the extent to which Organisation Studies consolidates the plethora of organisational impressions of contemporary manifestations of metaphysical beliefs, values, and assumptions (2012). In attempt to capture the complexities of contemporary sociological analysis of religion and provide a foundation for organisational scholarship, Tracey thus presents sociological analysis of religion to fall in to one of three categories of research: church-sect theory (Troeltsch, 1931); Rational Choice Theory (RCT) (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985); and cultural theories. Importantly, Tracey presents church-sect theory as outdated due to the decline of institutionalised religiosity, and cultural theories too complex for organisational scholars to develop meaningful scholarship due to the variety of theoretical approaches and perspectives underpinning such research, which typically seeks to immerse scholarship within the wider social, cultural, geographical and political context. In light of this, Tracey promotes RCT as the 'dominant approach to the study of religious organisations' (2012: 93). Such a position is justified by

Tracey on the basis that RCT shares the same assumptions as organisational scholars in that it frames understanding of employee efficiency, productivity and commitment to yield greater profit through capitalistic values, (2012). Tracey argues RCT is thus most compatible with organisational perspectives, aims and objectives in that it is formed on an economic model designed to understand social and economic behaviour that enables organisations to reflect beliefs, values, and desires expressed by the majority of human resources (2012). Affirming taken-for-granted capitalist assumptions that humans always attempt to make rational choices as guided by their irrational preferences, beliefs, and tastes (Tracey, 2012; Stark & Finke, 2000), such endorsement is strategically significant. This is because, having one foot within rational frameworks whilst seeking to accommodate to irrational beliefs, behaviours and commitments, Tracey ensures maximum appeal and interest in metaphysics amongst organisational scholars of all backgrounds, whilst also appearing to appease sociologists of religion.

Workplace Spirituality: An Overview

Of the themes identified by Tracey for future directions and trends of enquiry, WPS is the most accepted and widespread. WPS literature encapsulates the attempt by corporations to utilise contemporary manifestations of metaphysical belief to promote the attainment of organisational aims and objectives through greater productivity and efficiency of human resources (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). Summarised by Bell and Taylor as scholarship that seeks to recognise the importance of the inner-life of employees in the workplace and their need to find work meaningful (2003), WPS explores the question of whether 'organisations [would] be more productive and innovative, and individuals be able to live more satisfying lives, if they felt inwardly connected to their work, fellow workers, and workplace' (Sheep, 2006: 357). Simply, WPS scholars consider the inclusion of metaphysical belief and faith within corporate life to usher in a lighter style of management that recognises the importance of activities of work to both the achievement of organisational aims and individual wellbeing (du Gay, 1996). The inclusion of metaphysical belief and faith is also considered by WPS scholars to promote the organisational belief that organisational spaces provide a context or community in which spiritual expression can take place by nurturing and encouraging a reflective mind-set amongst employees 'with the intention that this will improve motivation and have a positive impact on organisational performance' (Bell & Taylor, 2003: 334). WPS literature thus not only makes explicit the rationale underpinning organisational interest in metaphysical belief in organisational settings, but also highlights how the inclusion and appropriation of metaphysical belief within organisational cultures is considered vital to the success and longevity of contemporary organisations.

Promoting the perspective that 'identity rather than labour becomes the site of indeterminacy' (Thompson & Smith, 2009: 921), what WPS literature illustrates is the dominant organisational perspective that the inclusion of religious and spiritual belief within organisational structures

encourages 'connection to something greater than oneself' (Ashforth & Pratt, 2003: 93). That is to say, WPS promotes the perspective that 'the workplace is no longer merely the site for the discovery and expression of socially sanctioned values and norms… [but provides the] material and metaphysical conditions for selfhood' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 270; Lips-Wiersma, 2003). The significance of organisational attempts to appeal to and include the inner-self of employees is particularly evident in the growing preoccupation with employee "wellbeing" within organisational cultures, philosophies and ideologies 'designed to bring new creativity and vision to business' (Redfield, 1994: 1). Simply, by providing opportunities to employees to explore, develop and cultivate their inward connection toward their activity of work, WPS literature demonstrates the extent to which organisations increasingly rely on employees to "bring their whole selves to work", the adoption and incorporation of rhetoric, techniques and practices the evoke metaphysical perspectives within corporate culture, staff training, courses, talks and weekend retreats (Hudson, 2014) is also evident through the emergence of practices such as "mindfulness" that encourage employees to 'search inside themselves' and overcome the stresses of the workplace. Highlighting the broad use and applicability of WPS in organisational processes such as human resource management (HRM) and total quality management (TQM) (Guest, 2002; Boon et al., 2007), such developments are important. This is because what corporate interest in evoking faith and belief in corporate settings demonstrates is how the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are utilised to encourage 'total obedience among a workforce' (2003: 342; Case & Gosling, 2010; Hudson, 2014). Whilst WPS literature that emerged in the 1990s originally cited traditional forms of religion such as Christianity, Judaism or Islam (Karakas, 2010; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999), increasingly organisational incorporation of metaphysical faith and belief adopts language, practices, ideologies and philosophical perspectives more commonly associated with the New Age, such as Shamanism, Paganism, magic, astrology, and Taoist philosophy (Bell and Taylor, 2003; Gotsis & Kortezi).

Through WPS literature, what is evident is that the inclusion of metaphysical belief is seen by organisations to enable the presentation of work as the mean through which employees can move "beyond oneself" to "become" a "more fulfilled" and "actualised being" by blending their self with the performance of their activity of work (Fineman, 2006). Such a statement is illustrated through the assimilation of activities of work with modes of being such as 'wonder, play spontaneity, joy, imagination, celebration, discernment, insight and creativity' (Mason & Welsh, 1994, Yee, 2009), and rhetoric, techniques and practices that encourage greater employee engagement, creativity, well-being, satisfaction, and emotional stability (Arnetz et al., 2013: Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014; Zaidman & Goldstein-Gidoni, 2011; Benefiel, 2005; Kolodinsky et al., 2008). The inclusion of spiritual and religious practices, techniques and practices are thus seen to allow organisations to present work as the means through which to 'encounter and construct meaning relevant to both their work and wider lives' (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000: 136; Konz & Ryan, 1999). From this position, what is evident is the

consensus amongst WPS scholars that the incorporation and recognition of spirituality in the workplace is of benefit to all, and intrinsically beneficial to and good for the achievement of organisational aims and objectives (Sheep, 2006; Tracey, 2012; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009). Indeed, so widely held is the assertion that spirituality symbolises a win-win-win scenario that it is deemed beneficial to the accumulation of profit whilst promising employees opportunities to explore, develop and cultivate their inward connection toward their activity of work, fellow workers and workplace (Willmott, 1993; Sheep, 2006).

Signifying a break from organisational attempts that seek 'to change people, [instead focussing on] how organisations can better reflect the whole human being' (Briskin, 1998: xiii), indicated is how the incorporation and adoption of metaphysical belief, practices, and perspectives is seen to encourage the treatment of human resources that takes into account their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs (Sheep, 2006). Given this, not only do WPS scholars argue that the inclusion of the "whole" self at work enables the meaning of work to relate to the wider moral and social contexts regardless of the diverse and various origins of practice, technique, rhetoric or narrative. WPS scholars also consider the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to represent the recognition of organisations of work as an inherent aspect of what it means "to be" human (Tourish & Tourish, 2010), and organisational spaces as capable of meeting employees existential needs (Bell & Taylor, 2003), and *the* location wherein contemporary Selves can "self-actualise" (Fry & Kriger, 2009). What is explicit then is the moral imperative underpinning attempts to mobilise the human resource through metaphysical rhetoric practices and techniques, not only for the good of the individual human resource, but to improve and sustain expected and desired financial performances through the celebration of human life (Case & Gosling, 2010). That is to say, WPS scholars perceive the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to signify the 'age of the moral organisation' (JMSR, 2016).

Workplace Spirituality: A critique

In relation to the research question concerning the significance of metaphysical belief poses to activity defined as "work" in the contemporary UK following the decline of traditional forms of organised religion, the above discussion highlights the importance the dynamic relationship between metaphysical belief and the perceived benefits its inclusion in the workplace holds in achieving organisational aims and objectives has to business and academic circles. In particular, it highlights the assumption that there exists a 'positive correlation between spirituality and workplace spirituality' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 264) to the point that religion and spirituality within WPS literature 'is treated as the panacea to all organisational problems' (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007: 583). Despite the growing interest evident through the emerging field of WPS, however, 'The phenomenon of spirituality at work has attracted relatively

little critical attention' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 209). Indeed, it is only in the last two decades that there has been a growing body of literature from organisational scholars, whose work focuses on illuminating the "darker side of workplace spirituality" (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2003). Defined as Critical Workplace Spirituality (CWPS), scholars representing this body of literature seek to highlight contentions that arise not only from various ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions made by WPS scholars, but how assumptions, expectations and values underpinning WPS claims allow for predisposed biases to influence and affect the claimed benefits that justify its practical application.

In order explore the motivations, assumptions and perspectives underpinning WPS claims, the following discussion first considers the contentions that surround positivistic methods characteristic of WPS scholarship. In doing so, it is argued that metaphysical concerns are considered significant by WPS the extent to which its uses enables the instrumentalisation and commodification of being. A claim reinforced by the lack of consolidation of what is meant by "religion" and "spirituality" by WPS scholars, CWPS scholars argue that the appropriation of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives for genuine religious and spiritual questing is questionable. Considering WPS to reduce metaphysical questions to material, secular concerns, this position is argued by CWPS scholars to be reinforced by a lack of empirical data undertaken with employees that questions the underlying assumptions made by WPS literature. As such, a number of biases inherent within WPS literature that affirms and confirms the use of metaphysical concerns to encourage the attainment of managerial and leadership aims and objectives are called into question. In doing so, CWPS consider WPS literature to dis-able resistance of employees to organisational demands through the promotion of metaphysical use that compounds and intensifies social engineering. This discussion thus concludes that much WPS literature emerges with minimal engagement with classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion. Rather than providing an impression of the significance of metaphysical belief to activity referred to as "work" following the decline of traditional organised forms of religion then, it is argued that the significance associated with metaphysical concerns by WPS literature not only lacks reflexivity and critical self-examination, but points to a crisis of meaning in organisation studies in relation to activity defined as "work" following the decline of organised religion.


### *A problem of method*

Subject to particular criticism from CWPS is how the majority of WPS scholars approach the study of "religion" and "spirituality". This is because CWPS scholars argue that WPS scholars' approach tends to be led by organisation science typically legitimises the lack of need for WPS research to engage with broader social theory (Case & Gosling, 2010), or classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion. Rather, CWPS scholars such as Case & Gosling argue that many WPS scholars perceive

themselves 'as pioneers of a new functionalist paradigm, which, although embryonic in form, promises to become a fully-fledged "normal science" in due course' (2010: 260). This claim is particularly evident through influential WPS research undertaken by Mitroff and Denton (1999), Milliman et al., (2003), and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), amongst others, whose research surrounding the effect of metaphysical belief in the workplace demonstrates a bias toward treating metaphysical belief as that which can be measured. The position that metaphysical belief can be measured remains the dominant perspective held by WPS scholars, as Tracey's advocacy of RCT demonstrates (2012). Indeed, so ubiquitous is the assumption that positivism is a viable means of researching metaphysical faith and belief that as late as 2016 the JMSR's website claimed to foster academic rigour and cross-fertilisation of organisational and Religious Studies scholarship through the application of hypothetico-deductive means. The attempt to measure metaphysical belief by 'positioning and subjectif[ying] persons within reductive, instrumental matrices... [that] render [people] as statistics suitable for techno-calculative manipulation' 2010: 261), inherently limits the metaphysical to the material, mundane and profane concerns, however. That is to say, by focusing their research on empirical, rational and objective methods such as survey and sampling methods (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007), the scientific validation WPS literature uses to legitimise its claims in fact reduce contemplation of the metaphysical, and subsequently the richness of what being "is" in its entirety, to that which can be measured in material existence at the expense of the irrational, emotional and experiential. The "humanising" claims made by WPS can thus be seen as similar to claims made by Willmott concerning the rise of organisational cultures in that WPS scholars neither abandon nor transform ontological, epistemological or methodological assumptions promoted and sustained by considered "scientific" approaches to the design of work (Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Willmott, 1993).

Such position is echoed by Bell and Taylor, who comment that the organisational interest in spirituality validated by scientific measurement is nothing more than 'an attempt to mobilise the individual to serve the interests of the organisation through the construction of a regime of truth' (2003: 337; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). Perceiving WPS literature to collapse 'higher, spiritual realities…into observable externalities [that] lack spiritual integrity' (Driver, 2007: 68), many CWPS scholars thus question the underlying motivation of organisational interest in the metaphysical, and its claims that its appropriation by organisations is morally benign. For example, much WPS scholarship asserts that the inclusion of metaphysical belief within the workplace is an unquestionable, inherent good 'so long as [employees] believe or feel, that their needs or purposes are being fulfilled' (Willmott, 1993: 534). Seen by WPS scholars as a unifying force within organisational environments that promote productivity, and thus the accumulation of profit (Boje, 2000; Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Benefiel, 2003), the utilisation of metaphysical belief in the workplace is considered by WPS scholars to facilitate the construction of a universal set of values. As CWPS scholars make clear, however, such moral legitimation is not hinged on the desire to further understanding of the meaning and purpose of the human condition, but to

promote greater commitment and engagement by aligning the beliefs of employees with the aims and objectives of the organisation (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

The willed intent of much WPS literature to construct a universal set of values points not to the intention to incorporate metaphysical belief for the benefit of employees, but to a 'crisis of meaning in organisational research itself' (Driver, 2007: 63). CWPS scholars thus argue that WPS scholars focus too much on the perceived benefits the inclusion of metaphysical belief affords the attainment of organisational aims and objectives at the expense of the human resource (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). Raising concern that the application of metaphysical belief and practices by WPS scholarship attempts to solve organisational problems concerning commitment, motivation, performance and productivity (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007; Bell, 2008), CWPS scholars emphasise 'there is no set of universal values to which all people prescribe unless humanity has suddenly become a more homogenous and tolerant species than previous studies of conflict, power and resistance would lead us to believe' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 215). Rather, CWPS scholars claim that such unquestioned assumption that the incorporation of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives is an inherent good renders the question as to whether it is the place of corporate, secular institutions to cater to employees' metaphysical concerns, as irrelevant (Sheep, 2006). That is to say, the claim that the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and beliefs promotes the construction of a universal set of values is a reality only if one reduces metaphysics not only to material concerns, but concerns exclusively held by corporate organisations. That metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives are ultimately concerned with non-materialistic aspects of being, however CWPS scholars question whether it is appropriate for organisations to focus on material gains such as increased organisational performativity achieved by integrating spirituality into organisational life (Benefiel, 2003; Bell & Taylor, 2003; Driver, 2007; Case & Gosling, 2010; Tourish & Tourish, 2010). Given this, the assumption that the inclusion of metaphysical belief is an inherent good is considered by CWPS scholars to limit critical interrogation of the claims made by WPS scholars surrounding the potentially negative impact WPS literature has to the expression and comprehension of the self.

### *Commodification of the human condition*

This is significant, for 'somewhat paradoxically, rather than enabling liberation from the constraints of work and modernity, workplace spirituality ensures that the search for meaning is harnessed to specific organisational purposes' (Bell & Taylor, 2003: 332). Argued by Case and Gosling to result in the appropriation of metaphysical beliefs, practices and perspectives to promote the alignment and mobilisation of employee motivations, beliefs and values with their place of employment for the purpose of encouraging greater productive performance of work (2010), for CWPS scholars, the

organisational implementation of metaphysical concerns in reality subsumes employees and the spiritual capacity of the human condition to the demands of the market (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009). From this perspective, not only apparent is how WPS literature positions the human resources as a means of 'secur[ing] competitive advantage through what might be understood from a critical standpoint as the appropriation of employee spirituality for primarily economic ends' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 258; Roberts, 2001; Casey, 2002; Bell & Taylor, 2003; Carrette & King, 2005; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009). Also apparent is how WPS literature promotes the commodification of metaphysical concerns for material gains in a manner that is 'demeaning of the human spirit' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 258; Driver, 2007). This is because, by unquestionably reflecting and reinforcing the "logic of the market" (Wilkinson et al., 1991), CWPS scholars posit that WPS literature treats metaphysical concerns not as an end in itself, but a means through which capitalist power and control is retained (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007; Bell, 2008; Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Case & Gosling, 2010).

With this in mind, CWPS scholars argue that organisational interest, adoption and incorporation of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives does not deepen organisational understanding of the importance of "work" to what it means "to be" human. Rather, it affirms and sustains dominant discourses of power and governmentality assumed by organisational stakeholders and interest groups representative of the market by promoting modes of being that supports the attainment of organisational objectives at the expense of being in the material world (Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Brown, 2003). What is demonstrated is how the appropriation of metaphysical concerns through positivistic approaches is considered by CWPS scholars an instrument employed to facilitate the manipulation of employee commitment for the attainment of greater productivity and profit (Case and Gosling, 2010; Tourish and Tourish, 2010; Lips-Wiersma, 2009; Driver, 2009; Pina e Cunha et al., 2006). From this perspective, positivistic approaches do not so much symbolise a 'search for truth [so much as] a search for the efficient' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 265). For many CWPS scholars, what is evident thus are the non-metaphysical, utilitarian, capitalist assumptions and values that characterise and underpin much organisational interest in and advocacy of, metaphysical belief (Tourish & Tourish, 2010). Such treatment of metaphysical belief is considered problematic by CWPS scholars then in that it enables WPS to treat metaphysical belief 'in ahistorical and apolitical terms as yet another neutral resource to be harnessed and husbanded by the erstwhile custodians of organisational performance' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 259).

### The misappropriation of religion and spirituality by leadership circles

What CWPS scholars point to is the need for qualitative research, such as interviews and ethnographic observation to balance the perspective garnered by WPS through positivistic investigation. This is because, due to the unquestioned and assumed superiority of positivistic approaches by the majority of

WPS research, there is currently a lack of empirically qualitative data that provides different perspectives and nuanced understanding to that gleaned through positivistic, quantitative methods, and ontological and epistemological assumptions. Nowhere is this more evident than through work conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999), which is generally regarded as pioneering research of WPS as a field of study because of the large-scale empirical examination of spirituality in the workplace through survey and sampling methods. Mitroff and Denton surveyed the opinions and beliefs of 1738 individuals to capture the "interconnectedness of spirituality" with the activity of work, and understand the role of organisations in fostering expression of the "whole person" through the inclusion and encouragement of personal manifestations of metaphysical belief, practices and rituals at work.

As Tourish and Tourish highlight, however, Mitroff and Denton's approach is highly contentious in that all research participants were managers who worked in the USA (2010). Representing the interests and perspectives of a small but powerfully influential section of organisational membership, such bias is particularly significant because of the overwhelming influence of Mitroff and Denton's study, which continues to shape organisational, stakeholder and academic perspectives of the use of spirituality within the workplace. As such, not only do they 'enable powerful elites to promote sectional interests while claiming that they embody universal truths and principles' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 218). They also endorse and entrench the assumption that managerial exploration of the "spiritual" and "religious" capacities of the human condition for the purpose of achieving organisational aims and objectives has a wider value and intrinsic worth (Tourish & Tourish, 2010). Such influence is highlighted in work undertaken by Hudson, who outlines the rise in training such as Spiritual Management Development for management circles to "become more spiritually aware" by learning both 'how to express their own spirituality at work, and to permit other employees to express their own' (2014: 32). Not only does this highlight the instrumentality of spirituality in an organisational setting. Such research begs the question: why organisations do not make available spiritual awareness and training courses to all and not just management if the individual was at the heart of the movement? Granting management circles the 'right to invade people's internal cognitive space to reshape their values' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 217), more than promoting sectional interests of management circles, CWPS scholars argue that WPS literature encourages and legitimate management circles to determine what is deemed acceptable expressions not only of metaphysical belief, practice and perspectives, but what it is "to be" human, by their employees (Willmott, 1993).

### Resistance is futile

The implications inherent in WPS literature that management circles possess superior, hidden, almost esoteric knowledge of what being "is" and how it can be known in material existence are considered by CWPS scholars to lead to greater hegemony and conformity amongst employees, who seek to secure

approval and career progression by embracing the value system enforced by management circles (Tourish & Tourish, 2010). With this in mind, what is explicit is the degree to which WPS facilitates and encourages for-profit organisations to engage in the social engineering of employees to promote a homogenised workforce. Though Kunda reminds us there is nothing new about the desire to engineer employees to accept organisational demands (1992), CWPS scholars argue that what *is* new is the degree to which WPS intensifies obedience and compliance from employees through value ascribed to autonomy in seemingly limitless ways (Bell & Taylor, 2003). This is because, facilitating the covert and concealed colonisation of employees' private belief and value systems by management circles, the use of metaphysical belief to affirm managerial power by WPS literature reduces the ways in which employees are able to resist expanding organisational dominion, domination, and subjugation of and over their being (Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Willmott, 1993). Simply, the inclusion and assimilation of metaphysical belief and faith with managerial rhetoric enables the indoctrination of employees by organisations. CWPS scholars thus argue that WPS constitutes attempts by contemporary organisations to manage not just what employees 'think and feel, and…how they behave' (Willmott, 1993: 516), but also what they believe, how they construct reality, and consequentially, how they conceive autonomy, freedom, and meaning of the "authentic" self. Far from liberating employees' "authentic" and "whole" selves in the workplace by abolishing contemporary tensions that exist between public and private aspects of being then, CWPS scholars perceive WPS assumptions that suggest the incorporation of metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives is an inherent good instead entrenches the subordination of employees (Tourish & Tourish, 2010).

More than this, however, CWPS scholars argue that the utilisation of metaphysical concerns for managerial and organisational agendas, aims and objectives advocated by WPS literature not only reduces sites of resistance, but disarms resistance in advance. This is because by positioning managerial circles 'as a priestly caste, endowed with greater wisdom than other lesser mortals' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 217), whatever contentions employees have with managerial aims and objectives is considered to result not from the incompatibility of managerial demands with the human condition, but personal weakness emanating from the employee that must overcome. Given this, CWPS scholars argue that 'Its claimed emancipatory agenda may serve as a vehicle for the advancement of a more controlling and oppressive leadership agenda than is normally acknowledged or may be intended' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 209), and more deceptive and sinister than the bureaucratic structures it replaces (Willmott, 1993). With this in mind, it is unsurprising that WPS perspectives are considered by many CWPS scholars potentially harmful. Indeed, outlining that WPS research represents a negative force that holds the potential for organisational misuse and misappropriation (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009; Drive, 2007; Bell & Taylor 2003), for many CWPS scholars, WPS literature does nothing more than treat the human condition as 'merely another resource to be defined and moulded by managerial elite' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 216). A claim explicit in the growing organisational dependency on employee

motivation, efficiency and productivity, CWPS scholars claim the intensification of organisational and managerial governance of the "whole" employee is encouraged solely for the strategic retention of organisational competitive advantage (Willmott, 1993; Rose, 1999; Bell & Taylor, 2003).

### Lack of Engagement with classical and contemporary scholarship

The above discussion demonstrates how WPS validates itself as a field of study, 'not only [through] claims regarding the "scientific" imperative to generate "viable" knowledge of workplace spirituality through accurate measurement of the phenomenon, but also a moral imperative to link that knowledge to corporate financial performance' (Case & Gosling, 2010: 264). Presenting itself as generating original contributions that successfully address the perceived "existential problem" of organisational spaces without regard for the meaning and purpose of metaphysical beliefs, practices and perspectives that go beyond material, secular concerns, for CWPS scholars, however, such claims constitute nothing more than organisational attempts to construct a 'totalitarian remedy for this existential problem' (Willmott, 1993: 529). This is because, affirming the interests of academic, educational and business circles and stakeholders, CWPS scholars perceive the WPS movement to present metaphysical, existential concerns as that which can solve organisational problems surrounding productivity, performance and commitment without consideration of why metaphysical beliefs, practices and perspectives are held in the first place, or the importance it holds in answering fundamental questions what it means "to be" human. As such, CWPS scholars argue that WPS literature fails to engage with the rich legacy of classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion. Arguably resulting from the need to legitimise perspectives that reflect the assumptions, expectations and values of the capitalist agenda that underpin organisational structures and its representative stakeholders, CWPS scholars thus argue that there is a lack of reflexivity or self-examination evident from WPS literature. Such wilful neglect of classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion is significant, however. Indeed, not only does it enable WPS scholars to retain their pioneering status wherein the claims they make remain irrefutable, but it reinforces the perspective that metaphysical faith and belief can be harnessed for the good of the organisation through the creation of a universal value system.

### "Religion" and "Spirituality": A lack of consolidation

Such concern is made all the more pertinent by the argument raised by Bell and Taylor that the inclusion of metaphysical concerns within organisational contexts by WPS works to de-emphasise non-work organisations as spaces through which spiritual growth can be explored (2003). Indeed, constituting contexts characterised by "bounded choice" whereby permissible feelings, attitudes and behaviours are limited according to organisational aims and objectives (Tourish & Tourish, 2010), CWPS raise the

question to what extent WPS conceptions of the metaphysical denigrate and impoverish the meaning such belief has for those who are faithful to a particular tradition emerges (Case & Gosling, 2010). These concerns are reinforced by the fact that there is very little consensus between WPS scholars as to what is meant by the utilisation of the terms "religion" and "spirituality". This is evident through the fact that such terms are used in highly ambiguously ways, and applied interchangeably without consideration of the distinction between their use  or attempt to qualify what exactly is meant through their application (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). Such claim is not only supported by a brief review of key literatures illustrates a number of terms used in WPS concerning study of the metaphysical: "religion and organisation"; "organisational spirituality"; "spirituality at work"; "spirit at work"; and "spirituality in business" (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007; Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Bell & Taylor, 2004). It is also reinforced by the increased utilisation in WPS literature of ambiguous concepts such as "self-actualisation", "mindfulness" and "health and wellness" (Case & Gosling, 2010; Bell & Taylor, 2004).

The lack of effort to consolidate precisely what is meant by their application of the terms religion and spirituality not only indicates the lack of consensus amongst WPS scholars as to what exactly "is" being studied through WPS, and through which lens: academic, business or educative circles (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007), but highlights the irony of WPS attempts to utilise metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to construct a universal set of values. CWPS scholars thus argue that there is no paradigm or framework that reflects the myriad of contradictory and conflating approaches that constitute WPS literature, scholarship and interest (Sheep, 2006; Driver, 2007; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009; Case & Gosling, 2010). Leading to the suggestion that the use of the terms "religion" and "spirituality" by WPS scholars enables organisational aims and objectives 'appear less intrusive or oppressive than they actually are' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010: 219), similar to organisational cultures, attempts to evoke metaphysical faith and belief in organisational settings 'impede rather than facilitate a process of coming to terms with the indeterminacy of human existence' (Willmott, 1993: 529). By validating and supporting organisational perspectives of existence that are unfalsifiable, ambiguous, and de-moralising, CWPS scholars thus argue that rhetoric that presents organisational membership as an opportunity for spiritual growth obscures the prescribed modes of being the appropriation of metaphysical beliefs and faith facilitates.

## Organisation Studies inclusion of metaphysical belief: Through the lens of Religious Studies

Highlighting a number of contentions with WPS claims regarding the unquestioned, positive correlation between metaphysical belief and its impact and influence in the workplace that emerge from scholars within the field of Organisation Studies, the above discussion demonstrates the importance of CWPS scholarship in addressing the problems associated with the contemporary incorporation of metaphysical

belief in organisational settings. In particular, CWPS scholarship indicates the extent to which quantitative, ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions typically assumed by WPS scholarship impact the way metaphysical belief is not only perceived and approached, but also researched. Serving to position the metaphysical yearnings of the human resource as the means to secure material, financial goals through the mobilising force metaphysical belief is perceived to symbolise by WPS scholarship, the above discussion makes clear the lack of consideration and engagement with classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion.

Despite providing a number of invaluable insights into the treatment of metaphysical beliefs, practices and perspectives by WPS literature, there remain, however, a number of arguments that can be made concerning WPS debate in addition to those raised above by CWPS scholars through consideration of perspectives held by sociologists of religion. In the following section then, an additional critique of WPS scholarship will be provided. Further discussion will also outline a number of limitations that affect both WPS and CWPS scholarship, before finally pointing to fundamental differences that exist between the study of metaphysical belief from the sociology of religion and dominant strands of Organisation Studies.


## Psychological assumptions

As touched on in the above discussion, of particular significance is the way in which WPS literature utilises and defines the terms "religion" and "spirituality". This is because such application does not reflect their application in classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion. For example, sociologists typically apply the term "religion" to describe organised, doctrinal forms of metaphysical belief that reflect and affirm a certain ontological perspective, and the associated practices, rituals and traditions (Horton, 1960). As is evident through WPS literature, however, the term religion is not only used at times to refer Judeo-Christian conceptions of what religion "is", but it is also evoked by WPS scholars to refer to individualised forms of metaphysical belief that manifests in the contemporary Western context. Such individualised forms of religiosity are typically referred to by sociologists of religion through the term "spirituality", which is regarded to relate more specifically to the experiential and emotional aspects of faith and belief (Woodhead, 2013). Whilst conflation between the terms "religion" and "spirituality" is problematic in that its current use in WPS scholarship neither enables comprehension of the subtle nuances and complexities of belief, nor understanding to develop in relation to the various forms of metaphysical belief and activity referred to as "work", of utmost concern to sociologists of religion is the prevailing notion in WPS that spirituality is rooted within the paradigm of psychology (Tracey, 2012). Reflecting the dominant perspective held in Anglo-American contexts that present psychology as the "science of man" (Carrette & King, 2005), such taken-for-granted authority bestowed on psychological paradigms to comprehend the emotional, experiential and mental

capacities of the human condition is explicit in much WPS, and indeed CWPS, literature (Bainbridge, 2011).

The unquestioned acceptance of psychology by WPS scholarship is evident through the prevalence of survey measurement and statistical analysis that implicitly validate scientific rationale and thought. Indeed, so natural seems the validity of psychology to WPS scholars that the term is often cited as a keyword under abstracts and is used to validate and affirm assertions contained in WPS discussion without the need of qualification as to what is specifically meant by this extremely broad and diverse term[1]. From perspectives garnered within the sociology of religion, however, the 'attempt to apply psychology to religion without recognising the uniqueness or sui generis character [is] fundamentally misguided' (Connolly, 1999: 136). This is because psychology at its very foundations is a paradigm through which to understand one aspect of spirituality: experience. This is not to say that sociologists of religion do not draw upon psychology as a tool to explore and develop an understanding of the metaphysical. The difference lies in the fact that where WPS applies psychology indiscriminately to the study of the metaphysical, psychology is one approach among many within sociology of religion, and is rarely applied in isolation from sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and theology. The problems associated with psychological interpretations of metaphysical faith and belief by sociologists of religion is particularly developed within Carrette and King's seminal text *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (2005). Illustrating how the term psychology first appeared in the 1870s through the work of Wilhelm Wundt (1874; 1896), Carrette and King make clear how psychology emerged at this time as a result of the decline of certainty and rise of doubt as to God's existence following the Enlightenment (2005; Dupré, 1993; Connolly, 1999). For many sociologists of religion then, psychology emerged as a result of the decline of Christian frameworks of belief that once provided overarching perspectives through which being could be known and comprehended during the Enlightenment period. As such, psychology is considered by many sociologists of religion to limit discussion of the metaphysical to the experience of religion as it manifests exclusively in Judeo-Christian contexts. This is because contexts outside of the West do not always recognise psychology as a valid frame of reference, nor are psychological categories and conclusions found to fit the pattern of experience as it presents in different geographical, cultural and social contexts. That is to say, psychology fails to capture the subtle yet complex nuances associated with spirituality.

Most problematic, however, is that where sociologists of religion regard "religion" and "spirituality" as fundamentally concerned with aspects of being beyond material existence, psychology is categorically rooted within, and bound to the condition of being as it is experienced exclusively within material reality. That is to say, where sociologists of religion maintain that definitive comprehension of what

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[1] For example, the term psychology can be applied to Artificial Intelligence, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, anthropology and education (Bainbridge in Clarke, 2011)

being "is" and how it can be known remains elusive to the human condition (Taylor, 1989), in contrast, psychological approaches suggest the condition of being can be known in its entirety through the experience of existence. Legitimising and validating desires expressed by WPS literature that metaphysical belief can be harnessed for the development of greater social, political and cultural control over the human condition by managerial circles, this is important. This is because in doing so, WPS scholars position psychology as capable of providing answers pertaining to the human condition to the point that it reaffirms its own assumptions that the condition of being can be known in its entirety within material existence. From perspectives garnered from the sociology of religion then, psychology can be seen as the favoured paradigm through which to explore, conceive and comprehend metaphysical concerns by WPS because it supports the assumptions that 'If human beings can be known they can be controlled and, even if they cannot be fully known in rationalist terms, transmitting the illusion of knowing will at least contribute to the management of large sections of society' (Carrette & King, 2005: 63).

As Carrette and King point out, however, 'it is human beings who have created the method of viewing and analysing the human self that we call psychology, they too are subject to the same illusions and delusions that they analyse in their study of human behaviour and experience' (2005: 64). Cautioning against the unquestioned application of psychology as a means of comprehending metaphysical belief and the human condition then, Carrette and King regard the reliance on psychology to contemplate the human condition to limit the comprehension of being to material concerns, experiences and perspectives (2005). That psychology affirms dominant conceptions of being as a hermetically sealed and isolated self rather than being within a collective as found in metaphysical frameworks, beliefs and perspectives, (Carrette & King, 2005), however, such reliance on psychology is not likely to dissipate because it promotes the underlying agenda and unquestioned assumptions held by WPS literature.


<u>Rational Choice Theory</u>

The dangers of exploring metaphysical belief through human-inspired categorisation and instruments of measurement used by WPS scholars are not limited to psychological assumptions. Also in contention are biases that favour ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that affirm and reinforce pragmatic approaches. Such pragmatic bias is made particularly explicit in Tracey's promotion of RCT as the dominant approach of sociologists of religion to the study of "religion" and "spirituality", and most suitable and relevant approach to organisational scholars. Achieved by portraying Stark, a proponent of RCT, as the 'leading pioneer of the new orthodoxy in the sociology of religion' (Tracey, 2012: 90), Tracey frames this discussion through the works of Hamilton, whom Tracey argues utilises RCT to turn 'conventional theory on its head' (in Tracey, 2012: 94). Significantly, however, Tracey's use of Hamilton is nothing more than a misrepresentation, in that his original

discussion of RCT published in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (2011) is largely critical of such approaches. Outlining the controversies that surround the application of RCT to religious belief and practice (Hamilton, 2011), Hamilton indicates how RCT is the subject of "intense debate" amongst sociologists of religion (2011; Bruce, 1999; Davie, 1994). This is because metaphysical belief, that is faith, is not typically something one "chooses" (Bruce, 1999), nor is one's affiliation and commitment to a particular perspective readily abandoned (Hamilton, 2011).

Making explicit the contentions levelled against RCT by sociologists of religion in that faith 'is not quite like choosing an everyday product' (Hamilton, 2011: 121), adherents do not adopt religious beliefs primarily for the receipt of worldly benefits. By approaching adherents to religious traditions and those who identify as "spiritual" as consumers rather than people who have faith in something beyond material existence, sociologists of religion thus consider RCT to deny the irrational, experiential and emotional reasons that underpin belief because they contradict the fixed and relatively stable frameworks used to determine market demand that underpin RCT (Hamilton, 2011). The incompatibility of RCT with metaphysical concerns is also argued by sociologists of religion to emerge because RCT is framed by economic and secular concerns that are inherently bound to values, ideals and desires found in Western geographical, social and cultural contexts. Similar to psychology then, RCT is limited in the extent to which it translates to manifestations of metaphysical belief, practices and frameworks found in global contexts (Bruce, 1999; Hunt, 2005). Such a statement is supported by Sharot's research. Outlining how RCT is applicable only to congregational religious forms rather than religious forms embedded within local communities (Sharot, 2002), RCT is not readily applicable to non-Western forms of religiosity such as Buddhism due to its ethnocentric biases that fail to address the various distinctions of sacred and profane aspects of being found throughout the world (Sharot, 2002; Carroll, 1996), nor the social and cultural preferences that shape manifestations of religiosity (Hamilton, 2011). Rather than an approach that dominates contemporary sociological analysis of religion as Tracey claims, RCT is largely shunned by sociologists of religion, as is evident by its lack of inclusion within *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (2011).

The logic of the market

Contrary to claims made by WPS scholars then, metaphysical belief is considered by sociologist of religion to represent the aspect of the human condition least susceptible or applicable to choice, or actions inspired by rationality (Hamilton, 2011). Rather, for most sociologists of religion, RCT is considered to enable WPS literature to embellish 'the numerical significance of spirituality in ways that smack of exaggeration, often with the view of the indeterminate, and tend to gain their effect by listing relatively ad hoc illustrations or by using poorly evidenced illustrations' (Heelas, 2008: 61). Making explicit how RCT narrows focus of WPS literature away from epistemic concern surrounding ethical

and moral concerns inherent within and central to metaphysical frameworks of belief, to instrumental forms of rationality (Weber, 1978), many sociologists of religion perceive RCT to reduce metaphysical exploration to over simplified frameworks that reflect the logic of the market. Such arguments are not new. Indeed, since the early 1990s sociologists have argued how the 'subjective life, emotional well-being and intimacy are pitted against the demands of rationalised industry' (Kellner & Heuberger, 1992: 57). What is new, however, is the inclusion of the metaphysical *for the success* of rationalised industry. From this perspective, WPS literature that presents RCT as a suitable method for the study of metaphysical concerns is perceived by sociologists of religion to affirm biases and assumptions that underpin the majority of such scholarship in order to make it appear as though sociology of religion not only legitimises and validates such scholarship, but that it is inherently compatible.

The insider/outsider debate

From the above discussion, what is clear is that much scholarship emerging from Organisation Studies that seeks to explore and consider the significance of metaphysical belief in relation to activities of work differs from sociological analysis of religion. This is due not only through differences between ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions held, but how metaphysical belief is approached. This is arguably because sociological analysis of religion adopts an outsider's perspective. An outsider's perspective is characterised by a lack of syncretism between perspectives held by the researcher and those being researched. This is because an outsider's approach to research represents the attempt to understand reality through the lens of reality held by those being researched (Otto, 1939; Eliade, 1959; Smart, 1969; Knott, 2010). Promoting an approach to research that attempts to 'see things from other people's point of view without necessarily agreeing that they are right' (Barker, 1984 in Knott, 2010: 251), the outsider's approach is significant in that it encourages study hinged on objectivity and neutrality that stimulates a dialogical and reflexive research.

This is not to say that an outsider's approach is free from contention. To begin with, an outsider's approach requires researchers to encounter unfamiliar technical terminology and perspectives that necessitates the researcher to become acquainted with a number of interdisciplinary perspectives that rarely give rise to opportunities for the development of one's own key concepts (Connolly, 1999). An outsider's approach, by positioning that being researched to guide the direction of research as opposed to researcher's preconceived biases, expectations and assumptions, undertaking research from an outsider's approach is also time consuming. Furthermore, as Knott makes clear, unequal power distinctions can also emerge between the observed and observer (2010). For example, participants can be unwittingly affected by the researcher that impacts research findings by feeling that they are special in some way because their beliefs are subject to academic study (Knott, 2010). Despite positioning the researched to guide the direction of research, it remains possible that the researcher influences the

participant, either through affirmation of their beliefs, or because the researched wants to tell the researcher what they think they want to hear (Knott, 2010). Most problematic, however, is that scholars of religion who adopt an outsiders' position are often cultural insiders. As such, it can be difficult to determine with certainty that preconceived assumptions, biases and expectations are not implicitly and unknowingly influencing research.

In contrast, though there is evidence of organisational scholars that treat the study of metaphysical belief from philosophical and sociological perspectives (Driver, 2007; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009; Case & Gosling, 2010), most organisational enquiry typically adopts an insider's perspective, which assumes authority and legitimacy of constructions of reality held through pre-selected frameworks hinged on preconceived assumptions, expectations and perspectives (Knott, 2010). That is to say, that which is being researched is not approached neutrally or objectively, but considered and judged through the assumed values, expectations and assumptions of the insider's lens adopted (Connolly, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). An insider's approach is evident in the fact that much management and organisational literature approaches its object of study in a manner that unquestioningly position organisational aims and objectives, and market concerns as the modus operandi for comprehending the human condition. It is also evident through the fact that much WPS scholarship considers themes such as "power", "authority" and "discrimination" in organisational settings problematic for sociologists of religion because 'they cannot turn to the financial incentives used in utilitarian organisations or the physical sanctions used in coercive organisations' (Tracey, 2012: 110). Further illustrating the neglect of classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion and its treatment of themes such as "power", "authority" and "discrimination" (despite pleas for organisational scholarship to perform such a task), what is apparent then is how an insider's approach opens the possibility for researchers to become blind to the obvious (Gilhus, 2011). It also demonstrates how, through adopting an insider's approach that perceives metaphysical faith and belief through capitalist lenses that favourably reflect economic aims and objectives of organisations, WPS scholarship does not neutrally or objectively approach the study of metaphysical faith and belief. As such, in assuming the researchers perspective is unquestioningly valid and authentic, many organisational researchers overlook certain factors or influences, or apply their own interpretation, which affects their research outcomes.

Thus, where scholarship that adopts an outsider's approach seeks to understand the insider's perspective of the researched, scholarship that adopts an insider's perspective denies validity and authenticity of perspectives held by the researched that can limit research findings that severely compromise academic integrity. Given this, it can be argued is that WPS scholarship is limited in that the approaches it adopts acts as its own judge and juror that both justifies and affirms dominant cultural perspectives, values and assumptions as unquestioned truths. It is difficult therefore for WPS scholars to contribute to comprehension of the significance of metaphysical faith and belief to activity regarded as "work" because the conflicting and contradictory loyalties do not enable cultivation of understanding of

alternative perceptions of reality as held by those expressing metaphysical belief, but serve only to strengthen and legitimise its own perspective. Highlighting how WPS scholars approach to study is marked by an unquestioned allegiance to values inherent and representative of the economic cosmos, illustrated then is how an insider's approach is inherently problematic in relation to research pertaining to metaphysical concerns. This is because by not questioning the validity of unquestioned values and principles that reflect market concerns, what is evident is a lack of appreciation within WPS as to the significance of metaphysical faith and beliefs in shaping, affecting and influencing participants' everyday lives, and consequently the meaning and purpose derived from the activity of work.

The impact of adopting an insiders approach to the study of metaphysical belief as opposed to an outsider's position is significant then, for as Connolly suggests, the approach adopted influences the mentality of the researcher (1999). For example, where sociological analysis of religion seeks to understand the significance of metaphysical belief to the individual in relation to the wider social and cultural context, academic, educational and business circles tend to focus on the utilisation of religious and spiritual ideas to mobilise employees for the improvement of employee commitment and performance, and organisational efficiency and productivity. This is in contrast to outsider approaches characteristic of sociological analysis of religion that foster reflexivity of its own assumptions. Reflected then is the methodological agnosticism that underpins much sociological analysis of religion (Smart, 1973), wherein researchers 'bring to their enquiries neither a commitment to the truth or accuracy of one or more religious views of the world, nor a conviction of their falsity or inaccuracy' (Connolly, 1999: 2). What is evident then is how much organisational research that explores the significance metaphysical belief, practices and perspectives concerning activity referred to as work remains unwilling to adopt lenses applied by sociologists of religion that seek to illuminate, challenge and expand dominant perspectives and considerations of metaphysical belief and activity referred to as work in a given context. That is to say, where the study of metaphysical belief within the sociology of religion adopts a phenomenological, interpretivist and comparative approach that seeks to hold as few assumptions as possible, the study of metaphysical belief within organisation studies is characterised by a relativistic, pragmatic and rational approach that 'explicitly accept certain assumptions and priorities' (Connolly, 1999: 3).

## A critique of workplace spirituality and critical workplace spirituality
### through the lens of Religious Studies

Though CWPS scholars criticise WPS for presenting religiosity as an instrument to be mobilised in support of rational, capitalist demands of the economic cosmos, CWPS scholars neither provide nor indeed advocate an alternative position to values and principles that reflect organisational aims and objectives. Thus, whilst CWPS scholarship outlines a number of contentions surrounding the underlying

market aims and objectives concerning the human resource that underpin WPS literature, such as efficiency, motivation, commitment and productivity, CWPS scholars do not confront their own assumptions of what the human condition "is". Failing to contemplate why such problems are considered problems at all, the insider position typically adopted by organisational scholars regardless whether they identify as WPS or CWPS is significant for a multitude of reasons. Concerning the present discussion, however, such an approach adds another dimension to the critique provided above concerning the lack of engagement with Religious Studies by WPS scholars. It is in the following then that WPS and CWPS literature will be discussed from a position reflective of sociological analysis of religion in order to critically evaluate the extent to which literature emerging from WPS and CWPS facilitates understanding as to the significance of metaphysical belief in relation to activities typically referred to as work in the contemporary Western context.

To begin with, from a sociological point of view, much CWPS literature that explores the metaphysical can be considered superficial. This is because, similar to WPS, much CWPS literature does not contextualise discussion in relation to the wider historical, social, cultural, political and geographical landscape. As such, when CWPS scholars do engage with sociological analysis of religion, the level of engagement attained is questionable. This is arguably due to the audience WPS and CWPS literature, whose primary aims and objectives reflect organisational concerns and managerial interests. This is particularly evident in the work of Bell and Taylor (2003), who draw heavily on Weber's *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*, but whose engagement with Weber only goes as far as to provide support for their argument that the Protestant work ethic has been reformulated and re-visioned by contemporary organisations through WPS into a New Age work ethic (Bell & Taylor, 2003). What is not evident from their discussion, however, is in depth engagement with the primary text or publications written in dialogue with Weber by contemporary sociologists of religion that generates reflexivity or reflection of the wider social and cultural landscape. This is particularly the case with Bell and Taylor's citation of Berger's seminal publication 'Some General Observations on the Problem of Work' (1964). This is because, despite providing a foundation through which to explore the 'ontological devaluation of the world of work' (Berger, 1964: 114) following processes of secularisation and technical advancement that contextualises the Protestant work ethic as a particular historical, social and cultural process, there is no evidence within Bell and Taylor's text of their engagement with this text and the narrative contained. Similar arguments can also be made concerning Bell and Taylor's use of influential contemporary sociologists of religion, such as Heelas (1991; 1992), Roberts (1992), and Sutcliffe and Bowman (2000). This is because the texts drawn on are out-dated by more recent and relevant publications from those scholars (Heelas, 2002; Roberts, 2001), that advances many of the key discussions, themes and debates Bell and Taylor raise.

From this perspective, both WPS and CWPS scholars alike can be considered to position classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion in a supporting role that does not enrich scholarship

generated, but to affirm the perceived authority and authenticity of insider perspectives held within Organisation Studies. Rather than using existing sociological debate to generate interdisciplinary discussion and dialogue, much CWPS scholarship also reduces sociological analysis of religion to a tool to support, validate and legitimise preferred perspectives. By appearing to engage with sociological analysis of religion, however, such CWPS can avoid such criticism from scholars who do not engage with sociological analysis at all whilst at the same time legitimising their own perspective as superior and authoritative. Further supporting the suggestion that CWPS limits the degree to which it engages with sociological analysis of religion in order to legitimise conceptualisations and theorisations emerging from Organisation Studies as the authentic, authoritative voice, not only explicit is the underlying confirmation bias toward values, expectations, assumptions and desires held by WPS, and much CWPS, literature. Such superficial engagement with sociological analysis of religion is also apparent in work conducted by Gotsis and Kortezi, who seek to ground their critical discussion of WPS by drawing on Hicks's concept of "respectful pluralism". A concept that emerged from Hick's own engagement with Leadership studies to refer to the creation of pluralistic work environments that encourage employers and employees to express widely divergent, multiple metaphysical perspectives and beliefs within one organisational context respectful pluralism highlights the negotiation required from both groups for such environments to emerge (2003). Through case studies, Hicks thus makes apparent the dominant sociological position that metaphysical belief resonates within the work environment in a multitude of ways, as well as the need to take into consideration the specific context being discussed, and metaphysical belief expressed (2003). Despite this, Gotsis and Kortezi continue to argue that 'any attempt to approach workplace spirituality from a context-specific background leads to fragmented discussion, in which only people sharing the same cultural, religious theoretical or scientific background can be involved' (2007: 583). As such, by superficially engaging with Hick's argument, Gotsis and Kortezi not only fail to recognise the point of Hick's "respectful pluralism", but also neglect to recognise the pluralistic context that encapsulates belief in contemporary Anglo-American contexts.

Given this, whilst CWPS scholars critique WPS on the basis that it explores metaphysical belief in order to construct a universal set of values that encourage commitment, motivation, and productive performance of work activities, such critique can also be levelled against some CWPS scholars. This is because CWPS scholarship also denies religious pluralism and ignores fundamental and incomparable differences between manifestations of contemporary metaphysical belief as documented in sociological analysis of religion in order to maintain the preferred interpretation that the inclusion of metaphysical faith and belief in organisational contexts promotes the creation of a universal set of values. What is apparent then is the extent to which CWPS scholars exploring the metaphysical are also unwilling to adopt the sociological lens required to see the religion as employees themselves do, despite claiming to engage with sociological analysis of religion. This is important, for although CWPS scholarship recognises that contemporary manifestations of metaphysical belief is often highly subjective, and

based on the experiences of the individual to the point that its expression is not constrained by a particular faith or tradition (Hill & Smith, 2003), what is omitted is the main social and cultural function of metaphysical belief: to provide a cohesive and all-encapsulating conceptualisation of an ontological home to frame the experience of material being (Berger et al., 1973). Neglecting thus the significance of metaphysical belief in terms of construction of a sense of meaning, purpose and belonging not only in relation to the wider human condition experienced in material existence, but following death (Berger et al., 1973), this is important in relation to the values underpinning Organisation Studies. This is because what is highlighted is how CWPS falls into the same trap as WPS by perceiving metaphysical belief as ahistorical and apolitical, and acontextual that can cause CWPS literature to lose sight of the purpose of metaphysical belief for the human condition.

Furthermore, also demonstrated is the lack of appreciation in WPS and some CWPS literature concerning how metaphysical belief shapes, affects and influences participants' everyday lives, including their approach to work. Nowhere is this claim more substantiated than the limited consideration CWPS literature displays toward the subjective spiritual turn. Considered by the many scholars of religion to represent the greatest spiritual revolution of the last century (Davie, 1994; Partridge, 2004; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005), there is general consensus that there has, over the past 60 years been a 'turn away from life lived in terms of external or "objective" roles, duties and obligations, and a turn towards a life lived by reference to one's own subjective experiences [both relational as much as individualistic]' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005: 2). Discussion of the subjective spiritual turn is largely omitted in CWPS literature, however. Given this, what can be argued then is that CWPS scholarship does not appreciate the subtle contextual differences and nuances that shape the vast majority of contemporary manifestations of metaphysical belief. As such, much CWPS scholarship that seeks to draw attention to the significance of metaphysical belief to activity referred to as work is arguably rendered meaningless in that it is unable to add anything of substance to the understanding of metaphysical belief in the contemporary Western context.

Such lack of contemplation surrounding the impact the subjective spiritual turn has had not only to manifestations of belief but informs constructions of meaning and purpose derived from activities of work, is an oversight with serious implications. This is because what is evident then is that some CWPS scholars would rather continue conceptualising "religiosity" and "spirituality" as monotheistic, Abrahamic traditions wherein sacred and secular domains are clearly identifiable, separate aspects of life. Given this, whilst Organisation Studies benefits from engagement with analysis undertaken by sociologists of religion concerning the connection between belief and one's approach to work, the same cannot be said for sociologists of religion. This is not to say that inroads have not been made (Driver, 2007; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2009; Case & Gosling, 2010), but that there are a number of considerations that current organisational research has yet to consider. These range, for example, from: the wider moral and ethical implications of organisational interest and mobilisation of human resources through

metaphysical belief; how contemporary manifestations of belief and the re-sacralisation of typically secular spaces reflect wider concerns of the human condition; and to what extent metaphysical belief impacts and shapes the approach to and performance of activity referred to as work.

Contextual differences

The lack of systematic engagement by both WPS and CWPS literature with sociological analysis of religion that seeks to develop understanding concerning contemporary manifestations of belief is important. This is because such lack of engagement signifies a lack of regard for the subtle nuances and complexities that shape contemporary manifestations of metaphysical belief that in turn leads to an over-simplified perspective that does not take into consideration the significance of the specific historical, geographical, social and cultural context in which manifestations of faith and belief occur. Such lack of regard for contextual differences is particularly evident in Hudson's comparison of spiritual courses available in organisations based in Ireland and Indonesia (2014). Though religion as found in Indonesia and Ireland is predominantly monotheistic, Abrahamic traditions, there are markedly different ontological and epistemological assumptions present. Religiosity in Ireland and Indonesia also manifest differently due to distinctive conceptions of sacred and secular aspects of existence that between global societies (Sutcliffe & Gilhus, 2013). Most significantly, however, they also manifest differently because of different expectations and roles metaphysical belief plays in public and private spheres that affect the way in which activities of work are interpreted relative to one's being. By failing to consider the widely divergent and conflicting manifestations and expressions of religiosity found in these contrasting geographical, cultural and social domains, or the significant role cultural and social influences play in shaping such manifestations, perceptions and expressions, Hudson's discussion thus reveals the assumptions held by WPS scholars regarding the instrumentality of belief.

Whilst conflation between different cultural contexts is problematic, most concerning, however, is conflation by WPS and CWPS scholars of manifestations of belief expressed within Anglo-American contexts. This arguably results from the shared history that gives the impression that there is a continued synonymy between metaphysical expressions of faith and belief despite the wealth of sociological analysis that states the contrary (Bruce, 2002: Berger et al., 2008). Such conflation is particularly evident in the fact that though the majority of WPS and CWPS research originates from the USA, its findings and conclusions are readily applied to the European and global context without hesitation or critical reflection of the degree to which such research translates. Whilst European manifestations of Christianity can typically be considered representative of Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism, American manifestations of Christianity are predominantly charismatic and evangelical in nature, and often informed by literal eschatological interpretations of the Bible (Stark & Glock, 1968; New, 2012). Furthermore, concerning the UK specifically, there is a marked decline of

faith in organised Christianity following the Enlightenment and the subjective spiritual turn, which typically draws on ancient practices, beliefs and techniques relevant to the Western European context, such as Paganism, as well as investment of eastern forms of religiosity (Partridge, 2004).

Explicit then are a number of fundamental differences that exist between expressions of metaphysical belief found in the UK and USA despite the fact that they share significant social, cultural and historical similarities. Given this, most contemporary sociologists of religion comment that direct translation of one religious context to another is not only impossible, and illogical, but misguided (Douglas, 2002). This is because sociologists of religion argue that it is impossible to derive insight into contemporary expressions of metaphysical belief when consideration of how historical, social and cultural factors emerging within a specific context that shape and direct metaphysical belief, are neglected. Rather than bundling contradictory and conflating beliefs, perspectives, practices to discuss "spirituality" or "religion" as a determined value in attempt to identify a set of universal values as is the approach evident from much WPS and CWPS literature, sociologists of religion traditionally approach contemporary forms of religiosity comparatively (Weber, 1922; Smart, 1969; Connolly, 1999). The advocation of comparative analysis is formulated on the basis that without contextualising and comprehending expressions, manifestations and conceptualisation of metaphysical faith and belief within its historical, cultural, political, social and geographical context, the significance and meaning of religiosity cannot be adequately contemplated or comprehended, nor the possibility of its effect and impact in society, be gleaned. Comparative analysis also limits the possibility for the researcher's assumptions and biases to cloud analysis in that such an approach fosters greater appreciation and understanding to develop not only in regard to the contexts in question but the themes, concepts and ideas being explored in a manner that does not favour one position or perspective over another. By not adopting a comparative approach then, scholarship runs the risk of producing meaningless research that does not further understanding of contemporary forms of metaphysical faith and belief, but simply affirms preconceived assumptions and expectations.

Assumptions of the "Self"

On top of the lack of regard for contextual differences, there is also the lack of regard amongst both WPS and CWPS scholars as to the differing constructions, conceptions, and beliefs of what the self "is", or how such constructions emerge from and rely on the surrounding contextual perspectives of being for such conceptions to derive legitimacy, certainty, and authenticity. Such a statement is evident in WPS and CWPS literature in that many scholars uncritically and unquestioningly assume the existence of a "whole self" or "soul" (Heelas, 2013; Partridge, 2004). Furthermore, unquestioningly assuming perspectives that reflect Christian conceptions of "self", many WPS and CWPS scholars' research implicitly perceive contemporary selves to possess a 'fixed essence' (Carrette & King, 2005:

58). As sociologists of religion argue, however, what constitutes the "whole" self according to WPS or CWPS scholars may not reflect what is conceived as the "whole" self by employees, and particularly within pluralistic contemporary societies where metaphysical belief is no longer taken for granted. For example, an individual who draws upon Christian frameworks will have a different construction of self to an individual who draws upon South Asian frameworks, or indeed contemporary New Age and occult spiritual practices (to be explored in Chapter Two), in that the self may be considered 'not itself active, [nor] having consciousness of otherness' (Biedler, 1975: 48). This is not to say that inroads have not been made by CWPS scholars who seek to draw attention to the fragmentation of identity and constructions of "self" at work (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014). Despite this, however, much CWPS research does not adopt a comparative lens to develop insight relative to particular positions and perspectives of what the Self "is" in a given context. When contextual nuances, such as pluralism as evident in contemporary UK and USA contexts, are side-lined in favour of portraying a more cohesive and homogenous landscape, however, it is difficult for CWPS literature to develop analysis that addresses where exactly manifestations of the Self they are discussing as a concrete reality manifests, nor precisely "who" it relates to. Rather, CWPS literature typically reflects conceptions of Self that emerge from Abrahamic religious traditions or psychological models that presume the "whole self" to be captured through its frameworks in totality that legitimise the instrumentalisation of the human condition for capitalist demands and objectives. From this perspective, what is evident then is how much WPS and CWPS scholarship fails to consider the various manifestations of self that exist, and which inform an individual's ontological perspective and interpretation of the experience of existence.

## Chapter summary

The above discussion outlines the dominant strands of organisational literature that seeks to explore the significance of metaphysical faith and belief to activity typically referred to as work. Inviting employees to bring their "whole" being to work through the inclusion of rhetoric and practices steeped in metaphysical rhetoric, ideology and symbolism, the above highlights the positive reception literature that seeks to harness metaphysical beliefs, values and practices has from Organisation Studies in general. Indeed, claiming to improve not only employee efficiency and productivity, but also employee motivation, loyalty and commitment, there is an overwhelming consensus that its inclusion has a positive impact in resolving contemporary organisational problems. Despite this positive reception, discussion raised by CWPS scholars highlight a number of contentions the current engagement with metaphysical belief from WPS research wields. Typically surrounding the instrumentality of being that results when organisations treat employees as commodities in line with the logic of the market and positivistic ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, CWPS literature highlights the lack of reflexivity emanating from much WPS literature that limits conception of the metaphysical

to echo material concerns held by managerial circles through its positivistic approaches that seek to measure the impact metaphysical faith and belief has to organisational contexts. Furthermore, it indicates a lack of engagement with classical and contemporary sociological analysis of religion, and the ethical questions that emerge through the attempt to create a set of universal values.

Ironically, however, whilst CWPS scholars perceive their exploration of metaphysical belief to facilitate understanding and contemplation of the human condition, this Chapter highlights how CWPS scholarship also limits metaphysical and incorporeal beliefs, values and concerns to the corporeal and material world. Such a position was argued in that much CWPS literature also fails to generate substantive engagement with classical and contemporary literature from Religious Studies. Unable, or unwilling, to recognise the subtle nuances and complexities of contemporary metaphysical belief, and the significance metaphysical belief holds for adherents, this was explored through the application of approaches developed by sociologists of religion to demonstrate how CWPS scholarship remains driven implicitly by capitalistic assumptions, expectations and perspectives held by organisations as opposed to exploration of metaphysical beliefs, concerns and values as valid perspectives themselves. Examined through the insider/outsider debate, this chapter thus argued that similar to WPS literature, CWPS literature continues to entrench the validity of pre-conceived assumptions, expectations and perspectives in shaping organisational research interests, rationales and focus. This is evident in the continued and implicit, unquestioned approach that reflects psychological assumptions and expectations that reduce the metaphysical to worldly concerns. This is important, for by continuing to hold capitalistic concerns, aims and objectives above the human condition, what amounts through organisational research is not greater understanding or knowledge of being in the world relative to worldly activity referred to as work, but a perspective of self understood through parameters that reflect the interests and logic of the market.

Rather than offer an alternative perspective that promotes further questioning and contemplation of organisational aims and objectives in relation to the human condition, CWPS thus continues to affirm the status quo that arguably denies the validity of metaphysical faith and belief. Such contentions are compounded by the lack of interpretivist data that make it difficult to position metaphysical belief as central to enquiry. Chapter One thus makes evident that understanding fostered within organisation studies by WPS and CWPS literature does not position the human condition as the primary concern then, but secondary to perspectives that derive validity and legitimacy within quantifiable, and scientific approaches. Given the lack of consideration of metaphysical belief, values and concerns from a sociological position that position the human condition before organisational demands, it is argued that literature emanating from organisation studies does not foster understanding of the significance of metaphysical beliefs, values and concerns in relation to worldly activity such as work that takes into consideration the wider social and cultural forces that shape how work is perceived and approached. As such, Chapter One highlights the need for exploration of metaphysical faith and belief in relation to

worldly activity referred to as work that adopts an outsider's position. This is because an outsider's approach seeks to provide a historically contextualised account that takes into account the changing nature and role of metaphysical concerns in the UK context. Thus, it is in Chapter Two that sociological analysis of religion will be employed to historically ground examination of the relational dynamic that exists between economic life, the human condition, and the significance of worldly activity such as work in relation to metaphysical belief following the decline of traditional forms of organised religion. In doing so, a perspective that reflects wider social and cultural forces rather than pre-determined aims and objectives emanating from organisational contexts and market logic can emerge.

# CHAPTER TWO:
# THE PROBLEM OF WORK, THE RE-ENCHANTMENT OF THE WEST AND THE SPIRITUALISATION OF THE WORKPLACE

As Chapter One makes clear, much scholarship emerging from Organisation Studies concerning metaphysical belief fails to grasp its complexity, and consequently the meaning and purpose it holds regarding activities typically referred to as "work". Given the critique raised in Chapter One regarding discussion of the recursive dynamic between metaphysical belief and worldly activity such as work generated from WPS and CWPS literature that typically reflects organisational aims and objectives, Chapter Two will explore the relationship between economic life, the activity of work and the human condition through historical, sociological, philosophical and anthropological analysis. discussion is organised in two parts. Part I contextualises the meaning and purpose of work historically. In doing so, it illustrates the dynamic between economic life and religious belief as a historical process. Drawing on Weber to illustrate the "Protestant Work Ethic" and "Spirit of Capitalism" that accompanied the growing advocation of economic activity in the Sixteenth century, such developments are contextualised through the works of Nietzsche and Arendt to consider the impact of the Enlightenment to the human condition. This is examined through Nietzsche's argument of the death of God, which outlines the affect the decline of collective and shared perspectives of being has had to the human condition. Such analysis is framed by Arendt's exploration of the human condition in contexts that have witnessed the death of God and rise of technical thinking. Giving birth to the economic cosmos, it contextualises the growth of conceptualisations of being that hinge upon the reality and centrality of the subjective self exclusively in material reality to compensate for the loss of an external Absolute that once gave security, stability and certainty concerning metaphysical reality. Part I also frames the works of Nietzsche and Arendt through Berger's considerations of the effect of secularisation and technical advancement to the meaning and purpose derived from activities of "work" in relation to being in the material world.

Part II turns its attention to the human condition in the contemporary Western UK context. Framing the contemporary condition of being through the theory of "homelessness" outlined by Berger and colleagues in the *homeless mind thesis* (1973), attention is drawn to the continued need of humanity to construct institutions to provide refuge from the responsibility of constructing for themselves a coherent and cohesive ontological outlook. This continued need for meaning and purpose derived beyond the subject is explored through the rise of what Berger and colleagues refer to as "secondary institutions". Distinct from moral, ethical and philosophical ideas and perspectives as expressed in traditional religious, primary institutions such as Christianity, secondary institutions that rose during the 1960s countercultural revolution drew on multiple religious and philosophical, concepts, rhetoric and practices that provided a home for being within a particular collective, but which also legitimised within its

system the exploration and "actualisation" of one's subjective "self". This is explored through examples of the Human Potential Movement (HPM) and Erhardt Seminar Training (est).

Secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution are significant to the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and economic life because they give rise to what Heelas terms "the self-work ethic" (1996). The self-work ethic is proposed by Heelas to refer to the development of the "ethics of self-work" wherein the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of the subjective "authentic" self is constructed in relation to the collective human condition through the enactment of worldly activity that is inherently meaningful and purposeful to the enactor. This chapter considers Thrift's concept of "soft capitalism" as found in secular, for profit organisations, as the organisational attempt to function as secondary institutions to provide a home for contemporary constructs of being in order to foster "ethics of self-work" by re-conceptualising the meaning and purpose of activity from its nature and character to its performance. Explored through a case study of *Landmark Worldwide* and its subsidiary consultancy firm, *The Vanto Group*, which hold the rights to practices and techniques developed by est, this chapter examines how the self-work ethic has been reformulated by soft capitalist secondary institutions to complement the aims and intentions of the economic cosmos. Finally, it considers the wider implications and consequences of soft capitalist secondary institutions to the human condition that seek to provide a home for being.

