

## Music and the experience of the spiritual

**Author:**

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**Publication Date:**

2012

**DOI:**

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/15848>

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# MUSIC AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



The University of New South Wales

School of the Arts and Media  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

October 2012

## Abstract

When an experience of music is described as spiritual, is that sense of spirituality an extrinsic (referential) or intrinsic (absolute) type of meaning? That question was examined using two questionnaires, which gathered qualitative and quantitative data on participants' experiences and interpretations of music and spirituality. Study I included 117 participants from the Christian religion. Study II extended these findings by including 172 participants, both religious and non-religious. Data was examined for evidence of spirituality, which was circumscribed with reference to three key aspects: transcendence, connection and meaning; and for evidence of a link between spirituality and either referential or absolute meaning.

Results demonstrated strong evidence of the perception of spirituality, though not all significant experiences of music were spiritual. Referential (extra-musical) associations were involved, particularly for religious people (e.g. reference to the supernatural). These associations were involved in the rational interpretation of the experience, but only really accounted for certain aspects of spirituality. Spirituality was better accounted for as an absolute (intrinsic) experience, though only in an absolute expressionist sense (ie. not just as an experience of the musical forms of melody, harmony, rhythm, etc., but as an expression arising from those forms. There was no evidence of spirituality as a formalist experience.). Spirituality was enabled or embodied by those musical forms, but not contained by them. Spirituality was seen to be a pre-conceptual, ineffable awareness of a transcendent connection that arises from the mystery of the material experience of tonal forms that is music.

Religion had only minimal impact on these findings. Culture and musical experience or training also had minimal effect on the experience of spirituality. Spirituality was as prevalent as emotion in most aspects of the questionnaire, suggesting that spirituality was as important as emotion in significant experiences of music. This finding challenges the dominance of emotion as the key construct of significant experiences of music, placing a strong call on the research community to engage with this phenomenon of spirituality.

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to the following people for empowering me to complete this work. I am blessed by the goodness of humanity that I have experienced in these generous people.

Most prominent amongst these is my primary supervisor, Associate Professor Emery Schubert. He has consistently guided, prompted, questioned and advised me at every point along this journey. He has always made himself available, whether at home, overseas or in the middle of a big teaching load, and has always been ready for a laugh. He has patiently guided my developing skills in areas that were often very new for me, all the time believing in the value of this project. He has demonstrated humility in not holding to himself any skill, knowledge or advantage, but sharing all with me for the sake of this project. For all of this I am deeply grateful.

To my other co-supervisors: Dr. Robert Walker was the first person I spoke to about this course of study, and he began the process of developing my thinking. All along he has challenged and probed my thinking, helping me take account of various aspects of the project, particularly the social aspect. Dr. John Napier, who became my co-supervisor late in the piece, but has offered assistance all along the way, thank you for your insights into spirituality, and for taking the time to assist in whatever way you could.

To the other music staff at the University of New South Wales: Dr. Dorottya Fabian, who first discussed ‘the power of music’ with me, and who gave me wise counsel on content and process from the very beginning. Dr. Manolete Mora, who has assisted me in some of the later detailing of the thesis. Dr. John Peterson and Dr. Christine Logan, and not least, the Head of School, Prof. Andrew Schultz, who have each assisted me as you were able.

To my friends and colleagues in the Empirical Musicology Group, thank you for reading my drafts, debating my ideas, and sharing tea and cake with me. I was always inspired by your own skills in reasoning and engaging.

To the many un-named people who comprise the UNSW. To the library staff who were always so willing, to Sue Starling and the others at the Learning Centre, to the various faculty who added to my learning process, and to the cleaners and ground staff who always keep that campus looking schmick. Thank you.

To all those who participated in my research, thank you for sharing your thoughts and so often your hearts with me. Your candid portrayals have enabled this topic to come alive.