## The Protestant work ethic

Throughout much of history, economic activity has been perceived in Christian frameworks of belief as antithetical to morality and ethicality (Tawney, 1922; Weber, 1905). During the sixteenth century, however, activity undertaken for economic prosperity was imbued with metaphysical significance. This was due to reforms made to the Christian church to account for the growing dis-ease and doubt concerning God's existence following the decline of Platonic philosophical conceptions of an Absolute that considered God the perfect, ideal form of the human condition, to Aristotelian philosophical conceptions that considered God wholly separate from humanity (Dupré, 1993). Attributed to the growing neglect of action undertaken for spiritual, other-worldly concerns of the collective in favour of economic activity undertaken not for the good of the collective but for individual benefit exclusively relative to worldly existence rose in prominence (Tawney, 1922), such developments are discussed at length by Weber in his seminal text *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905). Here, Weber argues that fluctuations in metaphysical belief alter and shape economic life and the meaning and purpose invested into and derived from worldly activity such as work (1905). This shift is particularly evident through the re-interpretation of the doctrine of predestination. The doctrine of predestination had previously stipulated that all who believed in the Trinity and expressed faith were

recipients of God's grace and salvation in the afterlife. Following the Reformation (1517-1648), however, the doctrine of predestination was re-interpreted first by Martin Luther and later by John Calvin in attempt to relocate certainty and truth of God's grace in the material world, and re-harmonise material and transcendental aspects of being.

Advocating through Puritanism a return to the "golden age" of faith of pre-medieval Christianity, Luther proposed that action undertaken to support biological necessity was reflective of one's grace and salvation (Weber, 1905). This is because, for Luther, action undertaken to sustain the biological needs of the human condition reflected God's will (Weber, 1905). Significantly, however, Luther's reforms stipulated that salvation depended not only on faith and belief in God, the Son and the Holy Spirit as expressed through worldly action, but whether one had been Elected[2] prior to worldly existence to receive Gods divine grace and salvation in the next life (Weber, 1905). In portraying salvation as dependent on divine election regardless of living a life replete with good deeds, however, many felt despair that faith in God as expressed through one's worldly actions was no longer indicative of one's salvation in the afterlife. Further fueling despair in reaction to fears of hopeless damnation despite religious conviction and worldly activity, in response to Luther's re-interpretation of the doctrine of predestination, Calvin posed that confidence in one's status as Elect could be derived from accurate execution and diligence of effort expressed through one's worldly actions (Weber, 1905). Arguing that metaphysical significance invested into worldly activity would lead to increased morality and certainty of God's reality within the Christian collective (Tawney, 1922) because 'it is only action, not idleness and indulgence, that serves to increase his glory' (1905: 67-69), Calvin particularly endorsed activities of work. This is because for Calvin, work could not only eradicate religious doubt, but reinvigorate certainty of God's grace. Regarding its enactment to be the most visible evidence of one's sincerity of faith in God's reality, rather than demonising economic activity then, Calvin made economic activity central to Christian social ethics, and symbolic of the degree to which one should have confidence as to whether one was Elect (Tawney, 1922).

Referred to as the Protestant work ethic, this is particularly evident through Calvin's re-conceptualisation of the term "calling". A term previously used to refer to an individual's calling to return to God upon death, Calvin reinterpreted one's "calling" to refer to 'the highest form of moral obligation [in] fulfilling his duty in worldly affairs' (Weber, 1905: xii). Calvin's reforms are significant regarding the increasing synonymy between economic and religious concerns then, for where economic activity had been considered to distract being from God's providence, and from attaining salvation in the afterlife, Calvin positioned worldly activity as synonymous with God's will. Where mental labour through contemplation had previously characterised humanity's relationship with God (Weber, 1905,

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[2] The term elect is used to refer to individuals who have received God's Divine will and Grace to receive salvation in the afterlife.

Taylor, 2007), what was now important was worldly labour through the body to attain a condition of humanity free from pain and effort. Highlighting the extent to which amendments made to the doctrine of predestination impacted the way in which economic activity is recast as symbolic of God's will, such developments are significant in relation to the way Christians perceived material existence, and their spiritual progression toward the afterlife. For example, where worldly activities had previously signified individual pious acts and meritorious deeds that affirmed belief in the Trinity, as Weber highlights, 'the God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a *life of good works* combined into a unified system' (1905: 71[my emphasis]). What emerged as a result of Calvin's re-interpretation of the doctrine of predestination was a narrative conception of being that enabled individual actions to be perceived as a reflection of one's being as a whole. Considered by Weber the "spiritualisation of personality" (1905), what was required of believers was the construction of increasingly solid conceptions of being exclusively within material reality. Legitimising the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's inner desires, interests and beliefs in material reality through worldly activity, and particularly activities of work, through Calvin's reforms then, work became increasingly symbolic of one's status as elect and destiny toward salvation.

Where worldly activity referred to as "work" had previously symbolised what one's status of being *was* during material existence and the status one should expect *to become* in the afterlife, Calvin's reforms ushered in a perspective of being previously illogical and impossible to any period prior to the modern age (Arendt, 1958). This is because by re-positioning worldly activity to symbolise one's inner-being and personality, the focus of humanity increasingly revolved around a trajectory of becoming in *this* life within material reality rather than a trajectory of becoming relative to one's future existence in the afterlife. As worldly existence became intricately bound to economic activity and the accumulation of profit as a means of securing confidence in the freedom of one's being in salvation, work was thus increasingly seen as "an end in itself" (Weber, 1905). Calvin's reinterpretation of the doctrine of predestination is significant then, for it illustrates how one's individual being became increasingly position as 'the spiritual substratum of all reality' (Dupré, 1993: 3), and the locus through which meaning and purpose of being within and beyond material existence is derived.


The spirit of capitalism

Illustrating how temporal being was increasingly 'used to 'secure' one's own calling' (Weber, 1905: 69), the above discussion highlights how the Protestant work ethic gave rise to subjective narrative constructions of life-time. With such constructions, time itself became increasingly perceived to relate to one's subjective existence, and thus symbolic of that which could be lost and spent inappropriately depending on the worldly activity undertaken (Tawney, 1922). Such a shift in attitude is significant in demonstrating how the development of a unified and systematic narrative construction of self had

significant consequences transformed the way in which economic life was perceived. For example, where Christianity had previously considered economic activity undertaken for self-interest and material gains as sinful (Tawney, 1922), following the Reformation, economic activity became symbolic of the measure of one's subjective character, identity and being in this life and the afterlife. How one "spent" one's life-time thus became the paramount concern of material existence. Thus, where mental labour required in contemplation had previously been considered the activity through which questions surrounding what being "is" and how it can be known could be explored, the Protestant reformation ushered in a growing attitude wherein the physical inactivity of contemplation was considered valueless and even sinful in contrast to action such as work, and particularly when contemplation was undertaken at the expense of action (Weber, 1905). Demonstrating the transformation of Christian ethics where economic activity was considered to undermine and detract from God's will, to economic life imbued with religious significance, is important. This is because what arose was the idea that restless, continuous and systematic action undertaken as one's calling was the highest form of asceticism.

An attitude emerging from the belief that worldly activity provided the surest and most reliable proof of one's status of Elect and sincerity of faith, the rising importance of worldly actions referred to as "work" is significant in relation to what Weber terms "the 'spirit' of capitalism" (1905). Constituting a philosophy of life wherein economic activity provided a means through which meaning and purpose could be conceived into material reality exclusively and in isolation from being beyond material existence, the spirit of capitalism is characterised by the growing valuation of economic prosperity wherein certainty of salvation hinged on the accumulation of wealth derived from action constitutive of one's calling (Weber, 1905; Tawney, 1922). As the economic cosmos grew in complexity, however, its application within material reality increasingly reflected the rapid expansion of Western trade and commerce across various socio-economic and cultural geographical contexts rather than certainty as to one's status of Elect in the afterlife (Weber, 1905; Tawney, 1922, Dupré, 1993). This is because the capitalism of spirituality encouraged the perspective that the human condition in material reality is inherently meaningful in its own right to emerge. Encouraging an expansion of economic life in Western European societies underpinned by secular concerns, the growing prominence of economic life and growth in material wealth resulted in belief concerning being in the afterlife to become increasingly insignificant and a separate condition to material being (Weber, 1905).

To illustrate, Weber draws on the works of theologian John Wesley, who foresaw disparities emerging between religious and economic life. Arguing that 'as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches' (Wesley, 1820: 235 in Weber, 1905: 118), Wesley's perspective indicates how the growing significance and expansion of being in the material world through increased economic activity, prosperity and wealth directly correlate with the decrease of religious significance and meaning pertinent to being in the material world. Rather than dispel tensions and uncertainty mounting between

worldly and metaphysical existence then, what Wesley makes evident is how the Protestant Reformation gave rise to the significance of material life and growing power of economic activity over the human condition never witnessed previously in the Western context (Weber, 1905). As such, whilst Christianity remained significant in terms of constructing a sense of what being "is", the spirit of capitalism challenged the relevancy of the religious ethos that had previously legitimised and validated such economic activity (Wesley, 1820; Weber, 1905). That is to say, where Christianity had previously encapsulated economic activity within its moral and ethical frameworks, economic activity now expanded beyond Christian frameworks.

For Weber, the re-conceptualisation of economic activity unbridled from restrictions imposed by religious life was significant, for he argued it left humanity as 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilisation never before achieved' (1905: 124). No longer did worldly activity symbolise a spiritual act through which confidence as to one's status of Elect in the afterlife could be conceived. Instead, what emerged was faith in the meaning and purpose of existence as experienced exclusively in the material world, and characterised by economic activity. Further illustrative of the correlation between the rise in attachment of and dependence on material goods, benefits and rewards received through economic activity, and the decline of faith and conviction in religious frameworks of belief, such developments can be regarded as the emergence of the economic cosmos. The emergence of the economic cosmos is evident through the increased significance associated with rational, pragmatic behaviours and activity that underpin economic activity. Nowhere is this more evident than through the intensification of the division of labour proposed by Smith (1776), who re-interpreted the division of labour of monastic communities who lived life according to Divine will and religious duty relative to the Christian collective, to apply it to activity undertaken for the qualitative and quantitative production of goods (Weber, 1905). Unlike the Protestant work ethic that conceived the nature and character of worldly activity undertaken should be an extension and expression of one's personality, however, the division of labour proposed by Smith promoted 'the idea that faithful labour, even at low wages, on the part of those whom life offers no other opportunities, is highly pleasing to God' (Weber, 1905: 121). Reinforcing the accumulation of wealth and ownership of material goods as the means through which the meaning and purpose of being could be determined, the re-interpretation of the division of labour according to the economic cosmos thus entrenched perspectives underpinned by rational self-interest and material pursuits such as property-ownership and private enterprise (Weber, 1905).

The rise of the economic cosmos is also evident through the creation of Utilitarian moral and ethical justifications that filled the void left by Christianity in order to compensate for and help the human condition cope with the loss of certainty in God's salvation and divine providence (Weber, 1905). This is apparent through Weber's illustration of 'the bourgeois business man, [who], as long as he remained within the bounds of formal correctness, and as long as his moral conduct was spotless and the use to

which he put his wealth was not objectionable, could follow his pecuniary interests as he would and feel that he was fulfilling a duty in doing so' (1905: 120). Highlighting the growing dependence on rational self-interest as doubt concerning God's reality flourished, evident is how, under the expansion of the economic cosmos over the human condition, it does not matter if one's activity of work is geared toward economic prosperity *so long as one believes and feels* one's activity is fulfilling a duty, and is not morally objectionable. Sustaining the illusion that the emancipation of humanity is possible through the development of faith in the economic cosmos, what amounted through the spirit of capitalism is the growing belief that the survival and progression of the human condition depends on the continual growth of the economic cosmos. The spirit of capitalism is significant then, for it signifies the period in which the light cloak that could be cast off at any moment and which once represented humanity's relationship with material concerns, was replaced for an iron cage, which binds the human condition exclusively to material concerns of the economic cosmos, and the technical and economic conditions of machine production that sustain it (Weber, 1905). Where material existence had previously been determined by religious sentiment relevant to the collective human condition then, the spirit of capitalism gave rise to a condition of material existence increasingly determined by mechanistic principles for the sake of economic acquisition. As Weber makes evident then, what emerged from the Protestant reformation then was justification and rationalisation of immoral and unethical activity in the name of progress of one's state of being that bound the human condition even tighter to a slave mentality not in service of the divine Absolute, but the idea of one's individual self-importance (1905).

## The death of God

Indicating the moral and ethical corruption and stagnation of the human condition as faith in an economic cosmos unbridled from the restrictions imposed by religious life grew and Christianity became progressively regarded as irrelevant, the impact this has had to humanity still pervades contemporary conceptualisations of being. This is because what was 'lost in the modern age, was not the capacity for truth or reality of faith nor the concomitant inevitable acceptance of the testimony of the senses and reason, but the certainty that formerly went with it' (Arendt, 1958: 277). Humanity was thus faced with a choice: assume responsibility for the role previously attributed to God or nature, thereby removing the need for theological frameworks of belief, or re-theologise nature and the human condition through conceptualisations of an Absolute that accounted for the intensification of doubt and uncertainty (Dupré, 1993, Brown, 2001). The choice humanity made to assume responsibility for material being and dispense with the need for God is the foundation of Nietzsche's concept the death of God. Discussed in a number of Nietzsche's works, the death of God draws attention to how, in turning away from belief in God's reality and certainty of salvation to derive meaning and purpose of existence

from certainty derived from empirical investigation, humanity can no longer depend on or be certain of what being "is" and how it can be known through previously unquestioned religious values, attitudes and perspectives inscribed within moral or ethical frameworks (1882; 1888; 1889; 1891). This was conceptualised by Nietzsche as the "transvaluation of values", in which the annihilation of belief in God's existence nullifies the foundation on which moral and ethical value in the material world is constructed (1888).

In foregoing shared and collective belief in ethical and moral perspectives of religious perspectives, however, what resulted was growing fragmentation and isolation of perspectives as to "what" being "is" and how it can be "known". This is because though the decline of metaphysical conceptions of being and the ethical and moral frameworks of religious institutions no longer "fit" the human condition, that is not to say the concerns and questions religious institutions seek to answer are no longer relevant to the human condition. Rather, the human condition is no longer "fit" for religious institutions (Nietzsche, 1888). No longer could the existence of emotions and experiences such as pain, suffering and death be comprehended through theodicy following the death of God and subsequent processes of secularisation. Rather, by no longer perceiving Christianity as the unquestionable source through which primary values are established and certainty, security and stability of material reality, the death of God left humanity isolated in assuming responsibility of and for itself, and responsible for justifying the existence and experience of pain, suffering and death exclusively in relation to existence as it is experienced in the material world (Nietzsche, 1889; Arendt, 1958). This is important, for in assuming the role previously designated to God, what resulted was the sacralisation of the human condition wherein humanity has rendered itself synonymous with God in order to cope with the responsibility thrust upon material being for the creation of meaning and purpose of existence. Contextualising the wider paradigmatic shift wherein certainty of what being "is" and how it can be known has become bound to the subjective experience of being in material reality to cope with a loss of certainty in salvation and Absolute providence, what has emerged in response are increasingly narrowed horizons of being constructed on the narrativised subjective self as conceived from birth until death (Arendt, 1958). Rendering 'the only thing that could now potentially be immortal…[as] life itself, that is, the possibly everlasting life process of the species of mankind' (1958: 321), such developments led to the increasing cementation and solidification of the meaning and purpose of existence to revolve exclusively around material being.

Thus, in reaction to the responsibility thrust on the human condition to give meaning to the conditions of pain, suffering, anguish, despair, frustration and anxiety that resulted from the death of God, humanity turned increasingly toward meaning and purpose conceived within the processes of life itself as experienced in material reality (Nietzsche, 1889, Arendt, 1958). Far from overcoming the doubt and uncertainty as to what material being "is" and how it can be known that gave rise to the Protestant Reformation however, the assumption of responsibility for the human condition gave rise to increasing

doubt and uncertainty as to what being "is" and how it can be known. Indeed, as Arendt makes clear, humanity 'did not gain this world when he lost the other world, and he did not gain life either…[Rather,] he was thrust back on it, thrown into the closed inwardness of introspection, where the highest he could experience were the empty processes of reckoning of the mind, its play with itself' (1958: 320). The reduction of the human condition to nothing more than the minds play with itself is based on Nietzsche's argument that, following the death of God and the subsequent need to re-conceptualise the meaning and purpose of material being, humanity became nothing more than conceptual idolaters (1888: 35). Enabling humanity to cope with the responsibility of determining for itself what being "is" and how it can be known, conceptual idolation is evident in the re-conceptualisation of previously metaphysical (non)concepts such as "progress" to relate exclusively to processes bound to the material world and condition of being. The rising faith placed in the significance of the experience of being in material existence is significant, however, for as Nietzsche argues, such re-conceptualisation of ideas previously the domain of the metaphysical realm are nothing more than false ideas (1889). This is because by encouraging humanity to concentrate exclusively on the experience of material being, what amounts is a condition of being that does not think about the collective human condition across generations, but a condition of being that lives in a manner that is believed to benefit their own subjective experience of existence in isolation of the collective. Rather than transcend the limits of religious sovereignty through the re-conceptualisation of concepts such as progress that enable humanity to reframe the progression of humanity toward a life free from pain and effort, paradoxically then, the reduction of abstract notions to as "progress" to the material world 'put man back once more – and now even more forcefully – into the prison of his own mind, [and] into the limitations of patterns he himself created' (Arendt, 1958: 288).

Such play of the mind with itself is evident through the growing faith and reliance on values and principles derived from human fabricated instruments and tools of scientific rationale and mathematical reason that underpin the economic cosmos and correlate with the death of God (Arendt, 1958). This is because human fabricated instruments and tools inspired by scientific reason and mathematical logic afford humanity the belief that comprehension of the totality of the human condition can be determined through precision and order, and quantitative measurements of the material world (Thompson, 1967). Allowing material existence to be perceived once more with certainty, security and stability, scientific rationale and mathematical logic is generally considered the guiding beacon through which truth and knowledge of the human condition can be derived. As such, not only did such developments legitimise Utilitarian principles to replace Christian moral and ethical frameworks of being as the 'supreme standard to which everything else is referred' (Arendt, 1958: 312). Scientific reason and mathematical logic also validated the position that truth and knowledge of the human condition could be derived by actions such as experimentation and empirical investigation as opposed to contemplation of God's existence (Arendt, 1958). Thus, where religious frameworks had previously positioned reason and

rationality as inferior to contemplation of God's existence and notions of divine providence, through the growing reliance on scientific rationale and mathematical reason contemplation became increasingly perceived as inferior to pragmatic, empirical investigation in the world.

The development of scientific rationale and mathematical reason thus compounded the growing antagonism felt toward Christian frameworks of belief, and the resentment experienced through the lack of resolution concerning doubt and uncertainty that surrounded such frameworks of being. Indeed, comprehension of material existence no longer needed to account for aspects of being beyond temporal existence. More than this, that truth and knowledge derived from mathematical reason and scientific rationale is hinged upon empirical measurement and investigation of the material world, what arose was the belief that validity of scientific and mathematical claims do not need further verification. The growing reliance on scientific rationale and mathematical reason thus gave the impression that truth and knowledge of the human condition could be known in its entirety through experience of material being through tools and instruments fabricated by humanity itself (Arendt, 1958). Where progress of the human condition had previously revolved around progression of one's being toward a condition free from pain and suffering through salvation in the afterlife, following the death of God progress of the human condition revolved increasingly around progression toward a life free from pain, necessity and effort in the material world through technical advancement as opposed to progress toward one's future existence in the afterlife (Arendt, 1958).

Positioning nature and the natural world as separate and inferior to the human condition, and thus subject to manipulation, use and consumption by humanity through the rising authority of human fabrications such as reason and rationality, the reliance on scientific rationale and mathematical reason to comprehend being also promotes a perspective of existence that revolves exclusively around the life processes of humanity in spite of nature and the natural world (Arendt, 1958). Reinforcing the belief that humanity is judge and juror of its own condition (Arendt, 1958), evident then is the transformation of the human condition following the death of God and the rise of truth and knowledge derived from scientific and mathematical reason in which humanity positions itself as master of being in the material world. For example, where Christianity enabled comprehension of the human condition in nature and the natural world relative to an external Absolute, truth and knowledge derived from scientific rationale and mathematical reason in contrast encourage humanity to 'look and live in this society as though we were…removed from [its] own human existence' (Arendt, 1958: 323). For Nietzsche, however, such developments were indicative of the 'de-spiritualising influence of our contemporary scientific pursuits…[for] if one expends in *this* direction the quantum of reason, seriousness, will, self-overcoming, then there will be a shortage in the other direction' (1888: 62; 1882; 1889, 1891). From this perspective, the reliance on scientific rationale and mathematical reason to comprehend the meaning and purpose of material existence is thus symptomatic of a declining condition of being in which humanity no longer recognises the world as it "is", but how it appears "to be" through

measurements, instruments and tools that reflect the perspective held by humanity (Nietzsche, 1888; 1889; Arendt, 1958, 1978). Such an argument is hinged on the position that scientific rationale and mathematical reason give *the appearance* that the human condition can determine truth and knowledge what being "is" and how it can be known according to accepted patterns derived from human-inspired fabrications that in reality reflect nothing but concerns, expectations and assumptions held by humanity itself (Nietzsche, 1888; Burtt, 1932; Arendt, 1958, Brown, 2001). That is to say, the growing reliance on scientific rationale and mathematical reason enable the human condition to fabricate into reality a perspective of truth and knowledge concerning material existence as it is conceived through observations underpinned by reason and rationality alone and in isolation from the senses (Nietzsche, 1889).

With this in mind, the belief that truth and knowledge derived from scientific rationale and mathematical reason enables humanity to conceive existence following the death of God can be considered nothing more than a perspective of existence that reflects what the majority in a given socio-cultural context want to hear and believe: that what being "is" can be known in its entirety by the human condition through scientific reason and mathematical logic. The growing dependence on scientific reason and mathematical logic thus induces a condition of being that is increasingly intolerant of alternative perspectives and value systems so as to avoid confronting outlooks that contradict such conceptions of material being (Nietzsche, 1889). Resulting in humanity concentrating more fixatedly on the condition of being in the material world, evident then is the paradoxical turn to life at the expense both of being after life, and what it is "to be" in material reality following the death of God and rise of scientific rationale and mathematical reason. This is because the desire to free the human condition from the experiences of pain and effort through concepts such as progress in reality renders the experience of being "less than" it had been previously in that, though unpleasant, pain and effort are necessary to experiences of being alive in order to live a full life (Nietzsche, 1889; Arendt, 1958). Rendering being an 'empty fiction' (Nietzsche, 1888: 36) by preferring to conceive existence as meaningful and purposeful according to concepts the creation of the minds play with itself than confront the realities of being, paradoxically, humanity creates a sovereign in its own image that is more restrictive, and which causes more pain and effort than any religious sovereign ever could.

## The problem of work

Such developments are significant in relation to work. Indeed, where work had once reinforced, affirmed and confirmed contemplation of God's existence and divine providence, stripped of its religious significance and symbolism, work became increasingly subject to human-inspired fabrications of reason and rationality that consider work activity that affirms and confirms the meaning and purpose of existence exclusively within material reality. Following the death of God and increasing reliance on

tools and instruments fabricated by the human condition to comprehend what being "is" and how it can be known, worldly activity that 'responds strictly to the experience of worldlessness' (Arendt, 1958: 115) became increasingly prevalent in societies that had undergone processes of modernisation and technical advancement. This is because activity that responds and caters to worldly concerns not only sustains and affirms the significance of the experience of material existence according to Enlightenment values of progress, productivity and efficiency that underpin scientific rationale and mathematical reason. It can also be valued according to the extent to which it supports and sustains the requirements of life's processes that reinforces the meaning and purpose of material existence as a meditation on the state of "being alive" that affirms the belief that the human condition is on a trajectory progressing toward greater security, stability, certainty exclusively in the material world.

Highlighting the correlation between dominant frameworks of belief held in a given social and cultural context and the meaning and purpose inscribed into "work", such developments have been explored by a number of sociologists in the twentieth century (Weber, 1905; Bell, 1956, 1977; Bellah 1970, 1985, Casey, 2013). In particular, Peter Berger's influential chapter 'Some General Observations on the Problem of Work' provides insight into how the changing dynamic between metaphysical belief and economic life has affected the meaning and purpose of "work" in the contemporary Western milieu due to 'specific structural and ideological developments in modern Western history' (1964: 212). Utilising the theoretical tools of Marx, Durkheim and Weber to develop his analysis, Berger's account illustrates how ideological changes to the concept of work through processes of secularisation that followed the death of God have transformed society by undermining previously taken-for-granted cultural legitimations and institutional conceptions of meaning attached to "work" (1964). Arguing that work has become problematic as a consequence of the loss of meaning previously attributed to work through Christianity, Berger outlines how the "problem of work" is further entrenched through structural changes resulting from the intensification of the division of labour during the industrial revolution. It is in the following then that the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos as it manifests through worldly activity referred to as work will be illuminated through the structural and ideological transformations identified by Berger. In doing so, greater clarity as to the significance of worldly activity to being as it is experienced exclusively in the material world that dominates contemporary approaches to "work" will be developed.


## Secularisation

Exploring the ideological transformation of work, Berger compounds Weber's argument that throughout history religious frameworks of belief have underpinned meaning and purpose attributed to activities of work in that it not only provides a means of sustaining humanity's biological needs, but provides a basis for self-identification through its enactment regardless whether the specific activity is

enjoyed or not (1964). This is particularly the case historically whereby work was typically hereditary and provided a means through which to anchor one's conception of being in relation to their ancestors, society at present, and the conceptualisation of the afterlife. That is to say, work afforded the human condition a shared and collective perception of worldly existence that was stable, permanent and durable across generations (Arendt, 1958; Berger, 1964). Furthermore, through the destruction of nature that typically characterised work undertaken for the sustenance of biological needs, "work" in the West also symbolically mimicked the act of creation undertaken by the Absolute in its nature and character that enabled humanity to "know" the Absolute. Echoing Weber's thesis whereby worldly activity conceived as work is representative not only of one's religious and ethical commitments, Berger thus makes clear how throughout much of Western history, 'to be human and to work appear inextricably intertwined notions' (1964: 211).

Following the doubt and uncertainty as to God's existence and divine providence, however, Berger illustrates how previously unquestioned, religiously sanctioned moral and ethical ideological foundations underpinning "work" were replaced by newly emerging moral and ethical ideologies that exclusively emphasised and compounded the reality of material being and secular concerns (1964). Where meaning and purpose of "work" had previously been bound to the notion of the calling wherein "inner-worldly asceticism" conceived by Weber had reflected religious ideologies, Berger illustrates how, following the death of God and rise of secular ideologies, "inner-worldly asceticism" now lay 'at the mainspring of both modern capitalism and modern industrialism' (1964: 220-221). Undermining meaning previously derived from "work" that had once made the experience of pain, suffering and death easier to bear (Berger, 1964), what Weber and Berger both make clear is that the more one searches for meaning through 'roles' created by the Industrial Revolution, the more one is faced with the prospect of sourcing meaning, satisfaction and fulfilment through activity where such expectations are unlikely to be met (Weber, 1905; Berger, 1964). This is because ideology that underpins capitalist, industrial societies does not consider "work" a reflection of being within and beyond material existence and across generations, or a means of self-fulfillment, but an activity undertaken purely for monetary gain. Rather than symbolising a means of securing certainty and stability of the meaning and purpose of the human condition, the nature and character of worldly activity that emerged during the Industrial Revolution no longer encouraged contemplation of questions of ultimate concern (Bell, 1977), but encouraged meaning to be derived exclusively to material existence, such as social status and identity formation (Berger, 1964). Considered by Berger to illustrate how the human condition isolates itself from meaningful worldly activity when religious frameworks that had once provided a cohesive and coherent perspective of what being "is" and how it can be known are neglected, what results is a condition of humanity left open to meaningless and goalless material existence (Williams, 2012). As such, what results is the 'ontological devaluation of the world of work' (Berger, 1964: 218) as material life becomes increasingly significant to compensate for the void left by the death of God.

Significantly, however, Berger comments that contemporary societies that have undergone ideological transformation following processes of secularisation do little to shield the human condition from the loss of ontological value previously invested in worldly activity such as work. What is clear then is how faith in the economic cosmos does not provide moral and ethical frameworks that foster meaning to be derived from activities of work despite its growing sovereignty and authority over the human condition, but is a source of despair, anguish and anxiety that entrenches the ontological devaluation of work. Despite the structural and ideological developments of the economic cosmos that make it increasingly unlikely that humanity can derive meaning and purpose from worldly activity referred to as work, however, Berger illustrates how there remains an underlying assumption that 'work will provide the ultimate "fulfilment" of the individual's life, and minimally in the expectation that, in some shape or form, work will have some meaning for him personally' (1964: 221). Leading to the search for meaning and purpose of what being "is" and how it can be known in basic, banal and alienating activity (Berger, 1964), this is important. This is because such activity not only reinforces the construction of identity to revolve around being as it is experienced in the material world. As long as the human condition continues to expect meaning pertinent to their being within "work" that reflects ideological values and principles of the Enlightenment, the "problem of work" will not dissipate (Berger, 1964).

## Technical advancement

The above demonstrates how the ideological transformation of Western European resulted in the separation of economic life from religious frameworks of belief. There are a number of contentions that emerge when economic life is separated from religious frameworks of belief, however, that impact the meaning and purpose of "work". This is because what amounts are structural transformations that reflect ideological perspectives, values and principles of the economic cosmos. Built on Enlightenment values such as efficiency, productivity and profitability that are underpinned by human-inspired fabrications of scientific rationale and mathematical logic, such structural transformations represent attempts made by the human condition to fill the theological gap left by the death of God. Typically referred to as the division of labour, such structural transformation emerged through technical advancements of the Industrial Revolution, wherein "work" became increasingly organised according to calculated administrative and orchestrated bureaucratic techniques, and characterised by fragmentation, impersonality, specificity of content, punctuality, rationality, interdependence and discipline and respect (Moore, 1951). Contrary to "work" conceived through Christian frameworks of belief whereby activity mimicked the act of creation undertaken by the Absolute through the creation of an artefact or object in the material world that encouraged contemplation of the meaning and purpose of existence within and beyond material existence, "work" under the division of labour signified a means of measuring being in relation to the collective through material status derived from one's role and the surplus generated (Bell, 1977; Wilson, 1985).

Such structural transformation is particularly evident through the rise of Scientific Management at the turn of the century. Introduced by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911), Scientific Management standardised work by breaking down each task into its constituent parts and timing each process so that it was undertaken in a manner that promoted the greatest efficiency, productivity and profit to be derived (Taylor, 1911). In doing so, however, 'tasks formerly assigned to the young and inexperienced were frozen into lifelong occupations' (Arendt, 1958: 90). Designed to ensure maximum production and consumption for the newly developed mass market (Berger, 1964; Merkle, 1980), where work in the past had primarily been organised according to the need to construct meaning and purpose into the human condition, Scientific Management in contrast positioned objectives of the economic system to take precedent over previous taken-for-granted religious conceptions of meaning that reflected the human condition (Taylor, 1911). What resulted then was the relocation of meaning and purpose of "work" to its method, the receipt of monetary reward for one's wage labour, and consumption of consumer goods targeted to cater to popular wants, values and desires relative to material existence (Kerr & Siegal, 1955). That is to say, rather than encourage worldly activity to be undertaken primarily for self-identification and self-fulfilment, or to derive confidence of what being "is" within and beyond material existence, the structural transformation of work reformulated meaning derived from its undertaking to revolve around placation of human concerns such as 'hunger, dis-ease and early death' (Berger, 1973: 126), compensation for one's time and effort, and the generation of surplus (Berger, 1964).

Whilst the organisation of work under Enlightenment values may be more humane and less demanding physically and temporally when meaning is relative exclusively to material concerns, Berger argues, however, that such activity constitutes neither a source of joy nor pain (1964). Reflecting the rationalisation of culture that justifies and legitimates the organisation of the human condition according to values, principles and perspectives of the economic cosmos, evident then is the rising in authority of the economic cosmos over the human condition (Weber, 1905). More than this, however, what is apparent is the extent to which worldly activity organised under the division of labour and Enlightenment values is stripped of its ontological significance through the abolishment of skilled labour under technical advancement. This is because the "rational organisation" of worldly activity drastically reduced 'the room left for work that involves the totality of the person' (Berger, 1964: 219-220) in that it is exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, for humanity to comprehend or encounter meaning pertinent to their being through fragmented and mechanised forms of worldly activity (Berger, 1964). For example, the Industrial Revolution and the division of labour encouraged activity that was inherently meaningless to the human condition in that it did not require mastery of skill over one's life-time. Given this, no longer was "work" conceived under the economic cosmos synonymous with the Christian concept of the calling then. Rather, limiting meaning derived from "work" to surround one's social status and identity built on recognition of one's professional "role", what emerged was meaning

and purpose of work indicative of pseudo-reality and pseudo-identity (Berger, 1964). Berger thus argues that, following the division of labour, work has become increasingly meaningful the extent to which it facilitated "one-upmanship" and competition as a means of attempting to override the dissonance between who one "is" and one's "role" caused by monotonous and meaningless activity that stagnates the condition of being (1964).

Rather than reflecting the human condition experienced in material reality in totality then, work that has been broken down into its constituent parts to reflect the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos does so at the expense of the human condition. By accepting and adopting work that reflects the demands of the economic cosmos, and significance attributed to material being through the desire to benefit from its perceived economic and social advantages then, work organised through the division of labour does nothing but give 'the *appearance* of human types suited to participation in a highly rationalised social and economic system' (Berger, 1964: 224). Making explicit the significance of the structural transformation of work to the human condition, Berger thus outlines how following the Industrial Revolution work has become an oppressive and ignominious activity (1964). This is because though 'work under such circumstances need not be hard or painful (that would be nothing new) the question of its meaning is apt to become conscious much more so than in situations where the worker related to work process until the final product emerged' (Berger, 1964: 214). Indeed, not only does activity underpinned by Enlightenment values of efficiency, productivity and profitability encourage the alienation of the human condition as worldly activity became increasingly abstract, vague and incomprehensible processes that bore no resemblance to the end product created (Berger, 1964). The conception of work as activity subject to "rational organisation" ushered in by the Industrial Revolution and Scientific Management also fundamentally altered the social organisation of work. This is evident in the fact that many activities whose use, character and function did not did not reflect Enlightenment values and principles of efficiency, productivity and profitability, but which had previously enabled the human condition to determine a sense of what being "is" and how it can be known, became increasingly obsolete (Berger, 1964). Giving rise to the creation, cementation and crystallisation of distinct categories of public activity undertaken as employment, and private activity undertaken for "leisure" referred to as "hobbies", such categorisation of worldly activity is significant. Indeed, making explicit how the organisation of work according to Enlightenment principles not only cements but causes and perpetuates the fragmentation and componentialisation of the human condition, the creation of leisure and hobbies reinforces distinctions to arise between "leisure" activities undertaken for self-fulfillment and self-identification, and activity undertaken 'with the [mechanistic] requirements of technological production' (Berger et al., 1973: 36). Justifying the extension of rationality over material existence, the structural transformation achieved through the division of labour and the subsequent categorisation of activity thus makes clear the extent to which the "problem of work" identified by Berger is endemic to the human condition in that it not only entrenches but compounds the ontological devaluation of "work".

## Homeless minds

The above discussion demonstrates how "the problem of work" results from specific historical processes that led to the re-conceptualisation of worldly activity to be considered meaningful exclusively to material existence as framed by values and principles of the economic cosmos (Berger, 1964). The impact of "the problem of work" to the human condition that emerged from the structural and ideological transformations of Western Europe is expanded on by Berger, Berger and Kellner in their text *The Homeless Mind: Modernisation and Consciousness* (1973). Here, they make clear how modernity 'fundamentally changes the finitude, fragility and mortality of the human condition…[by] seriously weakening those definitions of reality that previously made that human condition easier to bear' (1973: 166). Through the loss of cohesive and coherent frameworks of belief once provided by Christianity, existence thus became increasingly insecure, uncertain and unstable and deprived of plausibility (Berger et al., 1973). This is because where Christianity had provided a means of deriving certainty, stability and security through worldly activity that enabled the human condition to carve out a "home" for being within and beyond material existence and thus the cosmos as a whole, ideological and structural processes of modernity required subjects to occupy multiple social worlds, realities and institutions. Resulting in amorphous perspectives of reality wherein what being "is" and how it can be known is not fixed to a particular doctrine or belief system shared by the collective but in constant motion and interpretation, humanity increasingly experienced material existence as 'fragile, possibly artificial and essentially unreliable' (Berger et al., 1973: 168). Entrenching anxiety, doubt and frustration as to the meaning of material existence, by occupying multiple social worlds then, it is increasingly difficult for humanity to derive certainty, security and stability concerning being within and beyond material existence.

Demonstrating how the "rational organisation" of society renders the human condition subject to bureaucratic ordering and functional rationality, what is justified in turn is the 'the imposition of rational controls over the material universe, over social relations and finally over the self' (Berger et al., 1973: 180-181). Humanity was thus faced with either accepting the perceived validity of scientific and mathematical truths as a product of the mind's play with itself, or re-conceptualising scientific rationale and mathematical logic to transform such rhetoric and discourses to cater to the irrational, the emotional and the experiential. What Berger and colleagues make clear then is the inherent inadequacy of ideological and structural transformations of modernity and its secular bureaucratic institutions to provide a home for being in the universe akin to metaphysical frameworks. This is because through the pluralisation of social worlds and multi-relationality of social relations established and perpetuated by secular, technological and economic ideologies, structures and advancements, the individual is increasingly responsible for all actions (Berger et al., 1973). Echoing Nietzsche and Arendt's sentiments discussed above concerning secularisation and the processes of modernity and the human condition

(Nietzsche, 1888; Arendt, 1958), Berger et al. illustrate the alienated state of material being following the death of God and the weakening power of human-inspired primary institutions. Furthermore, secular institutions of the economic cosmos do not encourage the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of being within all-encompassing and cohesive conceptions of existence that consider the state of being after life, but obscure the ability of the human condition to conceive of being through cohesive and comprehensive frameworks, and beyond material existence (Berger et al., 1973). This is evident in the transformation of the meaning and purpose of work from the concept of "calling" to revolve around material gain according to values held by the economic cosmos.

Simply, then, through the discontent that rises from the pluralisation of being necessitated by the ideological and structural transformations ushered in by the economic cosmos, 'Institutions cease to be the "home" of the self; instead they become oppressive realities that distort and estrange the self' (Berger et al., 1973: 87). This is because through the fragmented and componentialised conception of being encouraged by the economic cosmos not only through its distinction of public and private worldly activity but the plural realities and multiple social worlds that result, most individuals are not able to construct for themselves a cohesive and coherent conception of existence (Berger et al., 1973). Resulting ironically in frustration and anxiety at the unparalleled liberation and freedom the economic cosmos affords being to construct for themselves meaning and purpose of material existence, humanity thus continues to seek a home in the material world that provides refuge and shelter from 'a world he unwittingly created' (Berger et al., 1973: *blurb*) and from the responsibility of constructing cohesive and coherent ontological perspective that imbue material existence with meaning and purpose. At the same time, however, Berger et al illustrate how most are not capable of tolerating the dis-ease, uncertainty and anxiety experienced when the meaning and purpose of existence is not framed by institutional support, but the responsibility of the subjective self (1973).

What is explicit then is how responsibility placed on humanity by the economic cosmos denies the human condition to feel "at home" not only in the material world, but the universe when worldly activity is undertaken for material concerns. Given this, Berger and his co-authors argue that faith in the economic cosmos ushers in a condition of being marked by "homelessness" where the subject is "thrown back" on their own subjectivity to fabricate into the experience of material existence certainty, stability and security in order to experience material being as meaningful and purposeful (1973). What amounts through the self thrown back on the self, however, is not only increasing fragmentation of the human condition as individuals seek to construct for themselves a universe of meaning and purpose pertinent to their specific experiences, desires, beliefs and values. They also argue that the pluralisation of social worlds and multi-relationality of social relations results in a condition of being that is perpetually in search of their "authenticity", meaning and purpose. Indicating that processes of modernity encourage a condition of being that is marked by agitation, insecurity and anxiety, Berger and colleagues thus illustrate how the economic cosmos perpetuates an alienated state of being. This is because through the 'discontent specifically derived from the pluralisation of social life-

worlds…generally subsumed under the heading of homelessness…[what amounts is that] no succeeding milieu succeeds in becoming truly "home" either' (Berger et al., 1973: 165).


Secondary institutions

When the individual alone is responsible to construct coherent and cohesive frameworks that support meaning and purpose to emerge in relation to worldly activity, Berger and his co-authors argue that, for many, there remains a desire and nostalgic yearning to comprehend being within and beyond material existence through frameworks marked by 'wholeness, unity and comprehensibility' (1973: 184). Making explicit how institutional life remains a central aspect of the human condition despite the "subjective turn" away from traditional religious frameworks of belief, such nostalgic yearning and desire for assurance from structures beyond the subjective self is significant. This is because despite the loss of plausibility in religious institutions that once provided cohesive and coherent frameworks through which to comprehend the human condition, Berger and his co-authors argue that, ironically 'man's fundamental constitution is that, just about inevitably, he will once more construct institutions to provide an ordered reality for himself' (1973: 89). Reflecting the hopes, values and desires of a generation that sought to usher in a future different to that promoted by the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment principles of efficiency, productivity and profitability, Berger and his colleagues term such institutions "secondary institutions" (1973). Providing a means of coping with material homelessness and world alienation the result from their spiritual homelessness, that function 'to protect the individual from having to make too many choices' (Berger et. al., 1973: 167), the rise of secondary institutions was prolific during the 1960s de-modernisation movements of the countercultural revolution. Comprising of an amalgamation of existing institutions that provide alternative frameworks of being such as The Theosophical Society and ancient occult beliefs such as Paganism (Partridge, 2004: Owen, 2004), as well as institutions drawing on expressivism of the Romantic movement (Taylor, 2002), the construction of alternative institutional orders during this historical period is important. This is because secondary institutions 'fill the gap left by the under-institutionalisation of the private sphere' (Berger et al., 1973: 168), following the loss of faith in primary institutions of religion and the rise of faith in the economic cosmos.

Drawing on perceived ancient, exotic, esoteric knowledge from traditions emanating from the East and occult beliefs, secondary institutions disassociated the conceptions of being promoted from the historical baggage and negative connotations associated with Christian frameworks of belief. Moreover, assimilating Eastern and occult beliefs, values and ideologies with popular and culturally relevant neoliberal values such as "freedom", "equality", and "liberty", secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution not only provided refuge from bureaucratic, rational conceptions of being held by primary institutions of the economic cosmos, and the frustration, anxiety and dis-ease

responsibility of and for the human condition the economic cosmos evokes in return for one's commitment. By promising radical change to one's condition of being, they also promoted the belief that commitment to secondary institutions afforded participants the freedom to "discover", "explore" and "express" one's "authentic" being through their flexible, relaxed and ambiguous communities, and informal, democratic and intra-personal structures (Berger et al., 1973; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). Encouraging countercultural participants to express and explore their inner feelings, and grow, both individually and in relation to one another, such ideology was further reinforced through the adoption of neoliberal language that presented secondary institutions as communities of "opportunity", "possibility", "advice", "guidance" and "support" (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). Thus, in contrast to the dominant corporate institutions promoted by the economic cosmos, secondary institutions were *'life-affirming* and *life-expanding… soft* rather than *hard;* autonomous rather than heteronomous' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 53). Given this, evident then is how secondary institutions promote conceptions of existence that align public and private aspects of being through cohesive and coherent frameworks that seek to conceptualise being both within and beyond material existence. Re-establishing worldly activity undertaken as symbolic of both public and private concerns to encourage a holistic impression of being, secondary institutions are significant then, for they provide once more an ordered reality for the human condition to construct meaning and purpose of the human condition and the experience of existence through worldly activity such as work.

*Secondary institutions: The Human Potential Movement and Erhardt seminar training*
Highlighting the cultural shift wherein feeling, emotion and experience is placed above rationality (Berger et al., 1973), for Berger and his colleagues, the rise of secondary institutions constituted an inherent good. This is because, realigning public and private spheres of being in traditional or new shared and collective frameworks of belief, secondary institutions once again enabled the human condition to be experienced holistically despite the loss of plausibility placed within Christianity, and the fragmentation and alienation of being that emerged as a result of the rational organisation of worldly activity such as work. The positive influence secondary institutions of the 1960s de-modernising movements is arguably evident in the attendance, participation and identification with countercultural secondary institutions such as the Human Potential Movement (HPM) and Erhardt Seminar Training (est), which provided alternative ideologies, philosophies and perspectives to those expressed by primary institutions of the economic cosmos in the 1970s across the US and Western Europe (Bry, 1976; Bartley, 1978). Emerging in the 1960s, the HPM sought to encourage the cultivation of one's untapped, latent "potentialities" of life through the actualisation of one's subjective being within material existence as conceived through Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943). Similarly, founded in 1971, est consisted of 'workshops, retreats, seminars, lectures, rituals or healing sessions' (Heelas,

1996: 18) that drew on eastern, exotic, ancient knowledge of rediscovered religious and spiritual traditions and emerging popular psychological rhetoric (Bry, 1976). Lasting several days, est's aim was to give participants the opportunity to 'make [their] life a masterpiece' (Tracy in *The Century of the Self*, 2002) by utilising methods and techniques designed to encourage experience of the "authentic" Self and dis-identification of the self with one's ego (Bry, 1976; Tipton, 1983; Rhinehart, 1977).

### *The turn to life and rise of subjectivity*

Providing viable and practical alternatives institutional spaces to perspectives of bureaucratic and functionally rational primary institutions of the economic cosmos, secondary institutions such as the HPM and est thus not only encouraged but validated the expression of individual participant's "inner voice" as a means of informing their judgements, decisions and choices relating to the experience of everyday life (Heelas, 1996). More than this, however, secondary institutions of the 1960s de-modernising movement such as the HPM and est are seen to provide 'a middle way between the failures of primary institutions on the one hand, and the vacuous "lost" homelessness of the self left to itself on the other' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 44). Illustrating the wide-scale cultural shift in America and Western Europe in the 1960s and the loss of faith in and deference to external, neoliberal values, to the turn within wherein what matters emanates from one's subjective beliefs, values and desires (Heelas, 1996, 2002), secondary institutions such as the HPM and est are significant for numerous reasons. To begin, by drawing on a variety of beliefs values and desires originating from a multitude of global religious and spiritual traditions, secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution encouraged participants to conceive meaning and purpose relative to being beyond material being. Significantly, however, contrary to Christian frameworks of belief, the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's being was no longer bound to conceptions of being relative to a sovereign Absolute (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). As such, conceptions of "authentic" being did not necessarily include consideration of being beyond material existence. That is to say, no longer did the comprehension of being in toto promoted through secondary institutions of the 1960s necessarily involve contemplation of being beyond one's subjective experience of material existence but could revolve completely around the subjective experience of life itself. This is because in constituting flexible, ambiguous and relaxed structural organisation and ideological perspectives, secondary institutions legitimised the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's "authentic" being according to one's subjective emotions, experiences and desires.

The sacralisation of the self that underpins the "turn to life" was explored in the influential Kendal project, a longitudinal study of spirituality that sought to explore contemporary forms of subjective spirituality as it manifests in contemporary Britain. The focal study of Heelas and Woodhead's text *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (2005), the Kendal Project serves to

illustrate the subjective turn to emerge from the 'turn away from life lived in terms of external or "objective" roles, duties and obligations, and a turn towards a life lived by reference to one's own subjective experiences [both relational as much as individualistic]' (2005: 2). This is important, for through the rise of secondary institutions in the 1960s, and the legitimation secondary institutions afford to the subjective experience of material existence, no longer is life in the material world meaningful within metaphysical conceptions of being only when such conceptions revolve around shared and collective conceptions of being in a future afterlife. Rather, secondary institutions of the counterculture promote conceptions of life in the material world that are considered meaningful the extent to which the individual alone not only "feels alive" in the here-and-now, but the quality of life the individual experiences as a result of the opportunities one takes up to "discover", "explore" and "express" one's "authentic" being, and grow (Heelas, 2002). Evident then is the pluralistic nature of religiosity following the 1960s countercultural revolution and rise of secondary institutions that position the self and the experience of one's inner-being as the catalyst in actualising one's latent, inner "potentialities". Illustrating how the decline of religion has 'enormously increased importance of life on earth' (Arendt, 1958: 315-316), so prevalent is the re-sacralisation of Western Europe through the subjective spiritual turn that Berger revised his secularisation thesis to argue that religiosity evolves within pluralistic society rather than declines (1999; Casanova, 1994). So rare is such a revision, and by such an influential thinker, that many sociologists of religion take Berger's retraction to demonstrate irrefutable evidence of the "re-enchantment of the West" (Partridge, 2004).

What is explicit then is how the search for alternatives to the extension of functional rationality to the human condition induced by faith in the economic cosmos has resulted in "life" following the 1960s countercultural revolution to be positioned as *the* value that underpins the experience of existence (Simmel, 1918). Its value ccomprising of amalgamated spiritualities that emphasise "self-transformation", "self-development" and "self-discovery", the subjective turn to life is explored by Heelas and Woodhead, who posit that where the explosion of secondary institutions in the 1960s signifies the institutional legitimation of the turn to life, the turn to life signifies the cultural element that underpins such an explosion of secondary institutions (2001). Enabling the expression of beliefs, desires and values deemed meaningful to the subject to manifest through worldly activity, the value placed on life itself indicates how the indifference to traditional religion evident in the contemporary UK context does not necessarily equate to the decline of private, subjective forms of spirituality (Norris & Inglehart, 2011; Partridge, 2016). Rather, what is evident is that through the turn to life, 'The self the primary point of reference for life and lifestyle decisions…and the starting point for a wider concern with the lives of self *and* others' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 49).

*The self-work ethic*

In relation to worldly activity referred to as work, however, secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution such as the HPM and est continued to reinforce the central significance of worldly activity as the means through which meaning and purpose of what being "is" and how it can be known can be encountered, comprehended and certainty derived. Indeed, so significant were the secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution that businesses in the 1970s sent employees to participate in countercultural secondary institutions such as est to remove the mechanical acceptance of misguided systems and frameworks of being from their worldview to encourage the "authentic" self to emerge in the workplace (Brewer, 1975; Bancroft, 1978). Encouraging constructions of subjectivity to develop wherein the meaning and purpose of being is considered to constitute something "more than" the superficial materialistic and consumptive values and desires as the Industrial Revolution had promoted (Heelas, 2002), this is explicit in est's slogan: 'work hard and achieve your goals in order to feel alive and natural' (Tipton, 1984: 145). Contrary to Utilitarian individualism advocated by primary institutions of the economic cosmos then, which encouraged an approach to worldly activity such as work characterised by greed, self-interest, resentment and superficiality (Heelas, 1996), secondary institutions such as the HPM and est encouraged approaches to work characterised by expressive values (Tipton, 1984; Heelas, 2002). Rather than inducing a condition of homelessness wherein the self is thrown back on the self then, secondary institutions such as the HPM and est re-conceptualised the experience of material being in line with the worldly activity one undertook as symbolic of one's journey of "self-discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's "authentic" being (Heelas, 1996).

Evident then is the holistic approach to being that re-emerged in response to a turn away from bureaucratic, rational organisation of worldly activity characterised by faith in the economic cosmos and the Industrial Revolution. From this perspective, secondary institutions encouraged counterculturalists to conceive worldly activity referred to as work as a means of working on themselves in order to free themselves of their ego and encounter a more holistic, less fragmented, pluralised and componentialised "authentic" self (Heelas, 1992, 1996). Coined the self-work ethic by Heelas, to account for approaches wherein worldly activity referred to as work is re-valued as activity imbued with spiritual significance, and which advocates the cultivation of expressive-individualism, activities undertaken through the self-work ethic of the 1960s countercultural revolution are chosen according to the extent to which its nature and character enables "self-discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of being in toto (1996; Taylor, 2007). For example, many who actively participated in secondary institutions of the counterculture seek work outside the capitalist mainstream as healers, therapists, artists, musicians, rune-readers, foresters, or seek self-sufficiency through smallholdings (Heelas, 1992, 1996). Highlighting how secondary institutions of the 1960s fostered the perspective that "right" action is determined according to the extent to which the activity enables expression of the "authentic" self

and 'cultivation of what it is "to be" human' (Heelas, 1996: 92), as opposed to rules and expected behaviours conceived through shared and collective frameworks of belief, this is important. This is because the self-work ethic of the 1960s countercultural revolution not only encouraged expression of beliefs, desires and values emanating from the conceived "authentic" self to reflect values held by the self rather than enact values imposed on their condition of being by primary institutions of the economic cosmos. It also reinforced perspectives fostered by de-modernisation movements of the countercultural revolution suggest 'there is much more to being a person than simply satisfying those wants which one *happens* to have' (Heelas, 1996: 156).

## Homeless minds today

Though Berger and his co-authors considered the rise of secondary institutions and the impact they had to the human condition as inherently good, contemporary sociologists of religion do not typically share such a position. This is particularly explicit in the expansion of the homeless mind thesis by Heelas and Woodhead, who argue that despite an increase in subjective forms of spirituality following the 1960s countercultural revolution, there has been a decrease not only in the participation and existence of secondary institutions, but a disappearance of the countercultural spirit and ethos that had once underpinned and inspired their existence (2001). Taken to symbolise a rejection of alternative metaphysical conceptions of existence that had sought to harmonise and account for being within and beyond material existence following the death of God, such loss of ethos that had previously underpinned the turn inward is important. This is because, following the disappearance of the countercultural spirit, certainty that the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's "authentic" self and individual desires, values and beliefs is no longer conceived through collective frameworks of belief. Unbridled from the ideological validation, stability and security once derived from the countercultural spirit and the secondary institutions that emerged in the 1960s, the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's individual desires, values and beliefs and idea of one's "authentic" self is now hinged upon popular and culturally relevant neoliberal values, desires and beliefs.

Not only does the human condition no longer place faith in human-fabricated perspectives derived from scientific rationale and mathematical reason, then, but it no longer places faith in alternative conceptions of existence that emerged to account for the experiential, the irrational and emotional aspects of being that are beyond scientific rationale and mathematical logic. More than this however, the growing plurality of perspectives of what being "is" and how it can be known as encouraged by neoliberal perspectives has resulted in the construction of increasingly diverse conceptions of values, beliefs and aspirations by individuals in isolation from one another. What results thus is a condition of being that

is thrown back on itself more forcibly as responsible for the alienated condition of being resulting from bureaucratic, functionally rationality and technologic social organisation. Rather than eliminate the condition of homelessness then, Heelas and Woodhead argue that the condition of homelessness is still rampant 'due to increasing pluralisation, accelerating bureaucratisation and technologisation' (2001: 48) of society that remains organised according to rationality, and justified by Enlightenment values. This is because, where secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution had provided socially sanctioned alternative collectives to express considered irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of being by rational perspectives underpinning mainstream society, the emphasis placed on the significance of the subjective experience of material being by neoliberal values paradoxically gives the impression that one is at home in the material world that in reality compounds a condition of spiritual homelessness (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001).

Soft capitalist secondary institutions

This is problematic, however, for as discussion above made clear above, despite the alienation and homelessness that emerged in the West following the Industrial Revolution and the division of labour, institutional life remains a central aspect of the human condition, and remains the primary means through which public and private aspects of the human condition are unified. This is because, despite the growing reliance on neoliberalist conceptualisations of the subjective self and individual values, beliefs and desires that respond to the construction of meaning and purpose of material existence, there remains a need for support, reassurance and validation derived from external structures beyond the subjective self to remove the overwhelming responsibility and choice neoliberalism affords the human condition, and the anxiety that results. The solution to the continued need for institutional support to unify aspects of public and private life that remain divided by the faith of the economic cosmos is evident in the emergence of secondary institutions that seek to re-conceptualise and transform primary institutions of the economic cosmos as meaningful and purposeful not just to capitalistic pursuits, but the human condition as well. Secondary institutions of the economic cosmos, however, are institutions wherein membership is obligatory on the basis that society is organised according to the exchange of ones labour for the receipt of a wage (Marx, 1867) rather than voluntary. Contrary to secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution 'that are fairly independent of primary institutions (such as the 'new spiritual outlets') [however, secondary institutions that emerged in response to the frustration, uncertainty and anxiety following the decline of countercultural secondary institutions]…operate within – while transforming – primary institutions' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 54).

Whilst the countercultural spirit has waned over the last sixty years, what is apparent is that the rhetoric and practices that emerged through de-modernisation movements in the 1960s and 1970s shaped,

continues to shape, society (Berger et al., 1973; Gehlen, 1949; Luckmann, 1967). Driven by the question that if worldly activity considered non-industrious, such as forestry, art and therapy, could inspire efficient and productive activity, then why not industrious activity as well (Heelas, 1996), such developments arguably stem from key influencers of the counterculture itself, such as Maslow, who promoted the appropriation of countercultural rhetoric, practices and techniques by secondary institutions of the economic cosmos. Indeed, seeking to expand New Age thought into secular, corporate entities and industrial activity, Maslow published *Eupsychian Management* (1965), which drew upon popular and culturally relevant neoliberal ideas to present the purpose of management to mobilise employees to perceive work not only as part of their identity but to encourage employees through work to "self-actualise". Illustrated then is the expansion of the economic cosmos as the dominant framework through which what being "is" and how it can be known is re-conceptualised in societies that have undergone processes of secularisation and technological advancement through neoliberal rhetoric in order to overcome the condition of homelessness, and make obligatory membership to institutions that reflect the values and concerns of the economic cosmos more bearable. This is arguably because the countercultural spirit and the self-work ethic that emerged during the countercultural revolution reinvigorated worldly activity as meaningful to the experience of material existence by encouraging autonomy, creativity and self-reliance (Heelas, 1996). Indeed, as research demonstrates, organisations that encourage "self-discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" are more likely to achieve "success" and increased profit (Schumacher, 1979; Aupers & Houtman, 2006).

Such developments are arguably captured under the umbrella term "soft capitalism", a term first utilised by Thrift to describe the development of "super-performance" culture of organisations wherein the derision of profit no longer relies exclusively on technical-rational means, but the acquisition of tacit knowledge of employees by management circles to influence employees' approach to work (1999, 2002, 2005). To acquire such soft, tacit knowledge, soft capitalist secondary institutions draw heavily on the 'culture, knowledge and creativity' (Ray & Sayer, 1999: 17), in a similar manner to secondary institutions of the counterculture. Illustrative of rationale underpinning the development of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the 1980s, the support for the appropriation of countercultural rhetoric, practices and techniques through soft capitalist is evident from former counterculturalists who hold positions of power in contemporary primary institutions, but who maintain that what lies "within" can contribute to the organisation of worldly activity structured by the economic cosmos according to Enlightenment principles (Hicks, 2003). Arguing that the best way to change the organisation of work to reflect the human condition and overcome alienation the result of homelessness is to change its organisation from within (Heelas, 1996), through the appropriation of values, aspirations and expectations that emerged from countercultural secondary institutions and re-conceptualised through neoliberal rhetoric, values and ideals, this is important. This is because what is evident is how 'The relationship between work and self is configured and presented as an "opportunity"' (Costea et al.,

2015: 385; Heelas, 2002) for the self to be cultivated, reified and fabricated through organisationally designed roles.

That the organisational bottom line no longer simply concerns profit yielded by the efficient and productive performance of the human resources, but the belief that the performance enables 'the development of the person as a whole' (Heelas, 2008: 160; 1996; 2002) is evident through the appropriation of spiritual practices and techniques such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness that characterised the de-modernisation movement. The appropriation of countercultural values, practices and perspectives by neoliberalist perspectives is also apparent in corporate cultures, training, weekend courses, talks, and seminars, that incorporate cultural discourse, narratives and rhetoric to promote personal commitment and motivation within corporate 'accountability systems, audits, job descriptions, targets, mentoring, training, and so on' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 48; Heelas, 2008; Bunting, 2004). Most significantly, however, further to the appropriation of values, practices and perspectives that emerged through the 1960s countercultural revolution by neoliberal perspectives, also evident is the re-conceptualisation and re-packaging of "spiritualised language" through neoliberal rhetoric that enables organisationally designed roles to appear compatible with the search within. Encouraging employees to perceive organisationally designed roles to transcend secular, material reasons to work through the application of neoliberal language to suggest that such roles facilitate movement toward existential, aspirational values and goals, what is evoked is the belief that through the performance of organisationally designed role that one's "authentic" being can be experienced (Heelas, 2008). This is explicit through rhetoric employed by 'management consultants, advisers, trainers, personnel officers, and so on, [whose] messages proclaim "the humanisation of the workplace", the importance of "self-development for productivity", the value of being "yourself" at work, and the unlocking of human potential at work' (Heelas, 2002: 89).

Highlighting organisational recognition that 'the axial principle of modern culture is the expression and remaking of the "self" to achieve self-realisation and self-fulfilment' (Bell, 1977: 13-14), this is important. Indeed, not only apparent is how organisational success now lies in the alignment of employee's quest toward "self-discovery", "self-exploration" and "self-actualisation" (Kellner & Heuberger, 1992) with its objectives (Heelas, 2008; Carrette & King, 2005) as made possible by the appropriation of countercultural values, aspirations and desires that encourage self-responsibility and self-discipline to evaluate and direct one's state of being (Heelas, 2008). Also evident is how institutions of the economic cosmos re-conceptualise worldly activity organised under the division of labour and Enlightenment values as inherently meaningful and purposeful to the human condition by drawing on the cultural turn to life and the subjective turn that legitimise and encourage the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's perceived individual, subjective latent "potentialities". Illustrating how the very success of contemporary organisations lies 'in their ability to reach into the deepest recesses of the modern soul into its very sense of mortality' (Costea et al., 2015: 380), what is

evident then is the extent to which the appropriation of countercultural values, beliefs and concerns through neoliberal rhetoric enables soft capitalist secondary institutions to extend control over the private and intimate realms of being. Given this, at the heart of soft capitalist secondary institutions are ideologies that organisations should draw on and try out cultural items to see what works best in facilitating the attainment of its specific aims and intentions (Heelas, 2002) to create a sense of meaning and purpose amongst employees as a means of overcoming the condition of homelessness (Peters et al., 1982) whilst continuing to uphold aims and objectives of the economic cosmos.  Operating as 'orchestrated repertoires' (Heelas, 2008), soft capitalist secondary institutions thus seek to overcome barriers to success by placing emphasis on employee's utilising their activity of work as an autonomous exercise of "self-discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation".

Making clear how the re-interpretation of spiritual rhetoric, values and practices  through neoliberal lenses provide ways in which organisations of the economic cosmos can re-conceptualise inherently mundane, meaningless and purposeless activities of labour as meaningful and purposeful to the human condition, it was only a matter of time before organisationally designed roles and the organisations in which they manifested also became imbued with spiritual significance (Tipton, 1983; Heelas, 1992, 1996). Indeed, since the 1970s a significant number of businesses have been "culturally primed" to overcome "the problem of work" and the ontological devaluation and alienation that results by transforming 'the values, experiences and to some extent the practices of what it is to be at work' (Heelas, 1996: 90) by utilising notions of inner spirituality developed during the countercultural de-modernisation movements to enhance efficient and productive work (Heelas, 2002). Contrary to the structure of previous rational, bureaucratic systems built on economic principles and values of efficiency and productivity for the accumulation of profit that position work as a duty or a necessity then, contemporary organisations seek to transform the value of the workplace as a vehicle through which personal, subjective aspirations can become a reality (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Carrette & King, 2005). That is to say, positioning the workplace as the means through which the sacralised self can be "realised", the inclusion of individual concerns and values encourage employees to associate personal meaning, significance and expectations of what it means to live a "full life" to the performance of organisationally designed role (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Heelas, 2002).

Indicative of a new kind of engagement from employees expected by corporate organisations (Costea et al., 2015), it is no surprise then that many employees feel "at home" in soft capitalist secondary institutions. Indeed, appealing to the fact that many employees place great significance on their subjective experience of material existence to the point that they do not want to submit themselves to organisationally designed roles unless they supports their personal journey toward "self-discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" is assured (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Heelas 2002), no longer are employees employed by soft capitalist secondary institutions expected to work simply for monetary rewards. Rather, reflecting the position held by many in the contemporary that they do not want to

"waste" their time "just" working without growing (Heelas, 2002), reaffirmed by soft capitalist secondary institutions is the self as a value in and of itself (Heelas, 1996; Roof, 1993; Taylor, 2002, 2007; Hicks, 2003; Carrette & King, 2005). Demonstrated then is how 'from an organisational perspective it is profitable to break with alienating bureaucratic structures and incorporate issues like self-understanding, identity and self-spirituality in corporate culture' (Aupers & Houtman, 2006: 217). Where previously there had been a vast distinction between secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution and institutions that reflected values, principles of the economic cosmos and the faith it inspired, through the development of soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to cater to the subject and the value they attribute to their subjective experience of material existence, what is evident is a collapse of this distinction (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001).

### *Soft capitalist secondary institutions: Landmark Forum and Vanto Group*

The above discussion outlining the appropriation of countercultural rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist secondary institutions to re-conceptualise the activity of work and indeed the workplace as the means through which the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the self can be realised has arguably led to a paradigmatic shift in the way material being is conceived in relation to the creation of capital. Such paradigmatic shift is explicitly evident in the establishment of Landmark Education Corporation in 1991. Restructured in 2003 to become Landmark Education before restructuring again in 2013 to become Landmark Worldwide, its personal development and consultancy programmes delivered through seminars and lectures comprise of intellectual property, namely rhetoric, techniques, ideologies and perspectives, that were created by est in the 1960s, for which it owns the copyright (*Landmark Worldwide,* 2018). Facilitating the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "inner", "authentic" self through capitalistic activities of work, this is explicit in Landmark's organisational ethos publicised on their website that claims participation enables one to 'Create power, freedom, full self-expression, and peace of mind' and 'live an extraordinary life' by 'redefin[ing] what's possible' in 'your relationships, your work, your family, your communities, *what matters to you* most' (2018).

Highlighting the neoliberal slant organisations can achieve through the appropriation of countercultural values, desires and desires, of most significance, however, is the appropriation and re-conceptualisation of countercultural values, beliefs and aspirations through discursive means as evident through the Vanto Group. The subsidiary strategic management consultancy company of Landmark Worldwide, the Vanto Group was established in 1992 to market and deliver 'unprecedented business results and exceptional quality of life for their people at work' (*Vanto Group,* 2018). Since then, this self-proclaimed 'boutique global consulting firm aims to "develop", "transform" and "deliver" 'high performance cultures, organisational change implementation and organisational alignment' designed to 'break with the past'

and enable companies to 'make a quantum leap forward' (*Vanto Group,* 2018). Working with organisations such as Reebok, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson and Johnson, Mercedes Benz, Western Union, Heinz, Exxon Mobil, JP Morgan and NASA, amongst others, the re-interpretation and use of est rhetoric, discourses and techniques is evident in the approach the Vanto Group takes in cultivating, transforming and conveying its training and consultancy packages. For example, as Vanto Group's Founder and Head of Research and Development, Steve Zaffron, outlines:

> 'Our expertise is not in particular industries or specialities. *Our expertise is in people*: How people *work* and how they work together; what constitutes breakthrough performance; what's missing that would need to be there to have a team elevate and have breakthrough performance. *So you could say we're the people people*' (2018).

Highlighting the emphasis placed on the reorganisation of employees' personality through training, consultancy and personal development programmes to achieve 'breakthrough performance', Zaffron's testimony illustrates the extent to which **'the state of being of employees is critical,'** (Heelas, 2008: 69), to organisational success. Similar to est then, the Vanto Group illustrates how soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to align private and public concerns through subjective experiences and "inner" interests of employees. Indeed, claiming to be experts not in a particular industry or speciality but in 'people', like est, the Vanto Group orients itself as the authority of and over being wherein employees can become "better", "more authentic" humans. This is achieved in a manner similar to est through ambiguous and intermediary rhetoric that requires employees to actively interpret and invest meaning into such ambiguous language in order for work to be conceptualised as meaningful to their subjective state of being. Rather than reflect (non)conceptual existential concerns, questions and considerations, however, the vague and ambiguous rhetoric developed by the Vanto Group for organisations to use reflect (non)conceptual neoliberal attitudes, values and perspectives. For example, there is no definitive or singular definition of what 'breakthrough performance' "is". Rather, what is meant by this phrase depends on the demands of the specific organisation in line with the interpretation of what "breakthrough performance" is as held by the employee, and how they relate it to their individual performance according to their aspirations. Functioning in a similar way to countercultural (non)concepts that inspired and mobilised counterculturalists to perceive their worldly activity as a means to "discover", "explore" and "express" their "authentic self", illustrated is the emphasis placed on the cultivation of the human resource by soft capitalist secondary institutions through the harnessing the irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of being for the attainment of organisational aims and objectives.

Given this, the Vanto Group demonstrates how soft capitalism provides a subtle, fluid means of managing, organising and mobilising employees through the appropriation of desires, beliefs and perspectives held by the individual self by drawing on socially and culturally relevant humanistic and neoliberal rhetoric and values. Placing emphasis on *how* employees perform at work rather than *what*

they *do* to promote, sustain and expand competitive market advantage, contrary to est, however, Zaffron's testimony highlights how the Vanto Group does not regard the nature and character of worldly activity as significant to the attainment of 'breakthrough performance'. Unlike the self-work ethic encouraged by secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution then, the Vanto Group indicates how soft capitalist secondary institutions reinterpret the self-work ethic to surround the performance of worldly activity as opposed to its nature and character so as to present activity organised under principles of the Industrial Revolution and the economic cosmos as meaningful and purposeful to the human condition.

Such reinterpretation of countercultural concerns and values through culturally relevant neoliberal attitudes arguably enables 'managers to think that they have found solutions to the problem of "humanising the workplace", "restoring 'life' to work", and becoming "immaculate" human beings, all whilst increasing productivity' (Heelas, 1992: 159), through rhetoric that present work as organisationally provided opportunities for self-actualisation and self-fulfilment (Willmott, 1993; Peters et al., 1982). This argument is reflected by sentiments expressed by Senior Vanto Group Consultant, Sandy Robbins:

> '*They're doing it for them*. They're not doing it because it's their job or because they ought to; *it's a self-expression*. And when people's work becomes a self-expression, and when the goals of an organisation become the self-expression of each person in that organisation…that level of responsibility, that level of ownership, that level of caring for the outcome of that company…*you get a level of power you just can't get from traditional buy in or consensus*' (2018).

Making it clear that the presentation of activity referred to as work through soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques encourages employees to re-conceptualise such activity as a self-expression, Robbins' testimony not only highlights how effective such re-conceptualisation is in terms of creating and inspiring alignment between the human resource and the aims and objectives of the organisation. It also illustrates how the '*mobilis[ation of]* whole companies' is achieved by *allowing* people to *see* their lives at work and see the *possibility* of their lives at work' (Robbins, 2018) by exciting the idea that employees' have ownership, and thus responsibility, of their activity through the performance of their organisationally designed role. That is to say, rather than subordinating the subjective self to the demands of organisation, the re-conceptualisation of countercultural concerns and values enables soft capitalist secondary institutions to encourage human resources to identify with their employer to the point that they consider themselves an integral and essential aspect of the institution in question (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). Addressing perceived organisational deficiencies whilst also reflecting socially and culturally relevant neoliberal values, desires and beliefs that resonate with many contemporary employees (Heelas, 2002), such alignment and identification is achieved through practices and techniques developed by est. For example, working with '50 to 100 people at a time, sometimes more,

to get everybody on the same page' (Zaffron, 2018), by addressing large groups of employees at once, similar to est, the Vanto Group not only encourages alignment through conformity (Arendt, 1958), but is able to mobilise whole organisations through the creation of collectives that promote the alignment of one's personal, individual goals with those held by the organisation (Robbins, 2018). Reflecting the Vanto Group's claim that organisational success lies in the creation of "aligned organisations" (2018), similar to est then, the Vanto Group illustrates how soft capitalist secondary institutions incite a level of commitment previously the reserve of metaphysical primary institutions and secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution through the re-conceptualisation of countercultural values, desires and beliefs.

Reinforcing the idea held by HRM since the 1980s that there is no need to withdraw from the corporate world to quest within (Heelas, 1996), illustrated then is how soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage the assimilation and alignment of the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the self by 'transforming the values, experiences and to some extent the practices of what it is to *be* at work' (Heelas, 1996: 90) is thoroughly underpinned by rhetoric, practices and techniques that emerged through the counterculture. Achieved by aligning human resources' goals, aspirations and values with those of their organisation through the idea that such goals, aspirations and values are compatible, 'it is of no surprise why the workforce is so committed, so enthusiastic, so much at home and *alive* at work' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 57), nor indeed why people arrive early and leave late with no extra pay. Highlighting how 'pure performativity in work – in other words, the pure acting out of the appearance of work – becomes the basis upon which the value of work is perceived and ascertained' (Costea et al., 2015: 376), apparent is power invested in soft capitalist secondary institutions that reflect values of the economic cosmos over the human condition never before achieved. This is important, for what can be argued is that the re-conceptualisation of countercultural concerns and values through neoliberal ideas and aspirations signifies the attempt by soft capitalist secondary institutions such as the Vanto Group to provide a refuge from the condition of homelessness that followed both the death of God and the rise of the Industrial Revolution, and the loss of alternative conceptions of being following the decline of the countercultural spirit.


## Soft capitalist secondary institutions: Some contentions

Though the countercultural spirit dissipated by the mid-70s, the above discussion indicates the growing recognition of organisations of the power of culture as a vehicle for the construction of self and overcome the condition of homelessness. Indeed, seen to solve the problem of work through a sophisticated blend of 'benign social engineering' (Hochschild, 1997: 43), by reintroducing a moral and social aspect back into activities of work (Heelas, 2002), certainly the "problem of work" and the

homeless condition that underpins it is regarded by many to have been resolved by the re-conceptualisation of work through soft capitalism (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). Certainly at face value, soft capitalism can be seen to resolve the differences between capitalist values, principles and concerns, and rectify the meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as work through its attempt to realign public and private aspects of being, and replace alienation with connection and collectivity (Heelas, 2008). At the same time, the impact of soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to provide a home for the human condition that caters to the irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of being that is aligned with the demands of rationalised, bureaucratic industry to the human condition is only really beginning to be critically appreciated and considered (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). Indeed, despite the relative "newness" of critical literature, many argue that soft capitalism, like capitalism itself, is riddled with tensions and contradictions (Thrift, 2005; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Heelas, 2008). Such concerns are made all the more pertinent given that soft capitalism is still in its exploratory phase in terms of how far it can extend its reach into the inner being of the human resource because the ramifications of such developments to the human condition and possible unintended consequences are neither fully considered nor comprehended (Heelas, 2002). Given this, though space does not allow for a comprehensive evaluation, it is in the following that a number of key criticisms and concerns surrounding the development of soft capitalism will be explored through the lens of sociological analysis of religion.

To begin, many scholars of religion argue that whilst soft capitalism enables institutions of the economic cosmos to appear to alleviate the condition of homelessness by elevating the significance of culture and appearing to facilitate the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's "authentic" self, in reality they do nothing but facilitate the expansion of capitalist values, principles and concerns over and into the human condition that is obscured by the use of neoliberal rhetoric (Heelas, 2008; Carrette & King, 2005). This is echoed by Carrette and King, who comment that soft capitalism is nothing more than 'an extension of the economic rationality of the marketplace into the realm of fundamental human beliefs' (2005: 135) in that organisational goals revolving around the accumulation of profit can be more effectively attained through the inclusion of culturally valued aspirations and desires (Ray & Sayer, 1999). That is to say, soft capitalist secondary institutions do not emphasise the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of the self and include cultural values primarily for the good of employees and to overcome homelessness, but to encourage employees to become more efficient producers (Heelas, 2002) and more effective employees (du Gay, 1996). Contrary to secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution that provided homes with alternative ideologies to those espoused by economic cosmos but left conceptions of what the "authentic" self "is" to be constructed according to participant's inner beliefs, desires and values, soft capitalist secondary institutions such as the Vanto Group discussed above seek instead to change and reorganise conceptions of being and

personality held by the human resource to fit with organisational needs stipulated by market demands (Carrette & King, 2005).

Where 'The dynamic of the HPM revolved around an emptying of the subject rather than a positing of its inner qualities and potential as source of personal value' (Costea et al., 2015: 385), soft capitalist secondary institutions continue to presume there is something is lacking within human resources that can be remedied through culturally relevant neoliberal meaning, aspirations and values embedded into the performance of work (Heelas, 2002). Presenting employees as a resource that must continually undertake in-house training and development programmes to correct their behaviour and increase their efficiency, productivity and commitment to their organisation of employment (Carrette & King, 2005), this is important. This is because, rather than facilitate the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the "authentic" self, and balance conflicting and contradictory demands placed on the human condition by values, principles and demands by the economic cosmos, soft capitalist secondary institutions instead provide a home for being that is not designed to reflect the needs of humanity, but those of economic cosmos (Willmott, 1993; Carrette & King, 2005; Costea et al., 2015) at the expense of the human condition and the expression of inner beliefs, values and desires (Arendt, 1958; Rose, 1990; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001). This is supported by the fact that soft capitalism rarely provides opportunities for self-reflection but results in the internalisation of dis-ease. Such claims are explicit through the increased accountability placed on individual employees within soft capitalist secondary institutions through the rapid growth and reliance on targets, personal reviews, workplace surveys and audits that attempt to quantify and make tangible the actualisation of one's latent "potentialities" according to the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos (Heelas, 2008). This is important, for whilst the appropriation of values, aspirations and beliefs characteristic of secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to re-conceptualise previously alienating activity to *appear* as activity through which employees can grow, learn and "become", in reality such activity remains organised under utilitarianism. What is considered "good" according to soft capitalist approaches then does not depend on shared moral and ethical frameworks as was the case in secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution, but what will secure market competitiveness (Ray & Sayer, 1999; Kunde, 2000; Roberts, 2001; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Carrette & King, 2005; Heelas, 2008). Given this, what is argued is that soft capitalist secondary institutions provide homes for the human condition that encourage nothing but the 'increasing application of a narrowly instrumental and calculative rationality from the realm of economics to all aspects of life' (Carrette & King, 2005: 136).

More than this however, by highlighting the underlying principle motivating organisational attempts to include the "whole" self by soft capitalist secondary institutions is to promote greater efficiency and productivity, it can also be argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions signify the attempt by institutions of the economic cosmos to mobilise culture for economic ends (Ray & Sayer, 1999).

Indicative of the subliminal, implicit social engineering achieved through soft capitalist rhetoric, 'what is at the heart of it all lies a particular understanding or evaluation of the self' (Heelas, 2008: 194; Taylor, 1989). This is explicit in the often-evoked metaphor of family organisations implement, which naturally positions employees as children, and subsequently their perspectives, beliefs and values inferior to the superior perspective and knowledge possessed by the organisation and management circles. Given this, it is suggested that soft capitalist secondary institutions that utilise discourses, practices and techniques developed by the counterculture are not as benign as organisations, stakeholders and academic circles claim. Rather, it is argued that their misappropriation is illustrative of how 'managerialism creates a platform from which it issues the demand that the individual engages with her or his potential, and takes control of its expression and mobilisation' (Costea et al., 2015: 385). This is important, for rather than overcome "the problem of work" and the condition of homelessness that underpins it, what is evident is the degree to which soft capitalist secondary institutions use employee beliefs, values and aspirations to develop a form of managerial and organisational control that is increasingly difficult to refute, challenge and counter. The ironic absurdity of these states of affairs was not lost on Musil, who reflects:

> 'the enormous cruelty of our political and economic social structures, which do violence to the feelings of individuals, is so inescapable because these very social structures at the same time give the individual a shape and the possibility of an expression' (1961, cited in Heelas, 2008: 220).

Such irrefutability and inescapability not only results because soft capitalist secondary institutions can effectively silence debate and criticism by framing opposing perspectives as "unprogressive" (Carrette & King, 2005). Indeed, the historical association that to be human and to work appear as inextricably intertwined notions as highlighted by Berger above (1964) makes it very difficult to refute claims made by soft capitalist secondary institutions that organisationally designed roles are the means through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and perceived latent "potentialities". Indeed, through the historical relevance, 'who can object to the *idea* that work ought to be the central place where 'I' find and express 'my' essential humanity?' (Costea et al., 2015: 385). That is to say, to deny the demands of soft capitalist secondary institutions placed on the human condition is to deny one's opportunity to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities". Leaving many anxious with guilt of having no one to blame but themselves for not taking up opportunities of "self-discovery" afforded through soft capitalist rhetoric, as Costea et al. make clear however, the question "who am I?" is not a managerial invention but a question of ultimate concern pertinent to the human condition (2015; Luckmann, 1967). Explicit then is how soft capitalist neoliberal rhetoric is argued to both appeal to homeless minds, or indeed provoke a state of homelessness, in that they provide a home for the human condition that removes completely the responsibility of the human condition through the orchestrated repertoires of rhetoric, techniques and

practices that excite conformity, dependency, passivity and compliance (Heelas, 1996). Thus, though secondary institutions of de-modernising movements mutually reinforce the turn to life and the significance of the constructed, subjective self through the homes for being provided, the homes provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions undermine the turn to life and the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of the self.

What is evident then is how soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to transform dominant perspectives through the inclusion of neoliberal rhetoric treat metaphysical belief as 'a valuable way to sell a product [and similarly] a valuable way to make a product for business practice…[in that] religious language, concepts and ideas can all be made into a money-making exercise' (Carrette & King, 2005: 141). Begging the question to what extent soft capitalist secondary institutions and the importance placed on cultivating the self is more *apparent* than "real" (Heelas, 1992), this is important. This is because whilst soft capitalist secondary organisations appear to provide a home for the human condition that affords security, stability and certainty of being in the material world that displaces responsibility of the self to the guiding principles adopted, in reality, soft capitalist secondary institutions arguably reinforce and entrench homelessness experienced by the human condition by manipulating the beliefs, values and desires of employees to reflect organisational objectives. That is to say, though soft capitalism appears to provide a sacred canopy that displaces responsibility of the self to the organisation (Berger, 1990), what is promoted is a particular neoliberal perspective, ideology and approach to work that asks employees not to question and be curious as secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution encouraged, but to implicitly accept assumptions and expectations that represent the faith of the economic cosmos (Carrette & King, 2005). Making apparent the extent to which soft capitalist secondary institutions prize assimilation over individuality, Heelas draws parallels with "brainwashing" theories formulated by Brown, who argues how 'ideologies can be implanted in a person mind permanently and regardless of his original beliefs' (1972: 261). Arguing that whilst many believe that they are exercising autonomy, choice and freedom within soft capitalist secondary institutions, Heelas outlines that in reality, soft capitalist secondary institutions instigates a condition of being that is increasingly devoid of autonomy or agency, and dependent on organisational rhetoric to conceive and construct meaning and purpose (1996) that is contrary to the very promises it extends to the human condition.

Supported by Heelas' claim that 'New Age provisions and services of subjective wellbeing culture are simply or largely about fulfilling the experiential, secular promises of the culture – about feeling good, displaying status or individuality, about providing people with whatever consumer-culture experiences they happen to want, about pandering to their desires' (2008: 171; Roof, 1999; Lau, 2000; Campbell, 2004), metaphysical concerns are thus reduced to material, secular ends by soft capitalist secondary institutions. This is made possible by neoliberal and humanist values, beliefs and desires that enable the re-branding of diverse metaphysical concerns into simplified and homogenised packages that revolve

around hedonistic endeavours, and organisational concerns of efficiency, productivity, and which "fit" the corporate space as required (Carrette & King, 2005). Demonstrating how soft capitalist secondary institutions position metaphysical concerns, values and aspirations as a corrective and therapeutic, countervailing remedy to the amoralistic demands of the economic cosmos, what is argued is that the appropriation of metaphysics by the economic cosmos enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to continue to promote the homes provided that reflect corporate aims and objectives by obscuring their alienating and inhuman character (Carrette & King, 2005).

Explicit then is the inherently neoliberal theology underpinning soft capitalist secondary institutions that revolve around secular, material concerns such as freedom, self-expression and self-transformation in *this* life in support of continual growth and validity of the economic cosmos as a religion in its own right (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Carrette & King, 2005). This is in contrast to metaphysical ontologies and ideologies that account for being within and beyond material existence in support of comprehension and contemplation of the human condition for humanity itself. Demonstrating the restricted conception of being disseminated by homes provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions, this is important. This is because where the self-work ethic of secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution is underpinned by an ethos that puts the human condition first, the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions is underpinned by an ethos that puts the system first. Highlighted then are concerns raised by Carrette and King in their seminal text *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (2005), who comment that there is a fundamental difference between the incorporation of "ethical" values by organisations seeking to improve their practice to reflect the needs and concerns of the human condition, and the misappropriation of spiritual concerns, values and aspirations in order to enhance, mobilise and extend control of the human resource.

Illustrating that the ethical struggle between the rational, bureaucratic demands, values and principles of the economic cosmos and the irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of human condition remain prevalent (Heelas, 2008), as Carrette and King make clear, however, such reduction of metaphysical concerns to surround secular concerns constitutes nothing more than the 'corporate takeover of the religions' (2005: 133) by soft capitalist secondary institutions. This is because by reducing metaphysical concerns to those bound to organisational aims and objectives, contrary to traditional metaphysical frameworks of belief or indeed alternatives that arose during the 1960s countercultural revolution, metaphysical concerns are not presented in a manner that encourages the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of subjective being through worldly activity that incites meaning and purpose in relation to the collective. Rather, presenting the performance of worldly activity as activity through which ends and benefits valued for the subject alone are acquired, such self-realisation-cum-gratification promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions compound, institutionalise and perpetuate the "problem of work" and the condition of homelessness that underpins it rather than addressing, alleviating and resolving it (Heelas, 2002).

**Chapter summary**

This chapter provides an account of the dynamic between metaphysical belief and work as perceived through the sociological analysis of religion by considering the transformation of the human condition and the meaning and purpose of worldly activity. Exploring the extent to which metaphysical belief has shaped meaning and purpose derived from worldly activity referred to as work throughout history as demonstrated through Weber's Protestant work ethic, this chapter illustrates how for much of history, work has been an expression of one's love for God as well as the means through which being can be conceived in relation to the collective human condition within and beyond material existence. As belief in God's reality declined, however, this chapter illustrates through Weber's concept of the spirit of capitalism how humanity turned away from conceiving work as meaningful and purposeful to being within and beyond material existence, to conceive work as meaningful and purposeful as an expression of one's subjective being exclusively to the experience of one's lifetime in material existence. This was argued to symbolise the rise in faith in the economic cosmos. Where worldly activity in material existence was once regarded as an expression of love for God and duty toward the Christian collective, worldly activity in material existence became increasingly meaningful and purposeful to the extent it facilitates the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's subjective construction of self, and perceived latent "potentialities" in this life.

This was explored by Nietzsche through his notion of the death of God, no longer could metaphysical frameworks of belief dominate popular thought and provide a shared and collective home for the human condition. Rather, what results is a decline of belief in metaphysical frameworks of existence, and humanity assuming the role of Absolute itself. Throwing the responsibility of humanity back on itself to compensate for and cope with the loss of an external Absolute that had previously been positioned as responsible for the human condition, this was illustrated through the creation of absolute standards underpinned by scientific rationale and mathematical logic, and principles reflective of economic concerns such as productivity, efficiency and profitability, through which to conceive the meaning and purpose of the human condition. Positioning humanity as masters of its own condition, such developments were argued to indicate the attempt to free the human condition from the binds of necessity, pain and suffering through human-inspired frameworks of scientific rationale and mathematical reason. As Arendt illustrates, however, the promises the human condition makes to itself through the creation of human-centred absolute standards does nothing more than bind humanity further within the minds play with itself. Compounding Nietzsche's argument that the rise of the economic cosmos transforms the human condition into conceptual idolators, this chapter outlines how, following the death of God, humanity confuses the world as it is with the world as it is thought about, talked about, and conceived to affirm the meaning and purpose of existence most want to hear and believe.

Indicative of the condition of homelessness that marks the human condition following the decline of belief in metaphysical conceptions of reality that once situated the individual being within the collective human condition under conceptions of an Absolute, this chapter highlighted the impact structural and ideological transformations have on the activity of work through Berger's "problem of work". Illustrating the ontological devaluation of work and increasing fragmentation of worldly activity as a result of technical advancement through the division of labour and the elevation of economic principles of efficiency, productivity and profitability that followed and exacerbated processes of secularisation, this is because economic life is re-positioned as separate, contradictory and superior to religious life in response to the condition of homelessness. Contextualising the rise in significance of action over contemplation, the rationalisation of the human condition does not compensate for the loss of metaphysical frameworks of meaning, however, but exacerbates a condition of being marked by alienation from worldly activity by individuals who neither perceive existence through metaphysical frameworks of belief nor find refuge in primary institutions of the economic cosmos. Highlighting how the principles of bureaucracy, rationality, plurality, componentiality, and multi-relationality characteristic of the economic cosmos do not provide a home for being in the material world but render the human condition increasingly thrown back on itself to make meaningful and purposeful being in multiple social worlds, institutions and roles, this chapter thus demonstrates how the "problem of work" is not rectified by the economic cosmos, but exacerbated.

As this chapter makes clear, however, the condition of homelessness is an unnatural state of being, for as Berger and his colleagues demonstrate, very few individuals can tolerate the continuous uncertainty, or contemplation required, to construct cohesive ontological frameworks through which to comprehend being in the material world. Furthermore, due to the historical connection that to be and to work are inextricably entwined, the human condition continues to perceive work as the activity through which to construct, affirm and confirm the meaning and purpose of being. Contrary to the secularisation thesis then, what is evident is the re-sacralisation of the UK context through popular culture through the countercultural revolution. Giving rise to the emergence of secondary institutions through the countercultural revolution to cope with homelessness following the loss of metaphysical homes and the alienating forces of primary institution, the rise of secondary institutions was explored through the HPM and est, which provided alternative metaphysical frameworks informed by an eclectic mix of global traditions. Free from the historical baggage that surrounds Christian ideology, the significance of secondary institutions that emerged through the countercultural revolution to the condition of homelessness is explicit in that they not only encouraged the conceptualisation of being within and beyond material existence within collective frameworks. Whereas traditional metaphysical frameworks of belief accounted for being within and beyond material existence relative to the collective human condition, secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution also supported the rising significance of the subjective experience of material existence that emerged following the death of God. Protecting

humanity from the responsibility of/for being by enabling the re-conceptualisation of existence within coherent and ordered constructions of reality, this was framed through the cultural turn to life. Illustrating the appeal of secondary institutions because they affirmed the central significance of one's subjective experience of being in material existence, they also reinvigorated the nature and character of worldly activity to reflect meaning and purpose relative to one's being. Explored through the self-work ethic, which advocates the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's inner beliefs, values and desires through the nature and character of worldly activity that at the same time positioned the individual in relation to the collective human condition and the natural world, this chapter explored how the self-work ethic re-assimilated worldly activity with ontological significance.

Though the countercultural spirit and most of its secondary institutions had dissipated by the 1970s, this chapter outlines how rhetoric, practices and techniques developed through the countercultural revolution have been misappropriated by the economic cosmos in its attempt to re-conceptualise worldly activity characterised by inherently inhuman principles of efficiency, productivity and profit, and organised by the division of labour, as meaningful and purposeful to the human condition. Discussed under the rubric soft capitalism, such developments indicate attempts made by the economic cosmos to overcome the "problem of work", and the frustration, anxiety and uncertainty characteristic of the condition of homelessness that emerges when worldly activity is experienced as alienating and ontologically valueless. Echoing what most want to hear and believe so as to bind and align individual aims and objectives to those held by the organisation, such developments were explored through the Landmark Forum and the Vanto Group, soft capitalist secondary institutions that bought the rights to countercultural rhetoric, practices and techniques developed by est. Illustrating how the economic cosmos reinterprets the self-work ethic by investing significance into the performance of worldly activity as opposed to its nature and character in order to encourage the alignment of the human resource to organisational aims and objectives, soft capitalism thus enables the economic cosmos to appear to overcome "the problem of work". Rather than overcome alienation and the condition of homelessness then experienced as a result of the ontological devaluation of worldly activity as a result of "the problem of work, however, soft capitalist secondary institutions instead obscure "the problem of work" from human resources through the significance attached to the performance of organisationally designed roles. As such, this chapter demonstrates the growing reliance of contemporary organisations and management styles not only on cultural items and artefacts to re-conceptualise work, but the aspirations, values and desires held by human resources that consider work as the means through which the "authentic" self can be "discovered" and "explored", and one's perceived latent "potentialities" "actualised".

As such, this chapter alludes to problems that emerge through attempts made by the economic cosmos through the development of soft capitalist secondary institutions to overcome the problem of work, and the condition of homelessness that results. Seen by sociologists of religion to facilitate the expansion of

capitalism and bureaucratic, rational means of organisation over the human condition under the rhetoric that presents organisationally designed roles as a means of "self-discovery", "self-exploration" and "self-actualisation", what is clear is how soft capitalist secondary institutions misappropriate and exploit the need for meaning and purpose concerning the experience of existence to further ends couched within market demands. Where secondary institutions of the counterculture were organised under expressivism, however, soft capitalist secondary institutions remain organised under utilitarianism made to appear as expressivism through the incorporation of rhetoric, practices and techniques developed through the countercultural revolution. As such, what is explicit is how the appearance of meaning and purpose invested into the performance of organisationally designed roles is difficult to refute in that it effectively silences alternative rhetoric, narratives and discourses under value attached and associated with progress, and because many in the contemporary want opportunities to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their latent "potentialities". Questioning thus the intentions behind the inclusion of the self and extending its authority to direct questions of ultimate concern, this chapter considers soft capitalist secondary institutions to misappropriate legitimate concerns and aspirations inherent to the human condition to reflect instead corporate and not human interests and concerns.

Rather than providing a home for being in the material world that overcomes "the problem of work" and alienation that underpins the condition of homelessness, this chapter argues that soft capitalist secondary institutions not only reduce metaphysical concerns to material, secular concerns that are inherently inhuman. It also argues that soft capitalist secondary institutions reinforce and entrench homelessness experienced by the human condition by manipulating the beliefs, values and desires of employees to reflect organisational objectives. This is because where the self-work ethic of secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution is underpinned by an ethos that puts the human condition first, the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions is underpinned by an ethos that puts the system first. Such an argument is framed by Carrette and King, who highlight how the use of neoliberal and humanistic values relevant in contemporary popular culture that appeal to most, serve to strengthen the position of capitalist, economic ideologies as authoritative over the human condition. Demonstrating how soft capitalism is perceived as a means of manipulating the aspirations of employees to develop and transform their being in material reality by enabling primary institutions to obscure the economic reasons for such organisations existence, this chapter illustrates where the economic cosmos was previously couched within religious life, that religious life is now couched within economic cosmos.

This chapter thus makes explicit the ideological differences between secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution, and soft capitalist secondary institutions. What is not discussed, however, are the structural differences that exist between secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution, which hold the nature and character of worldly activity as significant to the individual in relation to the collective human condition, and the derision of meaning and purpose of being within and beyond material existence, and soft capitalist secondary institutions that hold the performance of worldly

activity as the source of significance. For example, secondary institutions of the counterculture promoted the expression of the self-work ethic through the selection of work that reflected values, desires and beliefs held by the subjective self that in turn provide opportunities for the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the "inner", "authentic" self. The same cannot be said, however, for the self-work ethic as it manifests within sot capitalist secondary institutions, which re-conceptualise activity marked by principles and values of the economic cosmos as meaningful and purposeful to the individual in isolation of the collective through its performance. Attention ascribed to the performance of work in the contemporary, however, means that the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the human condition remains unexplored. Also unexplored is the significance of belief, and to what extent soft capitalist secondary institutions facilitate genuine "self-discovery", contemplation and growth according to values, desires and beliefs held by human resources. Similarly, the question of *who* organisationally designed roles provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions appeals to, and to what extent individuals seeking to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their "authentic" self are able to express their "inner" beliefs, values and desires remains unexplored. This is because whilst on the surface one may *appear* to advocate a life of spiritual questing, by undertaking organisationally designed roles, they also identify, albeit to varying degrees, with mainstream capitalist values and goals. Unexplored then is whether soft capitalist spiritual discourses and practices appeal to those searching 'within', or to those 'bored with conventional success [who] are looking for 'more'' (Heelas, 1992: 160). Thus, it is in Chapter Three that the significance of the nature and character of the activity in question will be explored in order to consider the impact of soft capitalism to the human condition, and the extent to which it influences approaches to work.

# CHAPTER THREE:
## BRINGING LIFE BACK TO WORK OR MAKING WORK FROM LABOUR?
## AN EXPLORATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF WORLDLY ACTIVITY

Chapter Two illustrates the continued significance of belief in shaping the meaning and purpose derived from the activity of work by those seeking to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their "authentic" being and latent "potentialities" within and during their subjective experience of existence. Drawing on the works of Nietzsche and Arendt, such an argument was made through historical exploration of social and cultural transformations. These arose following the death of God and the alienation induced by the increasing promotion and organisation of worldly activity through rational Enlightenment principles of efficiency, productivity and profit in the name of progress of the human condition in the material world. As Chapter Two detailed, however, not only did the human condition become increasingly concerned with material concerns, values and desires at the expense of the conceptualisation of being beyond material and temporal existence through Enlightenment perspectives, but the principles and values that underpin its ideology do not account for irrational, emotional, or experiential aspects of being. Termed the economic cosmos, Chapter Two outlined how the ideological transformation of the Enlightenment period fundamentally altered the human condition. Such a shift was explored through Berger and colleagues term "homelessness" to describe the perpetual state of anxiety, frustration and continuous uncertainty that results when humanity is thrown back on tools and instruments of its own creation in order to construct a sense of meaning and purpose of material being. More than this, however, Chapter Two indicated how the ideological transformation of the human condition resulting from processes of secularisation, which in turn transformed the structural organisation of worldly activity referred to as work, and consequently the meaning and purpose derived from such activity. Giving rise to a society and human condition characterised by labour, the significance of ideological and structural transformations were explored through Berger's "problem of work" to argue that where worldly activity considered work had once been the means through which being was affirmed and confirmed to the human condition, following the organisation of work according to principles of the division of labour, the nature and character of such activity no longer provided meaning and purpose to the experience of material being.

In seeking to provide a home for being and present worldly activity as meaningful to the human condition and overcome the problem of work, however, Chapter Two illustrates how primary institutions of the economic cosmos appropriate language, practices and techniques that emerged during the 1960s countercultural revolution through neoliberal rhetoric, values and ideals. Re-conceptualising and transforming employment from activity considered estranging and alienating, to activity representing opportunities to "discover" one's "authentic" self, and "actualise" one's latent

"potentialities" through the performance of organisationally designed roles, such developments were discussed through the rubric "soft capitalism". In doing so, Chapter Two outlines how contemporary organisations seek to provide a secure, stable and certain home for being in the material world. Certainly, in focusing on the performance of the activity as opposed to its inherent nature and character, organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches suggest the problem of work has been overturned. Whilst Chapter Two explored the ideological transformation of organisationally designed roles through neoliberal soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques that present the performance of worldly activity as the source of meaning and purpose, what is not explored is the significance of the structure of organisationally designed roles (that is, its specific nature and character). Leading to the question of whether the problem of work can be resolved through ideological transformation alone, or whether structural transformation is also required, Chapter Three is thus concerned with the question of to what extent the nature and character of the activity undertaken matters to the construction of meaning and purpose. This is in contrast to claims by soft capitalist secondary institutions that significance lies in the performance of organisationally designed roles.

Though there is very little empirical research undertaken that explores the impact of soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques to the human condition, a number of insights can be made theoretically through discussion raised by Arendt, and contemporary scholars of religion and culture. Thus, in order to explore the reality ushered in by soft capitalist ideals and discern the extent to which the nature and character of a given activity is significant, Chapter Three first discusses the contextual milieu to determine what work "is" following the industrial revolution. This builds on the considerations of Arendt and Berger to illustrate how the structure of organisationally designed roles remain organised through value placed in its productive capacity and not the significance the nature and character the specific activity poses to the human condition. Drawing on Arendt to outline how the value of productivity obscures the distinction that exists between activities termed work and activities termed labour, this chapter explores the distinction between them in order to highlight how the nature and character of activity referred to as work in the contemporary Western context is more akin to the nature and character of labour. In doing so, Chapter Three poses that the neoliberal ideological transformations ushered in by soft capitalist approaches adopted by primary institutions re-conceptualise organisationally designed roles as opportunities to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities" in attempt to make activities of labour appear as work. This is because though neoliberal soft capitalism transforms the ideology underpinning activities of labour to make activity seem 'work', the structure of such activity remains underpinned by enlightenment principles that characterise labour. What is argued instead is that soft capitalism attempts to make labour appear as work deny what it is "to be" human because such approaches misappropriate metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques for the accumulation of profit. This is supported by contemporary sociological analysis of religion and critical voices present in Organisation Studies to indicate a number

of contentions that emerge when labour is made to appear as work. Leading to the suggestion that soft capitalism constitutes nothing more than a capitalism of spirituality by the economic cosmos for the purpose of greater efficiency and productivity in the name of profit accumulation, Chapter Three finally outlines some potential consequences the capitalism of spirituality represents to the human condition.

## The significance of worldly activity to the human condition

Seldom do we contemplate how the terms work and labour relate or apply to worldly activity in the contemporary Western context. Colloquially referring to paid employment ubiquitously as "work" regardless of its nature and character and despite most vernacular languages throughout the world having distinct terms for activities considered work and activities considered labour, such omission renders contemplation of how the self and the beliefs, values and ideas held interact with and shape how we approach the activity in question, unquestioned. As such, rarely do we pause to reflect on the subtle differences of skill and unskilled activity, or whether activity demands manual or intellectual input, or why we might prefer one activity over another, or describe certain activities as work, but refer to others as labour. Thus, though most would agree there is difference between activity undertaken by a baker in an independent bakery and activity undertaken by an individual who works in a baked goods factory, seldom do we have cause or occasion to consider why this might be, and what these differences "are".

Despite the lack of regard for the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity in the contemporary context, discussion raised in Chapter Two through Berger and Heelas reveals its importance. Berger's work illustrates how the ideological transformation of society following the decline of metaphysical belief and authority from public thought, infrastructure and societal sovereignty rendered worldly activity regardless of its nature and character, ontologically devalued (1964). Underpinned by ideology inspired by the principles and values of the economic cosmos, Berger also indicates how contexts that have undergone processes of secularisation design, organise and structure worldly activity referred to as work according to Enlightenment principles of reason and rationality to promote productivity and efficiency, and secure the accumulation of profit (1964). This demonstrates how cultures shaped by rationality neglect to consider the nature and character of worldly activity when activity is designed according to human-inspired moral and ethical values of the economic cosmos, wherein continuous progress and growth of profit is achieved through efficient and productive labour attained by the fragmentation and standardisation of worldly activity into its constituent parts. Identifying the correlation between the division of labour made possible by technical advancement and the death of God and the transvaluation of values and the problem of work, Berger makes evident how the neglect of consideration concerning the nature and character of worldly activity results in the loss of meaning and purpose concerning material existence (1964). Similarly, Heelas' work concerning the self-work ethic that arose during the 1960s countercultural revolution highlights that, despite the

introduction of the division of labour, the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity prevails. This is evident in the importance of the nature and character posed to counterculturalists who conceived the meaning and purpose of material existence, and worldly activity, through metaphysical frameworks of belief in their selection of worldly activity (1996). Identifying a number of activities selected by counterculturalists such as art, music, teaching, counselling and artisanal craft (1996), Heelas' work surrounding the emergence of the self-work ethic is particularly significant because it illustrates a continuation of the relational dynamic identified by Weber between metaphysical belief and the selection of worldly activity (1905). This is because such expressive activities enable expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires in the material world, the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution enables the expression of one's inner being within and in relation to the collective human condition.

Despite recognising the significance of the nature and character of the activity in question, however, Heelas does not expand his discussion to explore precisely *what* it is about the nature and character of expressive activities that make them ontologically valuable. Nor does he comment *why* such activities enable the self-work ethic and expressive individualism to manifest. Despite Löwith claiming that consideration of the theme of work to being has never been discussed with seriousness and diligence since Hegel (1807, 1818) and Marx (1844, 1867), the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity is a major theme within Arendt's influential text, *The Human Condition* (1958). Drawing on the work of Hegel and Marx, Arendt discusses how differences between activities that require neither skill nor intellect but physical exertion of the body, activities that require either or both skill and intellect to fulfil its completion, and activities that are defined according to its productive capacity, shape the meaning and purpose derived (1958). Despite the variety of ways in which worldly activity can be perceived as meaningful and purposeful to the human condition, more so than the distinction between manual and intellectual activity, and skilled and unskilled activity, however, Arendt comments that 'the distinction between productive and unproductive labour contains, albeit in a prejudicial manner, the more fundamental distinction between work and labour' (1958: 87) in the modern age. This is because the language of the modern age, built on the values of process and progress, indicates how productive activity was perceived to complement the burgeoning capitalist, consumer culture that followed the industrial revolution.

Resulting in the 'modern glorification of labour' (Arendt, 1958: 92), since the industrial revolution, Arendt thus outlines how the world created by human condition on earth is a world designed not to accommodate the human condition primarily, but to house the machines believed to usher in the emancipation from necessity in the future, and facilitate the freedom of the human condition as promised as attainable within the material world by the economic cosmos (1958). Indicative of the cultural obscuration of the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the human condition once humanity positioned itself as master of its own condition, no longer is worldly activity

undertaken primarily according to the meaning and purpose its nature and character affords the enactor's conception of being in relation to the collective human condition. Rather, it is meaningful and purposeful the extent to which it affords the enactor's individual experience of existence perceived benefits in material reality. Evident then is how contemporary labourer's societies can only be understood through consideration of structural and ideological transformations within a given context. This is significant, for Arendt argues that the organisation of worldly activity through the division of labour negates not only the need for intellectual input, but 'abolish[es] skilled labour altogether' (1958: 91). Given this, Arendt provides a distinction between activities of labour and activities of work to illustrate how the nature and character of worldly activity has become increasingly obscure and secondary to its productive capacity. Outlining how in the past activity considered work had been undertaken in public, as opposed to labour, which was traditionally activity undertaken out of necessity and in private (Arendt, 1958), the transformation and legitimisation of labour as activity undertaken in the public sphere is regarded by Arendt to originate in the works of Locke (1689), Smith (1759; 1776) and Marx (1847, 1867), whose perspectives established productive labour as the most desirable form of activity to be undertaken in public. This is because, though labour leaves nothing of permanence and durability in the material world despite consuming resources in its unfolding, Locke, Smith and Marx perceived labour to be the best form of worldly activity because of its capacity to yield the most profit when organised through Enlightenment principles that encourage its productive capacity, and promote the pursuit of private property (Arendt, 1958). Not only does labour according to Locke, Smith and Marx mark humanity's perceived superiority and distinction against nature and the natural world through its capacity to enable the human condition to create surplus beyond the needs or means of its condition. It also symbolises the activity through which humanity could construct a home for itself within the material world.

More than this, however, unlike activity that depends upon skill or the intellectual capacity that varies from person to person, Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, Smith and Marx considered the human capacity for productivity, that is one's '"labour power", [as that] which each living human being should possess approximately the same amount' (Arendt, 1958: 90). Reinforcing the division of labour as an inherent good in that machines substitute for and artificially improve the "labour power" of the human condition, the focus of Locke, Smith and Marx on the productive capacity of labour is thus seen by Arendt to legitimise the organisation of society in a manner that prizes productive activity over unproductive activity regardless of its nature and character. Though Arendt is critical of Locke and Smith's lack of reflection concerning the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity in shaping, affirming and confirming perspectives of reality and being because such lack of reflection denies recognition of the inherent worth of an activity to the human condition by concentrating its value to surround the "labour power" the activity requires, Arendt is most critical of Marx. This is because through Marx, Arendt outlines how labour has become 'the source of all productivity and the expression

of the very humanity of man' (1958: 101). Thus, whereas the significance of the worth of worldly activity regardless of its productive capacity is still present in the works of Locke and Smith, Arendt argues that Marx's conception of "labour power" focuses the significance of worldly activity to revolve solely around the use the activity had in sustaining the life processes of the collective human condition (1958). An argument illustrated through Marx's concept of "use value" as the means through which the emancipation of the human condition could be achieved by humanity labouring past the point of necessity (Arendt, 1958; Marx, 1867). This is problematic, however, to Arendt because the idea of "use value" as a construct inherently supports and unquestioningly assumes the validity of the economic cosmos, and subsequently scientific rationale and mathematical logic (Arendt, 1958). More than this, however, from Arendt's perspective, Marx's concept of "use value" did not account for the abstract and ambiguous nature of the human-inspired standards of "use" and "value". Echoing Nietzsche's concerns that conceptualisation of what value "is", and indeed what is of value depends on the ideological principles, beliefs and perspectives of a given time, context and situation (1888) where the inherent worth of an activity is fixed to the intrinsic nature and character of an activity regardless of whether it is performed in public or private, the "use value" of an activity only applies to an activity performed in public exclusively. This is because the socially determined values that unfold in public life is not something that can be ascribed to activity undertaken in private, outside the purview of society (Arendt, 1958). That the success of the economic cosmos hinges on the public execution of productive labour as opposed to unproductive work, Arendt thus demonstrates how, through Marxist influence, contemporary labourer's societies forwent the worth of the intrinsic nature and character of worldly activity in favour of the "use value" ascribed to the activity according to shared, "in vogue" ideas of value at a given time.

Though the above discussion highlights why contemporary labourer's societies emerged during the Enlightenment, and contextualises the shift from activity undertaken as a result of its inherent worth to the human condition, to activity undertaken as a result of its perceived value to the human condition, what is not clear is why activities of work have worth to the human condition and activities of labour do not. Also unclear from the above is what this difference between the nature and character of activities of work and labour means in relation to the condition of homelessness, and soft capitalist approaches that attempt to obscure the condition of homelessness from the human condition. With these questions in mind, the following will consider Arendt's distinction between activities of work and labour in detail so as to explore the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity, and the impact it has to the construction of meaning and purpose of being within and beyond material existence, and the condition of homelessness.

Activities of work

The distinction Arendt provides between activities of work and labour is best illustrated through the differences that arise between the creation of a table created by an artisan in one instance, and a table created by an individual working on an assembly line in another. In the first instance of a table created by an artisan, rather than undertaking activities of work primarily out of necessity to sustain one's biological existence through monetary exchange, Arendt makes clear how activities of work undertaken by an artisan are undertaken voluntarily from of a desire to improve one's skill and ability of their craft (1958). Indicating that the act of fabrication that underpins the nature and character of activities of work depends on the creative destruction of nature and the natural world in that to reify the abstract idea of a table, the artisan must destroy the tree in order to commence its fabrication (Arendt, 1958), this is important. This is because not only does the act of making a table by an artisan cause the artisan to confront, contemplate and accept the finitude of their own existence. It also enables the artisan to express their inner beliefs, values and desires held in relation to a particular ethos during the reification and subsequent fabrication of the item created (Arendt, 1958). For example, undertaking all processes involved in its creation from the initial idea of the table to the finished item created, the item created is marked by the ideas and design of the artisan. Reflecting the inherent worth of the nature and character of the craft in question to the artisan that motivates the undertaking of such an activity, the nature and character of activities of work thus reflect the internal rhythm of the artisan. Demonstrating the complete responsibility for decisions made throughout all stages of the table's creation, from the initial intangible idea, to the type of wood chosen, the tools and method applied, to the finish selected upon its creation, activities of work thus allow the artisan freedom to choose when they work, and for how long according to the demand for their craft at a given time. That is to say, a table created by an artisan thus is created not for the sake of repetition or reproduction of a particular design, but for the sake of reifying and fabricating in the material world the idea of a table according to the intended use and specific purpose.

Indicating that the plausibility of activities of work originate in Plato's teachings surrounding the original, permanent and ideal idea from which all items reified and fabricated stem from (Arendt, 1958), the creation of a table by an artisan then is undertaken with foresight with a specific end in mind rather than compulsion without a known end. This is important for numerous reasons. Not only is the fact that the nature and character of activities of work follow a linear process with a definitive beginning and end, evident. Also evident is the inherent contemplation that characterises the nature of activities of work. As Arendt makes clear, however, in order to reify in the mind's eye the idea, image or blueprint of the table to be fabricated, the nature and character of work requires the artisan to work in isolation (1958). Given this, what is evident is how 'the specifically political forms of being together with others, acting in concert and speaking with each other, are completely outside the range of his productivity' (Arendt, 1958: 160). This is significant, for belonging within the collective human condition is inherent within activities of work. This is because though an artisan must work privately in isolation to reify the

idea underpinning the design of their fabricated item, they must return to the public sphere in order to make the use item created, available for exchange. Given this, what is evident then is how the nature and character of activities of work unify and unite public and private aspects of being through the creation of items deemed useful to the collective.

Anchoring perspectives of being to the world constructed through the creation of use items, **t**he creation of a use object that occurs in undertaking an activity of work not only confirms and affirms what being "is" and how it can be known to the enactor, but enables the human condition to look upon nature and the natural world objectively from a perspective echoed in the design of the item created (Arendt, 1958). This is important, for despite encouraging the expression of the artisan's inner beliefs, values and desires through the reification and fabrication of the object then, Arendt outlines how the activities of work requires the artisan to comprehend their experience of material existence, not only in relation to nature and the natural world, but in relation to the collective human condition (1958). Rather than encouraging the alleviation of one's subjective suffering in isolation from the collective human condition, items created by activities of work are created as a means to multiply the existence of an end for the sake of a particular purpose, such as easing painful effort experienced within material existence by the human condition (Arendt, 1958). Reinforcing the belief that humanity are masters of their own condition through the reification and fabrication of use items, the human condition is able to build and sustain a stable and solid, shared public realm, activities of work thus enable the human condition to create and construct a home of permanence and durability for being in the material world (Arendt, 1958). That is to say, for an artisan undertaking an activity of work, the particular purpose underpinning their activity is the creation of an item that supports the construction of a world of permanence and durability in material reality. Making explicit how the nature and character of work 'lies less in its usefulness than in its capacity for producing durability' (Arendt, 1958: 172), this is important. This is because what is indicated is that the inherent purpose underlying activities of work goes beyond the accumulation of material benefits, but revolves around the creation of a shared and collective condition of being across generations in material reality.

Works of art

From this perspective, the nature and character of activities of work afford 'the human artifice the stability and solidity without which it could not be relied upon to house the unstable and mortal creature which is man' (Arendt, 1958: 136). Of particular significance to the reification and fabrication of a reliable, permanent and durable home for the human condition, however, are works of art, such as music, poetry, and aesthetic objects. This is because, works of art, due to their character, defy the association of socially inscribed value. The nature and character of works of art thus are not bound to the consumptive life processes of the human condition, but instead encourage, through the creative

destructive processes involved, humanity to confront the finitude of material existence. Furthermore, created for the purposelessness of pleasure as opposed to use or a specific purpose for the collective human condition, the nature and character of works of art enable the reification and fabrication of intangible thought, emotions and questions of ultimate concern across generations throughout history through the creation of tangible artefacts that would otherwise remain imprisoned within the self (Arendt, 1958). Similar to rituals of metaphysical frameworks of belief then, the nature and character of works of art give form to intangible aspects of the human condition that maintain a 'shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, de-privatised and de-individualised as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance' (Arendt, 1958: 50). From this perspective, the nature and character of works of art are significant as they serve as a threshold through which the artist, their work and the wider societal make-up transforms *from one state of being to another*. This is because, more than the transformative capacity the mark of the nature and character of activities of work, the nature and character of works of art are considered by Arendt to be transfigurative in that thought changes its forms into something more beautiful and spiritual than it was before through the creation of a work of art (1958).

Similar to activities of work then, the nature and character of works of art encourage a construction of truth as to what being "is" that results in the abolition of conceptions of subjective being in favour of collective conceptions of being marked by a shared ethos concerning existence. More than activities of work, however, the nature and character of works of art are seen by Arendt to enable humanity to confront its divine nature (1958). This is because 'nowhere else does this thing world reveal itself so spectacularly as the non-mortal home for mortal beings' (Arendt, 1958: 167-168) than in works of art. Where the nature and character of activities of work encourage a condition of worldliness, Arendt makes clear how the nature and character of works of art encourage instead a state of worldlessness that enables humanity to construct a home both within and beyond the material world (1958). Given this, Arendt argues that works of art enable humanity to transcend mortality and attain immortality *through* the immortalisation of the enactor's sentiments, thoughts and ideas expressed in the items and artefacts created through their remembrance by the collective human condition over time and across generations (Arendt, 1958).

Activities of labour

The above discussion illustrates how the nature and character of activities of work and works of art, in producing items and artefacts that transform nature and the natural world and which enable the human condition to transcend the condition of mortality, enable the human condition to construct a home of permanence and durability in the material world, whilst at the same time enabling humanity to construct meaning and purpose of being beyond one's subjective mortal existence. The same, however, cannot

be said for activities of labour. This is argued by Arendt to result from the ethos of the economic cosmos that underpins activities of labour, which does not encourage the human condition to contemplate the finitude of material existence, nor the meaning and purpose of being in relation to the collective human condition. Rather, reflecting values of efficiency, productivity and profit underpinned by scientific rationale and mathematical logic that emerged during the industrial revolution so as to progress the human condition, activities of labour affirm and confirm exclusively the condition of being in the material world (Arendt, 1958). As such, under the economic cosmos, worldly activity is not undertaken for the sustentation and preservation of the world of permanence and durability so as to ease the pain and effort of the human condition during existence in the material world through the creation of use items. Neither is it undertaken because of the inherent worth the nature and character of the activity symbolises to the meaning and purpose of material existence to the labourer in question. Rather, labour is undertaken predominantly because of its perceived value in emancipating the human condition from the pain and effort of being in the material world.

Undertaken for the purpose of optimum efficiency and productivity then, no longer is worldly activity gauged as meaningful by the economic cosmos according to 'the quality or character of the thing it produces' (Arendt, 1958: 93) that sustains and preserves the world of permanence and durability constructed by and for the human condition, but the "labour power" of the labourer used to sustain, preserve and ease the biological processes associated with life itself. This is argued by Arendt to result because 'of all human activities, only labour…is unending, progressing automatically in accordance with life itself and outside the range of wilful decisions or humanly meaningful purposes' (1958: 106). Thus, contrary to the nature and character of activities of work and works of art, which require intellect and skill, activities of labour are undertaken for the purpose of sustaining one's biological needs, or for the sake of improving one's skill and ability in one's chosen craft, Arendt demonstrates how the nature and character of labour requires only physical performance of the labourer's "labour power" alone for its completion (1958). This is significant for a number of reasons. To begin, in focusing the significance of worldly activity on the efficient and productive performance for the purposes of progress of the human condition as opposed to the purpose of creating products to sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability, the nature and character of labour justifies, validates and authenticates the division of labour for the purpose of sustaining and preserving life's processes (Arendt, 1958). That is to say, the nature and character of labour justifies the organisation of worldly activity in a manner that the labourer performs only part of the process of a given activity because such organisation facilitates the sustentation of biological processes necessary for the continuation of human life as efficiently and productively as possible (Arendt, 1958; Thompson, 1967). Contrary to the nature and character of activities of work that require isolation for the artisan to be alone with the idea, what is evident is the emphasis placed on action by activities of labour as opposed to contemplation. Constituting not the reification and fabrication of one's inner beliefs, values and desires through the nature and character of

the activity in relation to the collective human condition then, this is important. This is because, whilst an artisan undertaking an activity of work is responsible for designing and creating a table from start to finish, a labourer of a large furniture corporation is responsible for only part of the process, such as the production of table tops, without comprehension of what the finished table will look like. Furthermore, whilst an artisan chooses the method applied and tools utilised, the labourer of a furniture corporation is required to perform their labour using the tools specified by the owners of the means of production in accordance with the values of efficiency and productivity. More than this, however, where an artisan chooses when they work, and indeed what they do whilst they are working, a labourer of a large furniture corporation is required to repetitively undertake specific parts of the production process at the behest of an external authority as opposed to their natural rhythm.

Lacking both purpose in one's activity and comprehension of the end product created, evident then is how the nature and character of labour encourages the unification of the human condition through the rhythmic coordination of "labour power" from multiple individuals added together (Arendt, 1958). Given this, what is demonstrated is how the nature and character of labour requires humanity to be 'instrumental in the production of objects of whose ultimate shape he has not the slightest notion' (Arendt, 1958: 141). Requiring the labourer adjust to the external rhythm of the machine to perform their constituent part of labour process, and adopt the mechanical movements and rhythmic, ordered coordination demanded of their performance by the machine world as opposed to their natural, internal rhythm, this is important. This is because, slaves to the external rhythm of the machine, rather than enabling the human condition to mediate being in the material world in relation to nature and the natural world freely through the use of tools and instruments according to their natural, internal rhythm that in turn brings about the construction of a world of permanence and durability as is evident through activities of work and works of art, the nature and character of labour does not require labourers use tools and instruments because labourers *are* the tools and instruments of the machine world (Arendt, 1958).

Demonstrating the shift of meaning and significance from the product created to the performance of the producing activity according to the "labour power" of the labourer, what is evident is a further mark of the nature and character of labour: that its performance does not leave anything of permanence behind in the world (Arendt, 1958). This is because the nature and character of activities of labour lead to the production of parts of an object, and thus the creation of objects only incidentally (Arendt, 1958). Constituting then a futile activity that produces means to further means as opposed to a means to an end, contrary to activities of work whereby the destruction of nature is justified through the creation of a use object then, there is no justification of the destruction of nature for the creation of surplus for consumption in support of the biological life processes of the human condition. Thus, whereas the nature and character of work causes the human condition to encounter and acknowledge the eventual destruction of one's subjective existence, activities of labour encourage the human condition to perceive

existence as continuous, cyclical and never ending (Arendt, 1958). Indeed, marked by an endless, repetitive cyclical movement as opposed to linear movement marked by a definitive beginning and end, Arendt makes clear how the nature and character of labour is marked by consumption to the point that 'labouring and consuming follow each other so closely that they almost constitute one and the same movement' (1958: 99-100). The value of consumption is a significant aspect of the nature and character of activities of labour, for where an artisan creates a table for a specific use, such as the result of demand, to sustain their biological needs, or out of the desire to further their skill, a labourer of a large furniture corporation produces tables, regardless whether there is a demand, for the purpose of creating a surplus.

From this perspective, where activities of work and works of art are considered valuable relative to the use or purpose of the item created to the human condition, or because of the pleasure derived from its aesthetic beauty, or the meaning communicated from its existence across generations, activities of labour instead are considered valuable relative only to the "labour power" of the labourer, and the potential to produce surplus one's "labour power" holds in supporting the sustentation and preservation of life itself (Arendt, 1958). As such, what is explicit is how the nature and character of activities of labour evoke a relationship between the labourer and the material world based on the exchange value of one's perceived inherent "labour power" throughout one's lifetime in material existence, wherein gratification for one's effort is compensated for almost immediately after the performance of labour through the receipt of material benefits and the purchase of items for consumption (Arendt, 1958). Thus, where activities of work and works of art are undertaken "for the sake of" sustaining the human created world of permanence and durability through the creation of use items, for the sake of the idea or meaning expressed in the artefact, or indeed because of the inherent worth of the activity to the enactor and the human condition, activities of labour are undertaken "in order to" receive a wage used to relieve the pain and suffering of material existence (Arendt, 1958). This is important, for what is evident then is how the economic cosmos presents the activity of labour as a moral obligation, not only for the sustentation of the life processes of material being, but in making a reality the hope that through labouring the human condition will progress, and in so doing, usher in a better, pain free and effortless future condition.

Such aspirations are affirmed and confirmed by the nature and character of labour through its repetitious and cyclical movement. As such, activities of labour enable the human condition to concentrate on the 'sheer bliss of being alive… with the same happy and purposeless regularity with which day and night, and life and death, follow each other' (Arendt, 1958: 106). The impact of the reliance on the cyclical and repetitive motion of labour underpinning the aspirations of the human condition is significant, however. This is because by binding the human condition to an endless repetitious cycle of consumption, the nature and character of labour does not encourage life to be experienced and comprehended through the fabrication and reification of tangible use objects and works of art that add to, sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability, and which reflect one's inner beliefs,

values and desires through thought and contemplation required (Arendt, 1958). Rather, the nature and character of activities of labour, revolving around the sustenance and preservation of life processes experienced in the material world, and progression toward a pain free and effortless existence, encourages the human condition to focus exclusively on the sustenance and preservation of one's subjective experience of material existence. Dis-abling humanity's ability to recognise and confront the limitations of existence in the material world, what is evident then is how the nature and character of labour thus imprisons the human condition within a perspective of existence that does not enable humanity to transcend or free itself from the endlessly repetitive cycle of one's biological life processes (Arendt, 1958).

As Arendt comments, however, 'In order to be what the world is always meant to be, *a home for men during their life on earth*, the human artifice must be a place fit for action and speech, for activities not only entirely useless for the necessities of life but of an entirely different nature from the manifold activities of fabrication by which the world itself and all things in it are produced' (1958: 173). In undertaking worldly activity not out of thoughtful contemplation to construct a shared and collective world of permanence and durability through the creation of use objects, but for the purpose of sustaining one's biological survival through the repetition of meaningless parts of a process then, what amounts is a condition of being that revolves around the fulfilment of one's needs that cannot be shared or related to by the collective human condition (Arendt, 1958). Indicative of the appeal of labour in that it not only justifies the hedonistic concentration on one's subjective experience of material existence but soothes and pacifies the need for the human condition to contemplate the condition of being beyond the material world through its endless and repetitive cycles, this is important. This is because what Arendt illustrates is how the nature and character of labour does not facilitate expression and comprehension of what being "is" to be communicated across generations through the reification and fabrication of the intangible through tangible use objects and works of art. Indeed, 'Shattering the very purposefulness of the world' (Arendt, 1958: 150), Arendt also demonstrates how the cyclical and repetitive nature and character of labour serves to distract humanity from contemplation of questions of ultimate concern such as the finitude of material existence in that it never invites the labourer to contemplate the condition of being beyond existence in the material world (1958).

Illustrating the neglect of the world of permanence and durability by a condition of humanity that focuses purely on sustaining its own life processes, Arendt makes evident how the nature and character of labour does not lend itself to the sustentation and preservation of a permanent and durable home for humanity in the material world as is possible through the creation of a use item during work or works of art (1958). Rather, sustaining and preserving life itself through the production of items for consumption to ease the burdens associated with one's biological needs by focusing on the perceived material benefits labour's productive qualities deliver to the human condition, activities of labour induce a condition of being 'incapable of building or inhabiting a public, worldly realm' (Arendt, 1958: 160).

Given this, Arendt makes clear how the nature and character of activities of labour induce a condition of being whereby humanity is homeless in the material world in that worldly activity underpinned by Enlightenment principles that brought the world of permanence and durability into being, ironically serves to undermine its continuation (1958). Thus, though the machine world of the economic cosmos functions as a substitute for the real world, Arendt argues that this pseudo-world 'cannot fulfil the most important task of the human artifice, which is to offer mortals a dwelling place more permanent and more stable than themselves' (1958: 152). As such, whilst the human condition on the surface enjoys a state of security, stability and certainty within material existence through the appearance of homes established by human-inspired frameworks and principles that compound the significance of material existence, in reality, such homes are not only precarious, but unstable and insecure. This is because, concerned only with sustaining and preserving the life processes of humanity, activities of labour do not sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability, but compound and obscure both world alienation, and alienation from the human condition.

## Employment in contemporary labourer's societies

The distinction between activities of work and labour provided by Arendt is significant for numerous reasons. To begin, it is significant in relation to discussion raised in Chapter Two concerning organisationally designed roles provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions of the economic cosmos that seek to re-conceptualise the performance of such activity through neoliberal rhetoric as opportunities through which the human condition can transform, reify and fabricate one's "authentic" self and one's perceived latent "potentialities". This is because when Arendt's distinction between the nature and character of work, works of art and labour is taken into account, what is evident is that organisationally designed roles do not constitute neither activities of work nor works of art, but activities of labour. The reason why most organisationally designed roles constitute labour as opposed to work arguably stems from arguments raised in Chapter Two concerning contexts that have undergone technical advancement following processes of secularisation. Unquestioningly underpinned by values and principles that reflect the faith of the economic cosmos as opposed to metaphysical frameworks of belief that prized efficient and productive activity in pursuit of the progress of the human condition in material reality, activity referred to as work became increasingly by calculative administration and orchestrated bureaucratic processes. As such, the nature and character of worldly activity is no longer considered significant to the degree to which it provided meaning and purpose of material existence relative to the finitude of material existence. Rather, worldly activity is increasingly valued in such contexts as the means through which its performance affords 'free[dom]to "consume" the whole world, and to reproduce daily all the things it wishes to consume' (Arendt, 1958: 132).

Evident then is the neglect and lack of consideration of the distinction between activities of work and labour in contexts where human-inspired values of efficiency, productivity and profitability constitute the primary aims and objectives of worldly activity referred to as work. Following the death of God and transvaluation of values, for many then, the only point of reference left for the human condition to comprehend what being "is" and how it can be known is not comprehended through the use object created, or the nature and character of the activity, but through the performance of action (Arendt, 1958). This is because when 'the ultimate standard of measurement is not utility and usage at all, but "happiness," that is, the amount of pain and pleasure experienced in the production or in the consumption of things' (Arendt, 1958: 309), what matters is not the creation of an artefact that sustains and preserves the world of permanence and durability, but the pain free and effortless experience of existence the activity seems to afford. This argument is supported by the fact that the majority of individuals in contemporary society do not equate "work" with expressive activities that are undertaken for the sake of enjoyment of the activity, such as music, art and writing. Rather, such activities are typically regarded as "hobbies" to be undertaken for leisure during one's free time because such activities do not coincide with the principles of efficiency or productivity that underlie employment in the contemporary milieu (Arendt, 1958). Furthermore, activities undertaken in the contemporary milieu whose nature and character does reflect activities of work, such as plastering, gardening or construction work, are typically regarded as undesirable, low socio-economic forms of activity undertaken by the working classes (Willis, 1978), and thus inferior to activities that promise material betterment through the receipt of a wage, and personal development through soft capitalist rhetoric.

Making explicit how worldly activity is valued to reflect secular concerns such as the receipt of material benefits for efficient and productive activity following the fragmentation, standardisation and division of labour, this is important. This is because what is illustrated is the continuation of the recursive relationship that rose in the seventeenth century between consumptive capitalism and "labour power", whereby most expect payment to cater to popular wants, desires and values in exchange and compensation for the utilisation of one's "labour power", and for the pain and effort that its performance may have caused in order to fulfil the expectation that employment leads to material betterment. As such, most activity referred to as work undertaken in contexts that have undergone technical advancement following the decline of faith in metaphysical frameworks of belief is valued according to the means its productive performance facilitates "conspicuous consumption" for the continued survival of the human condition rather than for pleasure or joy derived from the nature and character of the activity, or the skill or intellect required in its undertaking (Arendt, 1958). Given this, it is of no surprise that soft capitalist secondary institutions glorify activities of labour as essential and necessary for the progression and survival of the human condition to the point that 'most work in the modern world is performed in the mode of labour' (Arendt, 1958: 141). Indeed, perceived to free the human condition from pain and effort necessary in catering for one's biological needs, and which affirms and

confirms the central significance of one's subjective being through its performance, apparent then is the extent to which modern communities have become societies of labourers and jobholders wherein worldly activity is 'centred around the one activity necessary to sustain life' (Arendt, 1958: 46).

Making labour appear as work

That the majority of employment commonly referred to as work in the contemporary reflects the nature and character of activities of labour rather than work is important. Indeed, whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions claim they seek to transform the ideology underpinning worldly activity referred to as work through the introduction of neoliberal rhetoric, practices and techniques discussed in Chapter Two, what is evident is how soft capitalist approaches depend on the ideological re-conceptualisation of organisationally designed roles to obscure the fact that, structurally, it remains an activity organised under the principle of the division of labour. By remaining an activity organised under human-inspired enlightenment principles of rationality and reason in order to mobilise human resources to perform in a most efficient and productive manner to retain its competitive advantage then, soft capitalist approaches do not seek to reverse Taylor's notion that the system must be first (1901), but confirm the legitimacy of the economic system over material being. Institutionalising the structural stagnation of organisationally designed roles to sustain and preserve faith in the economic cosmos and consumer society that emerges without compromising the productivity, efficiency and thus profit yielded (Arendt, 1958), from this perspective, soft capitalist approaches arguably obscure organisations' primary objective: to secure the accumulation of profit. Affirming arguments raised in Chapter Two surrounding the contentions of soft capitalist secondary institutions, soft capitalist ideological transformation thus functions to obscure the alienating force that results when worldly activity is structured according to enlightenment principles of efficiency, productivity, and progress.

That soft capitalist secondary institutions have adopted neoliberal rhetoric to make organisationally designed roles appear as opportunities to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's latent "potentialities", however, what becomes evident is implicit compatibility of activities of labour with soft capitalism in contrast to activities of work and works of art. Given this, what is evident is how the ideological transformation of labour achieved by soft capitalist approaches occurs in isolation from the structure of work, which remains in line with Enlightenment principles and values. Thus, in order to obscure the structural stagnation of worldly activity and the alienation that results, soft capitalist secondary institutions equate 'work with labour, so that labour is endowed by them with certain faculties which only work possesses' (1958: 102). That is to say, soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to make labour appear as work by reinterpreting the nature and character of labour to appear as though it is compatible with the nature and character of work. In doing so, whilst organisationally designed roles are structurally stagnated, activities of labour are arguably re-conceptualised through complex

ideological design that present activities of labour as` activities of work. This is particularly evident through the way in which soft capitalist approaches relocate the meaning and purpose of worldly activity from the reification and fabrication of use object and artefacts created through activities of work to sustain the world of permanence and durability, to the performance of labour. Thus, although activities of labour do not enable the reification and fabrication of the labourer's inner thoughts, beliefs, and values through the creation of a use object or artefact that sustain and preserves the world of permanence or durability, soft capitalist secondary institutions position the perceived subjective self as the object to be reified and fabricated through the performance of labour.

Demonstrating how soft capitalist secondary institutions play with the concept of work so that labour appears to possess the transformative and transfigurative faculties inherent within the nature and character of activities of work and works of art, such re-conceptualisation is arguably underpinned through the appropriation of contemporary metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques such as mindfulness, yoga and meditation. Touched on in Chapter Two through the development of high-performance cultures as encouraged by Landmark Worldwide and the Vanto Group, this is further evident through the appropriation of beliefs and values of metaphysical frameworks of belief that encourage employees to perceive 'labour (work) [as] the realm in which humans express their true humanity' (Costea et al., 2008: 678). Making explicit how soft capitalist approaches promote the development of the person in toto by presenting the performance of organisationally designed roles as an opportunity through which to become more than what one currently "is", this is important. This is because what is illustrated is how the use of metaphysical language, practices and techniques enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to promise what most employees want to hear and believe concerning their organisationally designed role: that employment is the means through which they can "actualise" their perceived latent "potentialities" (Costea et al., 2012). Furthermore, encouraging human resources to perceive the performance of organisationally designed roles as horizons of possibility that provide a glimpse of what one *could potentially* be, should one 'work hard, develop continuously and take command of these innate possibilities' (Costea et al., 2012: 32), what can be argued is that the appropriation of metaphysical aspirations *exploit* the aspirations of the human condition to obscure the meaninglessness of activities of labour. Achieved through the alignment of desires and goals of human resources with organisational conceptions of their potential conveyed through the performance of organisationally designed roles of labour makes attainable such desires and goals during their lifetime (Heelas, 2008), soft capitalism can be argued to function as a cultural mechanism that validates, affirms and confirms perspectives held by soft capitalist secondary institutions: that humanity can realise their potential and "self-actualise" during their existence in material reality (Costea et al., 2015).

Highlighting how the meaning and purpose of employment provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions revolves around its neoliberal ideological re-conceptualisation, evident then is how organisationally designed roles serve as horizons through which human resources can conceptualise the

expansion, exploration and enrichment of their subjective experience of existence, and construct a sense of direction and movement of being in terms of self-development exclusively during material existence. From this perspective, what is evident then is that soft capitalist secondary institutions present the performance of labour to reflect what is *desired* by most: that the performance of worldly activity is *the* means through which to measure and comprehend the trajectory of one's being toward "self-actualisation". Glorifying the experience of material existence in the performance of organisationally designed roles as opposed to the product created, explicit then is the level of subtlety to which organisations attempt to make work from labour through soft capitalist approaches operates. For example, by reaffirming the desire that worldly activity is still the means though which the human condition affirms and confirms to itself what being "is" and how it can be known, soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage employees to actively perceive the performance of organisationally designed roles as the vehicle through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and perceived latent "potentialities" exclusively in material existence. Enabling soft capitalist secondary institutions emerging in industrialised nations to appear to have rediscovered forgotten approaches and knowledge of the meaning and purpose of work (Thompson, 1967), this is important. This is because what can be argued is that the question of whether the opportunity to "self-actualise" through the performance of the activity is an attainable possibility is irrelevant so long as employees *believe* their organisationally designed role facilitates cultural ideals such as personal development.

The mechanisms through which soft capitalist secondary institutions re-conceptualise labour as a means of "self-discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" to make activities of labour appear as work through the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to harness the aspirations of their human resources is further evident in HR recruitment and selection practices, wellbeing incentives, as well as schemes and training designed to encourage employee commitment and loyalty. Designed to mobilise employees and prospective employees to align themselves to organisational perspectives, and adopt them as their own (Costea et al, 2012), soft capitalist organisational strategies for managing human resources typically draw on culturally relevant neoliberal rhetoric and values and ideals that 'invite self-scrutiny, the re-evaluation of identity, and the espousal of prescribed values' (Costea et al., 2012: 29). The attempt to make labour appear as work by soft capitalist secondary institutions is also evident in the design of organisational environments and roles to evoke play, creativity and innovation (Andersen, 2013; Yee, 2006). Reflecting Costea and colleagues' considerations of therapeutic organisational cultures that present work as the means through which being can express the sheer bliss of the experience of life (2008), supported then are arguments raised in Chapter Two that the experience of life itself and one's conception of self has come to represent the highest value of the human condition in contexts that have undergone processes of secularisation. Making apparent how the attempt to make labour appear as work through soft capitalist approaches arguably responds to the changing value attributed to life within contexts that have undergone

secularisation, this is compounded by the employment of neoliberal values by soft capitalist secondary institutions that present activities of labour as the means through which "happiness" and "freedom" can be realised. Demonstrating how soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage human resources to construct a particular ethos, not only concerning what being "is" and how it can be known in the present, but concerning their future existence in material existence in line with neoliberal values, desires and perspectives (Costea et al., 2012), this is important. This is because, in line with the above argument, what is promoted through soft capitalism is the idea that it is the *performance* of labour that enables humanity to establish a condition of being in the material world that alleviates the discomfort and pain experienced during existence in the material world, and not the objects and artefacts created through activities of work and works of art.

## Making work from labour: Some contentions

Enabling soft capitalist secondary institutions to extend the promise of a "better" future in the material world to human resources through the performance of labour, what emerges then is an almost 'irresistible tendency to look upon all labour as work' (Arendt, 1958: 87) in contemporary labouring societies by presenting the performance of labour as a positive moral and ethical obligation through which one's conceptualisation of being can be engaged with, and "actualised" (Costea et al., 2012). Such argument is supported by the fact that most stakeholder, organisational, business and academic perspectives perceive such developments as beneficial to individuals' in the contemporary UK context because the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric practices and techniques that make activities of labour appear meaningful and purposeful to being is seen to bring life back to work. As Chapter Two made clear through the work of Berger, however, the structural transformation of worldly activity achieved during the Industrial revolution results in alienation that arguably compounds the condition of homelessness (1964; 1973). Despite the optimism professed by many organisational scholars then, as Arendt makes clear, the attempt to make labour appear as work 'always leads into patent absurdities' (1958: 102). Such a position is also shared by scholars from both the sociology of Religion and Organisation Studies, whose work indicates a number of contentions with this view.

Whilst space does not allow for a comprehensive review, drawing on literature from contemporary organisational theory and sociological analysis of religion, and Arendtian discourse, the following discussion will explore the incompatibilities of the self-work ethic with organisationally designed roles. Arguing that soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work compound and entrench values and principles of the economic cosmos, illustrated is how soft capitalism constitutes the capitalism of spirituality. A development made possible by the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to reflect neoliberal values and concerns that enable the reduction of (non)conceptual values, ideas and aspirations to being experienced exclusively in the material world,

the following not only discusses the (non)conceptual idolatry that soft capitalist approaches promote, but the (non)conceptual slavery that results. In doing so, what is made clear is the control over being soft capitalist secondary institutions achieve. Outlined through the "principle of potentiality" to indicate the suppression of the human condition to assess its state of being as directed by one's inner beliefs, values and desires and the perpetual agitation that results when the self "I am now" is held as inferior to the self "I could potentially be", highlighted is the paradoxical double bind soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work incite. Holding that to reject soft capitalist approaches constitutes the rejection of the opportunity to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" who one "is", soft capitalist secondary institutions arguably promote an increasingly homogenised condition of being at the expense of the richness of what it is "to be" human. More than this, however, in pursuing the attainment of "self-actualisation" in the material world through the performance of organisationally designed roles of labour, it can be argued that human resources do not "actualise" but annihilate their being. With the above arguments in mind, attention turns finally to the home soft capitalist secondary institutions seem to provide the human condition in the material world. In doing so, it is argued that whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions appear to provide a home for being, that in reality the home provided not only prevents human resources that undertake organisationally designed activities of labour membership into the world of permanence and durability created by the human condition, but denies its sustentation and preservation. Rendering human resources perpetually searching for a home through which to construct meaning and purpose, and alleviate the perpetual uncertainty, anxiety and insecurity homelessness induces, it is argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions thus perpetuate and *cause* homelessness soft capitalism purports to resolve.

The incompatibility of organisationally designed roles and the self-work ethic

To begin, empirical, qualitative fieldwork undertaken by Aupers and Houtman demonstrates the significance of the nature and character of activities of work and works of art to the human condition (2006). For example, drawing on a number of in-depth interviews undertaken with New Age teachers and spiritual trainers specialising in the provision of spiritual courses for business to determine why they became spiritual practitioners, Aupers and Houtman's data illustrates how the nature and character of such individuals' activity enables the expression of their interviewees inner beliefs, values and desires relative to the collective human condition. Echoing discussion raised in Chapter Two of the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution, this is in contrast to the activity of labour practitioners interviewed had previously undertaken, through which many experienced inner conflict, dis-ease and anxiety as a result of the fact that their inner beliefs, values and desires were juxtaposed with the nature and character of their organisationally designed role. This is because, once the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of one's being is internally directed as opposed to external direction

from culturally relevant neoliberal perspectives, conceptions of identity constructed through organisationally designed roles became experienced as "one-dimensional", "alienated", and "unhappy" (Aupers & Houtman, 2006).  Resulting in their interviewees seeking out forms of worldly activity that enabled expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires when they were 'no longer unite [their] private life with [their] position at work' (Aupers & Houtman, 2006: 207), this is important. This is because as Aupers and Houtman's research indicates, once human resources begin to actively contemplate what kind of life they wish to lead, what is meaningful to them *really*, and what makes them "them", being true to oneself becomes increasingly incompatible with business objectives (2006).

Highlighting the inadequacy and inability of soft capitalism in fostering meaning and purpose relative to one's lifetime when human resources perform activities of labour despite appearing to do so, Aupers and Houtman's research illustrates how the self-work ethic (discussed in Chapter Two) that emerged during the 1960s countercultural revolution is incompatible with employment provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions in the contemporary UK context. This is because as Heelas alludes, the self-work ethic of the 1960s countercultural movement manifests depending on the extent to which the nature and character of the activity enables the contemplation, mediation and expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires relative to the collective human condition within and beyond the material world through worldly activity undertaken (1996). Organisationally designed roles, however, do not enable the contemplation, mediation or expression of one's inner beliefs, values or desires, nor the collective human condition within and beyond the material world in relation to the specific nature and character of worldly activity. Rather, soft capitalist attempts to make labour appear as work disregards the nature and character of worldly activity in favour of placing significance on the performance of worldly activity. Valuing action that promotes the mortal and transient conceptualisations of the self as the object to be reified and fabricated through the performance of one's organisationally designed role as opposed to a physical use item or artefact that transfigures and transcends the creator's existence in material reality, then, this is important. This is because, echoing  arguments made in Chapter Two that 'employee's "inner lives" are considered valuable assets which enable firms and organisations to strengthen their positions in highly competitive and demanding environments' (Aupers & Houtman, 2006: 214), the self-work ethic promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions encourages a conceptualisation of being hinged on and defined by one's subjective sense of being in isolation from the collective human being.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the moral and ethical position of soft capitalist approaches that seek to make labour appear as work reinforces utilitarian individualism as opposed to expressive individualism. This is supported by the fact that soft capitalist secondary institutions present the performance of labour as a calculated means of pursuing one's own material self-interests (Bellah, 1985), as is evident through the setting of personal targets in Personal Development Reviews, for example. As Chapter Two made clear, however, 'The 'ends' of the intentions, hopes, expectations

which are largely in evidence [through the self-work ethic] are not those of the utilitarian individualism or hedonistic gratification' (Heelas, 2008: 148), but expressive individualism, wherein activity is not approached *consumptively* for the purpose of material betterment, but *creatively* to add something to the world of permanence and durability beyond their material being (Arendt, 1958; Heelas, 2008). Given this, what can be argued then is that when worldly activity is no longer undertaken primarily for the collective human condition through the creation of use items and artefacts that connect humanity across time and generations, the question rises as to whether worldly activity 'serves the world and its things [or whether it has]… begun to rule and even destroy world and things' (Arendt, 1958: 151). This is because, discouraging the sustenance and preservation of the world of permanence and durability through which the human condition can carve out a home for the collective experience of being in the material world through the fabrication of nature, but endless consumption for the material betterment of one's subjective condition, what is encouraged is mindless activity of self-interest that destabilisers the collective home of the human condition for the opportunity to reify and fabricate an idea of what the self "is" (Arendt, 1958).

Aupers and Houtman's research thus demonstrates the incompatibility of the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires with organisational business objectives (2006). More than this, however, it can be argued that just because human resources identify with neoliberal soft capitalist approaches that underpin the meaning and purpose they derive from the performance of their organisationally designed role, and believe themselves to be on a path of "self-development" toward "self-actualisation", does not necessarily mean that they are. This is because soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work fail to recognise, accept or tolerate the validity, legitimacy or beliefs, values or desires expressed in the performance of organisationally designed roles of labour that do not support organisational aims or objectives. That is to say, soft capitalist secondary institutions fail to recognise, accept or tolerate ideological perspectives that do not reflect neoliberal values, Utilitarian perspectives, or the Enlightenment principles of reason, rationality and logic that validate and legitimise the demand and desire for efficient and productive performance of worldly activity. Human resources thus do not perform organisationally designed roles according to their inner beliefs, values and desires. Rather, human resources perform organisationally designed roles depending on what they *need* to be according to organisational aims and objectives designed to retain and secure competitive advantage, and promote the accumulation of profit in an increasingly competitive global market. Further illustrative of how the self-work ethic of the 1960s countercultural revolution is incompatible with soft capitalist secondary institutions and the organisationally designed roles provided, this is important. This is because what guides the direction of soft capitalist techniques and practices is not a reflection of the needs and concerns of the human resource and the collective human condition, but the needs and concerns of the subject as framed by the economic cosmos.

Presenting worldly activity previously experienced as alienating as a necessary condition that precedes the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of being and the progression of the human condition toward its emancipation from necessity, this was discussed in Chapter Two to result in the freezing of tasks previously undertaken by apprentices, into lifelong occupations as a result of the division of labour (Arendt, 1958; Berger, 1964). By undertaking activities of labour that do not enable or encourage the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires in its performance, but demand human resources put their inner convictions secondary to organisational aims and objectives, however, life is not lived according to the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires, but beliefs, values and desires espoused by the economic cosmos. Even highly skilled activities of work such as surgery (Schmemann, 1985), accountancy (McCance, 2019) and academic positions (Morris, 2010) are increasingly subject to standardisation and fragmentation in the name of increasing such activities' efficient and productive capacity. Demonstrating the decline of skilled, intellectual and contemplative worldly activity when the rationale of efficiency and productivity underlies worldly activity, not only compounded is the above argument that the self-work ethic is not compatible with organisationally designed roles. Also highlighted is how activities traditionally considered work as a result of its nature and character become activities of labour when organised through principles of efficiency and productivity, and thus subject to the rational, bureaucratic and fragmenting division of labour.

Given this, what can be argued is that the promise of a better future condition of being extended to human resources by soft capitalist secondary institutions through neoliberal rhetoric is not extended primarily for the good of the human resource. Rather, soft capitalist approaches promote the efficient and productive performance of labour that reflect the values of the economic cosmos, and its organising principles as outlined in Chapter Two (Costea et al., 2012). This is problematic, however, for as Arendt reflects, when activity manifests according to economic values and principles at the expense and loss of activity that promotes thought, speech and complete action, such loss of variety in worldly activity enacted is significant. This is because, positioning the human resource as the instrument through which aims and objectives of the economic cosmos are secured then, organisationally designed roles reinforce the reduction of the human condition and narrowed sense of being to an increasingly homogenous state that affirms and reinforces the structural stagnation of employment caused by the modern glorification of labour.

From this perspective, the question then arises concerning the extent to which soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work can be considered 'culture-resisting or culture-conforming' (Hunt, 2005: 154). Indeed, whilst the ideology of soft capitalist secondary institutions does not on the surface promote worldly activity representative of labour and structured according to the division of labour, it is activity whose nature and character reflects Arendt's definition of labour that

soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques compound. This is arguably because the more skilled and specialised the activity, the less control organisations have over the performance of the human resource (Enzensberger, 1989). Such an argument is made explicit by Aupers and Houtman, whose research illustrates how the more one embarks on a journey of inner "self-discovery", "exploration" and "expression", the more alienated one is from their externally specified, organisationally designed role and work environment (2006). Rather than challenge the lack of control human resources' have over the means of production (Braverman, 1974), evident then is how soft capitalist approaches achieve the very opposite it claims to achieve in that it provokes, entrenches and indeed justifies rather than eradicates and absolves alienation. Illustrating a lack of substance and sincerity that lies behind soft capitalist rhetoric, techniques and practices that re-conceptualise organisationally designed roles as opportunities through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities", demonstrated is the erroneous assumptions held by organisations who adopt soft capitalist approaches that human resources' inner beliefs, values and desires can be aligned to organisational aims and objectives without consequence to the human condition.

## The capitalism of spirituality

Such line of argument is affirmed by Arendt, who argues that the attempt to make labour appear as work through soft capitalist approaches are likely to come at a cost to 'the reality of the world and men' (1958: 50), in that soft capitalist approaches capitalise on the inherent nature of the human condition to "discover", "explore" and "express" being in the material world by obscuring the alienated reality of the contemporary labourers' society. The capacity of soft capitalist approaches to capitalise on the inherent nature of the human condition to express what being "is" by those who place faith in the economic cosmos through worldly activity was raised in Chapter Two through the differences between the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution and soft capitalist secondary institutions. For example, where the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution encouraged conceptions of being that sought to encapsulate being within and beyond material existence, the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions limit conceptions of being exclusively within material existence. This is explicit through the fact that 'the life of the human resource is typically focused on *narrow* targets…to the exclusion of (supposedly) irrelevant aspects of what it is to *be* at work…[to the extent that] the self at work *becomes* the *means* to the end of the target which is being aimed for' (Heelas, 2008: 161). What Heelas makes apparent then is how neoliberal soft capitalist approaches encourage human resources to be preoccupied exclusively with the material betterment of their subjective experience in the material world. That is to say, as mentioned, soft capitalist secondary institutions present the performance of organisationally designed roles as the vehicle through which they can alleviate the dis-ease that manifests as a result of this-worldly "issues" and secular concerns.

That soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques developed in the 1960s revolve exclusively around material, secular concerns, however, it can be argued that the attempt to make labour appear as work through the use of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is nothing more than the mis-appropriation of the metaphysical capacity of the human condition for secular, economic ends. Such line of enquiry is particularly evident through Carrette and King's exploration of the mis-appropriation of metaphysical practices such as yoga, which they argue has been re-coded to reflect the dominant psychological discourse and individualistic, neoliberal values that pervade contemporary Western society (2005). Enabling soft capitalist secondary institutions to present labour as *the* activity that can de-stress those who are stressed, raise the confidence of those with low self-worth, and relax those feeling under pressure if only the human resource actively engage with the practices offered and opportunities provided (Heelas, 2008), this is important. To begin, what is demonstrated is how the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist secondary institutions to legitimise subjective wellbeing cultures is employed to exclusively promote secular emotions, values and concerns that encourage human resources to *feel* "good" by reflecting what many want to hear and desire to be true (Heelas, 2008). That is to say, by presenting metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques as compatible with the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos, what is indicated is the inherent and unquestioned positive moral value attributed to soft capitalist approaches *because* they reflect what most want to hear and believe.

More than this, however, what is also evident is how the transformative and transfigurative qualities of metaphysical frameworks of belief are re-interpreted to surround secular concerns. Demonstrating how metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques that became popular during the counterculture are mis-appropriated to further capitalistic aims and objectives (Heelas, 2008), this is apparent through the aspirations of "becoming more" than one "is" promoted by soft capitalist rhetoric, and aligned to the performance of labour. This mis-appropriation of transformative and transfigurative nature of metaphysical frameworks to reflect what homeless minds want to hear and believe is made explicit by Costea and colleagues, who illustrate how the promises soft capitalism makes to human resources' functions by captivating the imagination and aspirations of human resources (2012). Achieved by reaffirming faith in the economic cosmos by conceptualising labour as a "horizon of possibility", and thus an inherently positive opportunity for "self-actualisation", obscured then is the alienating forces of labour wherein its performance results in self-renunciation and repression (Costea et al., 2012). As Aupers and Houtman's research outlined above, however, the more human resources embark on metaphysical questing emanating from within that encourages active contemplation of what kind of life they wish to lead, what is meaningful to them *really*, and what makes them "them", the more organisationally designed roles and business objectives are experienced as alienating (2006). By obscuring the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity by focusing on the value attributed to its performance according to Enlightenment principles of progress that discourage aspects

of being that hinder its efficient and productive performance, the unquestioned positive slant attributed to the appropriation of metaphysical beliefs, values and desires by soft capitalist secondary institutions is rendered nothing more than 'lip-service, or less, paid to the experienced-cum-"believed" reality of spirituality' (Heelas, 2008: 172). From this perspective, organisational attempts to make labour appear as work do not simply mis-appropriate metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to capitalise on belief to secure organisational ends. It can also be considered to constitute nothing more than "seductive bait" that entice human resources to accept and internalise the promise extended by soft capitalist secondary institutions that organisationally designed roles are opportunities through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities", but which in reality serve to further the interests of organisational stakeholders (Heelas, 2008).

As such, what can be argued is that soft capitalist secondary institutions seeking to make labour appear as work by mis-appropriating the transformative aspects of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques in order to exploit the space between aspiration and reality make activities of labour *appear* meaningful and purposeful to one's subjective experience of material existence through the promotion of the organisationally designed roles as "opportunities" to attain neoliberal values such as "self-actualisation". Thus, whilst organisational, business, and stakeholder perspectives argue that the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are beneficial to the human condition, soft capitalist approaches provide little substance or genuine engagement with the rhetoric, practices and techniques appropriated (Heelas, 2008). With this in mind, what can be argued then is that soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make activities of labour appear as work, and the faith it inspires in the economic cosmos, constitutes the capitalism of spirituality, whereby the attempt to conceive of the meaning and purpose of material existence has been appropriated for capitalistic ends and endeavours. Affirming arguments raised in Chapter Two that soft capitalist approaches signify the corporate takeover of religion for the expansion of capitalism through neoliberal rhetoric rather than encouraging and enabling genuine or authentic metaphysical questing (Carrette & King, 2005), this is important. To begin, as Heelas observes, soft capitalist secondary institutions only encourage and tolerate performances of labour that display the "right values" (2008). In requiring human resources' to forgo conceptions of being that contradict organisational, neoliberal perspectives (Costea et al., 2012), however, what is evident is how soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work require human resources' abandon ideals of potential emanating from within that conflict with organisational opinions. As such, what this arguably amounts to is indoctrination by soft capitalist approaches that induce a maladjusted condition of being where human resource are estranged from their inner beliefs, values and desires for the accumulation of profit. For example, by encouraging human resources to be more aligned and committed to the neoliberal, organisational perspectives and ideologies they work for by promising that they can, through the performance of labour, work on themselves to become "better", "happier" and "self-actualise", what is evident is how soft capitalist

rhetoric, practices and techniques function to secure competitive market advantage by capitalising on human resources' beliefs. Indicated then is how the efficiency and productivity of worldly activity is correlated to belief. Rather than represent a nuanced and more humane means of managing human resources, soft capitalist secondary institutions that make labour appear as work not only mis-represent the human condition, but fail to comprehend the richness of being in toto. Indeed, treating metaphysical belief not as an expression of commitment to a particular existential ethos or spirit, but a tool that can be harnessed to appeal to the irrational, emotional and experiential capacities of the human condition to mobilise humanity for primarily rational, typically economic, ends (Thoby, 2012), it can be argued that faith in neoliberal rhetoric of the economic cosmos is a faith in *appearance*.

## (Non)conceptual idolatry and slavery

Reinforcing the 'spectacle of order and regularity' (Thompson, 1967: 84) endorsed by the economic cosmos without consideration for the condition of being beyond materiality, the importance soft capitalist secondary institutions place on the performance of labour in the pursuit of neoliberal values of "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" is further problematic. This is because such neoliberal values and concerns can be considered an extension of Nietzsche's argument of conceptual idolatry raised in Chapter Two, wherein human-inspired concepts of mathematic reason and scientific rationale enable the human condition to perceive itself as separate and superior to nature and the natural world, and masters of their own condition (1888; Arendt, 1958). Whereas mathematical reason and scientific rationale can be conceptualised through objective display of numerical equations, and experiment and observation through tools and instruments created by the mind's play with itself (Arendt, 1958), the same cannot be said, however, for the neoliberal values mentioned above. Rather, remaining ideas that exist purely in the mind, they are (non)concepts in that there is no means of objectively observing, displaying or comprehending such ideas in the material world. Historically the domain of metaphysical frameworks of belief to conceptualise to the human condition the condition of being beyond material existence, the relocation and reduction of (non)conceptual ideas and values to the experience of material existence is significant. Indeed, arguably constituting an intensification of Arendt's argument of the mind's play with itself in that the inclusion of (non)concepts to comprehend the experience of material existence, the reduction of (non)concepts through neoliberal rhetoric to revolve around material existence not only entrenches the human condition to conceive of its experience of material existence as increasingly separate from and non-relative to nature and the natural world. It also encourages existence in the material world to be perceived subjectively.

Placing faith in the material world not as it actually "is", but how it *appears* according to dominant human-inspired, neoliberal values and principles that consider being exclusively in relation to the experience of material being, the "celebration of subjectivity" and the importance placed on

(non)conceptual emotions and private feelings expressed through the performance of labour by soft capitalist secondary institutions seeking to make labour appear as work is significant. To begin with, soft capitalist secondary institutions discourage human resources from perceiving their worldly activity for *what* it is, an activity that is inherently alienating, in favour of what they *want* it to be: an activity that facilitates "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation". Demonstrated then is how many no longer trust their sensory experiences, but the neoliberal and (non)conceptual *ideas* many have come to idolise. Compounding faith in the economic cosmos and the significance it places on the subjective experience of material existence, soft capitalist secondary institutions thus reflect what many want to hear and believe concerning the meaning and purpose of their worldly activity by mis-appropriating the transformative and transfigurative aspects of metaphysical belief.

More than this, however, is that the idea of what neoliberal (non)concepts such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" "are", remains subject to interpretation, and as such are interpreted by soft capitalist secondary institutions in a manner that reaffirms the faith of the economic cosmos: that the meaning and purpose of worldly activity is to experience "the sheer bliss of being alive". As Arendt states, however, 'he who wants to make pleasure the ultimate end of all human action is driven to admit that not pleasure but pain, not desire but fear, are his true guides' (1958: 309) in that the attempt to live a life free of painful effort is driven ultimately through the fear of painful effort and the desire to avoid it as opposed to pleasure. That is to say, a life lived that seeks to reduce the intensity to which it is experienced and felt is not life that is lived in full, for the richness of the experience of being comes not just from states of euphoria, but also painful effort (Nietzsche, 1888; Arendt, 1958). Given this, what is evident is how soft capitalist approaches re-conceptualise the meaning and purpose of worldly activity within secular, technically advanced societies in a manner that encourages the distrust and devaluation of painful effort associated with the creation of use items and objects through activities of work and works of art, and trust and value instead praise received through the productive performance of labour (Arendt, 1958).

Rendering life life-*less* through the nullification of aspects of being in material existence (Nietzsche, 1888; Arendt, 1958), this is important. This is because it can be argued that soft capitalist, neoliberal rhetoric, practices and techniques that present activities of labour as work promote (non)conceptual idolatry. Indeed, by conceptualising into its performance the attainment of neoliberal (non)concepts such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation", it can be argued that human resources who place faith in the economic cosmos fail to recognise the full extent of what life "is" in all its manifestations and nuances in that they seek to fabricate *into* reality life-affirming (non)concepts idolised and valued into the performance of worldly activity. Given this, it can be argued then that the attempt to make labour appear as work encourages human resources to no longer recognise the reality of existence relative to their experience of nature and the natural world, but what they want

to believe, and which neoliberal (non)concepts can be employed to strengthen the conception of reality desired.

More than (non)conceptual idolatry however, soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work through neoliberal rhetoric can also be argued to induce a condition of being marked by (non)conceptual slavery. This is because, when the human condition clings to neoliberal (non)concepts in order to give being in the material existence the appearance of stability, security and certainty in the face of the self thrown back on the self, what is promoted is not active engagement with the realities of life and being in the material world, but passive engagement through ideas of what reality "is" (Arendt, 1958; Costea et al., 2008; Heelas, 2008). What emerges then is a state of slavery wherein human resources willingly undertake activities of labour whose nature and character is fundamentally alienating in order to sustain the illusion that its performance ushers in a secure, stable and certain condition of and for their subjective experience of material existence. Such slavery is affirmed by soft capitalist secondary institutions that affirm what many want to hear and believe: that neoliberal (non)conceptual values and ideals such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation", are attainable during and within material existence. As such, it can be argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions arguably incite a condition of being that revolves around the pursuit of such (non)concepts to the point that they become the yardstick through which many use to determine whether they have lived a meaningful and purposeful life. Slaves to the (non)concepts idolised, it can be argued then that through the mis-appropriation of (non)concepts by soft capitalist secondary institutions, human resources are willing to compromise their being by undertaking activities of labour whose nature and character is fundamentally alienating in order to sustain the illusion of the meaning and purpose of existence as desired. Rendering the human condition a condition marked by pain when neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" are presented as attainable in material existence, the human condition thus becomes slaves to the necessities associated with 'living, which constantly consumes their services' (Arendt, 1958: 122).

Organisational control over being

Highlighting how in order to comprehend what being "is" in the material world that human resources increasingly conceive of the meaning and purpose of being through interpretations of (non)concepts that in reality exist primarily to promote economic ends and objectives, what is apparent then is the implicit complicity of human resources in affirming organisational ideologies promoted by soft capitalist approaches that seek to make labour appear as work. The value human resources invest into soft capitalist approaches to comprehend their subjective experience of material existence is problematic, however, for what is reflected are Marxist conceptions of alienation wherein 'the

degradation of men into commodities, sets in…which judges men according to the functions they perform in the labour process' (Arendt, 1958: 162). This is affirmed by Costea and colleagues, who argue that rather than encourage human resources to consider "who am I and what activity of work complements *me*?", that soft capitalist approaches encourage human resources to consider "who *should* I be in order to gain access to such highly valued jobs?" (2012: 29). This is significant, for in asking the question "who *should* I be?" rather than "who am I and what activity of work complements *me*?", soft capitalist secondary institutions that present activities of labour as opportunities to "self-actualise", do not evoke within their human resources real engagement with who one "is", or to contemplate and express what one truly believes or values. Rather, what can be argued is that soft capitalist secondary institutions incite a condition of alienation within their human resources as a means of provoking the question "who *should* I be?" in order to inspire human resources to perceive, ironically, their alienating activity of labour as the means to overcome alienation, and the activity through which they can attain "self-actualisation".

What is evident then is the ease through which soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work assume authority and control over the human condition when the nature and character of worldly activity no longer provides the means of affirming and confirming what being "is". Indeed, promoting a particular ideal of human resourcefulness that reflects the organisation's aims and objectives rather than constitute an expression of one's inner beliefs, values and concerns, this is in contrast to the specific meaning and purpose of being inherent within the nature and character of activities of work. Such argument is supported by the fact that the performance of labour does not depend on anything concrete through which human resources can direct through their inner beliefs, values and concerns, judgement over their own being, but relies instead on the aforementioned interpretation of neoliberal (non)concepts held by soft capitalist secondary institutions to derive value in its performance. Dis-abling the ability of human resources' to critically reflect what is meaningful and purposeful to one's inherent, "authentic" being (Costea et al., 2012), soft capitalist secondary institutions' conceptions of being thus become a cultural reality (Costea et al., 2008) that reinforces the idea that human resources are incapable of judging for themselves what being "is", or how it can be known. Furthermore, by highlighting the neglect of one's inner beliefs, values and desires that can occur when human resources perform activities of labour rather than work, and align their being to the aims and objectives of the institution they work for, what can be argued is that organisationally designed roles that constitute activities of labour rather than work paradoxically silence and deny the comprehension and expression of what it "is" to be "truly" human (Heelas, 2008), by suppressing the inner beliefs, values and desires held by human resources. Given this, what can be argued then is that when human resources willingly perform activities of labour made to appear as work through the belief that they are furthering their subjective self-interest and progressing toward the attainment of "self-actualisation" of their latent "potentialities", in reality they regulate life and sacrifice spontaneity by

compounding the neglect comprehension and expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires necessary for an authentic, genuine and free condition of being (Heelas, 2008).


Perpetual agitation

Achieving nothing more than the affirmation and legitimation of the tyrannical quantification of being (Boyle, 2000) of the economic cosmos, such extension of control of the human condition by soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work is arguably reinforced by "the principle of potentiality" (Costea et al., 2012). For example, whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions present the performance of labour as the means through which to reify and fabricate one's subjective self and realise one's own personal targets, aims and objectives (Heelas, 2008), it does not serve organisational interests of continual growth and accumulation of profit through mobilised human resources to articulate in constructive terms to human resources that they are "whole", "actualised" or "complete" beings (Costea et al., 2012). This is because such articulation is likely to decrease the efficient and productive performance such mobilisation inspires. As such, soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work through "the principle of potentiality" results in a form of mobilisation without end when neoliberal (non)conceptual values such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" are incited not for the good of the human condition but to secure the attainment of the ends and objectives of the economic cosmos (Costea et al., 2012). The impact to the human condition is significant, however, for by mobilising human resources to focus exclusively on their aspirations of what their perceived self "could be" in contrast to what the self "is now" by presenting the performance of labour as the means through which to reify and fabricate one's being, what arguably results is a condition of perpetual agitation, instability and uncertainty encountered in seeking to "actualise" one's latent "potentialities" in material reality. This is because, further entrenching the dependence and reliance on organisational ideologies by retaining the right to 'judge when the moment of self-fulfilment has occurred' (Costea et al., 2012: 33), the permanent movement toward endless potential not only deprives from human resources coherent comprehension of their being (Sennett, 1999). They also exploit the anxiety and uncertainty experienced by human resources who frame the question of "who am I?" through organisationally designed roles that reflect the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos (Costea, 2015).

In contrast to metaphysical frameworks of belief that promote conceptions of being wherein the "actual" and "potential" self is united and unified through notions such as the soul, however, it can be argued that faith of the economic cosmos built on "the principle of potentiality" drives a paradoxical and permanent wedge between the "actual" and "potential" self. This is because, inciting dispossession and/or preoccupation with the self "I am now" in contrast to the self "I could be", the self "I am now" is perceived as a resource to be used and consumed in the pursuit of becoming the self "I could be" as

promoted through one's organisationally designed role. When the predominant activity of a given society is labour whose nature and character supports the continuation of life processes and biological needs through continual consumption, however, activities of labour can only ever be meaningful to the sustentation and preservation of life's processes. Thus, whilst the performance of organisationally designed roles appears to support human resources' quest "within", in reality it serves only to further the ends of the economic cosmos. What results then is that the more human resources fixate on attaining neoliberal (non)concepts such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and 'self-actualisation" in the material world, the more the material world is seen as that which is to be consumed. Further compounded through the fact that "the principle of potentiality" invokes within human resources the desire and longing for "more" inner potential (Costea et al., 2012), soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work and capitalise on human resources' attempts to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their inner being. More than this, however, by perceiving potential as conceived by soft capitalist secondary institutions, which ultimately revolves around the accumulation of profit, human resources that seek to "self-actualise" according to soft capitalist ironically become more homogenous than "unique" and "individual" as soft capitalist conceptions of "self-actualisation", promise. What soft capitalist secondary institutions mean through the use of (non)concepts such as "self-actualisation" is to promote a cultural object so homogenous, 'rigid and overwhelming that it endangers precisely the cultural subject of which it seeks to speak so positively' (Costea et al., 2012: 32).

Contradicting the expressive individualism and transcendental underpinnings of (non)conceptual terms such as "self-actualisation encouraged by the 1960s countercultural movement, this is significant. This is because what can be argued is that the (non)conceptual idolation and slavery that underpin attempts to make labour appear as work by soft capitalist secondary institutions encourages the annihilation of the human condition, in that the self, now a cultural reality, becomes an object to be consumed in the pursuit of "self-atualisation" (Arendt, 1958). As Carrette and King reflect, however, 'to be critical of the concept is like rejecting "being a virtuous person" or equivalent to being against 'inner personal development' (2005: 137). This is because to resist soft capitalist ideals and take command of one's life in a manner that denies what one "ought to be" as conceived by primary institutions adopting soft capitalist approaches is seen to indicate a willing denial of the self to realise one's potential by the self, and evidence that one is not committed *enough* (Sennett, 2008). By the same token, however, Costea and colleagues also make explicit the difficulties faced by human resources in opposing organisational sovereignty in that the quest to derive meaning and purpose from worldly activity is a fundamental question of the human condition (2012). Indeed, 'who can object to the *idea* that work ought to be the central place where "I" find expression of "my" humanity?' (Costea et al., 2012: 31). The more human resources "buy into", comply and are obedient to organisational perspectives of what being "is" that reflect material, primarily economic concerns then, what arguably results is a paradoxical bind that

twists conventional avenues of resistance on their head. Further reaffirming the sovereignty of soft capitalist secondary institutions over the human condition, what is clear then is the willing maladjustment that results when human resources conform to the demands of organisationally designed roles.


The paradoxical provision of homes

Given this, what can be argued is that soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make labour appear as work effectively *institutionalise* existential separation (Giddens, 1991) to reinforce the dependence and reliance of human resources on organisational ideologies. Given this, the attempt to make labour appear as work by capitalising on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is likely to render many within a perpetual search for a home for being. This is because whilst metaphysical homes consider worldly activity an expression of being within and beyond material existence in relation to the Absolute, nature and the natural world that requires the individual to contemplate the finitude of material being, homes provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions consider worldly activity an expression of the actualisation of being exclusively within material existence, and separate to nature and the natural world. Whereas in the past metaphysical homes provided a refuge for the human condition from dis-ease, pain and suffering experienced in the material world, such refuge is lost when soft capitalist secondary institutions are seen to provide a home for the human condition due to the fundamental differences between conceptualisations of what being "is" held by soft capitalist approaches and metaphysical frameworks of belief. Supported then are arguments raised above wherein the focus on existence in the material world encouraged by soft capitalist secondary institutions serve to reduce and narrow what being "is". More than this, however, as Arendt makes clear, when life is lived purely for the attainment of neoliberal values such as material and personal "betterment" within and during material existence, no longer does the human condition 'live in a world at all but simply [is] driven by a process in whose ever-recurring cycles things appear and dis-appear, manifest themselves and vanish, never to last long enough to surround the life process in their midst' (1958: 134). Similar to arguments raised above then, the endless cycle of consumption for one's individual benefit does not permit the labouring human resource membership into the home created, sustained and preserved by activities of work. This is because when worldly activity is not undertaken to improve the collective human condition across generations, but for the provision of biological necessities, and the benefit of the subjective experience of material existence exclusively, such worldly activity can only ever damage the home created by and for the human condition.

Symbolic of the alienated state of human resources who perform organisationally designed roles of labour not only from its own condition but the world, rather than provide a home for the human condition, it can be argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions compound the condition of

homelessness. Whilst stakeholder, organisational, business and many academic perspectives outlined in Chapter One typically praise soft capitalist approaches because they reaffirm the perspective that the economic cosmos provides a home for being that facilitates the "exploration", "discovery" and "actualisation" of one's latent "potentialities" through the performance of labour, in reality such a perspective is contentious. This is because as Arendt highlights, 'Nothing…ejects one more radically from the world than exclusive concentration upon the body's life, a concentration forced upon man in slavery or in the extremity of unbearable pain' (1958: 112). Such an argument is hinged on the fact that when the values, principles and standards of the economic cosmos that enabled the *construction* of a home for the human condition in the material world continue to *govern* the human condition after its establishment, what results is a condition of meaninglessness and purposelessness wherein everything becomes a means to further means (Arendt, 1958). Though soft capitalist secondary institutions *appear* to provide a home for the human condition in the material world by obscuring the condition of world alienation that results through the performance of labour then, it can be argued that in reality soft capitalist secondary institutions that seek to make work from labour capitalise on the spiritual yearning of the inherent need to *feel* at home in the material world. Thus, despite the fact that the condition of homelessness is a result of the values and principles such institutions advocate, indicated then is how the institutional arrangements of soft capitalist secondary institutions are significant in obscuring and concealing the condition of homelessness outlined in Chapter Two.

## Chapter summary

This chapter highlights the lack of recognition of the worth and importance of the nature and character of activities of work and works of art in relation to the human condition in technically advanced societies that have undergone processes of secularisation. Framed through an Arendtian perspective to highlight the different nature and character of activities of work, works of art and activities of labour, this is because the desire to emancipate the human condition from pain and effort associated with biological life processes has led to the justification and prominence of activities of labour within the UK context. What has resulted then is that worldly activity referred to as "work" in the contemporary Western UK context is not "work" but labour in that it remains structured to reflect Enlightenment principles, values and perspectives that emerged in the seventeenth century. This has significant consequences for the human condition, however. For example, activities of work and works of art inspire contemplation of being both within and beyond existence in the material world, as reflected both in the nature and character of the activity, and in the design of the object and aesthetic artefact created. Enabling the human condition to transcend the mortal condition in that the use items and aesthetic artefacts created not only remain in the material world after their death, but sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability, the same is not true of activities of labour. Rather, marked by consumption that produces

nothing of permanence or durability, labour does nothing but sustain the survival of being in the material world without regard for being beyond material existence. Thus, where activities of work sustain and preserve, through the creation of use objects and aesthetic artefacts, the world of permanence and durability that affirm and confirm to the collective human condition a sense of what being "is" across time and generations, activities of labour sustain and preserve life processes surrounding one's individual, biological needs. What amounts then is that the worth of the nature and character of activities of work to the human condition to mediate what being "is" and how it can be known according to one's inner beliefs, values and desires, is obscured by the significance attached to the belief that the productive performance of labour enables the reification and fabrication of the subjective self.

Though the nature and character of labour does not lend itself to the construction of meaning and purpose of anything other than sustaining life's processes, and the values, desires and wants that underpin such conceptualisations, however, through soft capitalist attempts to make labour appear as work, human resources are more likely to perceive labour as meaningful and purposeful to their subjective experience of existence. Through such discussion, Chapter Three outlines how soft capitalist secondary institutions promote a state of mind in which worldly activity is not undertaken to sustain and preserve the world of permanence and durability through the creation of use items and works of art, but to sustain and preserve the belief that humanity is master of its own condition. Reflective of faith inspired by the economic cosmos, such faith results in a condition marked by alienation as outlined by Marx and discussed in Chapter Two. Building on contextualisation of the emergence of soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques used by soft capitalist secondary institutions discussed in Chapter Two, it is argued that soft capitalist approaches attempt to transform ideology underpinning organisationally designed roles of labour by playing with the concept of "work" to make activities of labour appear as activities of work to obscure its structural stagnation and alienating forces from human resources. Achieved through the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices, and techniques to present neoliberal (non)conceptual values of "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" as attainable within material existence, what is demonstrated is the significance of metaphysical frameworks of belief in enabling activities of labour to appear as work. This is because the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practise and techniques as discussed in Chapter Two enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to present organisationally designed roles of labour as activities through which the attainment of (non)conceptual ideas, values and aims previously the domain of metaphysical frameworks of belief can be attained within the material world, for secular goals such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation".

Drawing on empirical research and theoretical discussion raised by both contemporary scholars and Arendt, however, there are a number of contentions that surround this outlook. To begin, Aupers and Houtman's empirical research demonstrates the incompatibility of the self-work ethic as it emerged in the 1960s with soft capitalist secondary institutions when the nature and character of activity undertaken

does not enable the contemplation, mediation and expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires relative to the collective human condition within and beyond the material world. Valuing action that promotes the mortal and transient conceptualisations of the subjective self as the object to be reified and fabricated through the performance of one's organisationally designed role of labour, the self-work ethic promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions encourages instead conceptualisations of being hinged on and defined by one's subjective sense of being in isolation from the collective human being. What is argued to result then is the destruction of the collective world of permanence and durability rather than its sustentation and preservation when activities of labour dominate society. This is because by transferring the meaning and purpose of activities of work and works of art to the human condition to activities of labour by presenting its performance as meaningful and purposeful as opposed to its nature and character, what results is a condition of being whereby alienation is flipped on its head in that the creation of use objects and aesthetic artefacts that enable humanity to express the intangible within nature and the natural world is no longer possible. Reinforcing and reaffirming an alienated condition of being by presenting alienation as a condition necessary for one to embark on the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" being and perceived subjective latent "potentialities", it is argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions entrench, justify and obscure alienated states of being when they seek to appropriate the transformative and transfigurative qualities of activities of work and works of art. In doing so, this chapter arguably demonstrates the extent to which alienation is normalised in contexts where the productive performance of labour and the perceived movement toward "self-actualisation" it valued over the worth its nature and character symbolises to the human condition.

What is clear then is the choice human resources make, and which soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage, for a condition of being subject to productive slavery over unproductive freedom (Arendt, 1958). Rather than eradicating the problem of work highlighted by Berger in Chapter Two, then, soft capitalist secondary institutions not only entrench but institutionalise the problem of work, regardless of its claims to bring life back to work. That is to say, the use of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to make activities of labour appear as activities of work are mis-appropriated by soft capitalist secondary institutions in order to exploit the space between aspiration and reality and obscure the realities of labour. Chapter Three thus proposes that soft capitalist approaches results in the maladjustment of human resources for the sake of the economic cosmos. This is because, life is not lived for the human condition, but to sustain and preserve the capitalist aims and objectives of the economic cosmos by reinforcing the structural stagnation of employment caused by the modern glorification of labour. Reducing the meaning and purpose of being to the material world, organisationally designed roles of labour not only reinforce the reduction of the human condition to a narrowed sense of being in the material world that is devoid of thought and contemplation. It is also argued that human resources that seek to "self-actualise" according to soft capitalist rhetoric, practices

and techniques ironically become more homogenous than "unique" and "individual" as soft capitalist conceptions of self-actualisation, promise.

This is argued, as mentioned, to be achieved through the capitalisation of (non)conceptual values, concerns and desires. Extending Nietzsche's argument of conceptual idolatry through the reduction of (non)conceptual ideas previously the domain of metaphysical frameworks of belief to the experience of existence in material reality, (non)conceptual idolatry encourages the human condition to perceive the world not as it *is*, but how it *appears* and is *desired* relative to conceptions that exists purely within the mind. Illustrated through the desire promoted by soft capitalist institutions of the economic cosmos to attain (non)conceptual values such as "happiness", personal and material "betterment" and "self-actualisation", (non)conceptual idolatry is argued to result in (non)conceptual slavery, wherein human resources willingly undertake activities of labour, whose nature and character is fundamentally alienating, in order to sustain the illusion that its performance enables the attainment of (non)conceptual values desired. Rendering life life-*less* in that by chasing the illusions held in the mind of what one wants material existence "to be" over the realities of material existence, human resources undertaking organisationally designed roles of labour do not recognise what life "is", Chapter Three indicates how soft capitalism effectively silences and denies comprehension and expression of what it "is" to be "truly" human by suppressing the inner beliefs, values and desires held by human resources.

This is achieved by presenting the meaning and purpose of activities of labour not in line with the nature and character of the activity or Enlightenment values surrounding the creation of surplus and the accumulation of profit, but promising what most want to hear and believe: that labour facilitates "happiness", material and personal "betterment", and "self-actualisation". Chapter Three makes clear then how the success of soft capitalist institutions of the economic cosmos lies in the extent to which human resources *believe* the performance of labour is inherently meaningful to their subjective experience of material existence, and thus a positive, moral and ethical obligation. What is clear, however, is that just because one believes one is on a path of "self-discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" through the performance of organisationally designed activities of labour made to appear as work does not mean this is really the case. Rather, it is argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions promote the continuation of the economic cosmos, and its alienating values and principles by encouraging human resources to act according to what they *need* to be for the attainment of competitive advantage, and promote the accumulation of profit in an increasingly competitive global market. As such, Chapter Three argues that the ideological transformation of labour achieved by soft capitalist approaches constitutes the capitalism of spirituality, wherein the spiritual capacity of the human condition is reoriented to reflect purely secular values, pursuits and desires, and further capitalistic aims and objectives.

More than this, however, Chapter Three also demonstrates the implicit complicity of human resources in validating the sovereignty of the economic cosmos and the commodification of, and control over, being that emerges through their receptivity to soft capitalist approaches. Indeed, soft capitalist secondary institutions of the economic cosmos need do little more than pose the question "who *should* I be?" to mobilise human resources to seek the attainment of "self-actualisation" in the material world. Such receptivity is a double bind, however, for the question of who and what one "is" is a question of central concern to the human condition: to deny engagement with such a question when posed by soft capitalist secondary institutions of the economic cosmos is considered a rejection of such contemplation. By engaging with this question not through the nature and character of worldly activity that enables the expression of one's beliefs, values and desires, but the performance of worldly activity that appears to facilitate "self-actualisation", the answer of who and what one "is" is not framed by one's inner beliefs, values and desires, but beliefs, values and desires of the organisation in question, and the ethos that underpins its existence: the economic cosmos. Furthermore, as theoretical work undertaken by Costea and colleagues indicates through "the principle of potentiality", mobilisation in the name of the attainment of "self-actualisation" achieved through soft capitalist techniques is not endless, for an organisation to articulate the attainment of one's potential would likely decrease the efficient and productive performance, and thus accumulation of profit, such mobilisation inspires.

Resulting in the perpetual agitation of the human resource is significant, however, for endless mobilisation can only ever end in the exhaustion of that which is consumed, the self, in pursuit of (non)concepts, that is the unobtainable, in material existence. Leading to the argument that the attempt to realise (non)conceptual ideals in material such as self-actualisation constitutes self-annihilation under the guise of self-actualisation, the attempt to make activities of labour appear as work is thus inherently damaging to the human condition for a number of reasons. To begin, as Arendt expresses, in labouring rather than working or undertaking works of art, the world of permanence and durability is no longer sustained or preserved by the activity of humanity, but is destroyed instead. That is to say, when there is an imbalance of activities of labour over work, the human condition ejects itself from the home that it had previously created. Compounding the condition of homelessness outlined in Chapter Two, not only does the obscuration of the continuation of the problem of work result in world alienation, but alienation from the condition of humanity within the material world. The home of the economic cosmos that soft capitalist secondary institutions affirm thus can be considered to capitalise on the inherent need of the human condition to comprehend what being "is", and to feel at home in the material world. Contrary to metaphysical frameworks of belief, however, homes of the economic cosmos do not put humanity first, but the capitalist system to reflect values, principles, aims and objectives that underpin the economic cosmos.

Much discussion raised in Chapter Three, however, does not rely on qualitative interviews with, but theoretical insights. Reinforcing Aupers and Houtman's statement that 'research is needed to explore

whether and to what extent tensions between bureaucratic demands and spiritual practices emerge and how they are dealt with on a day-to-day basis' (2006: 214), there remain a number of questions unanswered. For example, how does belief influence the type of activity chosen, and the approach to work adopted? Does the nature and character of the activity undertaken affect the appeal of soft capitalist approaches, and if so, why/how? What are some of the implications to the human condition in undertaking activities of labour rather than work and works of art? Does soft capitalism succeed in making labour appear as work? To what extent do human resources actively engage with soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques such as mindfulness, yoga and meditation originating from metaphysical frameworks of belief, and how? "Who" do soft capitalist secondary institutions, and the approaches, perspectives and ideologies they promote, appeal to, and why? To what extent is soft capitalist approaches a capitalism of spirituality? Moreover, what can be said concerning the nature and character of the homes soft capitalist secondary institutions provide human resources? Is there a correlation between organisationally designed roles of labour that reflect soft capitalist approaches and the condition of homelessness? And if so, how, why, and in what capacity?

# CHAPTER FOUR:
# RESEARCH: THE DESIGN

Whilst organisational research typically adopts conventional ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that rely on a number of psychological assumptions (Tracey et al., 2012) within Religious Studies 'there are at present no widely recognised normative standards or guidelines, no professional code of ethics to set the standard for both how we should engage in our investigations and how we should communicate what we learn in the process' (Bird & Scholes in Stausberg & Engler, 2011: 82). In undertaking research that draws on and which seeks to reflect both Organisational and Religious Studies research, community interests, and perspectives then, the methodological design underpinning this research must be crafted to capture research objectives and interests of both disciplines without compromising or reducing the ephemeral to pre-determined categories and philosophical assumptions that result in confirmation bias to either field. Whilst outlining and situating research within a philosophical commitment is undoubtedly important in enabling researchers to situate their research within relevant research communities, identify appropriate methodological options and develop an approach in relation to the research objectives and aims, however, it is fundamentally important to critically reflect upon the philosophical assumptions adopted, and to allow oneself to deviate from the well-worn path of enquiry and method if necessary. This is because the selection of philosophical assumptions and methodological frameworks are not without limitations. Indeed, the very selection of ontological and epistemological frameworks can be considered detrimental to research in that they promote researchers to perceive research and the philosophical assumptions selected as fixed and static assumptions rather than flexible and ever evolving. By perceiving philosophical commitments that shape enquiry, methodology and discussion as fixed boundaries, however, not only introduces bordered thinking to concepts that are limited only in so far as they can be imagined, but can limit the exploration of avenues of thought to be restricted, overlooked and discounted when they "do not fit" the philosophical commitment and framework being employed. That is to say, philosophical assumptions selected can become relied upon to the point that hinders rather than aids (Rorty, 1979), research by limiting creative and original thought processes, as well as the ability to think laterally, both of which are of benefit in undertaking interdisciplinary research. Care needs to be taken then to ensure that the philosophical assumptions and positionality adopted does not limit the scope, critical reflection garnered, or interpretation of the data collected. As such, it is maintained by the researcher that such ontological, epistemological and methodological positioning 'is simply a tool' (Connolly, 1999: 7), used when necessary to guide the research process rather than frame through which to situate the research.

It is the following then that in-depth discussion of the rationale of the philosophical and ethical assumptions underpinning this research will be provided so as to position this research in relation to both Organisation and Religious Studies. Similarly, an overview of the methodological design of this research will be provided in order to detail the means through which consideration of belief and the nature of the producing activity shape and inform current debate in the fields of organisation and Religious Studies.

## Ontological and epistemological positions

Within Religious Studies, there is 'no singular, widely accepted paradigm of study' (Roof in Stausberg & Engler, 2011: 69). Rather, philosophical assumptions are employed depending on the nature of the study. Whilst the study of metaphysical belief can and has been approached through quantitative and qualitative philosophical assumptions within sociological analysis of religion, due to the focus of research surrounding the influence of belief to individuals' approach to activity defined as work, this research predominantly lends itself to qualitative enquiry. This is because quantitative research positions, such as positivism and realism, are not applicable to this research due to the importance placed on scientific fact and pursuit of truth that not only reflect the economic cosmos, but tend not to be compatible with qualitative investigation of constructions of reality held by the human condition that are inherently abstract. Similarly, though pragmatism, which relies on the philosophical assumption of relativism, has been used to varying degrees to discuss contemporary forms of metaphysical belief, most prolifically through the recent *Westminster Faith Debates* (2015), relativism does not satisfactorily apply to this research. This is because it suggests individual perceptions of reality and ontological perspectives cannot be constructed by the individual, but must be underpinned by notions of truth held in popular culture and society. Furthermore, as detailed in the introduction, the dominant philosophical assumptions adopted by much organisational literature is unsuitable, for it not only limits the critical gaze by positioning the researcher as an insiders of the phenomenon being researched, but tends to rely on philosophical assumptions that reflect the aims, objectives and concerns of the economic cosmos. As such, much organisational literature tends to adopt philosophical assumptions such as realism, which suggest that "truth" can be determined in material reality.

### Ontological assumptions

Such claim is not reflected in much sociological analysis of religion, which does not seek to claim to reflect *the* truth, but to provide a *perspective of* truth the result of interpretation. Particularly, this research assumes a position in which there is no "truth" to be discovered due to humanity itself being suspended within the phenomenon it attempts to cast an objective view over. Rather, what is often considered as "true" is considered to be the result of interpretation and belief held by humanity that

informs an individuals' inner narrative and construction of reality (Arendt, 1958). Indicating that social reality is created and constructed by the human condition language and discourse (Cunliffe, 2001), such perspective is in line with nominalism, which is ideal for research that focuses on examining social aspects of the human condition. This is particularly concerning the study of metaphysical belief that is only ever (non)conceptual, in that approaches other than nominalism risk the reduction of metaphysical belief to something that can be known, defined and identified; that which has no metaphysical significance. Furthermore, metaphysical belief is by definition is *a posteriori* (James, 1911), and thus requires experience of the abstract, (non)conceptual idea before one can comprehend what the metaphysical "is", what it "means", and how it interacts with culturally relevant narratives and ontological considerations held (O'Leary, 2007). Requiring analysis that accounts for the discussion of ideas without precisely qualifying what is meant other than through the use of ideal types, nominalism thus preserves the abstract nature of (non)concepts, values and ideas drawn upon by drawing inspiration from doubt and uncertainty resulting from the idea of "no truth" (O'Leary, 2007).

Seeking not to arrive at objective fact through measurement but to foster understanding regarding how ideas, perspectives, and meaning is constructed by the human condition, nominalism encourages a reflexive questioning of certainty (Heidegger, 1966), wherein data consists of discourse and experiences to generate insight of others' perspectives (Cunliffe, 2003; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Promoting creative, imaginative, and innovative modes of thought necessary in the research of the ephemeral and metaphysical, nominalism allows for an approach akin to storytelling as opposed to truth-telling (Boje, 1991; Cunliffe, 2003). As such, nominalism does not privilege any perspective over another (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018), but enables discussion of (non)concepts that transcend the limits of language, rationality and materiality through the deconstruction of such beliefs to reflect the multiple narratives and realities, as well as relevant social, cultural, historical and geographical contexts that frame such constructions of belief (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Seeking to provide a *perspective* of truth and certainty, nominalism encourages researchers to critically examine similarities and differences that emerge between the testimonies of participants to inspire the development of general concepts, values and thoughts that can be applied to the social, cultural and political context(s) in question (Arendt, 1958). Such position is influenced by Heidegger, who argued that exploration of the "other", though eliminating the position of certainty, enriches the human condition in the possibilities of being it reveals (1966), it is only through nominalism then that 'critical examination of the way we constitute knowledge, meaning, and our lives' (Cunliffe, 2003: 991) can unfold.

Nominalism is also a particularly suitable ontological position for this research because that which is sought to be captured from research participants surrounds the juncture between the metaphysical, which is inherently abstract and (non)conceptual, and the influence such beliefs have on material existence concerning the idea and approach of work as held in the Western UK context. Nominal philosophical assumptions thus validate the search for meaning in spaces that are both publicly

available, such as thought and emotion as expressed in writings, actions and linguistics, as well as private, interior narrative states of subjective interpretation and meaning that allow for holistic contemplation of emerging patterns. This is significant in relation to this research in that nominalism allows for reflection of that which is normally taken for granted, such as the definition of religion and spirituality, as well as work and labour, that challenges the researchers' as well as participant preconceptions. Given this, whilst critics argue that nominalism has little to offer because everything falls foul of the claim of "subjectivity" to the point that it leads to chaos of understanding rather than generating meaningful discussion and understanding, nominalism provides the most suitable philosophical framework and set of assumptions for the present study.

Epistemological assumptions

In adopting a nominalist philosophical outlook, this needs to be reflected in the epistemological stance assumed. For example, the epistemological position adopted needs to allow for similarities and differences to emerge concerning themes, concepts, values and thoughts encountered through research to facilitate the generation and development of knowledge. This is particularly the case in research focusing on transcendental, (non)conceptual and ephemeral aspects of existence such as metaphysical belief because it cannot be captured, measured or identified through observable evidence with certainty and truth, but 'must be translated into matters that are epistemically accessible' (Jensen, 2011: 50). Whilst some scholars apply a psychological lens to develop such discussion, this research not only holds that psychology seeks to categorise and reduce aspects of humanity and being to recognised, static and permanent classifications the result of positivist evidentialism, but that psychology is underpinned by values and principles of the economic cosmos, and thus reflects concerns, aims and objectives limited to existence as experienced in the material world. As such, this research adopts instead a phenomenological, social constructionist epistemology.

Although the term social constructionism emerged from Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's 1966 publication *The Social Construction of Reality*, numerous scholars prior to this publication can be considered social constructionists. For example, Arendtian phenomenology validates being in the material world as a viable unit of analysis, but specifically in relation to the human condition relative to its ontological assumptions, and the impact this has to the meaning and purpose of worldly activity such as activities of work and labour (1958). Built upon Heideggerian ontotheology, such an approach enables focus on the significance of the character and nature of the activity to be considered in relation to the social world and cultural context that surrounds such subjective experience (Allen, 1982). Also complimentary to Arendt's phenomenological perspective is the work of Rudolph Otto, who is regarded to have developed phenomenological approaches to the study of religion by presenting the subject as the only means through which the inexpressible aspects of religious experience could be best understood

(Otto, 1958; Erricker, 1999). Demonstrating the key role phenomenology plays in regard to the study of religion given the space for ambiguity phenomenology allows, utilising Heidegger, Arendt's and Otto's phenomenological positions thus allows the present research to 'bring out the nature of believers' (Smart, 1999: x), in relation to the surrounding social, historical, cultural and religious context.

Considered representative of the epistemological break from dominant positivistic philosophical trends that arose during the Enlightenment (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), social constructionism enables this research to focus on the way in which people make sense of the world and construct reality through their subjective narrative informed through lived experience. Social constructionists seek to interrogate perceived and assumed "common sense" knowledge, processes and contingencies of a given society through which perspectives of the world are constructed. Seen by Bauman to refer to 'the aspect of the world that bears the imprint of human activity, that would not exist at all but for the actions of human beings' (1990: 3), there is thus no one construction, but many (Hjelm, 2014). Reaffirming nominalist perspectives that what is generally considered "truth" is relative to how we think and what we do (Hjelm, 2014), social constructionism is thus an epistemological position that suits the needs of this research in that it reflects the diverse and varied manifestations and expressions of religion and spirituality evident in Western Europe without favouring one perspective over another. Furthermore, social constructionism encourages theoretical reflection on the coherence of belief and the inter-subjectivity that arises in social reality that facilitates the construction of ideal-types in the form of concepts, models, hypotheses and definitions. As such, social constructionism enables scholars 'to see things, to talk about them, to make theories about them, even if the "things" do not really exist' (Jensen, 2011: 50). Furthermore, as Hjelm identifies, social constructionism is always sensitive to history in that 'ideas do not pop up from nowhere, but are products of people's thinking and communicating in a sequence of time' (2014: 4). Social constructionism is particularly significant in relation to research that focuses on metaphysical belief then, for it is only through the deconstruction of subjective constructions of reality and existence in relation to the wider context of the subject that a deeper and more comprehensive appreciation of meaning and experience can be garnered in relation to the influential position subjective spirituality has within the construction of self at work.

There are numerous advantages in applying phenomenological social constructionism to this research. Primarily, Social Constructionism allows for the contextualisation of the unit of analysis, belief, in relation to historical and contemporary, cultural and social metaphysical assumptions of reality concerning the self in the West. Not only does this enable understanding to be gleaned in relation to metaphysical belief, the idea of work in contemporary society and the meaning and purpose derived, but it enables such context bound assertions to be related back to its historical social, cultural, economic and religious contexts that in turn can lead to a contribution to theory construction within Organisation and Religious Studies. This is particularly important in relation to this research for not only does it draw upon contemporary debates within religious and Organisation Studies that require previously perceived

knowledge formulated within both streams to be deconstructed and contextualised in relation to one another, but exploration of subjective metaphysical belief also demands deconstruction and synthesis of existing ideologies and discussion. Furthermore, the focus of this research surrounds the ineffable in that it is concerned with perspectives and beliefs surrounding questions of ultimate concern, and how these shape and inform approaches to the meaning and purpose of employment. As a researcher, however, one can never completely remove oneself from the experience and biases one's subconsciously holds; to claim to know what is "true" for another is thus illogical. Social constructionism encourages, however, the deconstruction of participants' conceptions of reality that facilitates not only the emergence of potential new interpretations and understanding to be developed, but reflection of assumptions and beliefs held, both consciously and unconsciously, by the researcher.

This is not to say social constructionist approaches are without limitations. Indeed, emerging from a predominantly Christian socio-historical context, understanding gained through Western philosophical commitments subliminally favour Western, historically Christian-centric perspectives that may influence how metaphysical beliefs, ideologies and perspectives held by research participants are approached, regardless whether such beliefs, ideologies and perspectives held themselves originate in such contexts. For example, many individuals in the contemporary UK context practice yoga, despite this practice emerging in South Asia. Whilst this is certainly a concern for research that transcends national borders or which intentionally seeks out research participants of different ethnic backgrounds, this research is limited to the UK, and whilst not intentional, has gathered data from individuals originating from the UK exclusively. Thus, whilst some participants draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques originating out of the UK, such as yoga, the interpretation and practice of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques from traditions originating outside the UK continues to reflect Western values, concerns and desires. As such, discussion and analysis will draw upon terminology located within Western philosophical commitments to enable the intended audience to comprehend assertions made through culturally relevant frameworks.

That this research collects data from participants whose ontological perspectives may significantly differ from person to person could also be considered problematic in that there is no perspective that grounds the ideologies that present. Furthermore, metaphysical belief exhibited in Western UK contexts is often described as "pick-and-mix" in the sense that individuals often engage in practices and beliefs that would traditionally have been considered contradictory, incompatible and conflicting. As such, the problems highlighted on page 139 whereby nominalist research results in chaotic comprehension as opposed to meaningful debate could be charged. Given this, it is imperative that this research draws on theoretical ideal types to help foster meaningful discussion, both in relation to the context of the research participants, and the ontological positionalities that present. Concerning the ideological context, this research draws on Partridge's theory of "occulture". An idea initially developed in *The Re-Enchantment of the West* (Partridge, 2004) as part of an attempt to make sense of competing secular and non-secular

currents in modern societies (see also Partridge 2013; 2016), occulture refers to those non-secular discourses that subvert hegemonic cultures in any society, whether we think of Christian hegemony in medieval Europe or secular rationalism in the late modern West. Concerning the latter, while the arguments for secularisation in Western societies cannot be ignored, there is also good evidence of a vibrant culture of non-secular ideas, many of which appear to be a quotidian feature of modern life. While trivial in some respects, occulture is also profoundly significant as a resource for enchantment. It can include culturally embedded doctrines from historically dominant religious traditions (e.g. angels and demons), as well as ideas drawn from esoteric currents (e.g. Theosophy; Gnosis), the arts and popular culture (e.g. fantasy; horror; science fiction), folklore and legend (e.g. Slender Man; Spring Heeled Jack; Arthurian legend), and even history and current events (e.g. Jack the Ripper; 9/11 conspiracies) (Webb, 1981; Partridge, 2004, 2016).

Concerning the multiple ontological perspectives that present in occulture, this research draws upon sociological classification of dominant ontological positions evident in the Western European milieu: religions of difference; religions of humanity; and spiritualities of life. Developed by Heelas and Woodhead (2000), their typological spectrum does not seek to classify or conceptualise belief through fixed categories of interpretation. Rather, it provides a loose ideal-type framework revolving around conceptualisation of the Absolute, nature and the natural world, and the human condition. Thus, where "religions of difference" 'distinguish sharply between God and the human and the natural' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2000: 2), within "religions of humanity" the 'locus of authority [shifts] from transcendent to human' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2000: 70) in that it is through the experience of existence that humanity comes to know the character and nature of God (Heelas & Woodhead, 2000). At the other end of the spectrum to "religions of difference" lie "spiritualities of life", whereby adherents 'adopt a "holistic" perspective and stress the fundamental identity between the divine, the human and the natural' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2000: 2). Such loose categorisation of ontological perspectives is advantageous. Indeed, Heelas and Woodhead's ideal types not only enable researchers to comprehend and explore key characteristics of contemporary metaphysical belief to enable scholars to further appreciate the complex subjective, pluralistic and eclectic nature of contemporary metaphysical belief. Its loose categorisation also has significant implications for potential future work that takes on an international aspect in that such a spectrum can be applied to a variety of contexts. This is because it is not the expression or practices that emerge through lived experience, but the ontological positioning of the subject that results from such belief.

Such loose typological spectrum also has scope for the addition of further ontological perspectives as metaphysical belief shifts and alters over the course of history. Indeed, work undertaken by Woodhead in the *Westminster Faith Debates* (2012 – 2015), identified a further ontological perspective in relation to the unprecedented rise of members of the population who describe themselves as having "no religion", despite the fact that they may indeed buy into, invest or explore aspects of their spirituality

in highlight religious or spiritualised formats, practices and techniques (2016). Reflective of the condition of homelessness discussed in Chapter Two, Woodhead classes such individuals as "nones" because such individuals represent the portion of the population that ticks "none" when confirming their religious beliefs, Woodhead argues that "nones" account for 48 per cent of the UK population. Believing that their subjective self is "unique", "authentic", "autonomous", and that which functions as sovereign over being, for "nones", similar to "spiritualities of life" then, the self itself is sacralised, and considered responsible and authoritative over the subjective condition and the interpretation of existence that manifests (Woodhead, 2016). Whereas individuals categorised as reflecting ontological perspectives representative of "spiritualities of life" draw on metaphysical frameworks of belief to justify the self as sacred and situate being within and beyond material existence, "nones" consider metaphysical frameworks of belief antagonistic to their experience of existence, which is considered meaningful exclusively within material existence.

The typological spectrum developed by Heelas and Woodhead capture some of the key characteristics of contemporary forms of religion and spirituality that enables scholars to apply a working definition through ideal types to contemporary forms of metaphysical belief that enables discussion to develop in a meaningful way. It also enables parallels to be drawn between various belief systems by establishing a conceptual framework to comprehend the relationship the human condition has to the Absolute and to nature. Not only can similarities and differences that exist between different expressions of faith and belief be understood more comprehensively then, but it also provides a means through which different manifestations of belief can be conceptually imagined in relation to one another. There are, however, a number of problems with Heelas and Woodhead's typology. Most significant is the linear presentation in which Heelas and Woodhead present their typology suggests then that the three ideal types identified are separate from one another, and that there is no crossover. It is not unusual, however, for individuals to hold beliefs representative of "religions of difference" whilst at the same time actively participating in practices associated with "spiritualities of life", or "religions of humanity". Such linear presentation then suggests that it is impossible for expressions of metaphysical belief that draw on elements of "religions of difference" as well as "spiritualities of life". Whilst Heelas and Woodhead arguably present their typological framework in such a manner to demonstrate the historical development of metaphysical thought and the changing nature of the relationship between the human condition, the Absolute and the natural world, it is proposed that the linear presentation of this typological spectrum is not conducive to research, and must be modified. Thus, it is proposed that it is more fruitful to conceptualise such a typology not as a linear spectrum, but as a Venn diagram, which connotes the fluid interconnectedness of contemporary forms of metaphysical belief. In doing so, it also further discourages the application of solid and definitive assumptions, and thus expectations as to the beliefs, values and desires encountered as is typically the case when specific religious traditions are studied, such as Christianity.

# Research Methods

<u>Rationale</u>

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this research, a number of methodologies were employed to encourage a rich and in-depth approach to the phenomenon in question. For example, Chapters One, Two and Three relied on a synthesis of content, discourse and hermeneutical analysis, which allowed historical and cultural exploration of the significance of metaphysical belief to activity referred to as work (Nelson & Woods, 2011). Demonstrative of methodological agnosticism advocated by Smart (1969, 1973) the benefit of methodological agnosticism is that it enables for triangulation with other research methods that promotes nuanced insight to emerge. Regarding the collection of data, the methodological approach employed was exclusively qualitative. This is because whilst some sociologists of religion such as Woodhead have adopted mixed-methodologies that infuse qualitative and quantitative methods, such as supplementing interviews with survey sampling and scaling measurements a means of presenting findings within scientific conventions (2016), the philosophic assumptions of this research were not compatible with mixed-method approaches. To begin, positivistic methods employed in mixed-methods research affirm and confirm the economic cosmos, and thus run the risk of reducing metaphysical belief to that which can be measured, captured and quantified in the material world. Echoing problems of early workplace spirituality literature outlined in Chapter One, quantitative methods thus run the risk of losing sight of what is being researched: ephemeral and (non)conceptual belief. This is not to say that quantitative research methods can be useful. Indeed, for research where the sample size represents a substantial portion of the population, quantitative methods can enable the researcher to collect data from a larger number of the population in a shorter space of time, which gives an indication of the research problem that lends itself to generalisations to be made in relation to the wider cultural context. For quantitative methods to be useful in this regard for this research, however, a large enough sample size would only be achievable through substantial external funding and a team of researchers. Thus, whilst future research whereby data collected through quantitative means could be used to inform further collection of data through interviews, in regard to the present research quantitative methods such as survey sampling and scaling measurements were neither suitable nor desirable.

As such, this research utilised qualitative methods to collect data. Though qualitative research can adopt a variety of methodological positions emerging from ethnographical, anthropological and grounded theoretical approaches, as the unit of analysis for this research was the significance of metaphysical belief in relation to activity regarded as "work", the methods employed had to complement the need for multiple positions to be contemplated, synthesised, and considered at once without favouring at the same time any position encountered. This is because of the varieties of metaphysical beliefs and practices encountered during research. What was required then was a method that enabled the researcher

to collect, organise, interpret, analyse and understand the multiple realities encountered without compromising the narratives of research participants, nor encouraging bias of the researcher to cloud the data collected (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Bird & Scholes, 2011; Bremborg, 2011). As such, complementing the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research, verstehen, narrative methods were employed to support the collection of data achieved through interviews. This was because phenomenological narrative methods not only complement nominalism and social constructionism. Phenomenological narrative methods also 'assume assumes people act in particular ways because *not* to do so would fundamentally violate their sense of *being* at that particular time and place' (Somer, 1994: 624). Thus, what amounts through phenomenological narrative methods is what is known as "narrative knowing", whereby the ambiguity and complexity of the life of the research participant can be constructed, complex patterns recognised, and comparative consideration between research participants sentiments, expressions and discourse developed (Etherington, 2013). Furthermore, phenomenological narrative methods encouraged data to be captured in the manner of a conversation that put research participants at ease and therefore more likely to be open and honest. Such an approach then enabled the researcher to view the "truth" of reality as conceived by the participant to reveal the significance of the words selected, and stories and experiences shared (Spickard, 2011). That is to say, phenomenological narrative research methods enabled the researcher to capture of ephemeral "inner" states evident in everyday conversation, but which are not typically subject to examination, consideration or contemplation, and construct participant realities according to relevant narratives, myths, metaphor relevant to the surrounding social and cultural context. As such, phenomenological narrative methods were appropriate because they enabled the researcher to identify 'alternative values' and social realities not expressed by dominant understanding (Somer, 1994).

As such, phenomenological narrative methods provided space for research participants to present their religious world to the researcher in a manner that encouraged the collection of rich data. More than this however, consideration of metaphysical belief through phenomenological narrative methods also enabled the researcher to consider how research participants constructed their sense of Self. This was particularly relevant to this research, for as Heelas and Woodhead's typology demonstrates, and indeed Weber's argument raised in Chapter Two, much metaphysical belief in contemporary Western Europe is predominantly constructed in relation to the narrative construction of the self to the point that the self has become the means through which one's perceived future and experienced past is constructed into a linear narrative pertinent to one's lifetime. Further highlighted then is the suitability of phenomenological narrative methods in capturing the metaphysical and transcendental beliefs in that the Self represents the contemporary continuation of historical oral traditions, as is explicit through the popularity of social media platforms.

Data collection

Whilst there are a number of formats through which data can be collected under narrative methods, as mentioned, for this research an interview process was adopted. This is because this research sought to capture a range of religious perspectives, to consider the significance of belief in relation to approaches and conceptions of work, and in-depth semi-structured interviews facilitated the capturing of multifaceted and diverse, complex and nuanced data. Indeed, interviews encourage the researcher to understand reality as perceived by the research participant according to their understanding, perspectives and belief, such as belief, through oral channels such as stories, myth and metaphor (Kvale, 1983). Echoing Arendt's perspective whereby, 'each time we talk about things that can be experienced only in privacy or intimacy, we bring them out into a sphere where they will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they could never have been before' (1958: 50), interviews presented a means through which intangible beliefs and experiences could be brought into reality within narratives. Though interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews, the type of interview adopted for this research was in-depth semi-structured interviews. This is because in-depth semi-structured interviews, whilst relying on an interview schedule in order to ensure certain questions are asked so that data is collected according to themes identified as (potentially) significant, give scope for the researcher to ask further questions depending on the narratives, stories and accounts divulged by the research participant, and to explore previously unconsidered avenues of enquiry during the interview. More than this, however, as this research was concerned with aspects of belief and lived experiences of work that the participant may not have given much thought to previously, in-depth semi-structured interviews promoted reflexivity and reflection of responses. This is because semi-structured interviews manifest more as a conversation than an interview. Participants were thus able to freely impart their story.

To achieve this, pilot studies were conducted to ensure the interview structure invited reflection and reflexive responses, and that academic rigour was maintained. Indeed, pilot studies not only provided valuable interview experience surrounding the research at hand that informed data collection, and which provided data that was included within the data set. They also ensured that the interview template[3] and exploratory questions were suitable and nuanced to the area of enquiry to enable the exploration of research themes (Bremborg, 2011). Promoting the collection of meaningful, relevant and rich data, in-depth semi-structured interviews also limited accusations of bias in that such interviews are led by the respondent. For example, in order to reduce the possibility of confirmation bias, the definition of key terms such as "religion" and "spirituality", as well as "work" and "labour" as held by participants was sought. In doing so, what was encouraged was respect of the standpoint of the respondent by the researcher, and treatment of their perspective as "true" and "authentic" regardless whether the

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[3] A research template typically comprises of a template of the nature of topics and themes identified. This research requires a research template loose structure to be used as an aid rather than direct the interview process.

researcher shared interpretations given, or indeed constructions of reality (Connolly, 1999: Spickard, 2011). As a result, the questions were structured in a way that invited the participant to talk for as long as is necessary, and which invited the researcher to exercise their 'abilities to listen, infer, imagine, suggest and question in order to gain a sense of what the others are communicating and by what means they do so' (Bird & Scholes, 2011: 85). Participants were also encouraged to actively reflect throughout the interview so that the data collected reflected their beliefs and experiences, and that their subjective perspective was captured as accurately as possible. Encouragement of reflection and reflexivity was particularly pertinent to the study of religiosity in that researchers own values and perspective can cloud interpretation of the data collected, and particularly in the immediacy of the interview process (Bremborg, 2011), in which the researcher may not recognise the depth of meaning through failure in recognising the significance of meaning to the participants' ontological perspective.

The level of reflexivity and self-reflection required for this research was encouraged by the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research in that questions posed to research participants revolved around how they constructed meaning of existence through their beliefs and in relation to worldly activity such as work. This was further supported by the interview process, which consisted of at least two face-to-face interviews, the location of which chosen by the participant so they were as comfortable and secure as possible. Holding two interviews provided time for the participant to reflect on the themes in between the interviews that enabled a level of reflection on the part of the research participant that encouraged deep analysis to be attained by the researcher. It also provided another opportunity for the researcher to raise questions concerning previously unconsidered themes and topics following their own reflection of the previous interview. At times, however, some research participants were interviewed up to four times. This was either because the interview had gone on for an extended period of time and other commitments meant the interview had to cease, or because of fatigue on the part of the participant in continuing the level of reflection necessary for such research. Such reflection is particularly necessary for research surrounding metaphysical belief in that the content was challenging for some participants, and particularly for those who identified as "nones". Indeed, not only was it rare for all participants to put into words their personal, metaphysical beliefs, and particularly in relation to worldly activity such as work, but this was particularly the case for "nones" who did not frame their conception of existence through metaphysical frameworks of belief. As such, having time in-between interviews to consider their beliefs was particularly beneficial to such participants. To encourage reflection, a number of techniques were employed. The reflexive approach began by inviting participants to fill out a 'Twenty-Statement Test' (TST) prior to the interview. Considered 'a 'desert-island-discs' of the personality' (Rees & Nicholson, 2004: 86), whilst TSTs are traditionally used as a tool of social science to facilitate coding and measurement of assumptions and attitudes, this research

modified the TST[4]. That is to say, the TST was used to support the qualitative approaches of this research where the self is perceived to symbolise a crucial element of social construction, and to stimulate reflexivity and reflection of the research themes and topics prior to the interview process. This also built time into the research process for research participants to reflect, contemplate and consider their metaphysical beliefs and perspectives prior to interview, which made the data collected during the interview process as rich, complex and nuanced as possible.

Furthermore, not only did the TST reveal an impression of the Self as held by the research participant to the researcher prior to the interview process, which enabled the researcher to gain a sense of the participant and how they perceived their being prior to the interview process, which undoubtedly benefitted the interview process. This was because depending how the research participant responded on the TST enabled the research to determine the order of the interviews. For example, whilst it was impossible for research participants who identified with metaphysical frameworks of belief to discuss their approach to work and the meaning and purpose derived in isolation from their metaphysical beliefs, for those that did not identify with metaphysical beliefs the opposite was true. Thus, depending how respondents answered the TST, for those who evidently did not identify as religious or spiritual, the interview process began with discussion surrounding their work, their approach to such work, and the meaning and purpose derived, before introducing questions concerning belief and their thoughts of the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by their institution. This was because starting an interview by asking such participants to discuss metaphysical belief would not only have made the respondent feel possibly out of their depth, and thus alienated, but could have affected the degree of openness and honesty during the remainder of the interview.

### *Selection processes*

One of the first considerations to surround qualitative research are the questions "who" and "how many". Such questions are important, for depending on the type of data collected, the method of data collection adopted, and the unit of analysis particular to research, saturation can be met anywhere between five and twenty-five (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).  Due to the size of this research project, and the time permitted, this research did not aim to reflect a sample of a particular demographic or group. It was thus illogical to attempt to reach data saturation, and particularly in relation to contemporary forms of metaphysical belief. Indeed, this research did not seek to provide general theory as to a specific group or demographic, but sought to illustrate how experiences of material existence, such as the activity of work, underlie metaphysical belief. Having said that, Possamai comments in his influential text *In Search of New Age Spiritualities* (2005), that while research into contemporary forms of spirituality may not attain saturation, that thematic saturation occurs between thirty to thirty-five

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[4] TST are usually carried out more than once and their contents, coded, cross-analysed, categorised and rated.

participants. Given the typological framework selected, however, in order to reach saturation point, the researcher would have been required to have undertaken as a minimum, two hundred and forty interviews: sixty interviews with thirty individuals identifying with "religions of difference", sixty interviews with thirty individuals identifying with "religions of humanity", sixty interviews with thirty individuals identifying with "spiritualities of life" sixty interviews with thirty individuals identifying as "nones". Beyond the scope of this research, the researcher thus aimed to undertake as a minimum, two interviews with between twenty-five and thirty research participants, in accordance with Kvale and Brinkman, and Possamai. Due to last minute cancellations, at the end of the data collection period, the researcher had undertaken fifty in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty-two participants: seven individuals categorised as "religions of difference", five individuals categorised as "religions of humanity", five individuals categorised as "spiritualities of life" and five individuals categorised as "nones". A breakdown of the interview participants are illustrated in the table on page 158.

Despite the fact that saturation point could not be attained during this research, participants still needed to be carefully selected so as to allow for the collection of narratives that represented the four typological ideal types identified by Heelas and Woodhead (2000) and Woodhead (2016). This was because whilst this study was primarily concerned with those undertaking organisationally designed roles of labour, it was not known to the researcher prior to the research whether there was a correlation between activity selected, and belief. As such, participants were not selected for their profession but their beliefs. Adopting snowball sampling (Heckathorn, 1997) whereby selection began with individuals known to the researcher, and who reflected the ideal types identified, from the identification of initial research participants, the numbers of respondents expanded by word of mouth and referral from existing participants. As a result, participants were spread throughout the UK. Though space limits in-depth discussion, attention must be paid to issues arising through snowball sampling. Firstly, snowball sampling ran the risk of stagnating research through limitations of access to participants familiar with the particular experience and beliefs sought. That this ultimately depends on the initial participants chosen, how interesting the research is to potential respondents, as well as a good deal of luck, this is something the researcher was aware of when selecting participants, but not overly concerned with. Secondly, snowball sampling can lead to a lack of openness and honesty from participants, either because the participant knows, or does not know, the researcher. As Babbie comments, however, not only can participants be more open when there is no personal connection in that they are exposed to a degree of anonymity, but participants can also be more open and honest as a result of personal connections (2015). Significantly, however, from participant feedback, participation with this research provided an opportunity for participants to "discover" and reflect on aspects of themselves, their experiences and their beliefs in a way that they had not always previously considered or encountered. Indeed, it is very rare that we are encouraged to reflect on what "work" means to us, and how it affects our lives. Even rarer, for many who identify as "nones", to consider work in relation to metaphysical

belief is never contemplated. As such, this research presented for research participants the chance to reflect on an aspect of existence that is rarely consciously or reflectively explored. Most tellingly, however, many research participants, regardless of their beliefs, commented that this research was an enriching journey for participants to "discover" aspects of themselves. This was also echoed by the researcher, who found the data collection not only illuminating for the purposes of research, but an activity that prompted reflection and consideration of their own ideological perspectives in relation to their work, and found themselves on a journey too. Other participants reported that they found the research participation akin to counselling, and interestingly, many contacted the researcher after the research process was finished to say that the reflection encouraged during this research had promoted them to change career.

Whilst this thesis sought to gain an understanding of metaphysical belief concerning all ontological positionalities, due to space it was not possible to provide analysis of all four ideal types identified by Heelas and Woodhead, and Woodhead. Thus, though the data collected from research participants categorised as "religions and difference" and "spiritualities of life" provided rich avenues of discussion, as the data collected unfolded, what became apparent was a correlation between metaphysical belief and the activity selected in that those who perceived existence through metaphysical frameworks of belief were less likely to undertake organisationally designed roles of labour. Furthermore, when such participants did undertake organisationally deigned roles of labour, such activities selected either enabled expression of one's beliefs, values and desires, such as teaching, or purposefully selected to maintain a degree of separation between their "spiritual" work and work undertaken for material ends. Echoing Aupers and Houtman's research raised in Chapter Three that found there to be an incompatibility with organisationally designed roles and spiritual questing (2006), in order to adequately address the research questions, the decision was made to focus the analysis chapters exclusively on data collected from participants whose beliefs echoed the ideal types of "religions of humanity" and "nones". This is because from the participants interviews, such individuals were more likely to undertake an organisationally designed role of labour, and thus were more likely to be exposed to soft capitalist approaches. Most significantly, however, as outlined above, Woodhead's *Westminster Faith Debates* proposed that "nones" comprise about forty-eight per cent of the population. Similarly, "religions of humanity", whilst being open to metaphysical frameworks of belief, represent individuals in contemporary society that do not place faith or conviction in a particular religious tradition or explore the arena of new age spiritualities, but represent those in society who consider themselves agnostic. As such, "nones" and "religions of humanity" combined make up the majority of the population. Thus, whilst it was not possible to reach saturation point through this research, by focusing the analysis chapters findings on "nones" and "religions of humanity" who typically had no fixed beliefs, the analysis that unfolded related to the majority of the population, and thus the common position adopted by the majority of individuals in the contemporary UK context as opposed to the minority.

<u>Data analysis</u>

The philosophical assumptions discussed above shaped the way the data was analysed. This was because the nature of this research revolved around identifying aspects of the experience of being that are transcendent, ephemeral and divine: it was through analysis then that the researcher 'must read beneath each person's account to find the patterns that it represents' (Spickard, 2011: 337). Particularly, the analysis drew upon phenomenological and narrative analysis conventions because such approaches supported analysis of abstract concepts and intangible belief in that analysis is led by the interpretation of signs, symbols, metaphors and ambiguity divulged within participant narratives. The assimilation between narrative and phenomenological analysis runs deeper, however, in that, regardless of methods of approach, 'what *any* interview study has – is a set of narratives about experience' (Spickard, 2011: 342). Thus, where narrative methods of analysis present the data collected as a story representative of 'socially situated knowledge constructions in their own right that values messiness, differences, depth and texture of experienced life' (Polkinghorne, 1995: 6), phenomenological analysis enabled the messiness, differences, depth and texture of experienced life through identification of themes in the narratives captured to be included in analysis. Further, both narrative and phenomenological methods of analysis attempt to 'describe the experience so that a 'native' can recognise it, without taking on board any of those natives' particular interpretations of what is going on' (Spickard, 2011: 338). Through narrative and phenomenological methods of analysis then, the level of analysis was neither restricted or limited to the conventions of one particular analysis method, but should allow for patterns, conventions, themes, similarities and differences to come to light. Rather than Grounded Theory that attempts to prove or disprove a particular theory, assumption or positionality, or coding that removes all contextual framing of the responses provided, the analysis of this research remained neutral in its expansion of themes and development of theory as possible.

*Data analysis processes*

As with any analysis of interview data, the analysis process to an extent relied on the tacit knowledge held by the researcher as informed by their own subjective context and conception of being and reality. To avoid as much as possible the problem of confirmation bias, the analysis was led by the stories and narratives collected, and the analysis of interview participants was multilayered and progressively focused. To begin, the TST was referred to prior to the interview in order to incorporate it into the initial interview. Following the interview, further communication via email, Skype and face-to-face contact were undertaken when necessary[5] so that as few assumptions and miscommunications as possible were made during the data analysis process. The audio recording was also listened to closely soon after the interview commenced. During this, notes were compiled with an emic focus. Adopting an analytic

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[5] It is likely through initial interviews that follow up interviews with specific individuals' may be sought.

memo style to provide an overview of the main points of discussion undertaken with each participant concerning their metaphysical beliefs in relation to work, this enabled the identification of themes relevant to those discussed in the literature review. The audio was then subject to transcription analysis, during which further themes, links and narratives were identified. Involving repeated listening of each interview, transcription analysis fostered a degree of familiarity and a level of data analysis before analysis with intent began. Complementing this approach, the experience of the interview was recorded in a research journal to promote the stimulation of ideas, clarification and insight of the interview during later stages of the Ph.D. process (Harvey, 2011: 238).

Analysis was principally carried out with hermeneutic intent. Initially, the analytic memos pertaining to individual participants were developed through content analysis of the transcribed interviews of each participant. Whilst transcription allowed data to be interpreted through visual means, relying on transcriptions in isolation from the audio file to interpret data can lead to research bias in that interpretation may be inaccurate in that it fails to take into consideration subtle cues communicated through silences, tone of voice, and emotion, for example. Throughout the analysis process then, audio files were listened to to remind the researcher of the interview as a whole conversation and narrative. Resulting in a number of open codes to emerge, the notes pertaining to each participant's responses were then comparatively analysed through discourse analysis in relation to those whose ontological perspectives fell under the same classification relative to the ideal types conceived by Heelas and Woodhead (2000) and Woodhead (2016). Enabling for a nuanced appreciation of each ideal-type and the identification of further themes, patterns and connections between the open codes of each research participant to develop, such individual analysis was then compiled into one document for each ideal type. This document contained testimonies from each participant and grouped them together in relation to the themes, concepts and open codes identified, wherein analysis was also developed. This document was then condensed through the creation of another document that did not contain testimonies, but which sought to further develop the level of analysis in relation to the other ideal types identified through comparative discourse analysis. This not only allowed for the conceptualisation of further themes, connections and arguments to develop, but enabled the researcher to comprehend the ontological positions and outlooks in relation to one another, which added a further level of understanding and analysis to unfold. Thus, whilst analysis of "religions of difference" and "spiritualities of life" did not feature in the analysis chapters, analysis of the interview data collected from participants classified under these ideal types were vital in informing and refining the analysis of "religions of humanity" and "nones", and vice versa. This was because the nuances of each ideal type enabled the researcher to consider the other ideal types from different angles, considerations and perspectives that enriched the analysis process. Finally, the data collected was considered in relation to the research questions in order to construct the narrative of Chapters Five and Six. Again, when required, the full interview transcripts were referred to, as were the audio files of interview participants

re-listened to foster reflexivity and reflection from the researcher. Whilst being a lengthy data analysis process, this was inherently beneficial to this research, and gave the researcher appreciation of the metaphysical landscape useful not only to this research, but potential future study.

Ethical considerations

As Hallowell and colleagues remind us, 'research is first and foremost a moral activity' (2005: 148). Due to the various, conflicting and contradictory religious perspectives, there is no cohesive professional code of conduct in Religious Studies. Indeed, to apply a 'one size fits all' ethical framework is far from appropriate to the study of metaphysical beliefs. There were thus a number of ethical considerations that were taken into account, and particularly as this research sought to capture data that concerned participants' metaphysical beliefs, which could evoke strong emotions and touch on areas that people may be sensitive, such as their ethical and moral positionality. Indeed, the very act of discussing metaphysical beliefs and experiences of work can evoke strong emotional responses. Though difficult to apply a professional ethical code to the study of religion, Bird and Scholes argue that there are a number of basic principles that can be applied to all forms of research adopting a lens of Religious Studies regardless of the approach, lens or perspective sought (2011). Firstly, ethical consideration must be paid to the core principles of the research ethics framework devised by the external funding body that backed this research, the ESRC, the research ethics adopted by the institution that housed this research, Lancaster University and the needs of both respondents and the researcher involved.

Concerning the researcher, attempts were made to ensure that they were protected during the research process through adherence to the university ethical code of conduct, and lone worker policy, which was followed when conducting fieldwork away from the university. Concerning the research participant, given that this research required respondents to think about their activity of work in relation to their belief in ways they may not have previously considered, it was difficult to predict with any certainty how the respondent would receive the question, nor gauge the response received. Such concerns were compounded by the fact that participants may not have considered or reflected on such aspects of their lives before to the degree evoked through research. As such, it was impossible to rule out the risk of negative emotions experienced resulting from the organic narrative of the participant. That this research was participant led, however, it was the role of the researcher not to shy away from such discussion, but to read the participant throughout the interview process so as to gauge whether to pause the interview for the participant to have a break, give participants the choice of resuming the interview another day, or to remind the participant of their right to withdraw. Whilst a difficult frontier to negotiate, this relied heavily on the emotional intelligence of the researcher to remain vigilant throughout the interviews, and spend some time getting to know the interviewee prior to the interview start, particularly if the participant was not known to the researcher prior to the data collection. Thus, from initial contact made

and throughout the data collection process, honest and objective communication with participants throughout the research process was maintained. This was supported in all communications with research participants, who were reminded in all communications that their identity, profession and location was anonymised, and their confidentiality preserved. To promote this, participants were informed of the rationale as to why particular methods were utilised, and given opportunities to ask the researcher questions relating to the study. In doing so, this research sought not only to maintain academic integrity, but to respect the dignity and integrity of research participants also. Furthermore, to promote the collection of honest and insightful data and meaningful knowledge of the significance of belief in relation to the activity of work, it was only during the analysis stage that the researcher actively looked for themes embedded within the narrative rather than attempting such an identification during data collection. This was undertaken not only to avoid detracting from the narrative and perspective held by the participant as it was captured, but to avoid comparison between research participants during the data collection through such themes. In doing so, this research promoted the protection of participant accounts, and consequently those to whom they represent and give a voice to. Demonstrated then is the importance of soft skills and the ability to recognise potential ethical dilemmas and considerations in order to protect the emotional state of the participant during the research process and as they emerge throughout data collection.

Secondly, regardless of the personal impact, it was imperative that the researcher approach the interview process and narratives captured with 'imagination, empathy and openness to possibilities' (Roof in Stausberg & Engler 2011: 77) to ensure there were no moral shortfalls from the researcher's perspective, or methods utilised that compromised the data collected. Such moral shortfalls include: improper communication of information to participants; discounting data collected too quickly; not counting relevant data; not providing space for the narrative of the participant due to the conceptual ideal types of analysis clouding data collection; and the perspective of participants (Bird & Scholes, 2011). This research also required a high degree of reflection, reflexivity, and responsible judgement from the researcher in order to analyse belief reflective of respondent attitudes, values and perspectives (Bellah, 1970). To promote such navigation, the researcher themselves sought counsel when necessary in order to consider the diverse issues and values at hand. This is supported by Droogers, who argues that researchers 'should view themselves, if only for a short amount of time of self-examination, as actors in that field' (2009: 276). This research thus remained open to and immersed in the ontological realm of the participant during the data collection and analysis process. Given the nature of the research undertaken and the data that was emerging, the researcher found the interview process burdensome mentally and emotionally, due to the situation of the research participants, and the desperation, alienation and exploitation observed, and difficult to separate themselves from the process. There was no respite from this, and no procedure offered either by the external funding body or the institution housing the research. Such difficulties were compounded by the timed nature research is subject to in

the contemporary, and the subsequent additional pressures faced, wherein many researchers do not have the time to take stock of their state but must continue to attempt to press on in order to meet deadlines set. Not having time to contemplate their dis-ease, however, the impact to research, the analysis generated, and the conclusions drawn goes unnoticed. Whilst this can be down to the fact that the researcher chose to put themselves in this position, the question of how much research in the contemporary is compromised as a result, however, must be posed.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the philosophical assumptions made during this research process. Whilst it is important when undertaking research to consider the philosophical assumptions of the research and how the methodology selected is shaped and informed by such assumptions, it is important to remember the problems that this causes. For instance, the philosophical assumptions that underpin research are predominantly shaped and influenced by Western positions, perspectives and points of view. Whilst this is not problematic for research undertaken in the West in relation to Western phenomena, such biases can be considered problematic when studying metaphysical belief, particularly in the contemporary climate where individuals may not align themselves to Western perspectives and ideologies, but those emerging from context outside, thus nullifying the frameworks typically applied. Most significant, however, is the reliance many researchers exhibit on philosophical assumption, which function as rigid borders of thinking as opposed to frames that guide thinking.

Situating the research within a nominalist ontological perspective to account for the variety of conceptions of "truth" encountered, this research sought not to privilege any conception of truth over another. Indeed, the conception of truth was not the point of this research. Rather, the point of this research was to gain insight into the impact and significance of metaphysical belief in relation to the approach to activities of work, and how meaning concerning being, is constructed. Allowing the focus of research to surround the social aspects of the human condition instead, a nominalist ontology thus enabled this research to consider the significance of abstract and (non)conceptual aspects of being to the lived experience of material existence without having to qualify precisely what the metaphysical "is", for example. Such ontological assumptions underpinned an epistemological position of social constructionism, which affirmed the ontological assumptions underpinning this research that conceptions of truth held by research participants are constructed according to the social, cultural, historical and geographical context of the individual. Enabling the focus of this research to surround the interrogation of that which was presumed "common sense" by the research participant, social constructionism also suited this research in that it encouraged theoretical reflection of the data collected in relation to the wider social, cultural and historical context as outlined in Chapters Two and Three. Whilst this research adopted a position wherein there is no truth to be determined by the human

condition, in order to make sense of the data collected and to overcome the criticism of nominalist research wherein nothing is achieved but meaningless chaos, this research applied the ideal types identified by Heelas and Woodhead to frame the research. Such framework was selected because of its ambiguity, fluidity and flexibility, in that it does not seek to determine the beliefs of a given group held, or indeed make assumptions of the practices and interpretation of truth exhibited. Rather, it is a typological framework that merely enables the researcher to loosely categorise the research participants dependent on beliefs held regarding the relationship of the Absolute to the human condition and the natural world. Such framework then enabled this research to interview individuals from any religious background, perspective or belief system without reducing the analysis and conclusions drawn to meaningless chaos. Furthermore, this typological framework also enabled the researcher to comparatively analyse the different ontological perspectives that presented, and particularly those framed by metaphysical frameworks of belief, and those framed by the economic cosmos. Most significantly, however, this enabled the researcher to comparatively analyse the significance of belief in relation to the approach to activities of work, trends concerning the activities selected, and the meaning derived from activities of work relative to being.

Such ontological and epistemological assumptions in turn influenced the direction of the methodology selected for this research. Too small for mixed methods to be of benefit, and arguably inappropriate for the study of metaphysical belief that remains beyond material existence and thus material measurement and qualification, this research adopted in-depth open-ended interviews that promoted the voice of the research participant to emerge. Such methodology was selected for a number of reasons. To begin, in-depth open-ended interviews enabled the researcher to collect, organise, interpret, analyse and understand the multiple realities encountered without compromising the narratives of research participants. Positioning the stories and narratives of the research participant to lead the direction of the interview, such phenomenological narrative method also encouraged open and honest dialogue between the researcher and research participant through the reflective and reflexive nature of the data collection process that also limited the possibility of the researcher's biases clouding the data collected. This is because in-depth open-ended interviews enabled the researcher to view the "truth" of reality as conceived by the participant to reveal the significance of the words selected, and stories and experiences shared.

As such, the data collection processes and data analysis was undertaken in a manner that further encouraged reflective and reflexive thinking, both from the researcher and research participants. For example, both the data collection and data analysis was multi-layered. The data collection thus consisted of a reflection exercise prior to the interview process, which consisted of a minimum of two interviews, and follow up questions were asked when clarity was required. Similarly, the data analysis process consisted of a number of steps of analysis, both in terms of the way in which the data collected from each participant was interacted with, as well as how the data was related both to the ideal type it was

categorised within, and between the ideal types identified by Heelas and Woodhead, and Woodhead. Whilst this was a lengthy process, the depth to the analysis gleaned was worthwhile, and enabled the researcher to gain a perspective of the landscape of metaphysical belief in the contemporary UK context that enriched the analysis that unfolded in Chapter's Five and Six concerning "religions of humanity" and "nones". Such focus on the ontological positions of "nones" and "religions of humanity" emerged for a number of reasons. Firstly, space did not allow for comprehensive discussion of the four ideal types identified in a manner that the researcher was satisfied with. Secondly however, as Woodhead's *Westminster Faith Debates* demonstrated, "nones" account for the majorities ontological position in the contemporary UK context. Similarly, having no framework of belief adhered to, "religions of humanity" largely account for those who consider themselves agnostic, which also makes up a large portion of society that does not have conviction in a particular metaphysical framework of belief.

In undertaking any research, it is of utmost importance, however, to remain attentive of the ethical considerations, and particularly embarking on research that explores such emotive terrain as metaphysical belief. Though impossible to account for how research participants would respond to the question, or gauge with certainty the emotional response that may be triggered, to account for this, the researcher strived to ensure that research participants were aware of such possibilities from the outset of research. This included open and honest dialogue from the outset, communication of their rights throughout and during the research process, and continual awareness of the researcher concerning the emotional state of the research participants. Also of importance, however, is the emotional state of the researcher. Whilst they willingly embark on research, this chapter touched on the impact to research the emotional toll the stories and narratives encountered can have to the researcher, and the lack of support or regard this is seemingly considered by institutions presently. It is suggested, however, that this should not be overlooked, and particularly because of the impact this can have to the clarity of mind of the researcher, and thus the analysis generated.

| Participant Pseudonym | Worldly Activity | Ontological positionality | Time spent Interviewing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Max | Higher Education Lecturer | Religion of Difference | 55 minutes |
| Hannah | Dance Choreographer | Religion of Difference | 2 hours 52 minutes |
| Grace | Higher Education Learning Advisor | Religion of Difference | 2 hours |
| Adam | Electrical Sub-Contractor | Religion of Difference | 40 minutes, plus email correspondence |
| Giles | Farmer | Religion of Difference | 1 hour 30 minutes |
| Bethanny | Further Education Teacher | Religion of Difference | 3 hours 17 minutes |
| Daniel | Director of Photography, Cinematographer, Camera Operator | Religion of Difference | 1 hour 15 minutes |
| | | | |
| Leah | Principle Change Manager | Religion of Humanity | 3 hours 57 minutes |
| Jacob | Systems material Engineer | Religion of Humanity | 3 hours 46 minutes |
| Mallory | Community Fundraising Manager | Religion of Humanity | 3 hours 25 minutes |
| Douglas | Technical Support Engineer | Religion of Humanity | 4 hours 13 minutes |
| Portia | Civil Servant | Religion of Humanity | 1 hour 26 minutes |
| | | | |
| Esther | Cleaner | Spiritualities of Life | 3 hours 25 minutes |
| Dylan | Busker | Spiritualities of Life | 1 hour 40 minutes |
| Esme | Ayurvedic Practitioner | Spiritualities of Life | 2 hours 6 minutes |
| Patrick | Spiritual Business Owner | Spiritualities of Life | 3 hours 23 minutes |
| Odette | Jewellery Designer/Maker | Spiritualities of Life | 2 hours 28 minutes |
| | | | |
| Ian | Higher Education Lecturer | None | 1 hour 51 minutes |
| Cecilia | Higher Education Learning Advisor | None | 3 hours 10 minutes |
| Samael | Software Engineer | None | 2 hours |
| Alastor | Bookshop Manager/Higher Education Research Support | None | 4 hours 47 minutes |
| Edward | Software Engineer | None | 1 hour 20 minutes |

# CHAPTER FIVE:
## SPIRITUAL HOMELESSNESS AND
## THE APPROACH TO WORLDLY ACTIVITY

In line with Stark and Glock's considerations mentioned in Chapter One that 'management literature does not offer a clear picture of the effects of religious beliefs on individual values, attitudes or behaviour in organisations' (1968: 1), Chapter Five attempts to explore contemporary forms of belief held by individuals who have no fixed religious or spiritual beliefs. While the majority of contemporary selves have no fixed religious or spiritual beliefs, research undertaken by contemporary sociologists of religion indicates that such individuals continue to subscribe to external, culturally relevant ideologies, and philosophical perspectives in order to derive meaning and purpose concerning their lives. As outlined in Chapter Two, following the death of God and the inadequacies of the economic cosmos in catering to humanity when the system is placed first, many individuals find themselves "materially" or "spiritually" homeless. An argument developed in Chapter Three to suggest that soft capitalist approaches are developed to counter spiritual homelessness by reflecting what such employees want to hear and believe concerning material existence, it is in Chapter Five that such observation will be explored. To begin, the discussion will first explore the approach to work exhibited by individuals who exemplify the positions of "none" and "religions of humanity" (RoH). Indicating the significance such individuals place on the performance of work in constructing their subjective self, the discussion then turns to focus on their activity of work in order to explore what it is that makes them choose to perform such a role, and why. Highlighting that it is not so much the nature and character of the activity that is significant but its performance, and how it can be conceptualised as meaningful and purposeful to their subjective experience of existence, this chapter identifies a number of differences between "none's" and RoH to outline how their approach is different relative to their ontological positionality. Finally, this chapter turns its attention to the reality behind the rhetoric to illustrate the trap spiritually homeless minds feel subject to as a result of the value they invest in material benefits received from the economic cosmos for their compliance.

## Spiritually homeless minds

As the literature review outlines, many individuals in the contemporary UK context have neither faith nor conviction in metaphysical frameworks of belief. Having identified that the position of spiritual homelessness following the decline of the authority of Christianity, the interviews held with spiritually homeless minds provided a rich tapestry of conceptualisations of existence. Despite this, in line with Heelas and Woodhead's typology discussed in Chapter Four, there emerged two dominant strands of spiritual homelessness: RoH and "nones". Concerning positions typically reflected by "nones", Samael,

a software engineer for a world-leading American multinational technology company, states the following:

> In software engineering it's hard for a religion to be relevant now, like people will think you silly, and it gets rid of a lot of baggage I don't need to think about! I don't need to worry about someone watching me, I don't need to think about what's going to happen after I die...I'm not really thinking about death yet! I mean something *might* happen…who knows...but I don't think there's 'meness' beyond the physical and I'm changing constantly as a result of that, I guess.

Identifying as an atheist, unlike RoH, individuals such as Samael who exemplify the position of "none" are not open to the possibilities of meaning and purpose of existence purported through metaphysical frameworks of belief. Instead, they find metaphysical conceptions of existence not only antagonistic to their experience of existence, but irrelevant. Claiming such a perspective 'gets rid of a lot of baggage he [does not] need to think about'. this position is supported by the culture of disbelief Samael refers to that manifests through and is perpetuated by the dominant culture of the technology sector. Echoing Arendt's concerns raised in Chapter Two whereby humanity is 'thrown into the closed inward-ness of introspection, where the highest he could experience were the empty processes of reckoning of the mind, its play with itself' (1958, 320), there is evidence of the significance attached to the experience of material being by "nones". For example, rather than seeking to resolve or contemplate the existential dis-ease he experiences regarding mortality, Samael illustrates how spiritually homeless minds typified as "nones" reflect arguments raised in Chapter Two wherein spiritually homeless minds turn to human-inspired frameworks in order to derive meaning and purpose of existence and distract themselves from their existential dis-ease. Reinforcing the perspective that meaning and purpose of being exclusively surrounds the subject's experience of 'me-ness' in the physical world, arguably evident then is that existence is not perceived by spiritually homeless minds as a trajectory toward a future beyond the experience of material existence, but a trajectory subject to and influenced by the choices made and actions undertaken during one's lifetime.

Whilst spiritually homeless minds reflective of the position of "nones" can perceive metaphysical frameworks of belief as antagonistic to their comprehension of material existence, this is not true of all spiritually homeless minds. Concerning the position of RoH, Leah, a Principle Change Manager for a UK County Council, provides an account that demonstrates a position of spiritual homelessness more open to metaphysical belief:

> I'm not a religious person, but I love that idea that religion is what we all make of it, because what we believe in is very unique and individual to all of us. Because even if you spoke to someone who is from a particular religion, the elements they choose to take from it are different. But I find the concept or the concepts that come out of organised religion, quite nonsensical, because I am quite empirical. I will, *I can*, have leaps of faith, but I do like to know why I'm doing something. So, if I was going to pray every day, I'd kind of want to know that what I was praying to was real. I wouldn't go so far as to say that I'm

an atheist because I like the idea of cause and effect and that things are connected, that we're all connected somehow as people. But I wouldn't say that I'm agnostic because I don't have this hope that there's something there. But I do subscribe to perhaps say some form of fatalism, some concept that there's some design in what we're doing has purpose, because I think I'd go insane if I thought that there was nothing because I'd be like 'Well, what is the point?'

Remaining open to metaphysical conceptions of being but at the same time labelling them 'nonsensical' because she seeks truth from empirical evidence, Leah's spiritual homelessness is evident in the fact that she does not know how to express her beliefs. She is not atheist because she desires there to be design and purpose to existence, but she is unwilling to call herself agnostic because she lacks the faith and hope that there is 'something there'. Leah's position is arguably typical of spiritually homeless minds who reflect the position of RoH. This is because she remains open to religious and spiritual beliefs in order to give meaning and purpose when she is unable to derive meaning from her everyday life. Demonstrating that such individuals are not necessarily open to metaphysical frameworks to comprehend the meaning and purpose of existence within and beyond material being, but through the need to secure meaning and purpose exclusively concerning material existence when human-inspired, empirical frameworks cannot, Leah brings to light the anxiety and dis-ease that can be experienced when individuals are required to think about the meaning and purpose of existence. What is indicated then is that metaphysical frameworks of belief are not evoked by spiritually homeless minds to incite meaning and purpose of existence, but are drawn upon to deny and circumvent confrontation of unresolved existential dis-ease concerning the finitude of the human condition.

This is significant in regard to how most spiritually homeless minds approach the activity of work, like Mallory, a Fundraising Officer for a Charity providing aid in Africa exemplifies. Considering herself 'agnostic because I don't know what I am' despite occasionally attending Unitarian Chapel and actively exploring ideas and practices drawn from occulture, Mallory comments:

> For such a long time their purpose was self-explanatory: it was put on them, they were going to be a farmer, they were going to be agricultural or they were going to lead the aristocracy. You were born into a very, 'this is what's expected of you', and you knew exactly what you were going to do and so you didn't have to question. But now the fact that so many people have different choices it's causing extra stress on them. That purpose is so malleable. Whereas purpose was at one point just your job, your role, now it's like: 'What's my legacy on the planet?', 'What's my purpose as a person?' 'What's my purpose in terms of career?', because you can choose it. And we've only been able to choose it for the last hundred years or so. And sometimes I don't feel that I'm living up to my potential, or that I'm not living the best way, that I'm not appreciating things, I very easily get sucked down by that. And it can get me in quite dark places sometimes when I feel like I'm not living the way that I would like to be because there's choices, and the more time that passes the more you don't know 'Have I wasted it?' 'Have I regretted anything?' So you're constantly searching. That's huge within our zeitgeist at the moment and I think people are really trying to find out their purpose.

Compounding the significance of the experience exclusively to material being, Mallory illustrates the loss of certainty experienced by spiritually homeless minds who remain open to metaphysical frameworks of belief but lack faith and conviction to comprehend the meaning and purpose of being.

Constantly searching instead for meaning and purpose following the decline of taken-for-granted metaphysical frameworks that once provided certainty, stability and assurance, Mallory highlights the stress and dis-ease faced by spiritually homeless minds when one's purpose is not only perceived malleable, but their responsibility. Reflecting Berger's and Arendt's considerations of the self thrown back on the self discussed in Chapters Two and Three wherein endless options, decisions, and responsibility can cripple individuals from comprehending with any degree of confidence the meaning and purpose of material being, is important. This is because through the rhetorical questions Mallory poses, arguably evident is how culturally relevant neoliberal values sustain the inherently weak, limited and fragmented subject position spiritual homelessness represents by heightening not only their awareness of difficulties associated in tolerating the continuous uncertainty the construction of subjective ontological positions (Berger et al., 1973), but their fear of not 'living up to [their] potential'.

More than this, however, Mallory demonstrates how such unresolved existential dis-ease significantly affects the way in which worldly activity such as work is considered meaningful by spiritually homeless minds. For example, seeking confirmation that she has lived in the 'best way' and up to her 'potential', so that she will not later regret her choices and feel she has wasted her lifetime, work can be considered to have become a means of gauging not only the condition of her subjective being exclusively within material existence, but in affirming its reality. Reflecting Thompson and Smith's argument raised in Chapter One that identity as opposed to labour has become the site of indeterminacy (2009: 921), this is evident in Mallory's use of terms such as 'potential' to determine the extent to which she lives in the 'best way'. Arguably demonstrating how the neoliberal values she draws upon frame her existence, and affirm and confirm her constructed subjective identity, similar to Leah then, Mallory indicates the reliance on human-inspired, neoliberal frameworks spiritually homeless minds rely on to satiate their existential dis-ease and derive meaning and purpose from their subjective experience of existence.

## Human-inspired activities of work

The reliance on human-inspired frameworks to comprehend material existence as meaningful and purposeful by spiritually homeless minds, impacts the selection of activities of work in a number of ways. Interestingly, in relation to the discussion raised in Chapter Three surrounding Arendt's distinction of work and labour, only a small number of spiritually homeless minds interviewed undertook activities, the nature and character of which reflected activities of work. This is true for Jacob, a materials engineer for a British multinational defence, security and aerospace company. Holding beliefs reflective of the position of RoH in that Jacob considers himself open-minded rather than religious or spiritual due to 'the fixed nature of religion' and 'the connotations spirituality has with hippies', Jacob reflects:

> The reason to work has always really interested me. People go into Engineering because they're Engineers basically; they just didn't know it before they went into Engineering. It's a belief system; it's a way of life certainly. It shapes who you are and gives you purpose. And I do put a lot of effort in work, so I don't just turn up, do my work and go home. I sit there thinking through things and making notes at home [about] ways to improve the process, make it quicker. So you're always thinking, rather than putting in the hours and just grinding through it. So there seem to be two types of people: those that enjoy their work – they're passionate and career driven people and they take an active interest in their work; and then there're people who want to pay for what they do at the weekend. Work isn't a hobby for those types of people.

Undertaking an activity the nature and character of which he fundamentally enjoys and is passionate about, irrespective of the exchange-value associated, his work as an Engineer influences his perception of the world and his experience of material existence by 'shap[ing] who [he is] and giv[ing him] purpose'. Jacob highlights then the extent to which activities of work undertaken by spiritually homeless minds are not framed through metaphysical frameworks of belief, but human-inspired principles of scientific rationale and mathematical logic. Activities of work undertaken by spiritually homeless minds are not undertaken simply for the love of the craft then, but to affirm the legitimacy of human-inspired paradigms that in turn validate the constructed, subjective self. For example, Jacob's activity of work provides a heady mix of belief and belonging previously the domain of metaphysical traditions, for rather than simply enabling Jacob to 'pay for what [he does] at the weekend' and catering to his biological needs, Jacob's activity represents to him a 'belief system' and 'a way of life'. Functioning in a similar way to metaphysical frameworks of belief in that they provide all-encompassing perspectives of existence wherein certainty of the experience of material existence is considered understood in its entirety, Jacob arguably indicates how activities of work underpinned by a scientific and mathematical rationale not only legitimise but encourage spiritually homeless minds to construct meaning and purpose concerning the human condition.

De-legitimising alternative conceptions of existence other than those provided by a scientific rationale and mathematical reason, however, is important, and particularly so in relation to human-inspired paradigms that are popularly considered to liberate humanity from stagnated and outdated perceptions of being conceived through metaphysical frameworks of belief. This is because what Jacob testimony alludes to is how scientific rationality and mathematical reason encourages the belief that humanity can 'act on the earth and within terrestrial nature, as though we dispose of it from the outside' (Arendt, 1958: 262). Reinforcing perspectives that the human condition is superior to, and dominant over, the natural world, certain perspectives are promoted whereby humanity can not only recreate and reformulate the world in its own image through the progression and refinement of human-inspired instruments of observation, but strengthen their unwillingness to confront the finitude of material existence. Indeed, strengthening belief that the human perspective is superior, authentic, rational and real, scientific and mathematical paradigms present the human condition as unquestionably certain, formulaic, orderly, and non-chaotic. Furthermore, through the self-affirmed legitimacy of human

perspectives encouraged by scientifically and mathematically backed worldly activity, arguably encouraged is a focus on the subjective self. An argument alluded to in Jacob's statement in that he approaches his activity with passion and with an 'active interest', this line of enquiry is made explicit by Samael:

> Well there's the money obviously, that's why we get jobs in the first place, but it's also something I enjoy. Like I've always enjoyed solving puzzles and I get to solve the hardest puzzles in the world! So I'm progressing as a Programmer and it's nice to see yourself write nicer and nicer code, it's so pretty when it all works and it's really clean and really clear how it works because there're absolute truths within it, you don't have all this wishy washyness. So that's it, done, solved. Next! It's amazing! It's my dream job! I get a lot of pleasure from it. You can just spend all day doing exactly what you enjoy doing. And I have a lot of ownership and I can decide what I do. It's very much as long as I'm punching the whole project in the right direction, they're happy for me to go off and pursue my own ideas so long as they're related to the product I'm working on. So it definitely gives you a chance to express yourself in the way you like, and your passions about doing things.

Basing the meaning and purpose he derives from his activity not only in the monetary reward he receives from its performance but through the enjoyment and pleasure he derives from the nature and character of programming, Samael illustrates how his activity of work not only allows him to work to his own rhythm in that he is given ownership and responsibility to pursue his own ideas relative to the project he is working on. Demonstrating how activities of work for spiritually homeless minds also provide meaning and purpose beyond catering for their biological needs, Samael's testimony illustrates how his selection of work enables him to express his being through an activity he is passionate about by reifying and fabricating, and thus expressing, through crafting and refining his code writing skills, that which is in his mind's eye into material existence. Thus, though Samael disregards metaphysical frameworks of belief, his approach illustrates how the selection of work for spiritually homeless minds remains a reflection of certain metaphysical commitments. For example, it affirms Samael's belief that there are 'absolute truths' that can be uncovered and revealed through human endeavour without 'all this wishy washyness'. That is to say, selection of worldly activity whose nature and character cement and solidify that which the undertaker believes. Indicative of a need for control and certainty within one's life, rather than relying on metaphysical frameworks of belief to enable comprehension of what being "is" and how it can be "known", Samael highlights the shift from metaphysical frameworks, to reliance on implicitly accepted, culturally relevant neoliberal assumptions that frame perspectives of existence exclusively within material reality. Reflected then is the significance of the subjective spiritual turn wherein the meaning and purpose of worldly activity hinges on what individuals' want to hear and believe. Indeed, enabling him to spend 'all day doing exactly what [he] enjoys doing...as long as [he's] punching the whole project in the right direction', as discussed in Chapter Two, productive work has become a means of "self-discovery", "self-exploration" and "self-actualisation". The rationale for such "self-actualisation" is arguably highlighted by Jacob:

> I'm afraid to die without achieving, without achieving my potential definitely. Not being remembered is usually a big one for a lot of people...I mean you go in and you go out and that's it, you're done. People like to leave an impact on the world, and I think about that, like *you need to make something of your life*, of yourself, whilst you're here because it's a blink of an eye and then you're gone, *and that feeds into your working life.*

Rather than encourage employees to fabricate and reify relative to the nature and character of their worldly activity as discussed in Chapter Three, organisationally designed roles supported by neoliberal rhetoric encourage spiritually homeless minds to reify and fabricate their Self. This is because, finding refuge from their unresolved existential dis-ease by perceiving the activity of work as the means through which to fabricate and reify the conceived subjective self, spiritually homeless minds such as Jacob consider their work to provide opportunities to be remembered for 'mak[ing] something of [his] life' and 'leav[ing] an impact on the world'. Jacob thus demonstrates how work is no longer simply a means of expressing one's self into the natural world by contributing to the world of durability and permanence (Arendt, 1958). Rather, Jacob indicates how it has become the catalyst that enables spiritually homeless minds to perceive the actualisation of their subjective being. A statement supported by Jacob's compulsion to make something of 'your life, yourself, whilst you're here [before] you're gone', what can be argued is that spiritually homeless minds do not aspire to contribute to the world of permanence and durability through the creation of a use-object, but through contributions they can make to secure to them the reality of their perceived unique, subjective self exclusively in material existence. As Arendt comments, however, when worldly activity is undertaken primarily for the receipt of worldly benefits, 'All work would have become labor because all things would be under-stood, not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process' (1958: 89). Indicative of the world alienation outlined in Chapters Two and Three whereby the distance between humanity, nature and the natural world is solidified, activities of work underpinned by scientific rationality and mathematical reasoning do not encourage spiritually homeless minds to conceive of their being in relation to the human collective and natural world. Thus, Jacob's statement arguably illustrates how the nature and character of the activity is understood more as a measure of the progression toward the actualisation of their being rather than a contribution to the world of permanence and durability reflective of collective conceptions of being as Arendt posed. Indeed as Samael elucidates:

> So with work now I've got the necessities in check it's more a case of how can I make things better? And I've found that the big things happen because I was doing all these other little things and pushing forward. So everything else will happen, like making things more beautiful for myself. So by getting a job I get more money so I can do the things that I want to do. I can have more pleasurable experiences and go travelling, get a nicer house with solar panels on. That would be awesome! I really want one...so I guess my belief is making everything better.

Believing that life can be made better by 'pushing forward' and getting a job so that he can afford to make his subjective experience of material existence 'better', more 'beautiful', and 'pleasurable', Samael illustrates how activities of work for spiritually homeless minds provides a means of

transforming the self so as to "actualise" one's latent "potentialities" as conceived meaningful and purposeful by the constructed subjective self. Reinforced by culturally relevant neoliberal values that justify and make tangible the highly ambiguous, abstract and 'wishy washy' (non)concepts Samael employs as a means of gauging and measuring the degree to which he has "actualised" his latent "potentialities", illustrated then is the heightened form of individualism encouraged by neoliberally validated, market rationale that reflects the values, aims and objectives of the economic cosmos. It can be argued then that Samael's testimony highlights the sacralisation of the subjective self in order to present the subjective self as the Absolute sovereign of being. For example, undertaking worldly activity to bring into fruition the life of hedonistic pleasure and make 'everything better', though spiritually homeless minds such as Samael and Jacob undertake their activity of work because they enjoy the nature and character characteristic of the activity, such activity is not undertaken for the sake of such enjoyment or to overcome estrangement from the natural world. Rather, such activity is arguably undertaken in order to cement the significance associated with the experience of being in the material world in line with culturally relevant, neoliberal values that represent the dominant rhetoric so as to distract from unresolved existential dis-ease.

## Making work from labour

Though Jacob and Samael undertake activities of work representative of their hobby, apparent from the interviews conducted with spiritually homeless minds is that the majority do not consider their hobby their work as Douglas, a technical support engineer for a UK wide contact technology company exemplifies. A member of a heavy metal band with moderate success in the UK and particularly Europe in his spare time, Douglas's beliefs reflect the position of agnosticism in that he takes an active interest in learning about various faiths to understand how other's 'choices and decisions shape the way they want to live their life'. Reflecting on the significance of his music making to his life, Douglas comments:

> It's voluntary, it's a hobby...It doesn't feel like work, even though by definition you're still exchanging your ability for money. But I don't see it as work. I don't really think of it as work because it feels a bit more free and easy, a bit more my own time, my choice kind of thing. I want to do that.

Stating that he does not perceive his activity as work because it is an activity he freely chooses to undertake regardless of the exchange-value associated, Douglas demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds do not recognise activities characteristic of work as work. Argued by Arendt in Chapter Three to result from the creation of leisure time due to the focus on efficiency, productivity and profitability during the industrial revolution and technological advancement, this is significant. This is because what Douglas arguably highlights is the expectation held by spiritually homeless minds that the nature and character of their employment is neither an activity one enjoys, should enjoy, or performed voluntarily. Contrary to spiritually homeless minds who work such as Jacob and Samael, most saw their hobby as

an activity undertaken purely for their own pleasure as Alastor, an Administrator for HE research projects shows. Representative of "nones" in that in the 'absence of any kind of religious fervour' 'believe[s] that [he is] a self [with] core values and core beliefs', he comments:

> I don't write for other people. I write because I want to write for me. So if I was to work following my hobby, those labours would be imposed; it would be more of a performance. You have to get to that position where you have the autonomy that you want to write what you want. You have to go through a lot of hoops. So it would be frustrating because you would be writing about things you aren't interested in and not being true to what you're about. You'd be editing your own voice to fit with someone else's aesthetic and that doesn't really interest me...We live in a pretty mundane world and all my hobbies are a form of adventure and stepping out a bit for a time.

Outlining his frustration encountered should he want to turn his hobby into his work in that he would have to write 'about things [he isn't] interested in' and 'edit [his] voice to fit with someone else's aesthetic', Alastor's statement touches on the differences between activities of labour and activities of work defined by Arendt. Significantly, however, due to the aforementioned restrictions that surround activities whose nature and character do not affirm the culturally dominant ontological perspectives reinforced by scientific rationale and mathematical logic of order, standardisation and formulaic rhythm, Alastor chooses not to write for a living. Rather, he perceives such activity as a means of escape from the mundanity of reality by writing not for other people but for himself. This is contrary to the nature and character of work as identified by Arendt, however, whereby activities of work are primarily undertaken to contribute to the collective human condition by creating something of permanence and durability that can be shared. Thus, in seeking to safeguard activities whose nature and character do reflect his inner beliefs, values and desires from external requirements and impositions should he make his hobby his activity of work, spiritually homeless minds such as Alastor arguably do nothing but perpetuate the condition of being in contexts where it is considered normal to undertake employment whose nature and character is fundamentally meaningless to one's being. Furthermore, Alastor alludes that activity undertaken not for oneself is a performance. That the majority of spiritually homeless minds interviewed undertook activities more akin to Arendt's categorisation of labour discussed in Chapter Three as opposed to work, this is significant, as Leah illustrates when she recalled a time she was asked to outline her role to a colleague:

> I had to sort of sit there and think 'what do I do?' And it's quite scary because you think 'well, what do I do?'

Highlighting the lack of contemplation and active consideration spiritually homeless minds give to what their activity 'is', Leah illustrates the extent to which most spiritually homeless minds neither consider the nature, character of their worldly activity, nor their skill and ability of its constituent parts, significant in relation to their experience of material existence, and their inner beliefs, values and desires. Rather, indicative of the dissonance between her being and the activity she performs in that she does not know what it is she does, Leah arguably illustrates how the nature and character of the activity

is considered irrelevant in contrast to the emotions experienced and evoked through the performance of the activity in relation to their experience of material existence. Thus, where activities of work discussed above function similar to metaphysical frameworks by securing meaning and purpose of existence within human-inspired frameworks of belief to validate and legitimise the central significance of the subjective experience of material being within all-encompassing conceptions of existence that do not account for life after death, Leah illustrates how most spiritually homeless minds are estranged from their worldly activity. Supported by the fact that the lack of meaning and purpose derived from the nature and character of their activity does not seem problematic until spiritually homeless minds are forced to confront what it 'is' they do, echoed then is discussion raised in Chapter Three that suggests spiritually homeless minds leave themselves open to undertaking activities of productive labour as opposed to contemplative work when they do not reflect on the significance the nature and character of the specific activity has in relation to their being. This line of argument is explicit in Douglas's reflections on how the terms work and labour influence how he approaches an activity of work:

> I'm not sure I can explain this...they don't feel interchangeable at all to me. They feel very different. You can say all labour is work, but not all work is labour, and if someone said 'Oh this is your labour, what you do is labour', I would probably think that's very a strange way of calling my work because my definition of labour is that it sounds like it's something that is forced upon you to do. So if someone gave me a choice and said would you prefer work or labour, I would probably choose work even though the work may be something as intense as what you expect someone doing labour to be doing... It's like the mystery box, you've got two envelopes, work and labour and on the inside of each envelope they can both say dig a trench. But I think most people would be inclined to pick work over labour even though it's the same thing because when it's described as work it sounds like that is your responsibility to dig the trench, it's your work to do, and you are going to undertake it to the best of your ability. And I like having the responsibility and the ownership of something that you know you are because it gives you kind of a sense of purpose, 'being' I suppose maybe is a better word, because it kind of gives me a sense of 'I'm doing the right thing' which for me I suppose is what it's mainly about. And in exchange for that we're going to give you a load of money. Whereas if I opened the labour envelope I would be like 'Oh what, man? Dig a trench? Really? That sucks, that's something I don't want to do', because it's something unpleasant that you're not going to enjoy very much, and you might not get any money for it.

Though Douglas echoes Arendt's sentiments that all labour is work but not all work is labour, Douglas's thought experiment of the act of digging a trench demonstrates the degree to which spiritually homeless minds derive meaning and purpose from emotions derived from and conceived through the performance of their activity rather than its specific nature and character. This is significant, and particularly so because through his thought experiment, Douglas arguably elucidates how spiritually homeless minds conceptualise meaning and purpose into activities of labour in order to imbue activities of labour with characteristics of work so as to make activities of labour appear meaningful and purposeful to the experience of material existence. Thus, whilst the activity remains an activity that he has been tasked to do, and thus characteristic of labour, Douglas imbues its performance with characteristics representative of work, such as ownership, responsibility, purpose and 'being in the world', as well as the moral and ethical affirmation that he is 'doing the right thing'. Reinforced by the fact that Douglas

expresses he would neither enjoy nor derive any meaning or purpose from an activity labelled labour, but automatically feels as though he would not be adequately compensated for the effort expended undertaking such an unpleasant activity, it is apparent that the significance, and indeed power, of semantics and culturally relevant neoliberal values and subjectivist ethics, is influencing how spiritually homeless minds approach worldly activity.

Most significantly, however, similar to Jacob and Samael, Douglas indicates how the appeal of the activity depends of the extent to which he believes the performance of the activity enables him to "actualise" his latent "potentialities". That is to say, Douglas highlights how labour perceived as work promotes the 'sheer bliss of being alive' (Arendt, 1958: 106) regardless of what the nature and character of the activity. A belief sustained, supported and perpetuated by promises made to themselves representative of what most spiritually homeless minds want to hear, that activities of labour not only cater to their biological needs but provide meaning pertinent to their subjective being, this is important. This is because what is arguably apparent is the withering away of the public realm Arendt alludes to in light of the growing significance of the subjective experience of existence buoyed by the social context, and which unfolds through labour conceptualised to appear as work. Echoing discussion raised in Chapter Three concerning the differences between work and labour outlined by Arendt, Douglas's thought experiment thus can be argued to illustrate how meaning and purpose derived from worldly activity by spiritually homeless minds is not necessarily derived from the inherent worth of the activity, nor through scientific and mathematical validation, but meaning and purpose imagined into the performance of work dependent on how this makes spiritually homeless minds feel. Indeed, as Leah remarks:

> I don't know what our motivation would be to complete an action if there wasn't a concept of work behind it, because without that purpose and outcome to aim for I wouldn't bother with the labour. It's a case of I wouldn't complete a labour; I wouldn't complete an action, an activity if there wasn't a purpose to it at the end. I'm completing an action for a purpose. Perhaps I just don't own that purpose. But I think it all drives from the idea I want to be remembered for something, even if it's just by the people around me.

Indicating the power the idea of purpose imagined and conceptualised into worldly activity has, Leah demonstrates how the notion of being remembered afforded by their performance of labour enables spiritually homeless minds to perceive such activity as purposeful. Motivating individuals such as Leah 'to complete an action', this is significant, for once the meaning and purpose of worldly activity depends on the interpretation of what is imagined and conceptualised into the activity, there is no limit as to the meaning and purpose that can be imagined into, and derived from, labour. Echoing Heelas's statement in Chapter Two that work has become an 'exercise of Self-responsibility [and] Self-discipline to monitor and address one's state of being…[and to work through] the "dis-eases" which have been generated within oneself' (2008: 156), whilst Leah recognises that she labours in that she performs for purposes owned by another, the idea that her activity is purposeful to her being through the meaning

she imagines into her activity can be seen to override this recognition. Given this, Leah illustrates how spiritually homeless minds perceive inherently meaningless activity as inherently meaningful in that the desire to be 'remembered for something' legitimises and validates the perception held that significance of worldly activity is not derived from the nature and character of the activity, but through the imagined and conceptualised meaning and purpose bound to its performance. Functioning to distract and pacify Leah's attention away from the lack of meaning and purpose the nature and character of her activity provides, Leah arguably demonstrates how some spiritually homeless minds who labour turn their estrangement from the nature and character of their activity into positive and necessary condition by asking themselves not 'who am I and what activity of work complements me?', but 'what activity complements what I *want* to be?' (Costea, 2012).

## Sustaining the illusion of labour

The above indicates how spiritually homeless minds seek to make labour appear as work by turning estrangement from their activity from a negative into a positive and necessary condition required in order to "actualise" their latent "potentialities". From the interviews conducted, however, the extent to which spiritually homeless minds wholeheartedly believe in their own rhetoric is questionable. Indeed, what became apparent during the interviews was a change in outlook between the first and second interviews. This was particularly evident when spiritually homeless minds interviewed were pushed to explore the differences between their conceptualisation of work and labour, as Douglas illustrates:

> Maybe we should be saying labour, I don't know... maybe it is the better term for going to work, I'm not too sure. Doesn't mean the word means that, it's just what's accepted. And you get that a lot actually, you get that lot in technology sectors there are terminologies for things that don't actually mean what the original meaning of the word I suppose, but we're so used to using certain terminology that we don't see that something actually is because that terminology is not applied to it.

Confronting the fact that what he considers as work may, in reality, be an activity of labour, significantly, rather than seeking to explore such realisation, Douglas seeks to resolve his anxiety and dis-ease by focussing on the fact that regardless what activity the term work is applied to, that work is the culturally accepted term. Justifying his position by drawing on the technology sector to illustrate how the application of a term does not necessary reflect what is meant, not only does Douglas imply that such normalisation of inappropriate terminology is perpetuated by the technology sector. Douglas also arguably illustrates how in using the term work spiritually homeless minds willingly deny and obscure the labourer's society the nature and character labour brings forth that perpetuates, legitimises and rationalises the desired and imagined meaning and purpose associated with the performance of labour with characteristics reflective of work. This line of argument is made explicit when Douglas was

asked specifically what it is about the activity of making music, which he regards as a hobby, it is different to activities he considers work:

> I don't know if that's true or not, but I know that you have to learn, and you have to put the effort in to learn and I don't think being given a very specific set of instructions is learning. I think that's just doing what someone has said. I used an example with a friend of mine about playing guitar. If I told you where to put your fingers on the guitar strings and do that you could play guitar just as good as anyone else. But you wouldn't know how to play guitar, you'd know to play exactly what I've shown you to do. It's like if you sat down with someone and taught them how to play Beethoven's 9th right and they can do it note perfect and it's absolutely just as intended. But if they've just learnt that there's a very good chance they won't actually know how to play the piano. They won't know what the notes mean. They won't know what they are. They won't know what works together. They won't understand the dynamics and they won't understand the thinking behind. They won't understand the process that went into thinking that should be in this order and that's why it's here and you know you don't get that.

Outlining the distinction Arendt makes between activities of labour and work, Douglas highlights the lack of thought, contemplation and understanding of the activity when it is not the nature and character of worldly activity that is deemed significant, but the imagined meaning and purpose derived through its performance. For example, highlighting how someone who has been given a specific set of instructions may appear to know and understand how to play Beethoven's 9th as if they were a musician, Douglas highlights how in reality such mimicry does not entail any understanding of the nature and character of the activity other than what has been specified and what is intended by the external other. Rather, constituting the ability of the performer to perform an activity to fulfil the aims, objectives and demands of the external other, Douglas indicates how the ability to perform without appreciation of the nature and character of the activity then can only ever be a performance in that it does not reflect or enable expression of his inner beliefs, values and desires. Unlike activities of work wherein the development of one's skill and ability concerning the nature and character of the activity ultimately leaves the individual able to deviate from what has been taught to express their inner beliefs, values and desires and create a new musical composition, for example, activities of labour do not foster the same capacity for creative expression of its craft. Indicating that the performance of activities of labour cannot facilitate the actualisation of one's perceived latent "potentialities", despite such reflections, when Douglas later discusses his potential at work, he comments:

> They wanted to employ me because I don't have preconceptions about how these things should work, so I am completely mouldable from day one, and can be completely tailor made to just know the company stuff, which is good in some ways, it's fine for me. The way it was put to me was that you could learn all that stuff but in real life you would probably only apply about 20% of what you learned, 80% of it is nonsense. So they could teach me everything that I need to know that I would learn on a degree course taking three years, or they could teach me in two months and that's what we've been doing. So that was kind of refreshing for them because they can teach me basically what I need to know to get their stuff working. The downside for me is that I don't know all the other background stuff because they teach me what I need to know to get their stuff working. But again the upside for me is that I didn't spend three years learning 80% of stuff I'm never going to apply, so I'm just getting the absolute vital integral bits from each kind of topic. So my learning is very very focused, but it saves me a universe of time, which

I think is great because I personally, as far as existence goes, want to fit as much efficiently into the time I have as possible.

Suggesting that his organisation wanted to employ him because he was 'completely mouldable' and could be 'completely tailor-made' to perform his labour in a manner that reflects its specific aims and objectives, Douglas's statement contradicts his earlier reflections through his comment that he likes to be given a set of specific instructions in order to perform his role according to the aims, objectives and demands of his company so he 'can get their stuff working'. Indeed, outlining how he does not understand the nature and character of his activity other than what he has been told, Douglas illustrates the lack of recognition of his own fallacy. For example, though he recognises the downside of his organisationally designed role in that he is unable to understand elements of his activity that do not coincide with his company's agenda, he counters this by rationalising and justifying the 'other 80% of it [as] nonsense'. Stating this is 'fine for [him] in that it 'saves [him] a universe of time' and enables him 'to fit as much efficiently into the time [he has] as possible', this is significant, for arguably demonstrated is how labour is rationalised and justified by some spiritually homeless minds representative of RoH to legitimise and justify the desired reality of their constructed subjectivity to counter their spiritual dis-ease, and deny the limitations of their finite existence. Significantly, however, even though he knows his understanding of the nature and character of his activity is limited to what he has been told, Douglas continues to conceptualise and imagine his activity as enabling him to achieve and "actualise" his latent "potentialities". Such considerations are further illustrated by Mallory, who in contemplating what it is about her activity that is significant to her, comments:

There's the economic employment rationale, but I got into it because it was always about the sector rather than what I get employed as, and I'd be very happy being any number of different roles for this organisation as long as it was fulfilling because it has a double meaning of how I want to be in the world and what I want my identity to be. So I live to work in a way because for me it's about making myself better and enriching my life in some way. So if I'm working on absolutely mind-numbing data entry or stressing about events or getting health and safety things right and I find myself asking 'What is the point in this? 'Why am I here?', I know what the point is because that cause is always there and I always know where it is in relation to me and that I'm adding value to something I have passion for, that's bigger than myself, that I can continually strive because the cause is always larger than myself so no matter what I'm working on - it's bigger!! It's bigger than me...

Illustrating how the cause the organisation and sector represent shape and legitimise conceptions of what spiritually homeless minds 'want to be in the world and what [they] want [their] identity to be', Mallory's testimony illustrates how spiritually homeless minds assimilate neoliberal capitalist values to the performance of labour in order to legitimise their belief that labour is meaningful and purposeful to their experience of existence. This is because they are able to enrich and make better their subjective experience of material existence by 'adding value to something…bigger than [themselves]', Mallory demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds encapsulate their subjective conception of being by reinterpreting the Protestant work ethic to imbue their activity with ontological value. For example, applying sentiments previously bound to the Christian conception of the calling to strengthen and

morally rejuvenate through the application of neoliberal values the belief that labour enables the actualisation of latent "potentialities", Mallory arguably seeks to align her conception of existence with her organisational aims and objectives. Where the concept of calling sought to evoke and instil confidence of one's salvation through the nature and character of worldly activity to secure confidence in an afterlife conceived through shared and collective frameworks of belief, however, Mallory highlights how the re-conceptualisation of the calling to revolve exclusively surround the experience of material being in material existence.

Signifying the reinterpretation of transcendental concerns into the performance of labour to make its performance meaningful and purposeful both to the subjective experience of material existence and the collective human condition, this is evident in Mallory's attempts to justify why she must undertake 'mind-numbing data entry' and the stress encountered through bureaucratic procedures surrounding events and 'health and safety'. Indeed, placing significance in the cause her organisation stands for despite the fact that Mallory finds her specific activity leaving her questioning 'What is the point in this? Why am I here?', Mallory demonstrates how she does not value her activity for the inherent worth the nature and character the activity holds to her being as Weber outlined of the Protestant ethic, but what she can conceptualise into its performance in terms of 'making [herself] better and enriching [her] life'. Thus, by aligning her identity to the cause the work represents that is 'bigger than [her]', Mallory illustrates how such reinterpretation of transcendental concerns frees the concept of calling from the historical baggage associated with Christian frameworks of belief that strengthens the cult of the self. Utilising her openness to metaphysical frameworks of belief to cement the performance of labour as meaningful and purposeful to counter her anxiety and distract herself from the dis-ease the nature and character of her activity induces, Mallory arguably demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds continue to perceive their performance of labour as inherently meaningful not only to their being, but the human condition in toto that denies the finitude of her subjective self. Such reinterpretation of transcendental concerns to rationalise and justify the performance of labour as inherently meaningful to the human condition in toto is also evident through the paradigm of technology, as Douglas highlights:

> I have limited time, like we all do in existence, but there's stuff I want to do and stuff that I have to do...So I work for a technology company and the good thing about working for a technology company is that it's just improving all the time. It just keeps on going so your scope for learning and improvement literally is unlimited as the world is. You can learn as fast as the world goes. That's a very very big bonus for me, I like that things just keep changing all the time because as soon as someone invents another system that's better everyone wants to do it and then you do it. And then someone betters that one and everyone wants to do that. So you're constantly…it doesn't stop, it will not stop…because the change is probably for an improvement. It's for a better thing. We have faster aeroplanes; we have more powerful telescopes; we have more efficient cars. They're all good things.

Placing significance on the perpetual improvement and scope for learning the paradigm of technology is seen to afford, similar to spiritually homeless minds who work, Douglas highlights how technological

advancement is seen by spiritually homeless minds who labour to not only liberate the human condition by enabling the "actualisation" of subjective "potentialities", but to facilitate greater security, stability and certainty regarding the experience of existence in general. This is significant, for in positioning humanity as the makers of their own destiny, Douglas arguably illustrates how worldly activity that drives forward humanities technologic capabilities is imbued with reinterpretations not only of transcendental concerns, but particularly soteriological concerns in order that represent to some spiritually homeless minds the salvation of the human condition. Further justifying labour as necessary to achieve self-actualisation in material reality, Douglas thus highlights the perpetuation of dominant perspectives, that to labour is an activity necessary to bring into being the desired technological utopia that is believed will free humanity from biological burdens and the painful effort of necessity. Indeed, seen to remove the burdens of biological necessity and shield humanity from uncertainty and chaos through the intelligent redesign of life that enables individuals to fit more into their lifetime and counter the stagnation of humanity, Douglas illustrates how productive labour is rationalised and justified as the only means through which humanity can save itself from the limitations of the finitude of material existence. Supporting the grand narrative of the future of humanity as imagined and conceptualised through scientific rationale and mathematical reason reinforced by neoliberal values, Douglas arguably illustrates then the moral rationalisation of labour by spiritually homeless minds as necessary to bring into fruition the progression of the human condition through the creation of faster, more powerful and efficient instruments and artefacts.

The above illustrates how some spiritually homeless minds do not like to confront the fact that they labour, but seek to deny and obscure, justify and rationalise the empty reality of their activity by imbuing its performance with transcendental and ontological value. From the interviews conducted, however, it would appear that this is not true of all spiritually homeless minds. Cecilia, a former teacher and HE professional, understands religion to be 'a means of social control in the world' and spirituality as 'something that you could come up with yourself. When first interviewed, Cecilia outlined her approach to employment as:

> I'm not the type of person who can just go to work and goes home because for me your work is your life…

Reflecting sentiments expressed by Leah, Jacob, Samael, Mallory and Douglas in her comment 'your work is your life', Cecilia compounds the central significance the performance of worldly activity comprises for spiritually homeless minds. When interviewed a second time, however, Cecilia's outlook had altered:

> You're in a trap; you're in a massive trap. You have to do what you have to do to get paid. So any person that works that has a mortgage is potentially in a trap, and you can't get out of that unless you sold everything and lived a very minimal lifestyle. But the confidence to do that I would never have. I would always be too scared because I don't think you'd be able to do much, and you would have to find some sort of internal happiness that wasn't [long pause] because you need things, or you maybe want things. And I get the impression that

everyone hits a breaking point, and you either maybe have the guts to say 'no that isn't for me I need to find something else', or you have to start that process of justification and rationalisation of why you're doing it, cos I don't think there's any other way, I think you have to do that. So we're on a tightrope sometimes. Because if I found that the stress and the pressure was too much and I had another burnout or a breakdown, and I couldn't go to work and I spiralled into an even worse state of mental health, then I could never then pick up the pieces and get back to where I was.

Indicating the trap labour conceived as work can become for spiritually homeless minds when neoliberal values and market rationale underpins their conceptualisation of meaning and purpose derived from its performance, Cecilia demonstrates how the appropriation of characteristics associated with work into labour obscures the dis-ease experienced resulting from its performance. This is particularly evident in the fear Cecilia experiences when she realises that her conceptualisation of work and the perspective of existence it encourages does not reflect the reality her activity induces. For example, to reject such neoliberal values would leave her unable 'to do much' in that she would have to rely on 'some sort of internal happiness' that was not underpinned by material wants and desires. Cecilia thus indicates how spiritually homeless minds continue to rely on external judgements and values reflective of the economic cosmos to sustain their desired conceptualisation of material existence as inherently meaningful. Rather than reflect on the dis-ease encountered as a result of her lack of internal happiness then, Cecilia illustrates how spiritually homeless minds seek to rationalise and justify activities of labour through their continued focus on the conceptualised standard of life their activity affords their subjective being.

Valuing the equity that surrounds neoliberal capitalism that promises our compliance and obedience will be of benefit to the subjective experience of material existence, Cecilia illustrates that spiritually homeless minds perpetuate not only the problem of work, but dis-ease about the human condition when one's inner beliefs, values and desires are ignored. This is explicit in the metaphor of the tightrope Cecilia employs. Indeed, promising to herself that she will be happier and her experience of material existence better if she remains on the tightrope laboring rather than risk spiraling into another breakdown, Cecilia's statement arguably reflects, however, the lack of desirable, viable alternative options that facilitate a standard of living as is made possible through material, market driven 'wants'. Perceiving her performance of labour as a precarious balancing act between the stress and pressure its performance induces during the experience of material existence when the nature and character of the activity is not considered significant to the meaning and purpose of being but the idea of meaning and purpose affirmed through its performance, Cecilia's statement illustrates how spiritually homeless minds would rather maintain their balance than follow their inner conviction and "get off" (Nietzsche, 1889). Pacifying her dis-ease but perpetuating her condition of estrangement from her worldly activity, this is evident in the distress Cecilia experiences at the thought of having to 'pick up the pieces and get back to where [she] was'. What Cecilia does not recognise or acknowledge, however, is that such a tightrope is her own creation that results from the value and reality that continues to be invested in

dominant neoliberal rhetoric that promises to free humanity from the bonds of tradition and liberate the subjective self by enabling the "actualisation" of one's latent "potentialities" through the performance of labour. Believing that the stable, secure and certain experience of existence the balancing act provides is better than the alternative of contemplating what activity actually makes her happy internally and whose nature and character reflects her internal beliefs, desires and values, Cecilia arguably suppresses her inner beliefs, values and desires. Indicated then is how spiritually homeless minds seek to overcome their dis-ease not through logical contemplation of the reality that surrounds their condition, but by breaking their spirit and undertaking processes of rationalisation in order to alter their perspective to fit with external neoliberal values to justify their continued performance of labour. Indeed, as she later alludes:

> It's not just about money it's security, it's having a good pension. Things like that. That's the culture, or tends to be the culture.

Demonstrating how neoliberal ideals of freedom that are drawn upon and conceptualised into the performance of labour are culturally bound, Cecilia illustrates how she works not just to provide for the necessities of biological existence, but for the security she derives from 'earning a living'. Such a claim is supported by the fact that Cecilia does not refer to the nature and character of her worldly activity to illustrate its worth, but refers instead to benefits afforded by neoliberal capitalist rationale to her subjective experience of existence through the performance of her activity. Perceiving the monetary provision afforded to her being to provide security and stability to her subjective experience of material existence both presently and in the future, Cecilia demonstrates then the reliance spiritually homeless minds have on culturally relevant neoliberal values to compound and confirm the desired reality of being within the performance of labour. Indeed, enabling a perception of being to emerge wherein a unified and systematic narrative construction of self enables comprehension of worldly activity, Cecilia arguably demonstrates how labour is seen to provide a platform through which meaning and purpose of material being that is desired is secured. Indicating how spiritually homeless minds focus on the positives labour is seen to afford their experience of being through cultural validation of labour to deny the possibility that there is no meaning and purpose to the subjective experience of existence, and quell her nihilistic despair concerning her finitude and the unresolved existential dis-ease that arises, from this perspective, such line of argument is explicit in the testimony of Alastor, when he reflects how he derives meaning from his activity regardless of the fact it constitutes labour:

> The projects start and finish so over time I'll be seeing projects close, I'll be closing them down and I'll also be opening new ones. So in the short and mid-term there are starts and finishes. But in the grand scheme of things it doesn't stop. It happened for years before me and it will happen for years after me. And there's something quite satisfying about being a part of that. Even if it doesn't have a massive difference in the long run just being a smooth facilitator is quite satisfying. And all we're trying to do is when we're at work is trying to get a job that gives us as similar a role to our comfort zone, to our skills and abilities as possible.

Further illustrating discussion raised in Chapter Three surrounding the nature and character of activities of labour outlined by Arendt in his description of his worldly activity, Alastor's testimony highlights how spiritually homeless minds rationalise the performance of labour as beneficial to the experience of existence by deriving feelings of comfort, belonging and satisfaction from smoothly facilitating predictable, organised, rhythmic, standardised processes and procedures. Indicative of the drive inherent within spiritually homeless minds to encourage comfort of the experience of material existence so as to ease the continuous uncertainty that spiritual homelessness evokes, Alastor indicates how spiritually homeless minds rationalise and justify their continued performance of labour through the idea of freedom from the burden of biological necessity sustained. An argument supported by the fact that spiritually homeless minds such as Alastor do not undertake an activity that is mentally taxing to their being, but actively seek out activities that promise to ease the burdens of existence, this is important. This is because in demonstrating that most spiritually homeless minds want to affirm through worldly activity their belief that the performance of labour benefits their experience of material existence, Alastor highlights how spiritually homeless minds willingly obscure their estrangement from worldly activity in order to entrench the reality of the constructed, subjective self, and deny the finite reality of material being. Thus, more than simply a process of rationalisation and justification so as to make the performance of labour meaningful and purposeful to their subjective experience of existence, Alastor outlines how spiritually homeless minds representative of the cult of the self actively seek to undertake activities of labour rather than activities of work so as to perpetuate the reality and centrality of the subjective self within the experience of material existence.

**Chapter summary**

The above discussion illustrates how spiritually homeless minds approach employment. Highlighting the dis-ease encountered at the freedom to choose what work one undertakes in the contemporary when being in the material world is not conceived through metaphysical frameworks of belief, the above testimonies indicate how most spiritually homeless minds do not choose their employment according to their passion and interest in the specific nature and character of the activity. Illustrating the state of spiritual homelessness alluded to in Chapter Two, Chapter Five supports arguments raised in Chapter three that it is the idea conceptualised into the performance of worldly activity that is meaningful and purposeful to the subjective experience of existence, rather than meaning and purpose derived symbolically from the activity's specific nature and character. In particular, the above discussion confirms arguments raised in Chapter Three spiritually homeless minds conceptualise the preferred meaning and purpose of worldly activity into its performance to affirm the idea that its performance facilitates the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of their perceived potential and "authentic" self, and enables individuals to leave their mark in the material world. In being spiritually

homeless, however, such individuals do not rely on groups, communities and institutions emerging through the rise of occulture in the public domain since the 1960s countercultural revolution to support their desire to leave their mark in the world. Rather, this chapter demonstrates how such individuals typically depend on human-inspired frameworks of belief reflective of primary institutions, and which adopt neoliberal values, concerns and expectations of the economic cosmos, to reify and fabricate being in the material world. This is because, seeking to affirm and confirm the reality of their subjective self exclusively within the experience of material existence following the decline of belief in metaphysical ontologies, spiritually homeless minds seek to obscure and distract themselves from contemplating or acknowledging the finitude of material existence.

Reinforcing enlightenment perspectives that humanity is superior to nature and the natural world, and master of its own condition, despite the lack of faith and conviction in metaphysical frameworks of belief, this chapter indicates how most spiritually homeless minds still seek external validation through neoliberal values reflective of the economic cosmos in order to orient their being within material reality to distract them from the uncertainty, insecurity and instability of unresolved existential dis-ease. Demonstrating how the economic cosmos provides a home for being in the material world for spiritually homeless minds, this chapter thus indicates how the economic cosmos functions in similar ways to religious frameworks of belief for spiritually homeless minds, in that it not only informs them what being "is" and how it can be known in the material world, but provides a means of conceptualising material existence as secure, stable and certain, through, and in relation to, dominant moral and ethical perspectives. As Chapter Three made clear through its Arendtian analysis, however, in order to conceive of existence as meaningful and purposeful exclusively within material reality and one's subjective experience of life itself, the human condition is increasingly marked by the activity of labour (1958). Its nature and character legitimising conceptualisations of being wherein the subjective experience of material existence is of central significance, Chapter Five illustrates arguments raised in Chapter Three then most spiritually homeless minds undertake activities of labour rather than work. Furthermore, reflecting arguments raised by Costea and colleagues in Chapters Two and Three that most spiritually homeless minds do not ask 'what activity complements me?', but 'what activity complements what I *want* to be?' (2012), also affirmed are arguments raised that most spiritually homeless minds do not appear to recognise activities of work as work, but consider such activities "hobbies". In line with the discussion raised in Chapter Three, however, Chapter Five makes clear how in perceiving activities of work as hobbies, spiritually homeless minds ironically deny themselves the freedom they are seeking. For example, providing a means of distraction, enjoyment and pleasure from the inhuman values and rationale of efficiency and productivity underpinning activities of labour, though hobbies appear to afford freedom from the demands placed on their being and the mundanity of material existence, by undertaking hobbies in their free time rather than as employment, the freedom such activities affords is

not liberation from the unresolved existential dis-ease, but liberation from the external demands that are willingly positioned as authoritative over the human condition.

Significantly, however, the above testimonies arguably demonstrate how spiritually homeless minds would rather labour than work so long as they can continue to conceptualise meaning and purpose into its performance relative to the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of their "authentic self" and perceived latent "potentialities", rather than confront, through the nature and character of the activity, their dis-ease. As this chapter evidences, however, there is no limit to the meaning and purpose that can be imagined into, and derived from, the performance of labour when it is the concept of meaning and purpose desired and idealised is the source of significance. Indicating the continued significance of belief in enabling assurance of the stability, certainty and security of what being 'is', this was illustrated through Douglas's thought experiment, wherein he made clear the appeal of the term work over labour, and how the application of the term work to activities of labour imbued labour with the idea that it too possesses transformative faculties the mark of activities of work. This was also apparent through Leah's conceptualisation of purpose, whereby she would only complete an action if she could conceptualise purpose relative to the progression of her being into its performance. Highlighting that it does not matter what activity is being performed so long as its performance supports what spiritually homeless minds want to hear and believe regarding the significance of material existence, this chapter thus indicates how for spiritually homeless minds that the emphasis is on participation rather than contribution to the collective human condition.

Given this, Chapter Five indicates that whilst such individuals construct a home for being in the material world, that such home does not encourage them to acknowledge or process the finitude of material existence in relation to their subjective self, that such individuals remain spiritually homeless. Concerning the conceptualisation of meaning through the performance of worldly activity as opposed to its nature and character, Chapter Five highlights how the simplest of tasks can become symbolic of the exceptional when the "right" values and language is applied. Evident through Leah's testimony whereby she considers her employment meaningful despite not really knowing what it is she does, explicit then is normalised condition of estrangement and world alienation of the contemporary labourers' society when spiritually homeless minds deny and suppress their inner beliefs, values and desires in favour of conceptualising the performance of labour as beneficial to their experience of material existence.

As Chapter Five indicates, however, the idea that through the performance of labour one is "discovering", "exploring" and "actualising" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentiality" does not sustain the world of permanence or durability of the collective human condition. Given this, Chapter Five outlines how some spiritually homeless minds convince themselves of the meaning and purpose of their choice to undertake labour despite the dis-ease they encounter. Legitimised to themselves

through the worldly benefits they receive from the performance of labour, such as monetary security presently and in the future through the receipt of a pension, they above testimonies also highlight the reinterpretation of transcendental and soteriological concerns into the performance of labour. For example, where some spiritually homeless minds, such as Mallory, rationalised their activity of labour by re-interpreting the Protestant work ethic to relate exclusively to existence within material reality and material concerns by assimilating such Christian inspired meaning into her organisation's cause, others rationalised their activity of labour as activity necessary to bring the salvation of the human condition in material reality through technological advancement and progress into fruition. Indicating how some spiritually homeless minds reflective of the position of RoH remain open to metaphysical frameworks of belief to the point that they reinterpret such belief systems to relate exclusively to the lived experience of existence in material reality, the above discussion illustrates how this is not true of all spiritually homeless minds. Rather, those who perceive metaphysical frameworks as antagonistic to the human condition, are possibly unable to rectify or rationalise the dis-ease their activity of labour induces. Perceiving instead the contemporary labourers society as a trap in which there is no escape other than basing their happiness on material wants and desires for an easy, pain-free and effortless condition it stimulates rather than their internal beliefs, values and desires, this chapter demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds turn increasingly to the performance of labour to counter the fear experienced and deny that they could have wasted their lifetime. Illustrating how some spiritually homeless minds would rather break their spirit than confront the continuous uncertainty spiritual homelessness arouses, Chapter Five thus outlines how spiritually homeless minds perpetuate their own condition of estrangement by relying on the conceptualisation of the performance of labour to support their imagined and idealised wants and desires.

This is not true of all spiritually homeless minds, however, in that Jacob and Samael undertake activities of work such as engineering. Such activities of work, however, are the product of human-inspired principles, values and absolute standards that reinforce the belief that material existence is the only state of being, and which do not seek to encourage humanity to acknowledge the finitude of material existence, or explore the possibilities of being beyond material life. Rather, comprising of activities of work characterised by principles underpinning activities of labour, such activities of work are activities of work reflect the values, expectations and assumptions of the economic cosmos within their design. Indeed, not only are activities of work such as engineering highly formulaic, but they rely on the industry standards in order for each worker to act in concert with each other to create the overall product. Such activities of work thus enable spiritually homeless minds who perform such activities belong to a collective community that they can construct a home for being in the material world. Furthermore, built on principles of rationality and standardisation in pursuit of efficient and productive activity that promotes progression toward the creation of a pain-free and effortless condition of being in the material world, the nature and character of such activities of work selected by spiritually homeless minds do not

encourage the human condition to perceive existence in material reality in balance with nature and the natural world, but reinforce perspective that position humanity as master of its own condition.

What is not clear from Chapter Five, however, is *how* spiritually homeless minds, regardless whether they work or labour, construct a home for being in the material world through the economic cosmos, nor how such individuals interact with and perceive soft capitalist approaches that affirm labour as meaningful and purposeful to the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities". Despite this, the above testimonies indicate the significance the performance of organisationally designed role symbolise to spiritually homeless minds in that all undertake such roles rather than working for themselves. Thus, Chapter Six will explore to what extent soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques play in providing a home for material being for those who labour, and in encouraging the continuation of a normalised state of world alienation.

# CHAPTER SIX:
## SELF-ACTUALISATION OR SELF-ANNIHILATION?
## AN EXPLORATION OF SOFT CAPITALISM AND ITS IMPACT TO BEING

Chapter Five makes explicit how activities of labour appeal to those who lack a coherent and consistent ethos through which to construct meaning and purpose of the experience of material existence in worldly activity. This is because their condition of spiritual homelessness makes it difficult for them to conceive material existence as meaningful and purposeful through the expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires made possible through the nature and character of their worldly activity. Rather, they rely on culturally relevant neoliberal values, ideals and assumptions framed by the economic cosmos to comprehend the experience of material existence as meaningful and purposeful through the performance of labour because its performance can be conceived and imagined to reflect the meaning and purpose they want to hear and believe. Made meaningful through the reinterpretation of transcendental and soteriological concerns to surround the progression of one's being exclusively within material existence, echoed were arguments raised by Arendt whereby labouring societies are geared solely toward 'life itself' (1958: 7) at the expense of contemplation of the state of being beyond material existence. This was evident through the value spiritually homeless minds place in leaving their mark in the world by "actualising" their latent "potentialities", or by contributing to the salvation of the human condition in material existence through technical and scientific progress.

Most significantly, however, Chapter Five indicates that many spiritually homeless minds seek refuge from the continuous uncertainty of spiritual homelessness that results from faith placed in the economic cosmos to distract themselves from acknowledging the finitude of material existence. This argument hinged on the fact that many spiritually homeless minds undertake activities of labour rather than activities of work, or undertake activities of work that sustain and preserve the economic cosmos. It is also supported by the fact that those interviewed whose perspective of being, the natural world, and the Absolute were reflective of "religions of humanity" (RoH) and "nones" sought out organisationally designed roles provided by an external organisation rather than undertake self-employment, or activities of work whose nature and character affords an expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires in relation to the collective human condition. Highlighting how spiritually homeless minds seek to belong to a collective that reaffirms and confirms the reality and centrality of their subjective experience of material existence, this is important, for what can be argued is that such individuals actively seek a home that shields them from the condition of homelessness and transvaluation of values the death of God brings into being. Thus, it is in the following that the organisationally designed roles of labour will be focused on before turning to explore the significance of soft capitalist approaches to make such activities appeal by making labour appear as work. Attention is also paid to the organisational context

itself to highlight how the re-conceptualisation of activities of labour made possible by neoliberal soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques. Discussion then turns to consider how the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist secondary institutions enables such institutions to appear to provide a home for spiritually homeless minds exclusively in the material world that shields them from the responsibility, anxiety and uncertainty of constructing a meaningful home for themselves. Argued to result from the capitalism of spirituality wherein the unresolved existential needs of the human condition are exploited to promote the productive and efficient performance of activities that are inherently meaningless and purposeless as the means through which one can live a meaningful and purposeful life, this chapter illustrates how the capitalism of spirituality and the soft capitalist governance over the human condition that results is willingly co-constituted by spiritually homeless minds. Drawing on the soft capitalist practice of mindfulness to illustrate how the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by neoliberal soft capitalist approaches enable organisations to capitalise on the human resource, discussion will finally turn to consider some of the consequences the capitalism of spirituality has to the human condition. Outlining how many spiritually homeless minds willingly break their spirit in order to retain the home soft capitalist secondary institutions provide, this chapter argues that soft capitalist approaches that promises employees can "discover", "explore" and "self-actualise" through its performance constitutes in reality self-annihilation.

## Soft capitalist Secondary Institutions

<u>Organisationally designed roles</u>

As Chapter Five illustrated, most spiritually homeless minds perceive the performance of their activity of labour as inherently meaningful and purposeful to their subjective experience of material existence precisely because its performance is believed to encourage the fabrication and reification of the subjective self exclusively within material reality. This is significant in relation to discussion raised in Chapter Two of organisational attempts to 'mop up the sins of capitalism, and heal fissures between work and life through a holistic approach to work' (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001: 58). This is because by presenting the inner life of the self as a "cultural reality" to be continuously revised, redirected, redefined and mobilised through the productive performance of labour, spiritually homeless minds increasingly rely on organisationally designed roles to construct a sense of Self and being in the material world that reaffirms and reinforces the significance of its performance. The success of such initiatives is arguably evident in Douglas's reliance on his role to define his sense of self:

> My role has an impact on my life. Like the role you're doing is kind of like 'this is it', 'this is what I do', 'this is who I am' and I like that about it.

Douglas' testimony demonstrates how his role provides him a means through which to structure, and thus comprehend, not only what life "is", but what "he does" during his lifetime by shaping "who he is". Illustrating the appeal of 'soft capitalism and its ethic of self-work' (Costea et al., 2008: 681), through the extent to which organisationally designed roles impact spiritually homeless minds' lives, Douglas's testimony makes clear the security, stability and certainty soft capitalist approaches afford, and which spiritually homeless minds depend on, to construct the meaning and purpose of material existence to revolve exclusively around their subjective experience of being. Highlighted then is how organisationally designed roles provide many spiritually homeless minds a framework through which they can "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their "real" and "authentic" being, and which removes doubt as to what being "is" in the material world. What Douglas arguably makes apparent then is the strength and reassurance many spiritually homeless minds gain from organisationally designed roles that their constructed sense of self is not only real and central to the experience of material being, but that their subjective, "authentic" self can be "discovered", "explored" and "actualised" through organisationally designed roles.

Moreover, by affirming, legitimising and rationalising the significance of the subjective experience of existence as meaningful and purposeful in isolation from the finitude of material existence, Douglas's testimony also indicates how the performance of organisationally designed roles enables spiritually homeless minds to believe that they can reify and fabricate being and identity exclusively in material existence. Evident in Douglas' statement that through his role he can reify and fabricate "who" he "is" and "what" he "does", Douglas thus highlights the influence contemporary organisations have over spiritually homeless minds. Echoing Berger and colleague's considerations that many contemporary places of employment seek to 'fill the gap left by the "under-institutionalisation" of the private sphere' (1973: 168) following the decline of religious frameworks of belief from the public sphere through the design of organisational roles that cater to the "whole" self, Douglas thus makes evident how such roles relieve the burden of responsibility faced by the human condition following the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief. Whilst many spiritually homeless minds often purport to be on a journey of inner "self-discovery", "self-exploration" and "self-actualisation" of their latent "potentialities", what Douglas makes explicit is how many depend on human-inspired, external frameworks to construct a sense of being and house such "self-exploration", "self-discovery" and "self-actualisation". Affirming arguments raised in Chapter Two, Three and Five that organisationally designed roles function to enable individuals to counter the vulnerable, anomic and uncertain condition of spiritual homelessness and one's unresolved existential dis-ease by focusing and fixating on the significance of being in material existence, this is important. This is because what is arguably evident is that in seeking to make their experience of material existence easier to bear following the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief, that spiritually homeless minds such as Douglas are susceptible to soft capitalist approaches. This argument is made explicit by Alastor:

> In my experience of working, organisations have turned more towards supporting you not necessarily in a work sense but in a 'personal development' sense, and I'm all up for self-improvement and being better than I was before. I just have that internal drive to contribute more, do more and be better. It's looking forwards, even if you can't see, just kind of going for it anyway. So when I go into any job, I've always learnt how it's done, I make myself good at my job, and I look at what my next step is in terms of a promotion: what I could do next? And I'm definitely one of those people who needs positive reinforcement. It's all related: when you feel like you're valued you approach the work in a more positive way, and if I'm not getting that why am I working?

Highlighting the susceptibility and emotional dependence of spiritually homeless minds on soft capitalist approaches that accept, recognise and incorporate the idea that worldly activity is meaningful to their being the extent to which it facilitates "self-discovery", "self-exploration" and "self-actualisation", Alastor's testimony highlights how soft capitalist approaches encourage human resources to focus on their personal development through their performance of worldly activity. This is evident in Alastor's expectation that his organisation will unquestionably support him 'not necessarily in a work sense, but in a "personal development" sense'. Demonstrating how soft capitalist approaches draw on culturally relevant neoliberal values, items and artefacts to present organisationally designed roles to complement desires for continuous 'self-improvement' held by spiritually homeless minds, this is important. This is because Alastor arguably highlights just how central a role neoliberal values, ideals and assumptions play in obscuring the alienating realities of labour to retain and satisfy employees by directing attention away from its nature and character toward the conceptualised, and desired, meaning and purpose its performance symbolises.

Emanating from Alastor's 'internal drive' to 'contribute more, do more and be better', this is also evident in the significance Alastor places in the 'positive reinforcement' he receives from personal development practices and techniques. Indicating how spiritually homeless minds perceive the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's subjective self as a value in and of itself, reaffirmed are arguments raised in Chapters Two and Three that spiritually homeless minds do not perceive themselves as being *in* the world, but beings *becoming* in the world through their active performance of worldly activity. That is to say, they perceive themselves as beings-in-process. Compounding perspectives that it is not the nature and character of the activity that is considered important to the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of the self by spiritually homeless minds but its performance and the *idea* that this signifies a number of possibilities for material betterment, Alastor illustrates how organisationally designed roles are unquestioningly attributed a positive moral value by spiritually homeless minds. Demonstrating the authority and governance invested into soft capitalist approaches by spiritually homeless minds, this is explicit in Alastor's testimony when he questions what the reason to work would be if he did not *feel* valued by his organisation.

Alastor affirms then arguments raised in Chapter Three that spiritually homeless minds perceive the performance of worldly activity as the mediation point between aspiration and reality. Furthermore,

Alastor's testimony also alludes that spiritually homeless minds seek to actively combat their spiritual homelessness by perceiving the performance of labour as the means through which they can not only conceptualise what being "is", but can gauge the progression of one's constructed, subjective self and "actualisation" of one's perceived latent "potentialities" during the experience of existence in material reality. More than this, however, Alastor's testimony echoes arguments raised in Chapters Two and Three through Costea and colleagues work that soft capitalist rhetoric sustains the idea that human resources are without limits and that there is always more they can give (2015). This is explicit in Alastor's statement that soft capitalist approaches and perspectives provide frameworks of being that encourage spiritually homeless minds to keep 'looking forwards, even if you can't see, just kind of going for it anyway'. As such, what Alastor demonstrates is the reliance on the performance of organisationally designed roles provided by soft capitalist institutions by spiritually homeless minds to not only conceptualise the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the subjective self, but to construct a trajectory of being relative to the progression of being exclusively within material reality. This particularly evident in the interviews conducted with Cecilia:

> So when I got the phone call to say that I had got the job here, one thing that inspired me was that they said 'one of the reasons we want you to work here is because we feel you have lots of potential'. And that made me think 'Ohhh OK they might support me to reach that potential', and that maybe I would go into managerial positions - she did talk about management type training and things when I first started. It's nice for people to see potential and then to tell you that they see potential in the future.

Cecilia's testimony highlights the extent to which the imagined future condition of being held by many spiritually homeless minds becomes a reality through the performance of organisationally designed roles. For example, rather than creating a coherent ontological perspective established according to her inner beliefs, values and desires, Cecilia's relies on her organisationally designed roles to reinforce particular conceptions of human resourcefulness that strengthen and legitimise organisational judgements of what being "is" according to their specific aims and objectives surrounding competitive advantage in the global market. Indicated then is how organisationally designed roles translate existential questions into technical questions of "self-actualisation" and "progression" of the constructed subjective self to revolve exclusively around being experienced in material reality. Validating conceptions of being reflective of the economic cosmos that do not recognise the need to acknowledge or contemplate unresolved existential dis-ease concerning the condition of being after death, or the finitude of material existence by suggesting that the subjective self can 'become' and progress their being in the material world, this is particularly evident in the encouragement Cecilia's found in her organisation's neoliberal rhetoric to realise and 'reach' her potential through 'managerial positions' and designated opportunities for 'management type training'. Comprehending her potential not through a particular activity whose nature and character she has honed over her lifetime and the possible contribution to the collective human condition such activity affords, but through pre-packaged conceptions of identity that reflect the beliefs, values and desires of the organisation in question, this is

important. This is because Cecilia's testimony illustrates how soft capitalist approaches successfully encourage the perception of the future conceived by human resources to reflect organisational aims and objectives by providing spiritually homeless minds a means through which to conceive their subjective experience of material existence as meaningful and purposeful. For example, if Cecilia had not been told by her organisation that they saw her potential to reside in the pursuit of managerial positions, would this be the conceptualisation of potential that Cecilia held?

What is clear then, is how the nature and character of worldly activity is not considered significant by soft capitalist approaches so long as its performance appears to support and sustain the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's latent "potentialities". As such, Cecilia arguably illustrates how organisationally designed roles reinforce conceptions of the future to revolve exclusively around the subjective experience of material being. Further demonstrating the faith and trust bestowed on organisational perceptions of being, and by consequence the economic cosmos, the subjective experience of material existence for spiritually homeless minds is thus tied to ordered and structured roles that both guide and legitimise the meaning and purpose of existence within an ordered sense of reality that enables "dis-eases" characteristic of spiritual homelessness, to be obscured. As outlined in Chapter Three, however, to refute such organisational judgements is seen as the Self denying and limiting itself. What Cecilia arguably indicates then, is how the use and application of culturally relevant and familiar, neoliberal values, ideals and assumptions that make labour appear as work, appeal to many spiritually homeless minds. This is because by presenting organisationally designed roles as the means through which to continually improve one's being and realise one's latent "potentialities", Cecilia's statement illustrate how soft capitalist approaches subtly demand employees' conceive of their identity in line with organisational aims and objectives rather than potential as conceived through their inner beliefs, values and desires. Further evidencing the positive moral obligation associated with pursuing one's potential through organisationally designed roles wherein the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's subjective self is only supported when the right values are evidenced (Heelas, 2008), reflected are arguments raised in Chapter Three that soft capitalist approaches encourage employees to "buy into" organisational conceptions of being. Achieved through the utilisation of rhetoric that draws on culturally relevant neoliberal rhetoric to reflect what spiritually homeless minds want to hear and believe.

More than this, however, Cecilia's testimony arguably indicates how organisational conceptions of what she "ought to be" have become synonymous with what she "*wants* to be". Echoed thus are arguments raised by Costea and colleagues in Chapter Three wherein soft capitalist approaches encourage employees to consider not "who am I and what activity of work complements *me*?", but "who *should* I be?". This is important, because what can be argued is that the more spiritually homeless minds depend on organisational conceptions of the meaning and purpose of material being to conceive a coherent narrative construction of self, the more they depend on, and are susceptible to, soft capitalist approaches

that present organisations as suitable and relevant frameworks through which to construct perspectives of being. With this in mind, the more employees *believe* soft capitalist techniques facilitate the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of their latent "potentialities", the more employees' are willing to forgo expression of their inner values, desires and beliefs that contradict organisational aims and objectives. Making evident the willing submission of employees to soft capitalist approaches in order to avoid having to confront and acknowledge one's unresolved existential dis-ease, evidenced then are arguments raised in Chapter Three wherein the perception of what being "is" in the material world becomes increasingly narrow according to the perspective of being held organisationally, according to its aims and objectives.

## Organisational contexts

The above illustrates how spiritually homeless minds are drawn to and find comfort in organisationally designed roles because they are shielded from the continuous uncertainty, anxiety and frustration arising from the condition of spiritual homelessness, and the responsibility of comprehending what being "is" and how it can be known. From the interviews conducted the same can also be said of the organisation itself, as is arguably evident in the testimony of Leah:

> I think that we are asked to view senior manager's words in the same way as you would a Priest or Imam or whoever, whichever religion you subscribe to. So I think they have the same structures. The organisation is that church and the manager becomes the priest who preaches the ideologies of the church, of the organisation, to the flock that they want to engage. So work's kind of a sanctuary for me, where I go and feel like I have some value and some worth. And I'd rather be at work with people than at home by myself, which is to do with the fact that I get my energy from beyond me, because I'm not very good at internalising and getting energy from myself and having all that inner-strength.

Imbuing her organisation with characteristics and attributes typically associated and located within metaphysical institutions, Leah's statement demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds perceive their organisation to mirror hierarchies and communities typically found in traditional religious institutions. This is particularly explicit through the comparison Leah makes between corporate organisations and traditional religious institutions. For example, stating that employees are asked to 'view senior manager's words in the same way as you would a Priest or Imam', in that management preach organisational rhetoric to 'the flock that they wish to engage', what is evident is the extent to which corporate organisations function in a similar manner to metaphysical institutions. Indeed, not only do they provide a 'sanctuary' that shields many spiritually homeless minds from their homeless reality, but they enable spiritually homeless minds to feel at home in the material world. What is clear then is how organisations, by assimilating to the structural, hierarchical and ideological conventions typically of traditional metaphysical institutions, wield power and authority over many spiritually homeless minds. Freed from the historical baggage and considered repressive, habits associated with traditional metaphysical homes that conceive of material being strictly through particular doctrines and collective

conception of existence (Berger et al., 1973), however, it can be argued that many spiritually homeless minds willingly accept organisational conceptualisations of what being 'is' and how it can be known. Such an argument is supported by Leah is that she would 'rather be at work' than at 'home' because she her organisation enables her to 'feel like [she has] some value and worth'. Demonstrating that spiritually homeless minds legitimise the power wielded by organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches over themselves, this is important, for despite the fact that many spiritually homeless minds seek to assert their subjectivity, many, such as Leah, derive their energy and inner-strength 'always from outside' and 'beyond' themselves than internally.

What is apparent then is that many spiritually homeless minds perceive their place of employment to possess superior knowledge of the human condition and the meaning and purpose of material existence. Affirming arguments raised in Chapters Two and Five that organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches function to provide a sense of security, stability and certainty regarding the subjective experience of material existence to cope with the uncertainty of the meaning and purpose of material existence, Leah thus illustrates the power, authority and control organisations have over the meaning and purpose of existence held by spiritually homeless employees'. More than this, however, Leah's testimony illustrates discussion raised in Chapter Two wherein organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches appeal to spiritually homeless minds because they function as secondary institutions. This is because by providing 'new collective structures' (Berger et al.,1973: 175) for human resources to cope with the anxiety, isolation and frustration encountered as a result of spiritual homelessness, soft capitalist organisational homes promote and encourage a heady mix of belief and belonging to a collective beyond one's subjective experience of existence. Illustrating Berger, Berger and Kellner's argument that 'man's fundamental constitution is such that, just about inevitably, he will once more construct institutions to provide an ordered reality for himself' (1973: 89), what Leah's testimony makes clear then is the continued need for humanity construct for itself, a home for being in the material world following the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief.

Encouraging the belief that economic and human concerns are assimilated through the application of soft capitalist approaches that present the meaning and purpose of worldly activity to go beyond material benefit and reward, what becomes apparent are organisational attempts to bridge public and private, human and economic, and subjective and collective concerns through the application of soft capitalist approaches. Given this, what can be argued is how organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches not only appeal to spiritually homeless minds by playing on and incorporating into organisational jurisdiction previously considered irrational aspects of being. What can be argued then, is that soft capitalist secondary institutions function as an external sovereignty for many spiritually homeless minds that guides and nurtures their subjective experience of material existence so that they can become all that they ought to be. Thus, whilst Douglas, Alastor and Cecilia indicate the extent to which organisationally designed roles of labour appeal to spiritually homeless minds in providing a means

through which to frame conceptualisations of the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities" during material existence, Leah indicates how organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches provide a home for such modes of being that revolve exclusively around the lived experience of material existence. The extent to which soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage human resources to concentrate on the perceived reality and centrality of their subjective experience of existence in material reality in isolation from the finitude of material existence is explicit in Samael's receptiveness to the home his organisation provides:

> I'm definitely in a bubble! Like they have a 360-degree kind of approach to life, so they really push you to achieve more but it's about enjoying yourself too. So I'm at work but it's not just about this - there're the slides to all the cafés and bars, and there's the slide down to the kitchen with unlimited food, next to the spa and aquarium and the climbing wall I can go on - like everything's lovely and it makes you yourself nicer to other people and happier generally in life! It's great! There're classes, and you can go and take trips and training courses on all sorts of things. And if there's something you want to develop we have this thing called "20% time" where you can spend 20% of your time working on a passion project completely unrelated to your role. I mean I haven't done it myself but it's there, and just having something there can be quite freeing…The whole idea is that you know when you're in the zone and you're working and everything's going amazing and stuff? Well this enables you to stay in the zone working as much as possible. I mean you can spend weeks just being perfectly in the zone and working. It's amazing! I think the record for being in the offices is about 50 days. A lot of people feel like that, like the only friends they have are friends here.

Highlighting how his organisation provides a home for being exclusively in the material world through the emphasis it places on the lived experience of organisational life, Samael's statement exhibits the openness spiritually homeless minds have to soft capitalist secondary institutions that encapsulate material existence by adopting a '360-degree kind of approach[es] to life'. Indeed, appealing to the material needs and desires of human resources through neoliberal values and ideals that encourage human resources to 'achieve more' whilst 'enjoying [them]selves too', such approaches enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to create organisational "bubbles" that encapsulates the experience of material being in toto. For example, Samael's testimony highlights how such organisations are designed to encourage the alignment of employees' private life with their public life at work. This is explicit through the incentives such as '20% time' where employees can spend 20% of their time working on a 'passion project completely unrelated to [their] role', but which reflects their inner emotional desires, ideals and beliefs. Such focus on the subjective experience of material existence in organisational design is further entrenched by the facilities, opportunities and developmental prospects Samael's organisational environment, which provides 'unlimited food', and facilities such as 'spa and aquarium and the climbing wall'. Presenting work as a series of opportunities to live a life "full" of endless possibilities, "enjoyment" and "happiness", Samael perceives such techniques to not only benefit and enrich his experience of existence by validating and confirming constructions of self and identity that relate exclusively to being in material existence, but his work-life. For example, arguing that organisations that make 'everything lovely' lead employees such as Samael to be 'nicer to other people

and happier generally in life', he also attributes the 360-degree approach to life exhibited by his organisation to enable him to stay 'perfectly in the zone and working' as much as possible.

Illustrating how neoliberal values reaffirm the conceptualisation of employment held by spiritually homeless minds wherein their subjective "happiness" and profit are not contradictory objectives, but can be attained through the productive performance of worldly activity, demonstrated then is the success of soft capitalist approaches in encouraging employees to focus on their productive performance regardless of whether they undertake an activity more akin to work rather than labour. Highlighting the effectiveness of neoliberal soft capitalist secondary institutions in providing a home for spiritually homeless minds that focuses exclusively on the experience of material, Samael's testimony not only illustrates then his wilful distraction and obscuration of the finitude of material existence from his acknowledgement. His statement also highlights how spiritually homeless minds are culturally primed to respond positively to soft capitalist approaches that affirm and confirm the significance of the subjective experience of material existence in that they believe that it is through one's subjective lifetime exclusively in material existence, and not the experience of material existence in conjunction with consideration of existence after life, through which they "become". As such, Samael's testimony epitomises the total commitment organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches evoke by presenting neoliberal values, such as happiness, freedom and enjoyment of life, as attainable within material existence through the productive performance of worldly activity (as discussed in Chapter Two).

Compounded then are arguments raised in Chapter Two that the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of the subjective self is the central rationale underpinning the productive performance of labour, as illustrated through the Landmark Worldwide and the Vanto Group, and how soft capitalist secondary organisations encourage employees to explore and undertake their passions, hobbies and interests within the organisational environment. As is argued in Chapters Three and Five, however, the inclusion of the irrational, emotional and experiential within soft capitalist secondary institutions can be considered to obscure the fact that many are undertaking activities of labour by making it appear as work. This is important, for unlike secondary institutions of the countercultural revolution that encourage the human condition to express their inner beliefs, values and desires within the shared, collective world in relation to the nature and character of their worldly activity, Samael's testimony highlights the extent to which soft capitalist approaches not only exacerbate but intensify the lack of mediation between the human condition, nature and the natural world through worldly activity. This is evident in the fact that for a number of Samael's colleagues, 'the only friends they have are friends here'. Seeming to replace fragmented, isolated and alienated conditions of being with belonging, community and connection wherein employees are supported in meeting their own goals and targets relevant to their organisational life, not only obscured is the meaninglessness of their activity to the collective outside the organisational context (Heelas, 2008). Also eroded is their belonging within the collective human condition beyond the manufactured organisational community. The reason why

spiritually homeless minds willingly and actively exhibit total commitment to the home provided by their organisation at the expense of the collective human condition is arguably outlined by Cecilia:

> I think we're already socialised into that, well definitely my generation is already socialised into not wanting to be a failure. So in many respects organisations don't have to do a lot to capture our desires and beliefs, I don't think organisations need to try and manage that, I don't think they need to try and increase that, because the internal pressure that you put on yourself is already in the employees that they employ…

Drawing attention to the 'internal pressure' employees place on themselves so as to avoid being perceived as a 'failure' by striving to "become what they could potentially be" in the material world, Cecilia's testimony illustrates how  neoliberal (non)concepts such as the fear of failure heightens the commitment human resources display to soft capitalist secondary institutions. Such an argument is confirmed through Cecilia's claim that 'organisations don't have to do a lot to capture our desires and beliefs' because 'it's already in the employees that they employ'. Indeed, should they not seek to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their being through organisational conceptions of being, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, such individuals are arguably seen to deny themselves not only what they "ought" to have been, but all that they *could* have been (Costea et al., 2012). More than soft capitalism constituting an insidious and tyrannical form of control by extending a promise of material and personal "betterment" and "development" that assures what is aspired to can be attained through the performance of labour, however, Cecilia's testimony indicates how soft capitalist approaches not only exploit the fears of human resources. It also provides spiritually homeless minds opportunities through which fear of failure can be actively overcome. This is significant, for in providing support and protection from the responsibility of constructing for oneself an ontologically sound perception of material existence, Cecilia's statement thus highlights how organisational conceptualisations of what being "is" and how it can be known are willingly co-constituted by spiritually homeless minds into the performance of labour when organisational promises reflect the aspirations of employees.


## The capitalism of spirituality

Indicative of the semi-autonomous state of being characterised by spiritually homeless minds, the above testimonies demonstrate not only the effectiveness and appeal of soft capitalist approaches employed by organisations seeking to re-conceptualise organisationally designed roles to appeal to spiritually homeless minds. They also outline the inherent susceptibility of such individuals to organisational strategies that seek to re-conceptualise labour to appear as work by providing a home for being exclusively in material reality. This is arguably due to their desire to affirm the reality and centrality of the subjective experience of existence exclusively within the material world as stable, secure and certain to distract themselves from their unresolved existential dis-ease, discussed in Chapter Five, by

conceptualising into the performance of worldly activity what they wish to hear and believe. As outlined in Chapters Two and Three, however, the extent to which organisations draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is not primarily for the benefit of employees, but to promote the accumulation of profit. Argued in Chapter Three to result in the capitalism of spirituality, this claim can be explored through Leah's testimony. This is because in her employment as a Principle Change Manager, her account provides insight into the rationale underpinning the implementation of soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques from a manager's perspective:

> Generally, people who come into my workplace are having their basic needs met. So they've got a roof over their head, they've got food, they come to work they've got that satisfied but we're moving further and further up that scale, we've got rapport with people, they've got relationships, and we're getting further up that pyramid of either what people have or believe that they have. So I think that as managers or certainly as management theorists we're now starting to focus on the top of that pyramid, because that is what differentiates keeping someone and losing someone. Do they feel satisfied in their job essentially?

Drawing on popular cultural values, ideas and desires to make activities of labour appear as activities of work, Leah's insight as a manager illustrates how organisations actively evoke irrational, experiential and emotional aspects of being to extend the means through which human resources can be controlled and managed. In doing so, soft capitalist approaches can be seen to prime, provoke and mobilise employees to explore their irrational, even spiritual beliefs, values and desires, 'in their job'. For example, implicitly referring to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) to underpin organisational efforts 'that focus on the top of that pyramid' and which seek to cater to employees' beyond 'their basic needs' by developing 'rapport' and 'relationships' to satisfy 'what people have or believe they have', Leah's testimony arguably indicates the asset the inner life of employees' represents to organisations striving to maintain and expand their competitive market edge. Playing with the concept of work to capitalise on the spiritual yearning of spiritually homeless minds by presenting the performance of worldly activity as the means through which human resources can feel satisfied and complete, this is supported by arguments raised in Chapter Two concerning the Vanto Group and Landmark Worldwide whereby the inclusion of cultural values, ideas and desires encourage many human resources to "buy into" and align themselves to organisational aims and objectives. Such considerations are arguably expressed in the reflections of Mallory:

> I've found out through this process the motivations to work and your belief can be quite similar, like your belief within the cause is very similar to your belief in a greater good so there are very similar parallels in a way. So your belief in a higher good, or even if you have humanist values, I think a lot of organisations ensure that their employees are being cultivated and nurtured through practices that stem from spirituality because people still need those answers. And as long as it wasn't 'you must prescribe to this', but was 'come see: it might be good for you', as a sort of 'let's see' type of situation then I'd be really open to it, because they're acknowledging that something else might need to be catered to to nurture and cultivate your productivity.

Highlighting the similarities that exist for Mallory between her 'motivations to work and belief', Mallory's testimony indicates the success of soft capitalist secondary institutions that capitalise on the

spiritual yearning of spiritually homeless minds through the use of rhetoric, practices and techniques that evoke spiritual questing 'because people still need those answers'. A possibility attributed by Mallory to the compatibility between her organisation's cause and her 'belief in a greater good', such compatibility is cited by Mallory as the reason why she is 'really open' to organisational employment of 'practices that stem from spirituality' because it demonstrates to her that her organisation is 'acknowledging that something else might need to be catered to to nurture and cultivate [her] productivity'. Strengthening and morally rejuvenating her belief that her place of employment is responsible, cares, and is concerned, for her subjective experience of material being, Mallory arguably highlights the subtlety at which the capitalism of spirituality operates. For example, deriving security, stability and certainty of her material being from the evocation of spiritual questing through her performance of worldly activity, Mallory's testimony can be seen to illustrate how soft capitalist approaches that evoke the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's irrational beliefs, values and desires, give spiritually homeless minds the perception that questions of ultimate concern can be answered through exploration of being as nurtured and cultivated organisationally.

As argued in Chapter Three then, organisations that utilise metaphysical frameworks of belief in order to appear to acknowledge 'that something else might need to be catered to' narrow and confine the meaning and purpose of material existence to relate exclusively to secular concerns relating to the subjective experience of material being. Strengthening dominant neoliberal cultural expectations, assumptions and perspectives that the meaning and purpose of the subjective experience of material existence is to strive for material and personal "betterment", and to "actualise" one's latent "potentialities" at the expense of contemplation of questions of ultimate concern, this is important. This is because soft capitalist approaches that capitalise on the spiritual yearning on human resources in reality not only weaken the ability of many spiritually homeless minds to consider and confront the condition of being beyond the finitude of material existence, but ironically close them to such contemplation under a rhetoric of openness. Demonstrated then are arguments raised in Chapter Three wherein the inclusion of metaphysical beliefs, values and desires in the workplace can be considered nothing more than the engorgement of subjective wellbeing culture to be used as seductive bait to fuel the purchase and consumption for the attainment of secular ends that surround commercial success (Heelas, 2008). Though spiritually homeless minds arguably consider the capitalism of spirituality a good development, Mallory highlights, however, how soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical frameworks of belief to capitalise on the unresolved existential dis-ease and continued spiritual yearning of employees to negatively impact the experience of being. This is because by presenting the performance of labour as the means through which questions of ultimate concern can be explored, however, not only do soft capitalist secondary institutions reaffirm the perceived humaneness of such techniques, but the irrelevance of the nature and character of the worldly activity to the human condition. Whilst the interviews conducted provide many examples of soft capitalist rhetoric, practices

and techniques that could be drawn on to illustrate such an argument, a practice particularly in vogue and experienced by a number of interviewees, is the practice of mindfulness. This is particularly explicit in the reflection Douglas exhibits concerning his organisation's practice of a "retrospective":

> We call it a retrospective rather than mindfulness: how does this make you feel? Feel...they use that a lot. How does this make you think? What techniques did I personally employ to help me achieve the goals I wanted to achieve? What helped me do this? Were there any practices? Was there any mind-set I go into to make things easier for me, or a certain way of thinking about things to make things better, more understandable for me? That kind of stuff.

Outlining how retrospectives encourage employees to focus on how the performance of labour makes them feel relative to their subjective experience of material existence, Douglas highlights how the capitalisation of rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist approaches such as mindfulness appeal to spiritually homeless minds because they are culturally primed and receptive to neoliberal rhetoric that encourages the "development", "discovery" and "actualisation" of their being. Utilised not to inspire contemplation of existence within and beyond material existence but to address secular emotions, wants and desires relative exclusively to his performance of work, such a claim is supported through Douglas's identification of "techniques", "practices" and "mindsets" employed 'to make things easier...better [and] more understandable' exclusively within material existence. Indicating how soft capitalism functions by appearing to provide answers to spiritually homeless minds' unresolved existential dis-ease by presenting the performance of labour as the means through which they can "actualise" their subjective being in material reality, but which in reality compromises their ability to contemplate such concerns, however, Douglas arguably makes explicit the degree to which the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques exploit the desires and aspirations of the human resource. Drawing attention to the differences between metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques used by secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution and soft capitalist secondary institutions that re-interpret metaphysical concerns through neoliberal lenses, this is important. Indeed, geared to the attainment of immediate material benefits, feeling "good", and pandering to desires emanating from, and relative to, the subjective experience of material existence soft capitalist secondary institutions are not concerned with encouraging comprehension of the condition of being in relation to the finitude of material being, and the collective human condition but his subjective condition of being in isolation of the collective.

As such, Douglas' account of retrospectives highlights how practices that stem from spirituality are used by soft capitalist secondary institutions and affirmed by spiritually homeless minds to strengthen the belief held by many that through activities of labour they can have mastery of and over their life and emotions. Reaffirming the belief that the self can be reified and fabricated through the performance of labour, this is important, for what is demonstrated is how the capitalisation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques affirm to spiritually homeless minds their desire for freedom and autonomy to shape parts of their life. Reinforcing arguments raised in Chapter Two that organisations seek to re-

conceptualise the performance of worldly activity as *the* means through which to "feel alive" (Heelas, 2008; Heelas & Woodhead, 2001), also reinforced are arguments raised in Chapter Three that highlight how the perspective of reality soft capitalism promotes does not provide space for the faculties of speech or thought, but action alone. This is arguably evident through the fact that all the questions Douglas is primed to consider during a "retrospective" do not encourage contemplation of his ability relative to the nature and character of his activity, or indeed what the activity means relative to the purpose of material existence, nor how he can work through questions of ultimate concern. Rather, they revolve around how he can use his emotions to actively and practically improve the efficiency in which he performs his role to make 'things easier' and 'better'. Thus, Douglas arguably highlights further how spiritually homeless minds co-constitute the mobilisation and subsequent instrumentalisation of the human resource through the acceptance of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques appropriated by soft capitalist secondary institutions that capitalise on employee's need to comprehend being in the material world.

Whilst Chapter Five suggests that spiritually homeless minds representative of "nones" would not respond receptively to organisational attempts to capitalise on employees' productive potential through the use of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques because they found metaphysical belief antagonistic to their being, from the interview data collected, "nones" were also receptive to such techniques. This is reflected in Samael's receptiveness to soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques such as mindfulness and meditation:

> There's a big push nowadays I think for encouraging people to practice mindfulness at work if they're stressed. I have seen them push it - more flyers, more posters, more opportunities, and more space for them to do them. It's like meditation, it has known benefits. But I wouldn't class that as a spiritual thing. It clears your mind; it gets rid of all the stress. Like you have all these things that are swirling around in your mind getting you stressed and mindfulness just kind of flushes them out, which is nice 'cos there aren't all those distractions. It's good!

Highlighting how spiritually homeless minds do not necessarily class practices such as mindfulness 'as a spiritual thing' but a tool to 'clear your mind' and 'get rid of all the stress' by 'flush[ing] out…all those distractions', Samael illustrates how one need neither have faith in or be open to metaphysical frameworks of belief in order to derive meaning and purpose relative to the subjective experience of existence from practices that are in essence inherently spiritual. Rather, justifying to himself his engagement with practices such as mindfulness and meditation through their "known benefits" to enhance his subjective experience of material existence and secular concerns such as improving his productive performance of worldly activity, Samael can be seen to illustrate arguments raised in Chapter Three by Carrette and King wherein metaphysical practices are recoded to reflect neoliberal, psychological discourses (2005). Indeed, arguing that mindfulness alleviates stress experienced, Samael

demonstrates then how some spiritually homeless minds draw upon human-inspired frameworks to justify the inclusion of practices designed to facilitate inclusion of irrational, abstract and (non)conceptual aspects of being by soft capitalist secondary institutions. Contrary to traditional applications that encourage contemplation of the human condition within and beyond the experience of material existence then, Samael indicates how metaphysical practises such as mindfulness and meditation are seen by those who consider metaphysical belief antagonistic to their being as purely secular activities.

Similar to Douglas then, Samael legitimises the use of metaphysical practices by soft capitalist secondary institutions for secular ends in order to cope with and pacify the dis-ease of spiritual homelessness and the alienation that results, and strengthen and legitimise the productive performance of labour as the means through which to "explore", "discover" and "actualise" his conceived latent "potentialities" within the subjective experience of existence. More than Douglas, however, by seeking to prove such practices are not fundamentally spiritual, Samael demonstrates just how effective the capitalism of spirituality is through the utilitarian individualism it encourages. A claim further supported by Samael's testimony that highlights the extent to which organisations 'push' metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to cope with stress, this is significant in relation to discussions raised in Chapters Two and Three whereby metaphysical practices are utilised by soft capitalist approaches to promote the calculated pursuit of one's own material desires and hedonistic gratification. This is because, Samael's testimony arguably indicates how the capitalisation of rhetoric, practices and techniques derived from culturally relevant metaphysical practices function as a cultural mechanism that enables soft capitalist secondary institutions to mobilise and align human resources aspirations to organisational aims and objectives. From this perspective, by focusing the efforts of reflection on ways in which they can improve their performance of labour in line with values of efficiency and productivity, soft capitalist approaches secure the continuation and sustentation of values reflective of the economic cosmos.

Supporting arguments raised in Chapter Three whereby holistic practices that promise to empower employees and "bring life back to work" in reality, perpetuate and contribute to the sins of capitalism and the exploitation of human resources, what is apparent is the effectiveness of the capitalism of spirituality that mis-appropriate metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to increase the efficient and productive performance of human resources. The exploitation that results from the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is arguably captured in the testimony of Leah, who through her role as a manager, gives an account of perspectives and rationales that underlie rationales for the implementation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques:

> Managers will bat around terms. So if a member of staff is struggling they'll say 'well what you need is some coaching'. And actually, it's nonsense because if you need coaching you know yourself. Coaching isn't about improving someone, coaching is more about helping them understand themselves. Or to say

to someone 'well you just need to go and do some meditation', it's an easy thing to do, but they don't really understand what meditation does because it helps maybe fix a symptom. And a lot of these techniques I guess will have been called something different in the past. So there would have been a period of time where Tai Chi was popular at work or callisthenics or all sorts of things, doing yoga as a group or away days for a while. One that bothers me a lot is mindfulness because it's used wrong, it's used incorrectly as far as I can see. Managers often look quite smug and say 'well they need to be mindful about it' or 'they need to practice some mindfulness'. And that doesn't mean anything! Mindfulness is about living in the moment. So really when a manager says it a manager doesn't really want you to take productive time out to be non-productive. They want you to be more aware of what they're doing, and actually, that is not the same thing. So it's almost like 'don't understand yourself unless it's how we've told you to understand yourself and we've given you a label for it so now go do it'. So on the one hand we're telling people 'understand yourself' but on the other hand we're saying 'get the job done'. And from what I can see, pushing responsibility from the organisation back onto the individual but pretending that it's caring.

Highlighting how managerial circles utilise rhetoric, practices and techniques such as coaching, meditation and mindfulness for the purposes of 'improving someone' so that they 'get the job done', Leah illustrates the disingenuous application of metaphysical approaches by contemporary organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches for material gain. Reflecting Berger, Berger and Kellner's argument that soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to 'assign emotional states' (1973: 57), so as to legitimise organisational authority over being, this is evident in Leah's statement where she draws on the historical legacy of organisational attempts to capitalise on employee's desires for constant and continual self-improvement and to promote the attainment of organisational aims and objectives through previous "in vogue" practices such as Tai Chi and yoga. Indeed, commenting how the use of "in vogue" metaphysical practices such as mindfulness is the latest in a long line of organisational practices introduced in attempt to exploit the space between aspiration and reality, and reinforce and legitimise managerial perspectives of how "to be" for decades, Leah labels such attempts 'nonsense'. This is because, despite encouraging employees to 'be more aware of what they're doing', Leah considers the organisational use of practices such as mindfulness not to be implemented primarily to encourage spiritually homeless minds to 'live in the moment', 'take productive time out to be non-productive' or to enable employees to 'understand themselves' better.

Unlike practices like Tai Chi and yoga that had previously remained largely novel practices because previous iterations had reflected their historical ethos and been largely culturally irrelevant, however, Leah's testimony illustrates how mindfulness reinvents and repackages metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques emanating from the East to become culturally relevant. Thus, whilst employees such as Douglas and Samael see organisational engagement with metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques as a tool through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their being exclusively in the material world, in reality, the inclusion of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques that incorporate (non)conceptual ideas, values and aspirations not only maintain, but extend and entrench organisational control over being. Supporting Berger, Berger and Kellner's argument that 'every institution, however benign in appearance or intentions, is life-denying and "repressive" [because] the

desire to bring it into being makes it necessary to construct elaborate facades of spontaneity to cover institutional processes' (1973: 189), this is significant. This is because whilst such organisations appear to care for and be concerned with the subjective experience of material being through the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to secure their competitive market advantage and the accumulation of profit, Leah indicates how such appropriation, in reality, perpetuates the confusion, anxiety and stress symptomatic of the condition of spiritual homelessness and the problem of work identified by Berger (1964). Furthermore, Leah's testimony also illustrates how metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques designed to enable the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of being within and beyond the subjective experience of material existence is used solely for secular means. Disabling metaphysical practices from being used in a way that adds anything of value to their being within and beyond material existence, rather than provide a spiritual home for being in the material world then, Leah's testimony highlights how the home provided by the economic cosmos is inadequate in functioning in this manner. Given this, Leah's testimony thus highlights the political agenda underpinning the implementation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to legitimise organisational attempts to 'push responsibility from the organisation back onto the individual'.

Indicative of the extent to which 'management becomes able to insert its own demands in the current cultures of work precisely because it seizes upon legitimate aspirations that come from the interiority of the contemporary self' (Costea et al., 2015: 386), through the mis-appropriation of metaphysical belief by soft capitalist approaches, this is important. Indeed, trapping employees within an endless cycle wherein metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are employed to 'fix a symptom', as argued in Chapter Three, organisationally designed roles and soft capitalist secondary institutions institutionalise existential separation by doing nothing more than paying lip service to metaphysical frameworks (Heelas, 2008). Exposing the illusion that soft capitalist approaches "bring life back to work" through inclusion of the irrational, rather than function as a threshold through which one's unresolved existential dis-ease inspires their use to foster contemplation, movement and understanding of being both within and beyond the material world, the organisational mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques function as a revolving door. This is because, used as a revolving door to pacify, obscure and distract spiritually homeless minds from their alienated state of being and the meaninglessness of their worldly activity, metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques mis-appropriated by soft capitalist secondary institutions cannot function as a threshold that enables human resources to resolve their dis-ease. Indeed, employed by managerial circles periodically to distract, pacify and soothe employees from recognising or acknowledging their unresolved existential dis-ease, and the meaninglessness of striving to be as efficient and productive as possible regardless of the activity's nature and character, the co-constitution of such approaches by spiritually homeless minds can be argued to ironically result in increased world alienation.

# Some consequences to being

Despite Leah's insights as a manager, the above indicates how soft capitalist approaches are generally conceived by most spiritually homeless minds as positive developments, and beneficial to their subjective condition of being in the material world. Indeed, drawing on culturally relevant neoliberal rhetoric that reflect the values, ideals and desires held by most spiritually homeless minds following the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief, soft capitalist approaches provide a frame through which spiritually homeless minds can comprehend what their being "is", and conceptualise what they would like "to become". As Leah's managerial perspective illustrates, however, in reality soft capitalist approaches arguably demonstrate the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to capitalise on the inherent capacity within the human condition to seek answers to questions of ultimate concern for the accumulation of profit. This is not to say that when asked to consider why organisations include such rhetoric, practices and techniques that the responses given by research participants indicated a lack of awareness of the exploitation, manipulation and mobilisation such rhetoric, practices and techniques give rise to. Rather, responses shed light on a number of reactions to and consequences of, soft capitalist secondary institutions that capitalise on spiritual frameworks of belief, and indeed the human need for spiritual questing. Interestingly, despite the differences in conceptions of being, openness to ideas of an Absolute and the relationship fostered with the natural world by "nones" and "RoH", the reactions to and consequences of soft capitalist approaches affected such individuals in very similar ways. This is arguably because whilst there are differences in perspectives and conceptions of being and existence that result from different attitudes toward ideas of an Absolute, both "nones" and "RoH" construct their sense of being through faith in the economic cosmos. Their reaction to contemplation of the potentially damaging and harmful nature of the economic cosmos to their being was thus met with similar reactions, concerns and refutation. As such, discussion from this juncture will not differentiate between ontological perspectives. To begin, Jacob outlines the impact the focus on productivity regardless of the nature and character of the activity has to the human condition:

> The opportunities wasted by not doing something I think that's possibly one of the reasons I sleep so badly. You feel like sleep is a waste of time in my head. You could be doing something productive...I'm always asking myself, 'Right, what am I doing next? You've been up for 26 hours. You need to go to bed. But I could be doing that and that and that'...so I'll come in absolutely exhausted, like this morning, absolutely exhausted, you know the sun's just started to come up at 4 o'clock in the morning and I'm thinking 'I could just lay those bits out in the garden while there's daylight whilst it's dry', you know 'I could do this...cutting the lawn'...just doing something, anything you know while I'm here. Or I'll do the hoovering while it's the middle of the day and people are starting to get up in the morning while I'm still awake on nights: 'Right, the people are up I can go and do the hoovering'. Rather than going to bed like you should, I'm an idiot...but you just try and be productive whilst you can, 'cos you may not have the chance later on.

Expressing concern at 'the opportunities wasted by not doing something', Jacob arguably illustrates how the idea of productive performance has become for many spiritually homeless minds the mediation

point between one's hopes and aspirations and reality at the expense of their personal life and without regard for the specific nature and character of worldly activity. Reinforcing arguments raised in Chapter Two that a life lived in unproductive contemplation is considered a life wasted in contrast to a life of productive action, Jacob does not discriminate between the nature and character of the activity as long as he is able to be productive. Rather, indicating the guilt Jacob feels by failing to be as productive as he possibly can, evident is the extent to which soft capitalist approaches are effective in mobilising spiritually homeless minds through the re-conceptualisation of the meaning and purpose of worldly activity into its performance. The emphasis on the meaning derived from the productive performance of worldly activity is evident in Jacob's testimony in that despite coming home from work 'absolutely exhausted', he would rather 'try and be productive whilst [he] can 'cos [he] may not get the chance later on'. Rather than striving to be productive in order to contribute to the shared and collective world of permanence and durability then, what is clear is how many spiritually homeless minds do not care what the activity "is" so long as they feel productive. This is arguably illustrated through Jacob's testimony whereby he perceives 'sleep as a waste of time' because he 'would rather do 'something, anything while [he is] here' such as hoovering or gardening.

This is significant, for what can be argued is that by indicating the marginalisation of the nature and character of worldly activity in favour of purposeless productivity that amounts from labour, Jacob highlights how activities of labour are undertaken by spiritually homeless minds is not undertaken out of passion for the specific nature and character of a given activity, but out of fear of not being as productive as he could possibly have been. Echoing arguments raised by Costea and colleagues that the problem contemporary organisations face that utilise soft capitalist approaches is 'not their inability to "motivate" but their excessive ability to mobilise the will to work' (2015: 380), such mobilisation of being to be mindlessly productive can be considered to not only result in a willingness for mindless productivity for the sake of being productive. Compounding arguments made in Chapters Three and Five wherein spiritually homeless minds do not consider the nature and character of the activity significant so long as the idea of its performance supports the conceptualisation of the meaning and purpose of material existence, this is important. This is because whilst Chapter Three outlined how organisationally designed roles of labour provided by primary institutions adopting soft capitalist approaches are incompatible with the self-work ethic, Jacob's testimony demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds themselves actively obstruct the self-work ethic from manifesting through their focus on mindless productivity as a means of gaining a sense of worth and value. Thus, whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions claim to "bring life back to work" through the introduction of rhetoric, practices and techniques derived from secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution, and are seen to encourage the self-work ethic to emerge, what is confirmed are arguments raised in Chapter Two and Three that the self-work ethic is not compatible with activity undertaken primarily for productive and consumptive purposes. Reflecting Arendt's position outlined in Chapter Three that organisations

adopting soft capitalist approaches leave employees with 'the rather distressing alternative between productive slavery and unproductive freedom' (1958: 105), Jacob illustrates then the increasing alienation from what it is "to be" human when spiritually homeless minds place value in the productive performance of labour. At the same time, also affirmed are arguments that spiritually homeless minds do not recognise or acknowledge their estrangement and alienation from the human condition that soft capitalist approaches not only induce, but exacerbate. This is arguably because spiritually homeless minds seek to distract and obscure contemplating or acknowledging the finitude of their material existence through the ideal its productive performance supports. Highlighting the negative impact soft capitalist approaches have on the human condition, this is arguably reflected in the interview conducted with Cecilia:

> So I get a lot out of work in terms of self-worth and self-value that I don't necessarily get doing things outside of work because I don't do a lot. But because I get so much of that from work I don't necessarily need it from outside of work. Does that make sense? So I am more myself at work than I am at home because I feel like work is my comfort zone, I'm very very much in my comfort zone at work and I'm confident because I know what I'm doing and I know my limits and I know how far I can push myself, but outside of work I'm not. Like for me, work is a very controlled environment. You know I come the same way every day, same office every day, same tasks pretty much. OK, you might get the odd curveball, but you sort of know what's going to happen. Whereas in my personal life, that's where things happen that you're not prepared for. So If someone says to me 'Do you fancy doing "this" this weekend?' my initial, my first reaction when it comes to activities or things that I've never done before is 'No', because it's just a complete…[pause]…the unknown or the uncertainty, that is what fuels the anxiety…

Claiming to get 'a lot out of work in terms of self-worth and self-value that [she doesn't] necessarily get doing things outside of work because [she doesn't] do a lot', Cecilia illustrates how spiritually homeless minds align their conception of being in the world to their place of employment. Resulting in Cecilia feeling she is 'more [herself] at work than [she is] at home because…work is [her] comfort zone', Cecilia not only affirms arguments raised whereby spiritually homeless minds find a home for material being from their place of employment. Cecilia also illustrates how spiritually homeless minds would rather define what it is "to be" human within the parameters of soft capitalist rhetoric that present the human condition as controlled, predictable and ordered rather than construct a sense of being outside of her organisation and organisationally designed role. This is evident in the extent to which she not only derives comfort, but depends on her organisation and organisationally designed role of labour to conceive the meaning and purpose of what being human "is". Indicative of the incompatibility of being true to oneself when one undertakes activities of labour not out of love for the activity itself, but to sustain the illusion that life is ordered, organised and controlled, Cecilia thus illustrates how the capitalism of spirituality does not come without significant cost to the human condition. Indeed, the seemingly stable and secure conception of being soft capitalist approaches provide are arguably seen by spiritually homeless minds such as Cecilia to affirm the belief that they can gauge their 'limits' and 'how far [they] can push [themselves]', for whilst they 'might get the odd curveball…you sort of know what's going to happen'.

Given this, it can be argued that spiritually homeless minds are not only unable to conceive of alternative conceptualisations of being, but actively seek to avoid encountering alternative conceptions and stay within the 'comfort zone' of their 'controlled environment' where they 'know [their] limits'. Enabling Cecilia to feel confident, prepared, and in control of her subjective experience of material being, her alignment to her organisation can also be seen to develop at the expense of her personal life. For example, commenting that her 'first reaction when it comes to activities or things that [she's] never done before is "No"' because it is the 'complete unknown…uncertainty that…fuels the anxiety' because 'that's where things happen that you're not prepared for', Cecilia demonstrates the dis-ease experienced when the safety derived from certain and predictable organisationally designed roles, is challenged. Rather than confront the fear evoked by her anxiety of the chaotic, unstructured and spontaneous realities of life then, Cecilia's testimony arguably outlines how spiritually homeless minds obscure their alienated state of being to the point that they lose sight of what being human "is". For example, Cecilia does not seek to contemplate or reflect what it is about the unknown and uncertainty of being that causes her to feel anxious and want to 'hide from everything'. As such, Cecilia thus highlights how some spiritually homeless minds would rather ignore their anxieties, frustrations and insecurities, and neglect to reflect on the inconsistencies between their inner beliefs, values and desires and the demands placed on their being by soft capitalist secondary institutions, to sustain and preserve the illusion of security, stability and certainty their organisational home appears to provide.

Illustrative of the belief held by spiritually homeless minds that the benefits soft capitalist approaches afford the subjective experience of existence outweighs the estrangement from the collective human condition, what can be argued is that spiritually homeless minds paradoxically deny exploration, expression of anything that may challenge or compromise such stability, such as their personal life, and consequentially to an extent their personality. More than this, however, Cecilia illustrates how soft capitalist approaches compound the reliance and dependence of spiritually homeless minds on conceptions of being promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions that reflect neoliberal rhetoric, practices and techniques but which capitalise on human resources inner beliefs, values and desires. Indeed, not encouraging human resources to "discover", "explore" and "express" "who" they "are" through worldly activity whose nature and character is inherently meaningful to their being, but who they want "to be" through the performance of labour, Cecilia's testimony arguably highlights the nullification of life beyond organisational parameters encouraged by activities of work where confrontation of the chaotic, unstructured and irregular is a prerequisite. Echoing Heelas' projections raised in Chapter Three that the attempt to make labour appear as work by soft capitalist approaches leads to the regulation of life and sacrifice of spontaneity for the sake of secular concerns such as the accumulation of profit (2008), it can be argued that the desire to control their subjective experience of existence results in a paradoxical condition of humanity whereby freedom of being is willingly conceded in the name of freedom. Evident then is the willing co-constitution of an insidious form of

totalitarianism in which life becomes regulated and predictable in order to counter the dis-ease generated by a lack of unresolved existential questioning. This is because Cecilia's testimony arguably demonstrates how spiritually homeless minds actively desire such totalitarian governance and sovereignty over being from their place of work to shield them from the disordered, unpredictable and uncertain realities of material being. Such totalitarian control over being to compensate for the growing fear of the nature and character of the reality of life itself betrays the extent to which soft capitalist approaches harm employees who respond positively to them, as is illuminated by Douglas:

> I think my personality is used against me…I'm a bit of a pushover, because I like a challenge, and because they know that I will often get given a fairly challenging job. But I like doing stuff like that so they know I'm going to say yes… And sometimes you do feel like you're being taken advantage of. But it depends how much you're willing to put up with, how much you're ok with.  I mean like I say it's a happy coincidence for me that I'm actually quite ok with it. Because I enjoy doing stuff that no one else will do because again it gives you this sense of…[pause]…It makes you valuable to the company because they know that they've got someone who can do things. And obviously, you know you also prove that you're reliable. And every company needs people like that to work for them…You know no one else could be sat doing what you're doing right now so that makes you the most important person doing what you're doing right now, which is good I guess, a good feeling...But I think everyone has like their breaking point where they just go 'OK, I don't strictly believe what I'm about to do is in the best interest of whatever, but I also know that if I do not do it it's my head, I am in trouble'. And I think a lot of people, probably the majority of people, would rather toe the line than get chastised. I'm certain that people will be forced to do things in work against their own personal belief systems because they have to.  Because if they don't the effect on them is going to be bad…[pause]...which probably causes some kind of horrible internal conflict within yourself, breaking your own belief system.

Perceiving his position fortunate due to the sense of fulfilment he derives from soft capitalist approaches in that he likes 'a challenge', at the same time, Douglas demonstrates the 'internal conflict' soft capitalist approaches cause when individuals are asked to 'work against their own personal belief systems', due to a lack of choice in having to labour in order to cater to one's biological needs and valid alternatives. This is arguably because the affirmation spiritually homeless minds receive from soft capitalist approaches make the compromises to their being, the result of labouring, appear worthwhile. For example, despite feeling his 'personality is used against [him]' and that he is being 'taken advantage of' because he is 'a bit of a pushover', Douglas justifies the organisational power and exploitation over his subjective experience of material existence on the basis that he feels like a necessary, indispensable and vital member of his organisation. Seen to enable progression toward the "actualisation" of one's subjective, latent "potentialities", Douglas' testimony not only affirms arguments raised in Chapter Five that spiritually homeless minds prize the value and recognition derived from the performance of labour and soft capitalist approaches concerning their perceived self-importance and subjective sense of being. Douglas also illustrates how spiritually homeless minds implicitly and willingly affirm totalitarian control and the exploitation of their being by soft capitalist approaches, expectations and assumptions, and in spite of the paradoxical feelings of abuse they encounter, by convincing themselves that they are 'OK with it'.

This is arguably a symptom of the reliance of spiritually homeless minds place on soft capitalist secondary institutions that provide a home through which they can counter the continual uncertainty, insecurity and instability that amounts from their spiritual homelessness. This is significant, however, for by adopting organisational perspectives of being that cause them to compromise their inner convictions, Douglas highlights how spiritually homeless minds put their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to those espoused by the organisation they work for to sustain the short-term material benefits of "feeling good". This is particularly expressed in Douglas's comment that 'the majority of people would rather toe the line than get chastised'. Highlighting the paradoxical contradictions surrounding organisational claims that soft capitalism 'brings life back to work', reflected is Arendt's comment that 'he who wants to make pleasure the ultimate end of all human action is driven to admit that not pleasure but pain, not desire but fear, are his true guides' (1958: 309). Indeed, believing the promises soft capitalist approaches extend that short-term sacrifices encountered by labouring will result in long-term pleasure, Douglas's testimony arguably illustrates the fear that underpins spiritually homeless minds motivations in complying with the demands placed on their being by soft capitalist approaches. For example, citing that if he does not comply with his organisational demands that he would be 'in trouble', Douglas illustrates how the perceived negative consequences to their overall state of being cause many spiritually homeless minds to re-wire, re-programme and re-process their perspective and align to organisational demands and expectations than accept responsibility for their situation and being, and construct for themselves a coherent and cohesive home.

Easier to conform to the demands placed on his being than question the exploitation experienced, Douglas thus makes explicit how the alternative of having to create a meaningful home in material existence that reflects his inner beliefs, values and desires is that which many spiritually homeless minds are seeking to avoid. This is significant, however, for Douglas not only demonstrates the passivity of spiritually homeless minds, and the repression experienced by neither addressing nor acknowledging their unresolved existential dis-ease. Douglas also can be considered to highlight how spiritually homeless minds would rather turn a blind eye to the fact that they compromise their being by labouring and thus deny the exploration, transformation and expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires. Justifying the harm meted out to the human condition when they labour to sustain and preserve the economic cosmos for purely secular concerns such as the accumulation of profit, Douglas arguably illustrates how spiritually homeless minds would rather break their own belief system, and spirit, than suffer the consequences of vocalising and acting upon one's own beliefs, values and desires. Indicating that it is better to have a home that is exploitative but which enables the construction of a cohesive conceptualisation of being in material existence that is meaningful and purposeful than face the responsibility of the self thrown back on the self, and construct the meaning and purpose of material existence according to one's inner beliefs, values and desires, this is important. This is because more than simply affect their own state of being by willingly compromising their being for short-term gains,

spiritually homeless minds also sacrifice the human condition in pursuit of external affirmation and material betterment afforded by soft capitalist approaches that capitalise on the human condition. This inherently damaging condition of being is particularly evident through Alastor's perspective:

> I started off being really like 'oh it's all for the greater good of the individual', but then they wouldn't do it if there wasn't something in it for them: 'we can improve you and we can make you a better person, but also better for work'. 'We'll make you a better person *for* work'. Whether it helps you get more meaning out of it so you work harder or you want more so you can aim towards getting promotion, ultimately they want you to do it better and this helps towards that…[pause]…I'm sure they would like people to stick around and help them gain more money so to speak but they can only really do that when they've got invested happy employees. But that's kind of an agreement you get into with work though, they're paying you to provide them with work, and in return, they're helping you develop so you find meaning from it and get more out of it yourself. Work is a performative role and you're going to have to kind of compromise those core beliefs at some point due to the demands of the workplace, your role and responsibilities…No judgement but sometimes you're expected to do things in order to fulfil your role in that job which might challenge the things you believe in…[long pause]…You've still got to do the job as this is stuff that's got to be done regardless, and I think it's a way that people get through the day by taking things that could be labour and making it a bit more interesting to them, a bit more amusing. And if you can disguise it as work or make it feel like work rather than labour then awesome, less strain on you!

Capturing Alastor's realisation that soft capitalist rhetoric that presents employment as the means through which to "discover", "explore" and "actualise" one's "authentic" being and latent "potentialities" is not implemented 'for the greater good of the individual' but to 'improve' employees so that they are 'a better person *for* work', Alastor's testimony illustrates the extent to which spiritually homeless minds do not critically reflect on the reason why soft capitalist approaches are implemented. Rather than seek to recognise the capitalism of spirituality unfolding, Alastor immediately reiterates the perceived benefits soft capitalist secondary institutions afford his material being. For example, choosing to believe his organisation helps him 'develop so [he can] find meaning from it and get more out of it', Alastor indicates how many spiritually homeless minds would rather continue to mindlessly perform activities that support the conceptualisation of existence they want to exist, that they will be rewarded with "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and opportunities to "self-actualise" by aligning to organisational demands, expectations and assumptions, than face the compromises to their being soft capitalist secondary institutions induce. Such argument is explicit when Alastor raises through the verbs such as 'invested' and 'happy' to project *into* his organisation his preferred rationale for such approaches, thereby enabling him to ignore and neglect the paradox he had just arrived at. Similar to Douglas then, Alastor can be seen to break his spirit to comply with his organisation's expectations and requirements surrounding his being.

Further indicating the continued reliance on soft capitalist secondary institutions by spiritually homeless minds to feel at home in the material world, such justification arguably arises from the need for self-preservation in order to protect oneself from having to face the reality of reality. With this in mind, what can be argued is that many spiritually homeless minds would rather obscure the reality of reality, than

face the reality the economic cosmos ushers in, and which they choose to affirm. For example, justifying organisational intrusions to the human condition as 'an agreement you get into with work', Alastor arguably refuses to perceive his organisation, and the impact that it has to his material being, negatively. Such a statement is also supported by Alastor's claim that 'this is stuff that's got to be done regardless' in that the world we have created depends on the receipt of a wage in order to support one's biological needs. Illustrated thus is the (non)conceptual slavery discussed in Chapter Three that abounds as a result of (non)conceptual idolatry, and the unwavering desire to sustain the façade that (non)conceptual ideals can be attained in material reality in order to protect themselves from the reality of what their organisational home requires of them. This is particularly apparent through Alastor's openness to soft capitalist conceptualisations that seek make labour 'a bit more interesting' and 'amusing' by 'disguis[ing] it as work [by making] it feel like work rather than labour'. Describing such approaches as 'awesome' in that there is 'less strain on you', this is important. This is because by making labour appear as work in order to distract spiritually homeless minds from their fallacious reality by evoking states of ecstasy and euphoria, Alastor illustrates the lack of liberty, freedom and choice in one's performance of work for employees despite the claims made by soft capitalist approaches.

Reflecting the passivity many spiritually homeless minds seem to exhibit, instead of confronting the demands and expectations placed on his being that require him to compromise his core beliefs then, Alastor highlights how spiritually homeless minds seek to protect and distance themselves from the exploitative expectations and repressive demands placed on their being by their place of employment by perceiving their labour as a 'performative role'. Reinforced then are arguments raised through Douglas's testimony above whereby spiritually homeless minds willingly exploit their being in order to retain their organisational home and avoid the responsibility of having to create their own. More than Douglas, however, Alastor highlights not only the willing acceptance that they will be asked to 'compromise [their] core beliefs', but their willing acceptance of manipulation in that 'in order to fulfil [their] role [they expect to be] challenge[d on] things [they] believe in'. Demonstrating that spiritually homeless minds would rather continue to labour and seek refuge from their spiritual homelessness within corporate organisations that require they put their inner beliefs, values and desires second than undertake activities of work and construct for themselves a home that enables the "discovery", "exploration" and "expression" of their inner beliefs, values and desires, this is important. This is because reflected are arguments made in Chapter Five that spiritually homeless minds consider the rationalisation and justification of labour made to appear as work by soft capitalist approaches better than the alternative of having to face the possibility that the frameworks they invest belief in are more damaging to their being than the alternative of accepting responsibility for oneself because, as Cecilia illustrated, saying no to such demands and taking responsibility for one's being 'takes guts'. In accepting the demands placed on their being by soft capitalist secondary institutions however,

spiritually homeless minds indicate how humanity ironically loses itself. Nowhere is this more apparent than through the testimony of Cecilia:

> I've learnt to play a role, I've learnt to appear confident when I'm not, and I'm constantly battling with that at work. Constantly. I'm very aware of how I'm performing in different situations, and for me, that's a bit of a conflict. So my whole career I've had to push and pretend and perform because I'm not a naturally confident person. And I'm very aware and I'm aware that other people are performing those roles. But that's what I find really interesting: work is a game sometimes, and you have to play that game in terms of who you're around and who you're speaking to. It's just part of life. But I think to be good at your job you do have to be good at that game. If you don't know necessarily how to play that game with professionals, so you don't know when to be professional and when to let that slip, that's when people might not progress. So even though I've got my own opinions and I've got my own way of doing things, you do have to 'fit' with everybody and now my sort of motto is 'Just be positive as much as you can'. I'll do my best at whatever, I'll perform to the highest standard that I possibly can, but it will always be at the back of my mind who I'm with and what…[pause]…*who I need to be*. So yeah I get meaning from it but it's not all me. That's why I do need, you know sometimes I'll get home from work and all I want to do is watch TV because I just want to not think and not…and just escape and just be quiet. And Chris will go 'why don't we go for a walk? dah dah dah', and I'm like 'Argh!' I just need a comfort zone because I'm not in it. I'm being pushed all the time at work and not by other people but by myself.

Reaffirming arguments raised that spiritually homeless minds play a role rather than "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their "authentic" self through organisationally designed roles of labour, Cecilia's testimony highlights that by placing their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to soft capitalist demands, that spiritually homeless minds can lose sight of "who" they are, and consequently what it is "to be" human. For example, 'even though [she's] got [her] own opinions and [her] own way of doing things', Cecilia actively seeks to 'just be as positive as much as [she] can', and override her dis-ease. Causing Cecilia to 'push and pretend and perform because [she is] not a naturally confident person' in order to play the game and ensure she is still eligible to receive perceived benefits such as 'progression' through promotion. Similar to Alastor and Douglas then, Cecilia's testimony exhibits the acceptance and justification spiritually homeless minds afford soft capitalist secondary institutions that place emphasis on their performance of labour as meaningful and purposeful to the detriment of their inner beliefs, values and desires. By seeking to 'do [her] best at whatever' and 'perform to the highest standard [she] possibly can' regardless of the task, however, Cecilia highlights the continued faith placed in the economic cosmos by most spiritually homeless minds regardless of the compromises, costs and sacrifices it demands on their being, and the negative implications its demands and activity has to the human condition. Indeed, commenting on the conflict she is 'constantly battling' due not only to the contradictory performative roles she is required to play, but the fact that she is 'aware that other people are performing those roles' too, Cecilia indicates perspective held by many spiritually homeless minds that such compromises to the human condition is 'just part of life'.

Through such resigned, willing denial, Cecilia not only highlights arguments raised in Chapter Three wherein individuals willingly prune themselves to accommodate the narrow, accepted conceptions of being activities of labour afford by aligning themselves to the demands organisations place on and over

their being. She also illustrates the paradoxical nature of such manifestations of being in that Cecilia's activity of labour is anything but an expression of her "authentic self". Reflecting arguments raised in Chapter Three that the performance of labour results in the perpetual agitation when individuals put their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to organisational aims and objectives, nowhere is this more evident than Cecilia's exhaustion that results when she is constantly having to determine who she 'needs to be' depending who she is with and the situation at hand. Highlighted then is how many spiritually homeless minds consider their performance of labour 'a game' they willingly play depending 'who [they're] around and who [they're] speaking to' in order to reap the perceived benefits of 'progression' toward "self-actualisation" through incentives such as promotion. Such mind-set is significant, however, in understanding how spiritually homeless minds "lose themselves" in their performance of labour. This is because though the game is easily definable when first initiated, what is real if everyone is performing a role? Furthermore, over time, the point in which the game ends and Cecilia "begins" arguably becomes increasingly difficult to identify as the performance induced by labour becomes her lived reality. Echoing Arendt's claim that 'nothing ejects one more radically from the world than exclusive concentration upon the body's life, a concentration forced upon man in slavery or in the extremity of unbearable pain' (1958: 31), this condition of being that results from labour is arguably illustrated in the reaction Cecilia has to activities in her personal life, as illustrated on pages 205 and 206. For example, wanting just to 'watch TV because [she] just wants to not think…and just escape and just be quiet' after pushing herself to perform and play a role all day that is not her, Cecilia highlights the detrimental impact playing a role has to her being in toto in that by not undertaking an activity whose nature and character is significant renders her increasingly unable to identify what brings her comfort, solace and recuperation within her personal life. Unable to conceive of being beyond the parameters set by activities of labour provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions when she lives from one performance to the next, rather than facilitate the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of her being her testimony on page 189 suggests, Cecilia illustrates arguments raised in Chapter Three how promises of the attainment of "self-actualisation" through labour as assured by soft capitalist approaches can be seen to induce nothing more than a state of self-annihilation. Indeed, as she continues:

> I'm more open to the fact that we're probably just going to be cogs in a big machine, and that's fine for me as long as I'm still able to do the things that I enjoy: teach; interact with students; come up with the ideas; that will be fine for me. I know it sounds like a weak way out, but honestly, I would just rather conform than have the stress. Even if I don't necessarily agree with it I'll just do it because I know I'm wise to the fact that the more you resist the more they push, which I want to avoid. And I don't believe that resisting that will do anything other than cause stress because I understand the way the world works. So now I've got a willingness to move with the times, move with technology, move with a central strategy. But I know there are people that I'm working with that won't be like that, who will resist at any opportunity, and sometimes I feel like saying 'We've got a job to do, let's just do it. Let's get the job done', but I know that's a completely different attitude from those who want to debate, who want to talk about it, whereas I just think, 'Let's just get it done'.

Accepting of 'the fact that [humanity is] probably just going to be cogs in a big machine', Cecilia's testimony illustrates the self-annihilation that results when spiritually homeless minds willingly place their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to the demands, expectations and assumptions of the economic cosmos by labouring, and the significant consequences self-annihilation under the guise of self-actualisation has to the human condition. This is explicit in her testimony when she states such changes are 'fine for [her] as long as [she's] still able to do the things that [she] enjoys', such as teaching, interacting with students and coming up with ideas. Unable to recognise either her fallacy nor the hypocrisy of her statement in that aspects of her role typically characteristic of work are likely to decrease the more humanity labours and becomes cogs in a machine, however, such annihilation is not just induced by soft capitalist secondary institutions then. Rather, it is co-constituted by spiritually homeless minds who would 'rather conform than have the stress even if [they do not] necessarily agree' than take a stand for the human condition and refute the alienating demands of activities of labour undertaken to sustain and preserve the economic cosmos. Indeed, claiming such passivity to arise from the fact that she 'understands the way the world works' and that 'the more you resist the more they push', it is precisely this passivity and lack of resistance to the alienating demands of the economic cosmos and activities of labour that causes and perpetuates the annihilation of being.

Through her acceptance of the status quo then, Cecilia justifies her 'willingness to move with the times, move with technology [and] move with a central strategy' by her desire for an easy life. From this perspective, Cecilia implicitly and complicity affirms and validates the exploitation and abuse of the human condition made possible through soft capitalist approaches by adopting the beliefs, values and desires of the economic cosmos over the interests of the collective human condition. Despite this, Cecilia's testimony can also be considered to indicate the fear spiritually homeless minds harbour in terms of retribution from the economic cosmos to those that resist its demands. Leading to the suggestion that Cecilia's acceptance of, and conformity to, external demands that usher in the mechanisation of the human condition can be seen as Cecilia's attempt to protect herself from the realities of her self-annihilation, the result of ever increasing, detrimental demands placed on her being, this is significant. This is because Cecilia arguably highlights how the acceptance of self-annihilation by spiritually homeless minds also compounds alienation and annihilation of the collective human condition from the world. This is evident in the resentment Cecilia harbours toward her colleagues who seek to resist the demands of the economic cosmos and refute soft capitalist attempts to capitalise on the human condition through the promise of the attainment of neoliberal (non)conceptual values. Indeed, forced to confront that which they actively seek to avoid, that faith in the economic cosmos is one of many way of being in the material world, the resistance of others and the different beliefs, values and desires other than those that maintain and sustain the economic cosmos they hold threaten the stability, security and ease of material existence spiritually homeless minds desperately crave.

What Cecilia makes clear then, is how many spiritually homeless minds re-direct the frustration and anxiety encountered away from the home provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions and the economic cosmos, and toward the collective human condition that compromises the certainty, security and stability derived from organisational homes. Cecilia's testimony thus highlights the vicious circle many spiritually homeless minds find themselves in when they willingly compromise their being for the perceived material and personal "betterment" believed to be attainable by belonging to a home provided soft capitalist secondary institutions. As such, Cecilia's testimony indicates a state of being characteristic of spiritually homeless minds ruled by slavery and pain (Arendt, 1958) as outlined in Chapter Three. This has significant consequences for the collective human condition, however. Indeed, driven by their fear of pain and slavery to the (non)conceptual neoliberal values they idolise, and which soft capitalist secondary institutions echo, many spiritually homeless minds are arguably unable to recognise how their affirmation of, and conformity to, a value system that entrenches and solidifies their alienation and annihilation impacts the collective human condition, nor future generations. This is because, seeking not to fight the demands of the economic cosmos and the alienating activities of labour it promotes, but to 'get the job done' without questioning why it's important, who benefits most from its undertaking, and what the long-term consequences of getting their job done may have to nature, the natural world and thus the human condition, spiritually homeless minds do nothing but exacerbate the condition of world alienation and homelessness induced by the economic cosmos, to the collective human condition. As Cecilia's testimony demonstrates, however, many spiritually homeless minds absolve themselves from the responsibility of their choices and the consequences of their decision because they value the short-term benefits the economic cosmos affords their subjective experience of material existence by providing a home that portrays material existence as secure, stable and certain. The ramifications of self-annihilation to the collective human condition when spiritually homeless minds reject their responsibility and co-constitute such a state of being is made explicit by Leah when she discusses the nature of younger generations entering her place of work:

> I see coming through into work now people who are moulded into what they think they should be. Like there's this expectation that things will come easily, and one of the most frustrating ones I see is that people expect to be told exactly how to do something, in a box to do everything within…Sometimes it's a fear of failure that I see a lot in the public sector, which makes us terrified to take risks, so we do everything in a mediocre way. And while they're afraid of failure, saying things like #epicfail is laughing at failure, laughing at people who took chances and took the risk, and that it's laughable when it doesn't work. So they don't challenge things and they're not critical and they're not exciting anymore. For example, I've just got a new team member and he's come in with this view that there must be a 'right way' to do it and I need to teach him the 'right way', and he doesn't understand because I'm not telling him exactly how to do things. It's like he's almost scared that if he does it wrong he's going to get told off, but just because he puts a document together a different way to how I do is not a problem, there are different ways of doing things. I don't know where we forgot that it's OK to just be good! And actually, I'm not old but I'm getting older and I am going to get more set in what I think's the 'right way' and I need that breed of people to come through and challenge me because if I don't have those people there to draw energy from then I'll stagnate as well.

Commenting that many of the younger generations coming to her place of work are 'moulded into what they think they should be', Leah highlights how the desire for an easy life characteristic of spiritually homeless minds and the lack of responsibility they take in causing a condition of being characterised by fear, resentment and dis-ease, exposes future generations to a normalised condition of self-annihilation under the guise of self-actualisation. This is because by placing faith in the economic cosmos to provide stability, certainty and stability for the human condition, but increasingly unable and unwilling to reflect on the affect activities of labour have to the human condition, such as the loss of culturally accepted, public spaces to express human faculties of thought, action and speech activities, the future human condition is likely to be rendered incapable of thinking, acting and speaking in the material world in a meaningful, and human, manner. Such argument is exacerbated by the fact that many of the younger generation are spiritually homeless minds in that they place their faith in the economic cosmos and the neoliberal (non)conceptual values it promotes such as continual "improvement" and "betterment". This is made explicit in Leah's testimony, wherein younger generations entering her organisation are so used to denying the expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires because life is a constant performance when activities of work and works of art and their significant nature and character are neglected and replaced by activities of labour made to appear as work, that many are 'terrified to take risks' and unwilling to take a chance on opportunities that arise due to their fear of failure. Rendering the human condition increasingly afraid to 'challenge things', be 'critical' and thus 'not [be] exciting anymore' by wanting to be told and taught 'the "right way" to do' something, not only illustrated is the loss of shared common sense through the rise of soft capitalist approaches that remove responsibility of the human condition from humanity. Also evident is how the human condition has willingly paralysed itself into a state of stagnation in that many 'expect to be told exactly how to do something'.

Leah's testimony thus indicates the fundamental alienation from comprehension of what it is "to be" human in a world that prizes the continual progression of being without questioning "where" or "what" humanity is progressing toward. Thus, when the human condition strives to "actualise" being in material reality according to neoliberal (non)conceptual values, ideals and desires that the human condition forgets that 'it's OK just to be good'. This is particularly the case when humanity willingly performs activities of labour at the expense of activities of work and works of art, however. This is because meaning derived from activities of labour depend on the external judgement of soft capitalist secondary institutions. As Chapter Three made clear through Costea and colleagues, however, soft capitalist secondary institutions will never tell human resources they are "good enough" because it risks compromising the efficient and productive performance that secures their competitive advantage (2015). Thus by no longer deriving meaning and purpose from the nature and character of their worldly activity and their inner judgement, spiritually homeless minds have no means through which they can ever feel that they are "good enough". Paradoxically perpetuating the strength of and legitimising the

need for external frameworks to impart judgement of and over one's being in the material world, echoed then is discussion raised in Chapter Three and above wherein the human condition is annihilated by its self-induced mediocrity the result of narrowing acceptable, or perceived acceptable, states of being. A condition marked by the willing acceptance of the status quo that reinforces and perpetuates attitudes such as Cecilia's above, Leah thus demonstrates how the reliance on external beliefs, values and desires to cope with the loss of humanity's shared and collective home in the material world chokes instead of nourishes being. This being so, also evident then is how the desire to "self-actualise" one's latent "potentialities" in the material world results in a condition of self-annihilation that is not only not recognised, but which is perceived ironically as good for humanity.

## Chapter summary

Obscuring the structural stagnation of worldly activity through ideological transformations that draw on culturally relevant neoliberal values, ideals and desires to appeal to employees, this chapter highlights the susceptibility of spiritually homeless minds to soft capitalist approaches that capitalise on their spiritual homelessness in order to promote the accumulation of profit. Perceiving such developments to symbolise how contemporary organisations care for and are concerned for the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of their being in the material world, this chapter highlights how organisations that adopt soft capitalist approaches provide homes for material being for spiritually homeless minds who undertake activities of labour as opposed to work. A collective they feel a sense of belonging, self-worth and value, organisational homes provided by the economic cosmos are compounded by soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to distract, pacify and soothe the need for many to acknowledge their unresolved existential dis-ease. Affirming what spiritually homeless minds want to hear and believe concerning the significance of the subjective experience of material existence, and their perceived irrelevance of the need to contemplate being after death, such approaches are not regarded as exploitative or detrimental to being by spiritually homeless minds. Rather, conceived as beneficial in terms of material benefits received and a sign that their organisation cares for and is concerned for the development of their subjective being, they are willingly co-constituted. This is because organisational attempts to overcome spiritual homelessness through the inclusion of ambiguous, abstract and (non)conceptual values and ideals enable many spiritually homeless minds to believe they are actively becoming what they "ought to be" in the material world. Explored through organisational inclusion of practices such as mindfulness, what is evident is how, depending whether they are open to metaphysical frameworks of belief or whether they find them antagonistic, many spiritually homeless minds imbue primary institutions adopting soft capitalist approaches either with religious significance, symbolism and attributes, or with scientific rationale and mathematical reason.

As Chapter Five made clear, however, the idea of meaning and purpose conceptualised into the performance of labour is vastly different from the reality its performance affirms and confirms, and which it brings into being. Argued to represent the capitalism of spirituality, this was made explicit by the fact that the self-work ethic is not only incompatible with soft capitalist approaches, but actively denied by organisationally designed roles and soft capitalist secondary institutions that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques. More than this, however, Chapter Six indicated that spiritually homeless minds co-constitute this incompatibility through their belief that (non)conceptual values and ideals such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" are attainable in material reality through the performance of activity whose nature and character constitutes labour. Resulting in mindless productivity that affirms the values, principles and ideals of the economic cosmos at the expense of opportunities to express one's inner beliefs, values and desires either into nature and the natural world or through the sustenance and preservation of the collective human condition, the misappropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques thus serves as a means of continuously edifying the self rather than transfiguration of the self. This chapter demonstrates then how spiritually homeless minds occupy a condition of being that Arendt identified as having the choice between productive slavery or unproductive freedom. This is because soft capitalist approaches neither acknowledge the finitude of material existence, nor what mortality means in relation to the concept of self-actualisation in material reality. Rather, trapping human resources within a cycle of life-affirming rhetoric, practices and techniques that promise the attainment of self-actualisation through the efficient and productive performance of organisationally designed roles, primary institutions adopting soft capitalist approaches provide neither suitable or adequate homes for being in the material world in that they do not cater to all aspects of what it means "to be" either within or beyond material existence.

Constituting instead the neglect of one's personal and private life in favour of ordered, controlled and predictable forms of being promoted organisationally, this chapter highlights then the paradoxical nullification of life and reduction of being when organisations seek to bring life back to work. This is because, inducing a state of passive mobilisation through the misappropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques, the above testimonies demonstrate the increasing dependency and desire for the extension of organisational control, authority and sovereignty over the human condition. Illustrating how soft capitalism functions as a system of governance that manages employees through fear of what is perceived and felt to be lacking in their life to the point that they push themselves to the brink in the belief that they have no limits, spiritually homeless minds thus break their spirit to remove the responsibility of constructing a perspective of being through their inner beliefs, values and desires. Evident through the fact that spiritually homeless minds can put their beliefs, values and desires secondary to those held by the organisation they work for to the point that many forget what their inner beliefs, values and desires *are*, illustrated is the willed self-exploitation in pursuit of "self-actualisation".

This is because soft capitalist approaches seek to overcome the problem of work through the ideological transformation and re-conceptualisation of the concept of work alone, and in spite of, the structure of work. Rather than add to the world of permanence and durability through activities of work whose nature and character is meaningful and purposeful to the collective human condition, activities of labour promoted by soft capitalist approaches and re-conceptualised to affirm the reality and central significance of the subjective experience of existence, serve to tear down the world of permanence and durability.

Echoing arguments raised in Chapter Three wherein the economic cosmos no longer serves the world and its things but has begun to rule and destroy the world of things, organisations of the economic cosmos that provide a home for being in the material world provide a home that is at a cost to the collective human condition. Leading to the alienation of spiritually homeless minds from the human condition by reducing what are considered acceptable modes of being, to modes of being that support and sustain values and principles reflective of the economic cosmos, this is concerning. This is because what arguably results is a condition of humanity wherein to be alienated from the nature and character of one's worldly activity is not only considered normal, but necessary for the progression of one's being in the material world. Highlighted thus is how spiritually homeless minds no longer recognise what it means "to be" part of the collective human condition, but "to be" human. Rather, used to adopting roles, performances and playing games to be not "who" they "are" or want "to be", but what they need "to be", this chapter indicates the (non)conceptual slavery endemic within the contemporary human condition that results from (non)conceptual idolatry. This is because soft capitalist approaches that promise employees can "self-actualise" through the performance of worldly activity require employees to willingly self-annihilate their inner beliefs, values and desires for the sustentation, support and progression of the economic cosmos. Annihilating their inner beliefs, values and desires to avoid having to confront the reality that they willingly create and affirm through their worldly activity, yet unwilling to recognise that they are the cause of their dis-ease, however, what results is a stagnated state of being in the material world. Symbolic of our fear of failing to "self-actualise" and "become" all one "ought to be", this chapter thus illustrates how the annihilation of the human condition is not a condition imposed onto humanity, but a co-constituted condition that emerges as a result of the narrowing of perspectives of being to revolve exclusively around the subjective experience of material existence. A state of being particularly characterised by younger generations due to the insidious extension and applicability of soft capitalist approaches throughout primary institutions of the economic cosmos, paradoxically then, the annihilation of humanity under the guise of "self-actualisation" is not only likely to increase, but become the normalised state of being in contexts that have undergone processes of secularisation, and strive for perpetual technical progressivism.

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This thesis has made a number of contributions to the fields of Organisation and Religious Studies. Conceptually, this thesis analysed the construction of meaning through work as a historical social, cultural and political phenomenon to suggest that where sociological analysis of religion has neglected such enquiry, much literature originating from Organisational Studies oversimplifies this relational dynamic. Indicating the continued significance of the relational dynamic that exists between metaphysical belief, the activity of work and the economic cosmos in contexts that have undergone technical advancement following processes of secularisation, the discussion has been informed by the work of Arendt and Berger, to provide a timely and novel perspective of the significance of worldly activity conceived as work that enriches current Organisational literature. Concerning Berger, this thesis utilised his observations of the problem of work that results in contexts that have undergone processes of secularisation and technical advancement, and applied such observations to his later theoretical analysis of homeless minds in order to develop theory that metaphysical belief remains of paramount importance to the construction of meaning of the human condition through worldly activity. Revealing how the processes of secularisation and technical advancement have impacted the human condition, such discussion was developed and underpinned through application of a number of theoretical arguments raised by Arendt in *The Human Condition*. Of particular significance was the distinction Arendt makes between activities of work and works of art, and activities of labour through which she demonstrates the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the human condition and the construction of meaning relative to being within and beyond material existence.

The differences that amount between perspectives of being, the relation of being to the collective human condition and the ontological ethos that underpins activities of work and works of art, and activities of labour that Arendt identified were developed conceptually through the self-work ethic as it manifests from the countercultural revolution and through soft capitalist secondary institutions. In doing so, a more nuanced appreciation of its manifestation in relation to the nature and character of worldly activity, and how the nature and character of activity affects and shapes the human condition unfolded. Simply, the nature and character of activities of work and works of art encourage an ethic of work that positions the enactor both in relation to the natural world and humanity across generations in a manner that is oriented toward the collective human condition. This is because the nature and character of work and works of art is activity that enables humanity expression of emotion, experience and ideals such as beauty, through speech, thought and action that inherently preserves and sustains the shared and collective world of permanence and durability. In contrast, activities of labour encourage a condition of being oriented toward the subject in isolation from the human condition. This is because, underpinned by an ethos exemplified by the economic cosmos that values efficient and productive activity for the

sustentation and preservation of the biological life processes of the human condition, the nature and character of activities of labour do not situate the human condition in relation to the natural world or the human condition across generations, but perpetuate focus on one's subjective experience of material existence.

Such findings contribute both to the existing literature of Organisation and Religious Studies. Regarding Organisation Studies, this thesis suggests that dominant perspectives held by Organisation scholars unquestioningly position and frame research to affirm organisational perspectives, aims and objectives. This, however, over-simplifies a considerably complex and nuanced cultural development, in that such literature concludes that the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques facilitates the instrumentalisation of human resources for corporate profit. By framing the inclusion of metaphysical belief through the lens of organisational concerns, however, attention is drawn to the limitations of research undertaken within Organisation Studies that adopts an insider's position in that such literature fails to question its taken-for-granted assumptions. This is particularly concerning when research surrounds metaphysical belief, for when an insider's position is adopted, metaphysical belief is viewed through the lens of the economic cosmos. Through philosophical assumptions held by organisational research adopting an insider's position then, metaphysical belief is not approached as a perspective of "truth", but inferior to the "truth" of the organisation, and its economic aims and objectives. This is contrary to research that adopts an outsider's position, such as sociological analysis of religion, which does not emerge from grounded theory, but encourages comparative analysis that seeks to understand metaphysical belief in relation to other positions, values and contexts. Through application of sociological analysis of religion then, this thesis demonstrates how dominant perspectives surrounding metaphysical belief in Organisation Studies such as Tracey (2012), and more critical voices such as Bell and Taylor (2004), do not account for the wider social, historical, cultural and geographical developments that both Berger and Arendt draw attention to.

Justifying the need to explore the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos as it manifests through contemporary forms of employment through the sociological analysis of religion, this thesis indicates how organisational research can benefit from outsider approaches adopted by sociological analysis of religion, not only in relation to metaphysical belief, but enquiry in general. This is because, by starting research from an outsider's position as opposed to an insider's perspective, researchers not only question their preconceived and unquestioned assumptions, expectations and perspectives. Furthermore, by questioning assumptions of a given perspective, research is approached in a reflective, reflexive and curious manner that enriches the research process, findings and conclusions in that the wider context and perspectives are incorporated into the research process. Most significant, however, in foregoing perspectives that favour the economic cosmos, and its aims and objectives that are fundamentally alien to the human condition, research naturally begins to place concerns, perspectives and questions emanating from, and central to, the human condition at the

heart of research. More than this, however, an insider's approach to research typically reinforces readership to predominantly consist of those who share the perspectives, beliefs and assumptions of the research. In adopting an outsider's approach, however, research undertaken would not only become more engaged with the significant value and wealth of social, cultural, historical and philosophical research, but would also encourage interdisciplinary debate, collaboration and readership between various disciplines. Enriching academia in general as opposed to the domain of Organisation Studies exclusively, this is imperative. This is because interdisciplinary understanding, collaboration and learning, whilst often neglected and forgotten, is a cornerstone of all academic discourse in the pursuit to further knowledge and contemplation.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this research, to structure the conclusions drawn it is prudent to return to the research questions identified in the introduction, and which underpin the narrative of this thesis to frame the discussion.

> Following the decline of faith in traditional forms of organised religion, what significance does metaphysical belief pose to the activity defined as "work" in the contemporary UK?

In regard to the research question concerning the significance of metaphysical belief to activity referred to as "work", in line with Arendt and Berger's theoretical insights, the empirical data of this research highlights the profound impact processes of secularisation and the decline of metaphysical belief have had to the human condition in technically advanced societies. Through application of sociological analysis of religion, this thesis demonstrates how dominant perspectives surrounding metaphysical belief in Organisation Studies such as Tracey (2012), and more critical voices such as Bell and Taylor (2004), do not account for the wider social, historical, cultural and geographical developments that continue to shape approaches to work when organisational perspectives are unquestioningly assumed as "correct". Justified thus, was the need to explore the relational dynamic between metaphysical belief and the economic cosmos as it manifests through contemporary forms of employment through the sociological analysis of religion. As such, this thesis first provided a historical account of the social and cultural developments of the UK context to illustrate how metaphysical frameworks of belief are significant to activity defined as "work" because it is through such activity that humanity can explore what being "is", consider the finitude of material existence, and contemplate questions of ultimate concern. Discussing how worldly activity of work had once provided a symbolic means of securing certainty and confidence of one's salvation in the afterlife when the economic cosmos was encapsulated by and within metaphysical frameworks of belief, this thesis posed how metaphysical belief is now encapsulated by the economic cosmos as a result of the fluctuations and eventual decline of traditional frameworks of metaphysical belief. A development facilitated by the spirit of capitalism that imbued worldly activity with meaning and purpose relative exclusively to the subjective experience of material

existence (Weber, 1905), no longer is the expression of being through worldly activity referred to as work considered symbolic of one's future being *after* life, but one's future being within material existence. More than this however, through exploration of Weber's Protestant work ethic, this thesis discussed how comprehension of worldly activity encouraged through metaphysical frameworks of belief also enables individuals to comprehend being in relation to the collective human condition. This is because, by positioning worldly activity as a moral and ethical obligation, metaphysical frameworks of belief encourage the human condition to consider the effect their worldly activity has toward the wider collective population.

As this thesis made clear, however, when metaphysical frameworks of belief decline, what results is a condition of being that is spiritually homeless in that most of humanity finds it incredibly difficult to construct for themselves a coherent and cohesive ontological position, and particularly in contexts where societal members are required to occupy plural social life-worlds (Berger et al., 1973). In order to avoid the responsibility of having to construct for themselves a coherent and comprehensive framework of being, and enable material existence to appear both meaningful and purposeful, and certain, stable and secure, however, this research indicated how many spiritually homeless minds put their faith in human-inspired frameworks of being of the economic cosmos. Such faith in the economic cosmos relies on neoliberal rhetoric that misappropriates metaphysical ideology, practice and techniques to reinforce the belief that being experienced exclusively in the material world is inherently meaningful and purposeful. Arguably constituting a religion itself in that it is couched within Utilitarian perspectives of morality and ethicality, scientific rationale, mathematical logic and psychology, the ethos of the economic cosmos is characterised by Enlightenment principles and neoliberal values to instil a sense of meaning and purpose concerning the experience of material existence to lie within worldly activity that promotes technological advancement for the accumulation of capital and progression of humanity toward a pain free and effortless condition. Where metaphysical frameworks of belief located the sovereign of the human condition beyond material existence, and in doing so, comprehension of the meaning of material being to lie beyond the experience of material existence, in contrast, frameworks of belief of the economic cosmos locate the sovereign of the human condition within the material world, and thus its meaning as knowable within and during material existence. Thus, rather than provide a home for being in the material world that facilitates and encourages contemplation of questions of ultimate concern, such as the finitude of material existence, through worldly activity, the home for being provided by the economic cosmos encourages the belief that being can be known through worldly activity that sustains and preserves life processes and biological needs necessary to allow for concentration on the subjective experience of material existence.

That is to say, worldly activity whose nature and character sustains and preserves the world of permanence and durability across generations, and the extent to which its nature and character encourages the confrontation of the mortal condition of being, is no longer regarded as meaningful.

Rather, ushering in a new kind of faith in the world as it appears, is talked and thought about rather than how it actually "is", worldly activity referred to as "work" has become increasingly symbolic of progression toward a pain-free and effortless future condition of being exclusively within material existence that disregards and obscures the finitude of material existence. Demonstrating the continued significance of belief to comprehend material existence as meaningful, this thesis thus illustrated how faith in the economic cosmos has significantly transformed the significance of worldly activity to the human condition. This is because, as worldly activity that reflects the aims and interests and values of the economic cosmos rises in prominence, it becomes increasingly difficult for humanity to comprehend being in relation to the collective human condition. Following the decline of metaphysical belief then, this thesis argues that no longer is activity selected either because of the appeal its nature and character represents to the individual, or because the use item or artefact created sustains and preserves the home of permanence and durability constructed in the material world by, and for, the collective human condition.

What is argued is that there is a correlation between the decline of faith in metaphysical frameworks of belief, and an increase activity undertaken whose nature and character does not allow for expression of one's being, but for progress of the human condition in the material world as defined by values and principles designed to sustain and preserve belief of, and in, the economic cosmos. More than simply illustrate the correlation between the decline of metaphysical belief and the alienated condition of humanity, however, this research also indicated the correlation between decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief, and rise of activity organised under the principles of efficiency and productivity for the accumulation of profit entrenches the condition of alienation. This is argued to be because of the lack of regard the economic cosmos has for the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity undertaken. Indeed, where metaphysical frameworks of belief provide the human condition security, certainty and stability of being within and beyond the material world that is affirmed and confirmed through worldly activity undertaken in material existence, this is not possible through worldly activity inspired by the economic cosmos. This research thus affirmed Nietzsche and Arendt's argument that the death of God has fundamentally altered, reduced and isolated notions of what being "is" and how it can be known by enabling the human condition to perceive itself as masters of its own condition in that worldly activity has become increasingly significant to the experience of material existence alone. It also reflected sentiments expressed by Berger (1964), that the structural stagnation of worldly activity that results when the significance of metaphysical frameworks of belief to the construction of meaning and purpose of the human condition, are neglected, compounds and entrenches the alienated state of being.

As this research demonstrates, however, despite the rise of faith in the economic cosmos, this is not to say that metaphysical belief is no longer significant to activity defined as "work" in the contemporary UK context. Indeed, as Berger and colleagues identified, the alienating forces of work organised under

the division of labour by the economic cosmos and ontological devaluation of worldly activity referred to as "work" resulted in a renewed search for meaning and purpose of material existence (1973). This is because though metaphysical frameworks of belief have declined in prominence within the contemporary UK context, not only does contemplation of questions of ultimate concern still prevail, but humanity still seeks to conceive meaning and purpose of the human condition. Resulting in the renewed reliance on alternative metaphysical frameworks and collective structures free from the historical baggage association with Christianity, the significance of New Age forms of metaphysical belief to activity defined as "work" was explored first by Heelas through the notion of the "self-work ethic" (1996). Similar to the Protestant work ethic, the self-work ethic not only encourages individuals to comprehend what being "is" within and beyond material existence, but reinvigorates worldly activity undertaken as significant to the collective human condition through the expression of human emotion, experience and concerns through its nature and character. This is evident through the proliferation of counterculturalists who undertook activities that allowed them to not only express their inner beliefs, values and desires, but which sustain and preserve the collective world of permanence and durability by contributing to the wider community, such as teaching and counselling, forestry, gardening and art. Unlike the Protestant work ethic that considered worldly activity ontologically valuable in relation to the confidence its performance symbolised regarding the future condition of being in the afterlife, however, the self-work ethic, though malleable to interpretation concerning the future condition of being in the afterlife, primarily positions worldly activity as significant the extent to which its inherent nature and character enables the expression of one's "authentic self" within material existence. Contrary to the meaning and purpose of worldly activity conceived by the economic cosmos that revolves around the extent to which the performance of worldly activity is efficient and productive for the accumulation of profit in the material world, this research demonstrated how worldly activity through the self-work ethic becomes ontologically valuable again when the significance of its nature and character is recognised as significant in relation to its performance.

Evident then is the continued need for an underlying ethos for worldly activity referred to as "work" to be conceptualised as meaningful to the human condition in the contemporary UK context. As outlined above, however, most perspectives held in contexts that have undergone processes of secularisation and technical progression are not framed by an ethos originating from a metaphysical cosmos, but the economic cosmos. In order to combat the proliferation of alienation that results when worldly activity is ontologically devalued by the economic cosmos then, what this research highlighted is the incorporation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques within organisationally designed roles of the economic cosmos to manufacture meaning and purpose into such activities. What is clear then is how the significance of metaphysical frameworks of belief to worldly activity referred to as "work" is recognised by institutions of the economic cosmos to mobilise human resources to perform their roles efficiently and productively. This was explored through the development of soft capitalist neoliberal

rhetoric, practices and techniques that emerged in prominence during the 1980s (Heelas & Woodhead, 2001; Heelas, 2002; Costea et al, 2008). Rooted within metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques developed by secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution, this research argued that soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to function in a manner similar to secondary institutions of the 1960s countercultural revolution in order to overcome the condition of alienation organisationally designed roles typically induce. In doing so, organisationally designed roles provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions are no longer seen as alienating. Rather, they appeal because the incorporation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques developed in the 1960s make it appear as though organisationally designed roles facilitate the "discovery", "exploration" and "actualisation" of one's "authentic" self. Strengthening organisational cultures by positioning corporate organisations to appear to care for and be concerned with the being of their human resources, it is argued then that soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to encourage the self-work ethic to manifest through organisationally designed roles to make such inherently alienating activity appear meaningful and purposeful to the experience of material existence.

That such appropriation is possible highlights how the economic cosmos now encapsulates metaphysical belief as opposed to past dynamic wherein metaphysical frameworks of belief encapsulated economic activity. This research thus outlined how the ethos of the economic cosmos conveyed through soft capitalism through the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques substitutes for metaphysical frameworks of belief by replacing contemplation and consideration of being beyond material existence, and which position being within the collective human condition, with culturally relevant neoliberal values, expectations and assumptions. As such, this research details how the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalism reinforces the values of the economic cosmos in that it emphasises the significance of the subjective experience of material existence in isolation from the collective condition of being, and recognition of its finitude.

Illustrating the response to the problem of work by soft capitalist secondary institutions of the economic cosmos, this thesis outlined how spiritually homeless minds seek out organisationally designed roles provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions because they are searching for a home through which they can derive certainty, stability and security concerning the meaning and purpose of their subjective experience of material existence that distracts them from contemplating and acknowledging the finitude of material existence. This is contrary to secondary institutions that emerged during the countercultural revolution, which provide homes for being within and beyond the material world that encourage conceptions of one's "authentic" being within and in relation to the collective human condition through worldly activity whose nature and character encourages reciprocation and contribution. What this research made clear then, is how activities promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions whose nature and character reflects values and principles of the economic cosmos such as material and personal

"betterment", "achievement" and "self-actualisation", provide a home for being in the material world that encourages the "discovery", "development" and "actualisation" of one's being in isolation from, and in spite of, the collective human condition. Whilst metaphysical belief continues to be of significance to the construction of meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as "work" in the contemporary context then, this research argues that soft capitalism mis-appropriates metaphysical frameworks of belief for the good of the economic cosmos rather than the good of the human condition, with potentially grave consequences to the human condition. This is because though it enables organisations to extend a promise to employees that reflects what many want to hear and believe, such promises have no bearing on the reality of material existence. Reinforcing the condition of alienation but obscuring it from the attention of spiritually homeless minds through the mis-appropriation of practices such as mindfulness, yoga and coaching, what this research argues then is that soft capitalism encourages the loss of comprehension of what it is "to be" in toto.

What significance does the specific nature and character of worldly activity have to the construction and conception of being in technically advanced, secularised contexts following the subjective spiritual turn?

Responding to the second research question regarding the significance the specific nature and character of worldly activity has to conceptions of being in technically advanced, secular contexts, soft capitalist secondary institutions that appropriate metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques do not encourage contemporary beings to "discover", "explore" and "express" their inner beliefs, values and desires through worldly activity undertaken, however. Rather, framing metaphysical rhetoric, practices and beliefs on culturally relevant (non)conceptual, neoliberal ideals, expectations and assumptions such as the desire to be "happy", to achieve material and personal "betterment" and aspirations to "actualise" their "authentic" self and latent "potentialities", soft capitalism successfully obscures the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to the human condition by presenting the performance of worldly activity as meaningful to the attainment of neoliberal values desired. Such argument was outlined through Arendt's distinction between activities of work, works and art and activities of labour, which demonstrated how, following the decline of metaphysical frameworks of belief that positioned activities of work and works of art as the means through which being can be known within and beyond material existence, what rose to fill the moral, ethical and ideological gap left was an ideology built on the values and principles of the economic cosmos. Characterised by scientific rationale, mathematical reason, utilitarian ethics and psychological assumptions that value being in material existence exclusively, this research posed that the nature and character of activities of work and works of art, and the nature of being such activities foster, are incompatible with the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos. Through Arendt's thesis then, this research posed that the nature and character of

organisationally designed roles provided by organisations that reflect the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos are activities of labour regardless whether they appear as work through soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques.

The theoretical argument raised in Chapter Three were explored through empirical data collected in Chapters Five and Six. As Chapter Four made clear however, due to space, the focus of the analysis chapters revolved around perspectives held by the ideal types identified by Heelas and Woodhead (2000) and Woodhead (2016) "religions of humanity" and "nones" because such ontological perspectives represent spiritually homeless perspectives held by the majority of individuals in contemporary society. In particular, Chapter Five explored the significance of worldly activity to the construction and conception of the human condition following the subjective spiritual turn by examining the relationship between metaphysical belief and the selection, approach and construction of meaning and purpose of being afforded through work. From testimonies gathered, this research indicated that many spiritually homeless minds do not regard worldly activity referred to as work as activity through which they are able to express their inner beliefs, values and desires in the material world through the reification and fabrication of an item or artefact, but equate work with activity that they receive economic return from its performance. That is to say, activities of work are no longer recognised as work by many spiritually homeless minds. Made possible by neoliberal soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques that imbues its performance with transformative and transfigurative qualities characteristic of work and works of art, this was made explicit through the fact that those interviewed did not consider activities they undertake as hobbies as activities of work, despite the freedom, creativity and social connection experienced through its undertaking, and the means of expression it affords their inner beliefs, values and desires in material reality. Rather, most interviewed considered undertaking their hobby as their employment undesirable in that they would no longer be able to escape the drudgery experienced in material existence, or obscure the demands placed on their being by the economic cosmos. Unable or unwilling to recognise that their need to escape and obscure demands placed on their being through their organisation of employment emerges as a result of the fact that they undertake activities of labour rather than work, this research found that most spiritually homeless minds prefer to undertake organisationally deigned roles of labour because they could conceptualise into its performance the preferred meaning and purpose derived.

That it is the performance that is considered significant by spiritually homeless minds interviewed as opposed to the nature and character of the specific activity, this research indicated a preference of most spiritually homeless minds to undertake activities of labour rather than work. Simply then, organisationally designed roles normalise the condition of alienation in technically advanced, labourers' societies that have undergone processes of secularisation. As this research made clear through Arendt's analysis and classification of worldly activity (1958), however, when the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity is neglected, the self-work ethic cannot emerge. This is because the self-

work ethic of the countercultural revolution recognised the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity in enabling not only the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires in material existence, but in enabling the construction of meaning and purpose of the experience of material existence could in relation to the collective human condition through the reification and fabrication of a use item, or social provision. Adding thus to the world of permanence and durability through the transformative and transfigurative faculties of activities of work and works of art, this is in contrast to the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions, which place value solely in the performance of worldly activity that disregards the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity. What this research made clear then, is how soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to make activities of labour appear as meaningful to the human condition for the attainment of aims and objectives of the economic cosmos. In doing so, however, the meaning and purpose derived from such activity can only revolve around the subject wherein its performance is considered meaningful and purposeful the extent to which it enables being to progress toward a "better" future condition in material existence. Where a sense of ownership, responsibility and purpose within their experience of existence is achieved through activities of work and works of art through the inherent worth of the nature and character of the activity, a sense of ownership, responsibility and purpose within their experience of existence can only be achieved through activities of labour when transformation and transfiguration is *imagined into* its performance.

That soft capitalist secondary institutions seek to appropriate transformative and transfigurative aspects of worldly activity defined by Arendt as work and works of art and transplant them into activities of labour through neoliberal (non)conceptual values and ideas assimilated into its performance, however, this research reaffirmed the significance of the nature and character of activities of work and works of art as defined by Arendt. This is because only when activities of labour appear as transfigurative and transformative can soft capitalist approaches focus employees' attention toward the imagined possibilities and conceived potentials its performance is believed to symbolise. That is to say, only when human resources invest belief into re-conceptualisations of labour promoted by ideological transformations of neoliberal soft capitalist approaches that the performance of organisationally designed roles is synonymous with their trajectory of being can the self-work ethic *appear* compatible with activities of labour. By aligning their perceived trajectory of being to organisationally designed roles in order to "become" what they feel they "ought" "to be", however, spiritually homeless minds deny not only their inner beliefs, values and desires, but what they hold as meaningful and purposeful. This is evident through the fact that organisationally designed roles made meaningful by soft capitalist approaches do not ask employees to consider 'how do I want to spend my time?', 'what activity complements my beliefs, values and desires?', 'what is the purpose of my activity in relation to the collective human condition?', and 'what is the ultimate purpose and goal my activity is working toward?' for example. Paradoxically requiring employees to suppress and repress their inner

convictions secondary to the organisational aims and objectives in the hope that their future condition of being will benefit and be better for it, what is argued is that spiritually homeless minds are imprisoned in a condition of being wherein there is no possibility of freeing itself and which is has no hope of transcending. Deriving a sense of self-worth and value from the performance of their organisationally designed role, and the idea of the meaning and purpose of existence conceptualised into it through (non)conceptual values and beliefs popularised by and through neoliberal rhetoric characteristic of soft capitalist secondary institutions, however, such imprisonment is arguably not recognised by many spiritually homeless minds. Rather, in deriving value, self-worth and purpose from the (non)conceptual ideas and values imbued into the performance of worldly activity regardless of its nature and character, spiritually homeless minds do not have to confront the reality the activity of labour brings into being. By valuing the productive performance of worldly activity as opposed to its nature and character then, this research argued that many spiritually homeless minds willingly forgo expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires to maintain the conceptualisation of security, stability and certainty afforded to their perspective of material existence through the performance of their organisationally designed role.

The desires to attain (non)conceptual, neoliberal values within material existence as mentioned above is significant for further reasons, for they reflect Arendt's argument that mindless productivity caused by activities of labour appeal to individuals who do not want to avoid the painful effort associated with contributing to the sustentation and preservation of the shared and collective world of permanence and durability constructed through activities of labour. Believing instead that labour will emancipate them from painful effort and activity undertaken out of necessity, however, this research argued that spiritually homeless minds who labour do not truly want freedom of the human condition because they do not want the painful effort required to create a world that would enable freedom to be attained. Such argument support those made by Arendt, who claims that 'Man cannot be free is he does not know that he is subject to necessity, because his freedom is always won in his never wholly successful attempts to liberate himself from necessity' (1958: 121). Willing to experience the painful effort activities of labour induce then, but unwilling to undertake the painful effort required to bring about its fruition won through the creation of use items created to make the condition of being in material existence easier to bear, this research thus made clear how the *idea* of freedom alone is enough for most spiritually homeless minds rather than its reality. Believing that if they are just a *bit more* productive, or a *bit more* efficient, then the freedom promised to them through soft capitalist approaches will be within their grasp, many spiritually homeless minds are caught in a never-ending cycle of activity undertaken in pursuit of that which is always out of reach.

More than this, however, in undertaking activities of labour whose nature and character is defined by the efficient and productive performance of the labourer, this research argued that spiritually homeless minds who labour do not recognise the freedom that comes from unproductivity. Choosing productive

slavery over unproductive freedom (Arendt, 1958), they do not recognise how freedom is won in the attempt to free ourselves from necessity by undertaking activity that is fundamentally unnecessary, such as the creation of a work of art, poetry, speech and thought. This is arguably because many spiritually homeless minds would rather undertake activities of labour than work because of the affirmation activities of labour afford their subjective construction of self. Indeed, as Arendt makes clear, labour is the only activity that enables the construction of meaning for a condition of being that concentrates on nothing but being alive (1958). As this research outlined, however, by promising spiritually homeless minds that their constructed self is "real" and can be reified and fabricated through the performance of labour, the faculties of speech and thought made possible by activities of work and works of art excluded and neglected (Arendt, 1958). By not thinking about the significance of the nature and character of their worldly activity, and increasingly undertaking activity that does not facilitate speech, thought and action with intent, however, spiritually homeless minds thus can be considered to miss the point of what it means to be alive. Living instead a life*less* life when worldly activity is not thought about in terms of the reality its nature and character ushers in, but the neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, values and desires its performance signifies to the individual labourer, this research thus argued that most spiritually homeless minds undertake nothing more than "mindless productivity". This is because what this research outlined is how soft capitalist secondary institutions encourage a mode of being in the material world this is meaningful *only when* one undertakes worldly activity that promotes values and principles of the economic cosmos at the expense of the human condition. Making explicit the choice spiritually homeless minds make to belong to a society that prizes productive slavery over unproductive freedom, echoed thus is Arendt's thesis wherein individuals labouring seek happiness at any cost, even when the situation they find themselves in makes them fundamentally unhappy in to sustain the illusion that (non)conceptual values such as "happiness" can be attained in material existence. Indicating how many forget that there is no way to attain and secure (non)conceptual values such as "happiness" material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation" either through worldly activity or within material existence, in line with Arendt's considerations, this research argued that the aspirations held by many spiritually homeless minds to attain (non)conceptual neoliberal values, ideals and desires means that, ironically, they undertake activity that perpetuates their "unhappiness" (1958).

Though data collected suggests that spiritually homeless minds are more likely to undertake activities of labour rather than activities of work, some spiritually homeless minds do undertake activities of work. Significantly, however, the nature and character of activities of work selected by spiritually homeless minds interviewed were activities whose nature and character sustain and preserve the world created that primarily supports the continuation of the economic cosmos, such as engineering, rather than the sustentation and preservation of the human condition. For example, activity whose nature and character is marked by formulaic, predictable, measurable and standardised activity, activities of work selected by spiritually homeless minds are activities that uphold Enlightenment values and principles

of rationality, reason and systematic processes. Indeed, activities such as engineering, whilst affording the enactor a sense of autonomy, ownership and creativity, are inherently organised according to the division of labour. Extending Arendt's argument that activities of labour are made to appear as work, this thesis argued that the economic cosmos also organises activities of work in a manner that appears to transform activities of work into activities of labour. More than this, however, following Arendt's arguments that the nature and character of activities of work position the human condition in harmony and equilibrium with nature and the natural world in that the home created in the material world is the result of humanity's mediation with nature and the natural world, activities of work representative of the economic cosmos reinforce the perspective that humanity is master of its own condition, nature and the natural world.

Further demonstrating the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity in not only affirming and confirming what being "is" but in shaping the human condition as it unfolds in the material world, such argument is reflected in the testimonies collected. Indeed, where activities of work reflective of metaphysical frameworks of belief encourage the human condition to perceive worldly activity as symbolic of salvation afterlife, activities of work reflective of the economic cosmos encourage the human condition to perceive worldly activity as symbolic of salvation in *this* life through technical advancement. Rather than encouraging worldly activity whose nature and character enables the expression of irrational, experiential and emotional states that bind the human condition collectively and across generations, activities of work selected by spiritually homeless minds justifies the majority of humanity to undertake activities of labour. This is because in pursuing salvation within material existence through technical advancement, what is required is the sacrifice by many to undertake activities of labour to progress toward such salvation from pain and effort as efficiently as possible. Such sacrifice of the human condition is not regarded as such, however, by the fact that many spiritually homeless minds whole-heartedly believe in the neoliberal rhetoric, values and ideals that underpin technical salvation. Whilst spiritually homeless minds may claim to aspire toward the emancipation and freedom of the human condition through technical salvation brought about by activities of labour and activities of work that affirm the sustentation and preservation of the economic cosmos, in reality such activity merely sustains the economic cosmos at the expense of the human condition. Paradoxically then, technological advancement is now seen as the means through which to overcome the condition of alienation, and liberate the collective human condition from the current, not-so-desirable condition of being.

What this research indicated thus is that when meaning and purpose of the human condition is constructed according to neoliberal (non)conceptual ideas invested into the performance of labour and activities of work that reflect the values and principles of the economic cosmos, what unfolds then are constructions of being that reflect what the individual *wants* to hear and believe: that their subjective experience of material existence is significant. This is argued to be because the nature and character of

activities of labour and activities of work that affirm the sustentation and preservation of the economic cosmos do not encourage the human condition to position their being within the collective human condition and nature, but as separate and superior to the collective human condition and nature. Rather, in line with soft capitalist rhetoric, practices and techniques, most spiritually homeless minds seek to affirm and confirm the performance of worldly activity as the means through which to reify and fabricate one's idealised and unique, subjective self into the material world through the performance of worldly activity. As such, from the interviews undertaken, this research posed that the collective is regarded important the extent to which it recognises and affirms the perceived significance of one's subjective being held by the individual in question. This is argued to be because spiritually homeless minds are not collectively oriented, but subjectively so. For example, most spiritually homeless minds interviewed stated that, regardless whether they undertook activities of work or labour, that they valued their activity for the opportunity its performance provided for them not only to live their "best life" through "personally developing", and "self-actualising" one's "authentic self" to realise one's "potential", but to leave a mark of their subjective being in material reality and be remembered for their achievements. The rationale for undertaking worldly activity possessed by spiritually homeless minds is not centred on how they can contribute to the collective creation of a world of permanence and durability now and for future generations then, but for the perceived and desired attainment of neoliberal (non)concepts soft capitalist secondary institutions promise are attainable within material existence.

Demonstrating how spiritually homeless minds, whether they undertake activities of work that sustain and preserve the economic cosmos or activities of labour, undertake worldly activity for the brief *feelings* of joy recognition for its performance facilitates through the sense of "achievement" won, what is not regarded as important is contemplation of what the activity "achieves" either in relation to their being in the long-term, or the sustentation and preservation of the world of permanence and durability. Indeed as Arendt makes clear, it is impossible to construct a collective, common world for humanity to inhabit when worldly activity is undertaken primarily for our own self-interest as opposed to the collective interest. When findings of this research are considered in relation to Arendt's thesis then, what is clear is that by seeking to attain subjective achievement, recognition and validation without regard for the impact such desires have to the current and future collective human condition, the world that is brought into being through activities of labour for the purposes of subjective accomplishment is a world that is fragile and impermanent. This is because, when worldly activity is undertaken in pursuit of neoliberal (non)conceptual values considered attainable through the performance of worldly activity, nothing of use is created that sustains the world of permanence and durability, nor are artefacts created that express emotions and experiences of the human condition in the contemporary that enables humanity to recognise the shared concerns, beliefs and ideals across time and generations.

What this research highlighted then is the susceptibility of spiritually homeless minds to soft capitalist approaches that claim to bring life back to work by drawing on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and

techniques to present the performance of organisationally designed roles as the means through which neoliberal (non)conceptual aspirations can be attained within material reality. Indeed, data collected for this research showed how the importance attributed to neoliberal values, ideals and perspectives by soft capitalist secondary institutions is reflected by many spiritually homeless minds themselves, who perceive the performance of worldly activity as the means through which to comprehend the meaning and purpose of material existence regardless of its nature and character . Many spiritually homeless minds actively choose to undertake organisationally designed roles of labour provided by organisations adopting soft capitalist approaches because such re-conceptualisations reinforce, affirm and confirm their belief that it is through their efficient and productive performance of worldly activity that they can "discover", "explore" and "actualise" their "authentic self" and latent "potentialities". Similarly, spiritually homeless minds who undertake activities of work that sustain and preserve the economic cosmos are driven by neoliberal desires to "achieve" something that enables them to leave their mark and be remembered. Co-constituting the re-conceptualisation of worldly activity encouraged by soft capitalist secondary institutions to surround the construction of meaning and purpose for one's subjective experience of material existence, affirmed thus are considerations by Berger and colleagues that many spiritually homeless minds are seeking refuge from the continuous uncertainty, frustration and anxiety that comes from having to create a coherent and comprehensive ontological position in secularised societies.

> To what extent can soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices, and techniques be considered to signify the capitalism of spirituality, and what are the implications to the human condition in technically advanced, secularised contexts?

This research argues then that the ideological transformation of organisationally designed roles achieved through soft capitalist approaches is designed to intentionally obscure the structural stagnation that characterises such activity, and the alienated state of being it induces. Furthermore, it also indicated how the susceptibility of spiritually homeless minds results from  the value they place in the home soft capitalist secondary institutions appear to provide because they obscure the condition of homelessness. Soft capitalist secondary institutions thus appeal to spiritually homeless minds, not only because they affirm and confirm the desired reality and centrality of the conceived subjective self, but because they remove responsibility from the individual to construct a coherent and cohesive perspective of being that reflects their inner beliefs, values and desires.

The willed co-constitution of totalitarian dominion and governance of the economic cosmos over being by spiritually homeless minds was explored through the third research question. Revolving around the extent to which soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques signify a capitalism of spirituality, whereby soft capitalist secondary institutions further the aims of the

economic cosmos whilst appearing to care for their human resources, this was a central theme in Chapter Six. Here, discussion surrounded the use of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to present soft capitalist secondary institutions as able to answer questions of ultimate concern, and support human resources in their quest to comprehend the meaning and purpose of material existence. Indeed, from the interviews undertaken, it was argued that most spiritually homeless minds respond well to soft capitalist secondary institutions that adopt a 360-degree approach to the life whereby the organisation encapsulates and takes responsibility for their experience of material existence in a manner similar to religious institutions. Reaffirming the religious nature of contemporary soft capitalist secondary institutions what seek to cater to the construction of meaning and purpose of being beyond secular concerns of the economic cosmos, what this research demonstrated is how the inclusion of irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of being through metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques enable soft capitalist secondary institutions to "tap into" what motivates their human resources so that they can mobilise employees more effectively to perform efficiently and productively.

As this thesis made clear, however, neoliberal (non)conceptual aspirations encouraged by soft capitalist secondary institutions have no conceptual counterpart in the material world apart from purely abstract signs and symbols the creation of humanity, and can never be attained within and during the experience of material existence. Terms and values typically employed by soft capitalist approaches such as "self-actualisation", whilst enabling capitalist secondary institutions to appeal to spiritually homeless minds by promising the attainment of neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, values and desires in material existence through the performance of organisationally designed roles, in reality are meaningless precisely because they do not refer to any "actual" state of being possible in material reality. More than demonstrating the neoliberal (non)conceptual idolatry that underpins the capitalism of spirituality, where (non)concepts previously the exclusive domain of metaphysical frameworks of belief are considered attainable in material reality through organisationally designed roles, this research illustrated the neoliberal (non)conceptual slavery evoked through the capitalism of spirituality, whereby worldly activity is undertaken for the purpose of attaining (non)conceptual aspirations and values idolised. By promising to employees the attainment of neoliberal (non)conceptual values, ideals and standards that it fundamentally cannot deliver then, this research highlighted how soft capitalist secondary institutions are able to capitalise on the resource's quest to leave their mark in the world and be remembered, and excite human resources to a level of commitment, motivation and productivity that could not be achieved otherwise. Functioning as a powerful cultural mechanism through which soft capitalist secondary institutions capitalise on the aspirations of spiritually homeless human resources, soft capitalist attempts to capitalise on the inherent capacity of the human condition to construct meaning and purpose into the experience of material existence are successful precisely because spiritually homeless minds believe in, and value, the neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, desires and values promised.

Whilst the use of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is presented by the organisations that adopt soft capitalist approaches as beneficial to the human resource and demonstrative of the care and concern for employees by organisations in the contemporary context, this research argued, however, that the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is not employed for the good of the human condition. Rather, it is argued that the incorporation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist secondary institutions are implemented for the alignment and mobilisation of the human resource to the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos for the accumulation of profit that maintains and sustains the legitimacy and authority of the economic cosmos at the expense of the human resource. Outlining how concerns reflective of the economic cosmos are prioritised under soft capitalist approaches, this research indicated that the capitalism of spirituality enables soft capitalist secondary institutions to exploit the inherent need of the human condition to make sense of material existence. Such argument was explored particularly in Chapter Six through testimony collected, which demonstrated the effectiveness of soft capitalist ideology surrounding organisationally designed roles that encourage human resources to align their being to organisational aims and objectives as if they were their own. This is because, as this research illustrated, the more spiritually homeless minds *believe* the performance of worldly activity facilitates the attainment of neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, values and desires such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation", the more likely they are to conform and align themselves to the aims and objectives of the organisation they work for. Also evident through this research then is how the exploitation of neoliberal (non)conceptual aspirations, desires and beliefs achieved through the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques legitimise the value of employment not as a means of self-expression in relation to the nature and character of the specific worldly activity undertaken, but an *opportunity* to achieve (non)conceptual ideals and values such as the desire to "self-actualise", leave their mark in the material world, and be remembered, through its performance.

This research made explicit then how the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by soft capitalist secondary institutions makes possible the appropriation of being by capitalising on the inherent need for meaning of material existence and need to resolve dis-ease that amount from questions of ultimate concern, by promoting a condition of being wherein contentment of what and who one "is" is never "enough". Encouraging a condition whereby the perpetual desire to be "more" than what it currently is "is" valued, as explored, however, the capitalism of spirituality is inherently problematic to the contemporary human condition. This is because the inclusion of the irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of being through the incorporation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques that promote the productive and efficient performance of labour is shown to extend managerial control of soft capitalist secondary institutions over the human resources to whom such rhetoric, practices and techniques appeal to more easily and successfully than ever before. This was explicit in the testimonies collected from spiritually homeless minds and the way soft capitalist

secondary institutions utilise metaphysical mis-appropriated rhetoric, practices and techniques. For example, the interview data collected from spiritually homeless minds suggests that soft capitalist approaches that utilise metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are not implemented to fix a symptom of dis-ease resulting from spiritual homelessness, but to obscure the root of their dis-ease, which ironically lies in the alienation activities of labour promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions, cause. What is indicated then is how metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are not utilised by soft capitalist secondary institutions in a manner akin to a threshold like metaphysical frameworks of belief that enables comprehension, contemplation and consideration of being in a transformative way. Rather, this research argued that soft capitalist approaches function as a revolving door that are utilised periodically to pacify and obscure spiritually homeless minds unresolved existential dis-ease, anxieties and insecurities that impact the degree to which they perform their organisationally designed role efficiently and productively, but which does not enable spiritually homeless minds to overcome such dis-eases.

In presenting soft capitalist approaches that draw on metaphysical belief to provide a solution to their dis-ease, however, the interview data gathered demonstrated how soft capitalist approaches leave human resources with nothing and no one to blame but themselves for the dis-ease they encounter through employment. As such, this research indicated that the ideological transformation achieved through the implementation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques is not employed *for* the "good of" human resources to be reflective, introspective and understand their ontological position and being, but to dis-able human resources from comprehending the reality of their dis-ease by reducing metaphysical tools and questing to revolve around secular concerns experience within material existence. Demonstrative of the cyclical pacification soft capitalist approaches enable wherein metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques are used when necessary to alleviate stress, anxiety and dis-ease of human resources, this research argued that soft capitalist approaches are a positive, but vacuous, signifier of, and for, life that normalises and perpetuates the condition of alienation the economic cosmos causes whilst claiming to resolve alienated states of being *if only* human resources engage.

By promising what spiritually homeless minds want to hear through the mis-appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques, soft capitalist secondary institutions provide a cohesive and coherent home for being that obscures the homelessness institutionalised by the economic cosmos. Evident then is the growing faith and reliance of human resources on the economic cosmos, and in turn the growing reliance of the economic cosmos on rhetoric, practices and techniques originating from metaphysical frameworks of belief to legitimise its authenticity and authority of, and over, the human condition, and support its claims that soft capitalism facilitates the synthesis of public and private, economic and human, and collective and subjective concerns. As outlined, however, there are fundamental differences between homes provided by metaphysical frameworks and the economic

cosmos. For example, contrary to homes provided by metaphysical frameworks of belief that maintain a degree of separation between the judgement of one's being made by the Absolute after life, judgements of one's being made by the economic cosmos are made and relate exclusively to one's being in the material world. By having no degree of separation between judgements made to one's being and whether one has lived up to what one perceives as their potential, however, homes provided by the economic cosmos afford no escape from the pressure or demands placed on one's subjective being to achieve and embody what is conceived to be one's "authentic self" and realise one's latent "potentialities". Validated and legitimised through absolute standards and measurements the product of the mind's play with itself, though, such judgements are neither possible to doubt or deny. Strengthening the perceived legitimacy, authority and sovereignty of the economic cosmos over the human condition, from this perspective, the economic cosmos is arguably guilty of the same contentions it finds with metaphysical frameworks of belief in that one is now open to judgement from the human condition within material reality exclusively according to one's actions as opposed to judgement made by the Absolute after death.

Whilst soft capitalist secondary institutions promise to bring life back to work through the appropriation of metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques by synthesising public and private, economic and human, and collective and subjective concerns, in reality soft capitalist secondary institutions promote the attainment of public, economic and subjective concerns at the expense of private, human and collective matters. Unlike judgements made by metaphysical frameworks of belief that impact being afterlife, and which can be refuted because they remain that which one voluntarily places faith within, however, judgements made to one's being by soft capitalist secondary institutions cannot be refuted. This is because to reject judgements made by soft capitalist secondary institutions is to reject neoliberal values that prevail that implicitly present the possibility of becoming more than one "is" as attainable. Replacing metaphysical governance with another form of governance more insidious and controlling than metaphysical frameworks ever could be, the economic cosmos binds the human condition even tighter to material concerns reflective of the economic cosmos, the capitalism of spirituality not only restricts but reduces what it is "to be" human in the contemporary world. Whilst the economic cosmos claims that metaphysical frameworks of belief are inherently damaging to the human condition, what this research made clear then is how the insidious nature of soft capitalist secondary institutions cause more damage to the human condition than metaphysical frameworks of belief ever could.

For example, shaping the condition of humanity in a manner antithetical to what it is "to be" human to support the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos, homes provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions do not, and indeed cannot, account for aspects of life considered destructive, chaotic and spontaneous. Due to the difficulties Berger and colleagues identify in constructing for ourselves cohesive and coherent homes that encapsulate being, however, what is clear from the interview data gathered is that most spiritually homeless minds do not want to lose the home provided by soft

capitalism, and be exposed to uncertainty, instability and insecurity homelessness brings because they like the predictability of life soft capitalism affords. Soft capitalist secondary institutions of the economic cosmos do not provide a home for being that makes sense of the realities of life in a manner that accounts for its unpredictable, uncertain and chaotic nature, however. In order to avoid losing the security, stability and certainty of the home provided by the economic cosmos then, this research indicated how spiritually homeless minds place their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to the organisation that they work for. This is because it is easier to comply with and thus stay within a system that does not have the interests of the human condition as its central concern than have to construct for oneself a cohesive and coherent home through which to construct meaning and purpose of material existence. What is evident then is that spiritually homeless minds would rather have a home that requires them to compromise their inner beliefs, values and desires, and ignore their dis-ease that emerges from the organisation of a society that does not put the needs of the human condition first but the accumulation of capital, than have no home at all. Demonstrated thus is the reliance on soft capitalist secondary institutions by many spiritually homeless minds to construct meaning and purpose concerning the experience of material being, by providing safety from the continuous uncertainty and anxiety of homelessness. This research thus argued that spiritually homeless minds not only willingly deny the realities of life and its chaotic, unpredictable and destructive nature, but that, out of the fear of no longer having a home through which to comprehend the meaning and purpose of existence, they willingly pacify, ignore and neglect their inner beliefs, values and desires.

Playing on the need for a home through which to seek refuge from the continuous uncertainty and frustration encountered in constructing a home for oneself then, this research outlined how soft capitalist approaches not only cement, but perpetuate the condition of alienation of spiritually homeless minds from oneself, the world and the human condition. This is because in seeking a cohesive and coherent framework that removes responsibility for their condition of being from themselves, homelessness is the state in which the human condition are most open to respond to soft capitalist approaches. Providing a heady mix of belief and belonging exclusive of the finitude of material being through the concentrated focus it facilitates to surround the subjective experience of existence, what results is not the facilitation of the exploration of one's subjective uniqueness however, but the homogenisation of the human condition to the expectations and assumptions of the economic cosmos that demand efficient and productive labour rather than self-exploration and expression. Indeed, aligning the comprehension and construction of their subjective being according to organisationally designed roles that reflect the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos, though they believe that the performance of labour allows for the actualisation of their authentic being, in reality they do nothing but conform to the performance of being desired by soft capitalist secondary institutions. That spiritually homeless minds co-constitute and value the home provided by the economic cosmos over expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires, however, the testimonies included demonstrate how spiritually homeless minds imagine

themselves to be playing a game to protect themselves from the demands of the economic cosmos that require them to compromise their inner beliefs, and align and conform to its perspective concerning the meaning and purpose of the human condition. As testimonies of those interviewed reveal, however, many spiritually homeless minds not only run the risk of losing sight of what being "is" and how it can be "known" relative to the collective human condition when they perceive themselves as playing a game with their organisation, but their ability to gauge where the game they play with their life and sense of being, begins and ends.

Further losing the ability to recognise "who" they are the more they perform and play a role, then, in putting their beliefs, values and desires secondary to the demands placed on their being in the performance of their organisationally designed role of labour, this research thus argued that the home the economic cosmos provides is inherently damaging to the human condition. Indeed, perpetuating and obscuring the condition of alienation, contrary to metaphysical frameworks of belief, homes provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions cause and provoke spiritual homelessness in order to secure competitive advantage achieved through the accumulation of profit resulting from efficient and productive activity. This is because as interviews undertaken suggested, soft capitalist approaches evoke the condition of homelessness within human resources when they rely on soft capitalist approaches by inducing a state of perpetual agitation that there is always more they could give to "become" "better" employees. For example, the more stressed, agitated and dis-eased employees are concerning their lack of attainment of neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, desires and values, the more efficient and productive their performance of labour becomes to realise such (non)concepts during their material existence. What is clear then is that when spiritually homeless minds prize the short-term benefits to their self-interest and subjective experience of material existence promised by soft capitalist secondary institutions through the efficient and productive performance of labour, that they willingly affirm and confirm states of being that are fundamentally bad for the collective human condition and their own subjective being, in order to sustain the illusion that (non)conceptual values, desires and beliefs can be attained. This is because when spiritually homeless minds perpetually strive to become something "more" than what they "are" in line with external demands placed on their being that contradict their inner beliefs, values and desires, they not only lose sight of, but forget, what it *is* "to be" human.

More than this, however, because spiritually homeless minds are so used to putting their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to their organisation of employment, this research indicated how many spiritually homeless minds have no conviction or ethos that emanates from within. Unable to conceive of being other than through conceptions provided externally through vague, abstract and inherently meaningless neoliberal (non)conceptual values such as "self-actualisation" to comprehend the meaning and purpose of what it is "to be", to rebel against the demands placed on their being thus runs the risk of losing the home such institutions provide. As such, what is indicated from interviews conducted is how spiritually homeless minds would rather break their spirit and undertake activities of labour in the

hope that promises made by soft capitalist secondary institutions will come to fruition, than confront the fact that the home they derive self-worth, value and meaning and purpose of existence from is fundamentally damaging not only to their subjective being, but the collective human condition.

Should they not participate in soft capitalist practices and techniques that promise to help them "discover" their latent "potentialities" and achieve "self-actualisation", however, spiritually homeless minds are seen to deny all that they could be, not only to themselves, but to others. When spiritually homeless minds do catch sight of the rationalised, controlled and conformist reality their worldly activity brings into being, however, they seek to distract themselves further by recounting the material benefits and opportunities for "self-actualisation" they would not receive from other frameworks of belief. By holding spiritually homeless minds responsible for not attaining neoliberal (non)conceptual values, ideals and desires during material existence by arguing that they have not been efficient or productive enough to "self-actualise" then, this research indicates that many spiritually homeless minds rationalise and justify the manipulation and exploitation they are subjected to through soft capitalist approaches. This is argued to be because if spiritually homeless minds did confront the idea that soft capitalist secondary institutions manipulate their beliefs, values and desires for the pursuit of economic aims and objectives, then everything they had previously been held as true, meaningful and beneficial to their subjective state of being would be called into question. This research illustrated then how many spiritually homeless minds continue to align themselves to soft capitalist approaches that fundamentally deny aspects of humanity that contradict its aims and objectives because by doing so, they do not have to confront the possibility that such constructions of reality are inherently meaningless. Willingly forgoing the confrontation of reality in order to sustain the illusion of reality that we *want* to be true out of self-preservation, in reality, however, they cannot blame anyone or anything for the world they find themselves in and which their activity perpetuates and sustains, because it is the world that they have made willingly. In this sense, soft capitalism is a reflection of the contemporary human condition, wherein it is not the victim but the perpetrator of a deliberate act in the attempt to obscure from its experience of existence, its own reality.

That this is a condition that spiritually homeless minds cause themselves because they believe in and undertake worldly activity for no reason other than their own self-interest and self-preservation is important. This is because they refuse to believe, recognise or confront that they are either being manipulated and mobilised through their beliefs, values and desires by the soft capitalist homes they invest hope within. Rather, as this research illustrated, many spiritually homeless minds resent those that do not conform to their way of being in the world, but challenge the central significance they afford their subjective condition of reality, and compromises they make to their inner beliefs, values and desires, such as those who find a home for their being within metaphysical frameworks of belief. In doing so, they do not have to consider or confront what they have given up in order to make the belief that neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, values and desires are attainable in reality "a reality". As such,

from interviews conducted, this research outlined how spiritually homeless minds not only limit conceptions of being in the material world to manifestations considered acceptable by the economic cosmos, but reduce the richness and variety of life by seeking to remove considered undesirable and unnecessary elements of being, such as pain and effort. That is to say, by comprehending what being "is" with certainty in the material world by aligning themselves to homes provided by the economic cosmos through organisationally designed roles, spiritually homeless minds willingly reduce what being "is" in the material world so as to avoid confronting the chaotic, unpredictable and fluid reality of being in the material world. Through the attempt to make life predictable and secure, and existence certain however, life is rendered life*less*. This is because what is forgotten is that a predictable, stable and secure life is a life that has already been lived, in that life does not unfold as a surprise, but like a book that has been read countless times, and the ending already known. Demonstrating how spiritually homeless minds willingly fictionalise the human condition through the belief that neoliberal (non)conceptual values, beliefs and ideals are attainable in material reality so that the concerns of humanity appear to reflect and be compatible with the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos, the impact this has to the human condition nullifies the very meaning of life as the expression of one's inner beliefs, values and desires.

Most significantly, then, this research outlined how the desire to attain (non)conceptual ideals, values and desires such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment", or "self-actualisation" does not lead to their attainment, but paradoxically renders the human condition incapable of ever progressing toward such ideals in either material reality or beyond. That is say, the pursuit of self-actualisation in reality leads to a condition of self-annihilation in which the human condition is forever in the dark because it is easier to live a lie and believe the performance of labour is meaningful then it is to confront the reality that has been created and formed by such worldly actions. This is not active self-annihilation as pursued in Eastern metaphysical traditions wherein the subjective ego is annihilated, and concern of and for the collective human condition takes centre stage, however (Ram-Prasad, 2001; Harvey, 1995). Rather, the annihilation induced by the capitalism of spirituality is a passive form of self-annihilation wherein the individual paradoxically annihilates their subjective sense of self through willing submission, repression and suppression of their inner beliefs, values and desires. In so doing, spiritually homeless minds place their being secondary to the demands and pressures of the economic cosmos encountered in the performance of labour whilst remaining firm in the belief that they are progressing toward the actualisation of their believed latent "potentialities", and neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals, desires and values.

As this research outlined, however, self-annihilation induced by the capitalism of spirituality can unfold in a number of ways depending on the activity undertaken and the character of being in question. For example, for the majority of spiritually homeless minds, the interviews undertaken suggest that self-annihilation typically results in the stagnation of the human condition, in that the fear of wasting one's

life and failing to "become" all that one "could be", ironically, paralyzes the human resource from thinking, acting, speaking – "being" – in a manner reflective of their inner beliefs, values and desires. Indicating how the extent to which one pushes oneself in response to the expectations and assumptions placed on the human condition by soft capitalist approaches is limited only by individual and how much they are willing to push themselves to "become" what organisations believe they "ought" to be, the limits of passive self-annihilation are arguably evident in cases such as Moritz Erhardt as discussed by Costea et al. (2015), and through the suicides of celebrities such as Tim Bergling, known by most through his DJ name Avicii, and Alexander McQueen. For example, Moritz, in his quest to achieve neoliberal (non)conceptual values, desires and ideals within his experience of material existence, arguably represents a state of passive self-annihilation in that he annihilated his being by pushing himself to his physical limits through his performance of labour. Where Moritz illustrates the end juncture the capitalism of spirituality that capitalises on the desire to become" in material reality when humanity undertakes activities of labour, Avicii and Alexander McQueen in contrast demonstrate the annihilation of being that results when individuals undertake activities more akin to work. Possessing a fundamental passion for the nature and character of their activity in that it allowed expression of their inner beliefs, values and desires in a manner that contributed and connected them to the collective human condition, both of their suicides are attributed in part to the pressures of the industry and the 'business machine' they found themselves in that positioned the accumulation of profit as central to their worldly activity (*The Economist,* 2018; *McQueen*, 2018). This is because, becoming increasingly difficult to express their being through their chosen art form when their activity was increasingly subject to neoliberal demands placed that did not resonate with their being, or their conception of the meaning of material existence, such dissonance is particularly expressed by the family of Avicii, who upon his death released the following statement:

> "Our beloved Tim was a seeker, a fragile artistic soul searching for answers to existential questions… He really struggled with thoughts about Meaning. Life. Happiness. He could not go on any longer. He wanted to find peace. *Tim was not made for the business machine he found himself in*."

Demonstrating how the ethos of the economic cosmos and its soft capitalist approaches, regardless whether they underpin activities of work, works of art or labour, by resulting in self-annihilation results in the very opposite of what it claims to achieve, the demand for human beings to strive to "be" "more" than then are can only end in the annihilation of being, either as an unintended consequence of the pursuit of neoliberal (non)concepts within material existence, or an intentional means of escape. Until humanity recognises the significance worldly activity has not only to the construction of meaning and perceptions of purpose of the individual, but to the collective human condition beyond the ideal (non)conceptual ideas conceptualised into its performance, however, this research argues that the self-annihilation and stagnation of the human condition will not ease, but increasingly become the

normalised state of being in technically advanced societies that have undergone processes of secularisation.

## Looking to the future

With the above in mind, a number of considerations can be made in relation to the future direction of the human condition in labourer's societies that are technically advanced and have undergone processes of secularisation, but which draw upon metaphysical rhetoric, practices and techniques to legitimise the authority and authenticity of the economic cosmos. To begin, the human condition in such milieus predominantly does not comprehend what being "is" in relation to nature, the natural world and being after death through contemplative practices, but through neoliberal (non)conceptual ideals formulated into the active performance of worldly activity that affirms and confirms preferred conceptions of material being. When the human condition is not encouraged to confront and consider the finitude of material existence through worldly activity, however, the consequences are arguably grave. Resulting in the assimilation of perspectives as to what the human condition "is" to those held by the economic cosmos through scientific rationale, mathematical reason, utilitarian ethics and psychological assumptions, increasingly evident is the subliminal prioritisation of the economic cosmos, such as perpetual growth and progress imbued with soteriological value and metaphysical significance, above the needs of humanity, and indeed acceptance of what humanity "is" in its chaotic, unpredictable and spontaneous entirety. Compounding and reaffirming a normalised condition of alienation both from one's own being, the human collective and the world, this is important, for what is likely to result, ironically, is an increased reliance and dependence on the economic cosmos to comprehend and conceive of the experience of material existence as meaningful and purposeful in order to obscure the condition of alienation.

More than this, however, this thesis demonstrates how the economic cosmos effectively silences those that resist the extension and encapsulation of being by scientific rationale, mathematical logic, utilitarian ethics and psychology through the "truth" argued to be espoused through measurements attained through human-inspired tools fabricated. Making it increasingly impossible for the emergence of alternative frameworks of being that seek to account for being within and beyond material existence however, it is likely that what will result is the cementation of the economic cosmos to function as a religion geared toward existence exclusively in material existence wherein the worth of humanity is measured according to the efficient and productive performance that results in the accumulation of capital. A cosmos founded on neoliberal (non)conceptual idolatry to legitimise belief that the economic cosmos caters to the irrational, emotional and experiential aspects of the human condition, however, this is not a cosmos that puts the human condition first, but second to the needs of the system. In appearing to put the human condition first however, it is likely that the human condition will be

increasingly conceived through neoliberal (non)concepts that fundamentally deny, and increasingly narrow what it "is to be" human in alignment to principles and values of the economic cosmos.

Promoting the belief that "freedom" and "happiness" won through "liberation" of the human condition is attainable within material reality, the success of soft capitalism as a cultural mechanism in mobilising employees to align conceptualisations of what being "is" and how it can be known to those held by the economic cosmos is also likely to have a detrimental impact to the human condition. This is because, in pursuing the attainment of (non)concepts in material reality, worldly activity will arguably become increasingly organised under the principles of labour, and marked by principles of efficiency, productivity, standardisation, fragmentation and rationalisation as the aims and objectives of the economic cosmos are increasingly internalised by the human condition. Activities whose nature and character is still reflective of activities of work as identified by Arendt will become increasingly few and far between as such activities are increasingly subject to absolute standards so that work becomes labour. The human condition ushered in by the ideals of the economic cosmos is arguably not a sustainable condition, however. This is because, in pursuing who one "is" through the economic cosmos that denies fundamental aspects of what it is "to be" human, what is induced is a condition of passive self-annihilation wherein spiritually homeless minds willingly place their inner beliefs, values and desires secondary to those espoused by the economic cosmos out of fear of no longer having a secure, comfortable and predictable home. That such individuals fear the loss of their home, and the pain this causes their being, this thesis demonstrates how humanity willingly sacrifices what it is "to be" human in all its richness and variety by reflecting attributions of value to the experience of life itself as carried through activities of labour. Given this, activities of labour will increasingly be perceived as an activity beneficial to the human condition by spiritually homeless minds, rather than an alienating force that limits and denies what it is "to be" human, and that which exploits their desire to avoid pain and effort.

Furthermore, that spiritually homeless minds typically prefer to labour rather than work in that they believe neoliberal (non)conceptual values such as "self-actualisation" are attainable within and through the experience of material existence, it is likely that, as their idealised dream of attaining "self-actualisation" does not transpire, that spiritually homeless minds will spend their lives moving from organisation to organisation, role to role, perpetually searching and hoping to "actualise" themselves, to "become" everything they imagined they could be, and which they believe is attainable in material existence. This mind-set is likely to be exacerbated by promises made to them by their organisation through soft capitalist approaches, for in constantly failing to attain "self-actualisation", such individuals are likely to be never satisfied or content with what they have, or have achieved, during their lifetime. As such, faith in neoliberal (non)concepts not only induces a condition of being that is characterised by perpetual agitation as discussed. Perpetually falling short of their goal yet at the same time encouraged to keep striving toward its attainment by conforming to organisations adopting soft capitalist seeking to mobilise human resources to perform productively and efficiently, it is not only

likely that the dis-ease experienced by spiritually homeless minds, but the condition of spiritual homelessness itself, will not dissipate, but will be heightened. This is because in the pursuit of neoliberal (non)concepts such as "self-actualisation", spiritually homeless minds embark on "mindless" productivity rather than "mindful" unproductivity. Echoing Arendt's comment that the human condition in labourer's societies have the choice between productive slavery or unproductive freedom (1958: 105), it is likely there will be an increase of a human condition characterised by suppression and repression of what it is "to be" human, and resentment meted out toward those who go against the homogenised grain. This is because in valuing the home the economic cosmos affords, and the responsibility it accepts for the human condition, it is easier to forgo one's inner beliefs, values and desires and believe that the performance of one's organisationally designed role is beneficial to their subjective experience of material existence, than face the detrimental consequences such belief has to the collective human condition, and the reality that such conformity has not only bought to fruition, but which through our conformity and implicit acceptance, will continue to do so.

Neglecting the sustentation and preservation of the collective human created world in favour of imagined neoliberal ideals and conceptions of the world, the human condition will not only destroy the very world of permanence and durability it created, and which is necessary to support such conceptualised ways of being. Highlighting the impact the capitalism of spirituality is likely to have to the human condition in such milieus, also probable is the rise of the destruction of the human condition through passive self-annihilation such as those who labour as illustrated by Moritz Erhardt, and those who work as illustrated by Avicii and Alexander McQueen. This is because the neoliberal (non)concepts underpinning soft capitalist approaches to appeal to the human condition are limited as far as humanity is willing to take them. As this thesis demonstrates, however, activities of labour are only complete relative to the human condition upon the death of the subject. Thus, in striving to attain the (non)conceptual in material existence that is fundamentally impossible in that the beautiful and the eternal cannot be made tangible within the material (Arendt, 1958) humanity willingly embraces annihilation of the human condition.

Future directions of study

This thesis is incredibly rich in relation to future avenues of study. To begin, following their participation in this research, a number of participants got in touch to say that they had changed their activity of work. Interestingly, such change seem to reflect the considerations outlined in the above section concerning the future. For example, those whose ontological perspective is "none" or "religions of humanity", their change in activity was considered a new beginning filled with hope of the promise extended to them by their organisation in terms of this activity being the one in which they would reach their "potential" and "self-actualise". By contrast, the change in worldly activity by those whose

ontological position was reflective of "religions of difference" and "spiritualities of life" reflected activity that was more akin and aligned to their metaphysical beliefs, values and perspectives. Further research that explores why this research prompted such participants to explore new avenues of employment, and why they chose to undertake the activity selected, would be fascinating. In particular, one individual who identified as Jehovah's Witness sold their house and furniture and relocated to join a construction project for their church following discussions raised during the interview process. Most interestingly, their activity of work did not change. Rather, they undertook this activity out of service to God as opposed to the economic cosmos. Further research would be interesting to explore to what extent the ethos underpinning their role alters how they approach their activity, and the meaning and purpose derived.

Despite the rich avenues of further study this research possesses from existing research participants, however, there are a number of limitations of this research in its current state that affect the degree to which such lines of enquiry can be explored. To begin, a doctoral thesis is naturally inhibited by time restrictions surrounding the research, and space in terms of length. As such, due to time limitations and the lack of feasibility in attaining saturation point, the arguments raised in this thesis hinge on research undertaken with twenty-three research participants. Ideally, however, it would have been preferable to have undertaken interviews with thirty individuals from each ontological position identified in Chapter Four. In so doing, a more nuanced but generalised picture of the metaphysical landscape present in the contemporary UK context and the significance belief poses to worldly activity referred to as work could have emerged that would have enabled the discussion and analysis raised in this thesis to have generated further insight.

The limitations of time allocated was also challenging to this research due to its novel focus and interdisciplinary nature in that embarking on this research was akin to falling into a crevice rather than a crack in that the matter of contribution was not problematic so much as where to turn one's focus. Given this, it was difficult to find the focus of this research from the outset in that the terrain needed to be in part mapped by the researcher and appreciation of the landscape needed to be developed before focus could emerge. Whilst the researcher maintains that research should be an organic process that unfolds as it is undertaken according to the discoveries and learning encountered during the journey rather than unfold in relation to an underlying agenda, due to the external time restraints, this initial lack of focus concerning research aims and objectives at the start of this research project limits this research. This is because in having to map the terrain and develop understanding of the significance of metaphysical belief and ontological positions in relation to worldly activity referred to as work, it was not until quite late in this research projects timeframe that the rationale of focus surrounding "nones" and "religions of humanity" emerged. That is to say, had the terrain already been mapped by prior research, this research could have been more focused from the start, which would have allowed for the selection of research participants whose ontological position reflected the positions of "nones" and

"religions of humanity". This is not to say that saturation point could have been attained in the time available, but that a fuller picture and insights derived could have been attained by focussing data collection to surround such ontological positions.

By the same token, however, the focus on "nones" and "religions of humanity" also can be seen to limit this research. This is because whilst such ontological positions represent the ontological position held by the majority, as detailed in Chapter Four, analysis of "nones" and "religions of humanity" was also contemplated, informed and developed in relation to analysis also undertaken with "religions of difference" and "spiritualities of life". Thus, whilst focusing on "nones" and "religions of humanity" allowed for in-depth consideration of the meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as work by such individuals, in doing so, a number of considerations that arose from the data analysis could not be explored. Simply, what is lost for the reader is appreciation of the significance "religions of difference" and "spiritualities" pose both to the metaphysical landscape of the contemporary UK context, and indeed the relational dynamic such positions pose to the development and manifestation of the ontological positions of "nones" and "religions of humanity". Not only this, through the limitations of space, also lost is comprehension of metaphysical belief to worldly activity referred to as work, and context that helps unpack why "nones" and "religions of humanity" approach worldly activity as they do, and why soft capitalist secondary institutions appeal to such individuals as they do.

Indeed, having collected and analysed data from research participants who occupy different ontological positions as identified by Heelas and Woodhead (2001), and Woodhead (2016), the approach to work typified by "religions of difference" and "spiritualities of life" pose significant avenues of future research. For example, similar to the focus this research developed in relation to "nones" and "religions of humanity", what became evident through the data analysis was that research that focuses solely on spiritually homed minds would also be a fruitful avenue of enquiry. From this initial analysis, what emerged was that spiritually homed minds are more likely to choose to undertake activities of work that are not marked by soft capitalist approaches. Bearing significance in relation to the self-work ethic that emerged during the 1960s countercultural revolution and Arendt's distinction between activities of work, works of art and activities of labour, further research would help tease out why activities of work as opposed to labour appeal more to those who construct a home for being through metaphysical frameworks of belief. Answering the question of to what extent is their choice of worldly activity undertaken informed by the nature and character of the activity as opposed to its performance, for example, would help to develop understanding concerning the significance of collective frameworks of belief in the selection of worldly activity and the meaning derived by spiritually homed minds, and indeed what capacity.

Most fruitful, however, is arguably future enquiry that surrounds insights garnered through comparative analysis of approaches to worldly activity referred to as work and the meaning and purpose derived by

"religions of difference" and "spiritualities of life" with perspectives held by "nones" and "religions of humanity". For example, what can be learnt about both perspectives through analysis of the position of "the other" in terms of the construction of meaning and purpose of worldly activity referred to as work, the appeal of soft capitalist secondary institutions and the manifestation of the self-work ethic? Preliminary enquiry suggests that if spiritually homed minds undertake activities of labour that they respond to soft capitalist secondary institutions and the rhetoric, practices and techniques differently to spiritually homeless minds. Why is this, however? To what extent does this difference in meaning derived, and approach adopted toward soft capitalism and soft capitalist secondary institutions, a reflection of their faith, and perspective of being fostered in metaphysical frameworks? Furthermore, in line with Berger and colleagues research, does the conception of being metaphysical frameworks encourage adherents to adopt in relation to the collective human condition, and beyond material existence affect the extent to which soft capitalism and soft capitalist secondary institutions appeal, and if so, why?

Through such enquiry, exploration into the differences that emerge from voluntary and involuntary membership of institutions could also be explored. Perhaps most interesting, however through comparative analysis there is also scope to develop the concept of homelessness as conceived by Berger and colleagues. For example, this thesis explored the spiritual homelessness of individuals who adhered to constructs of being held by those who have faith in the economic cosmos. What about spiritually homed minds, however? Do they experience material homelessness in contexts where the economic cosmos predominates, and if so, what can be said of this condition concerning the human condition? Such questions and comparative analysis is important, for it not only would allow light to be cast on the relational dynamic that exists between spiritually homed and spiritually homeless, minds, but would in turn illuminate understanding concerning the contemporary human condition. In particular, such comparative analysis of spiritually homed minds and spiritually homeless minds would arguably facilitate greater understanding of how the religion of the economic cosmos manifest and functions, and in turn, how it affects the human condition. Such line of enquiry is particularly significant when considered in relation to the capitalism of spirituality that the faith of the economic cosmos promotes.

By not focusing the direction of this research sooner then, this research limited the number of research participants interviewed that could have contributed to the analysis chapters. At the same time, however, had the focus of this research been determined sooner, the researcher would not have gained an overall appreciation of the metaphysical landscape that opens up further avenues of future enquiry. Simply, the question of whether this research should have explored such avenues first before developing more nuanced perspectives of spiritually homed and spiritually homeless minds through further research stands. Indeed, there are a number of regrets that surround this research project. In particular, these regrets surround the personal dis-ease of the researcher that affected the writing up period, which particularly affected the writing and development of ideas expressed in Chapter Three and Chapter Six.

Specifically, Chapter Three and Six would have benefitted from further consideration of Arendt's chapter on action. This is because Arendt raises a number of arguments that would have enabled the expansion of existing analysis, and allowed the development of more nuanced and complex argument to unfold within these chapters. Regret also surrounds the analysis chapters in general, which did not develop the theoretical insights generated in Chapter Two and Three in line with analysis generated. In particular, this regret surrounds Chapter Six, whose analysis is quite repetitive at times and as such did not develop analysis generated to its full extent, capacity and consideration. Such lack of synthesis with theory developed in the literature review chapters particularly surrounds the difference between metaphysical homes and homes provided by the economic cosmos, the incompatibility of the self-work ethic promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions, and the impact the capitalism of spirituality through its attempts to make activities of labour appear as work to the human condition.

Whilst discussion and analysis raised in Chapters Three and Six does not communicate what the researcher intended in the current format, and Chapters Five and Chapter Six do not build analysis as closely to the literature review chapters as was possible to develop analysis to its full extent in this thesis, this is not to say that such discontent can be resolved in part through future research. In particular, the future direction of the analysis generated in Chapters Five and Six can be enriched by drawing on Arendt's chapter concerning action. To begin, Arendt's chapter on action would enable a deeper exploration of the differences between homes provided by metaphysical frameworks of belief and those provided by the economic cosmos, and the impact of the differences of these homes have to the human condition. For example, whilst metaphysical homes synthesise public and private, economic and human, and collective and subjective concerns within a cohesive framework that extends beyond material existence, homes of the economic cosmos promote public, economic and subjective concerns at the expense of private, human and collective concerns. What is the impact however to the human condition when the realities of life are not promoted, but the conception of life that reflect the aims and objectives, values and principles of the economic cosmos that revolve around the sustentation and preservation of the capitalist system above the sustentation and preservation of the human condition?

More than this, however, what can be said of the impact to the human condition depending on the home selected in relation to the arguments raised concerning neoliberal (non)conceptual idolatry and slavery that emerges through the capitalism of spirituality, and the imprisonment of being? For example, whilst (non)conceptuality was previously bound to metaphysical frameworks of belief, what are the consequences to the human condition in relocating (non)conceptual ideas, values and aspirations to material existence made possible through neoliberal rhetoric that underpins the economic cosmos? For example, to what extent are those who place faith in the economic cosmos unable to confront and consider the reality of existence in the material world, and what are the consequences of this? Furthermore, exploration of the differences that emerge between homes of the economic cosmos and homes of metaphysical frameworks of belief would also open the door for development of ideas relating

to the argument of self-annihilation and self-actualisation, and particularly ideas concerning the differences between passive self-annihilation that the economic cosmos promotes, and active self-annihilation as promoted by certain metaphysical frameworks of belief.

Such extension of enquiry feeds into deeper exploration and understanding of the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity referred to as work in relation to the self-work ethic. This is particularly timely given the growing perception in organisational literature that the self-work ethic is compatible with organisationally designed roles as alluded to in Chapter One (Bell & Taylor, 2004), but which does not pay attention to the substantial differences between the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution wherein the nature and character of the activity is significant, and that promoted by soft capitalist secondary institutions. Indeed, as this research highlights, where the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions pays attention to the productive capacity of worldly activity, the self-work ethic of the counterculture focuses on the expression of being its enactment discloses in the world. Furthermore, contrary to the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions that is driven by a compulsion to transform and transfigure the self in isolation of the collective human condition, the self-work ethic that emerged in the counterculture promotes the transformation and transfiguration of the collective human condition that in turn inspires change within the individual. To what extent does the self-work ethic of the counterculture manifest in the contemporary within individuals who find a home for their being within metaphysical frameworks of belief? Thus, through further exploration of the individuals who find a home in metaphysical frameworks of belief, greater understanding of the nuances of the self-work ethic that is framed by metaphysical conceptions of being can be explored, and enable comparative analysis between the self-work ethic of the economic cosmos to emerge and insights to develop.

In line with Arendtian discourse, the manifestation of the self-work ethic, the ethos that underpins its manifestation and the activity through which it manifests is significant when attention is paid to the impact action has in the world in relation to the differences of intent that underpin activities of work, works of art and activities of labour. Indeed, whilst attention was drawn in Chapters Five and Six on the significance worldly activity posed to spiritually homeless minds in encouraging the belief to emerge that through the performance of worldly activity they could reify their "authentic self" and leave their mark in the world, Arendt's chapter on action also allows for further expansion of such arguments. Indeed, whilst it was argued that such belief makes evident the choice humanity is making for a condition marked by productive slavery rather than unproductive freedom, Arendt's chapter on action would enable such analysis to be pushed further in relation to the state of mind of spiritually homeless minds, and the condition of slavery they create for themselves when they locate pride not from "who" they are as disclosed by action, thought and speech, but from what they have done and who they will "become" (1958). Through such enquiry, the direction the human condition is heading in can be better understood in relation to the destruction of the world of permanence and durability when such intent

underpins the activity undertaken that in turn would also allow for further attention and analysis to be afforded to the self-annihilation that unfolds under the guise of self-actualisation.

The distinction between activities of work, works of art and activities of labour is also significant concerning the corresponding action, re-action and in-action inspired both by the nature and character of the activity, and its reception by the collective (1958). This is because action is the beginning of a process that has no predictable end (Arendt, 1958). Despite this, where the self-work ethic of the countercultural revolution retains the possibility of ending the process initiated through action by either forgiveness of its consequences, promises made amongst the collective or new actions and new directions in that the nature and character of the activity is largely activities of work and works of art, the self-work ethic of soft capitalist secondary institutions, built on endlessly cyclical activities of labour, does not possess either the capacity of forgiveness or promises. As such, as Arendt's chapter on action makes clear, the human condition is increasingly responsible exclusively for the private realm when most undertake activities of labour because the public realm is dissolved into the social realm (1958). Leading to an increasingly fragmented condition of being, there is no collective condition of being for spiritually homeless minds to belong to to facilitate forgiveness and promises to be made. Rather, seeing the collective human condition as necessary only to recognise the superiority of their perceived subjective self, they deny themselves the opportunity to halt the perceived progression toward "self-actualisation", or recognise other ways of being. Simply then, further research would allow for greater exploration of the significance of the nature and character of worldly activity to outline the paradoxes of the self-work ethic of soft capitalise secondary institutions that position not the nature and character of the activity as significant, but the performance of the "self" for the attainment of (non)conceptual values such as "happiness", material and personal "betterment" and "self-actualisation".

A further avenue of enquiry for future research also concerns the power of belief not only in the attainment of (non)conceptual values such as those espoused by the social realm of freedom, happiness and progress, but the unwavering faith in soft capitalist secondary institutions that makes such promises, and the impact they have to the meaning and purpose derived from the activity, to be derived not from its nature and character, but conceptualisations bound to its performance. This is particularly timely given the surge of companies adopting soft capitalist approaches that seek to follow in the successful footsteps of companies such as Google and Microsoft, and conceptualise activities of labour in a manner that appeals to the emotional fissures of spiritually homeless minds by presenting "work" as opportunities for "self-actualisation". Taking responsibility for the human condition, such discussion was raised in Chapter Six made wherein many spiritually homeless minds willingly break their spirit and annihilate their being in order to retain the home soft capitalist secondary institutions provide, and the hope that they can overcome their present limitations and aspire to become "more than". As this research indicated, however, the conception of being held by soft capitalist secondary institutions is a

conception of being that ironically keep human resources insecure, uncertain and unstable, and thus inherently destitute and controlled. Analysis also alluded to the co-constitution of totalitarian governance and tyrannical forms of control spiritually homeless minds bestow on soft capitalist secondary institutions to wield over the human condition by appearing to care and be concerned for the soul of their human resources. Whilst there are obvious parallels that could be drawn with the effectiveness of cults such as Scientology and regimes such as those found in North Korea that successfully obscure and hide the extent of their exploitation and manipulation, there is arguably scope for further exploration and expansion of these themes by drawing further on Arendtian discourse. For example, as Arendt make clear, tyranny arises when the human condition has lost its capacity to think, speak, and act (1958). As such, by drawing on Arendtian discourse, further research of the belief spiritually homeless minds invest into soft capitalist secondary institutions would enable greater appreciation of the significance of belief and the co-constitution of tyrannical forms of governance that emerge when activities of labour predominate the human condition. Whilst access to organisations such as Google and Microsoft is difficult to obtain, whilst researching this thesis the Vanto Group contacted the researcher following the access of their materials. Pursuing discussion with the Vanto Group would be fruitful in terms of further understanding the ethos underlying soft capitalist secondary institutions, and how soft capitalist secondary institutions rationalise and justify the extension of control of the human condition soft capitalism affords. It may also yield contacts to large multinational corporations similar to Google and Microsoft wherein its techniques are applied.

Scope for future research also emerges concerning the process of forgiveness the human capacity to promise in relation to the power of the economic cosmos over the human condition. Indeed, as Arendt makes clear, no one can forgive themselves, for such forgiveness is without reality or acknowledgement from the collective (1958). With the decline of the public realm, however, increasingly individuals who labour do not belong to a collective outside of the soft capitalist secondary institution that employs them. As this research indicates, however, organisations do not forgive human resources for their perceived failure to fulfil the promises extended to them through soft capitalist rhetoric, but continually push employees to respond to the promise that they can become "better" and "more than" they currently are. Arendt thus indicates how the promise of security, stability and certainty provided by soft capitalist secondary institutions paves the way for an incredible loss of power of the collective human condition in steering the direction in which the future unfolds (1958). What is not clear currently, however, is the impact the inclusion of human capacities of forgiveness and promises within institutions of the economic cosmos has to the human condition, nor how this will unfold over time.

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