I have left until last the two thank yous that mean the most to me. To my family – Regina, Benjamin, Samuel and Kayla Atkins – who have supported me, encouraged me, challenged me, travelled with me, let me leave early in the morning, let me stay up late at night, fed me, waited for me and believed in me. Thank you for your selfless participation in this project. Especially to my wife, Regina who did all of this and then proof read the entire thesis at the end! You are the most beautiful people on earth!

Finally, to God who has given me the opportunity to experience the spiritual dimension to life. I am eternally grateful for all you have done, not only in assisting me with this difficult project, but in giving me a life that is far from meaningless and empty. You are my inspiration and my hope. May your light shine from this work.

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## Chapter 1 Spirituality and Music

*“I sat there and was uplifted by the timeless language of the music while watching the time-honoured ritual. The music took me to an exalted level of awareness ... It was as if the music spoke a very different language and communicated beyond words, cutting through to a base meaning revealing an inner truth, touching an inner wellspring of existence. The music spoke of a deeper reality, outside the confines of words and narrow interpretations.”* (participant 3)

There is something very profound about music. It can move us deeply, affecting our imagination, our emotions and our bodies. Sometimes this is described as a spiritual experience, implying that there is some sort of mystical, transcendent sense that comes with listening to or performing music. This thesis investigates that idea, seeking to examine whether this sense of spirituality is extrinsic or intrinsic to the music. Is it something that becomes associated with the music and thus feels linked to it (being extrinsic), or is it inherent in the music itself (intrinsic)? Leonard Meyer explicated this theoretical distinction in his influential work *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956), by distinguishing between **referential** and **absolute**<sup>1</sup> meaning. I utilise this taxonomy to examine the relationship between music and spirituality.<sup>2</sup> My main research question is therefore: ‘Is the spiritual experience with music better accounted for as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience’?

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<sup>1</sup> Terms that are **underlined and bold** in the body text, such as these, can be found in the glossary located after the references.

<sup>2</sup> This theoretical framework is discussed in detail in chapter two. The present chapter is focused on examining what we mean by spirituality. The second chapter continues the literature review by examining the theoretical framework that will be used to examine spirituality in relation to music, as well as some other secondary issues. An overview of the entire thesis is provided in section 2.6.

## 1.1 Introduction

The relationship between spirituality and music has been the cause for much discourse over time, not least of all in relation to health and healing, particularly in music therapy and medical ethnomusicology.<sup>3</sup> Lipe (2002) reviewed much of the key literature on spirituality from music therapy and health care, concluding with seven ways in which music facilitates the spiritual.<sup>4</sup> Another prominent music therapy author; Aldridge (2003), suggested that music therapy “facilitates the process of connecting to that which is spiritually significant for the patient, thereby transforming experiences of suffering into those of meaning” (p. 3).

Medical ethnomusicology recognises the spiritual domain alongside the biological, psychological, social and emotional as a key domain of life (Koen, Barz, & Brummel-Smith, 2008). One researcher in the field described it as an “underlying animating life force that drives health and well-being” (Brummel-Smith, 2008, p.310). Music is very much part of this spiritual ontology, she writes, being linked with it in practices the world over. This is apparent in practices and potentialities such as meditation, quietude, synesthesia, dreams, extra-sensory or paranormal perception, transcendence, mystical consciousness, entrainment, rebalancing chakras, and so on.

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<sup>3</sup> Spirituality is not a new phenomenon. Some reference to the spirit or a spiritual awareness was apparent in the ancient Greek philosophy of the Music of the Spheres (J. James, 1995), Plato’s understanding of the soul (Jankelevitch, 1983), Liszt’s Transcendental Studies and the transcendentalism of the Romantic Period (J. Samson, 2010), Stockhausen’s claim that “we are spirits, and spirits should be connected with the superhuman, with the Cosmos, with God” (Godwin, 1986, p.289), and Robert Schumann’s description of music as a universal language that animates the spirit (Hoeckner, 2002). More recently it has been evident in Goldman’s (1992) claim that music provides a pure revelation of the human spirit, and Gordon’s (2005) description of music as an embodiment of the spirit. It is only in the last decade or two that it has begun to come under the scrutiny of scientific investigation, and thus require a commonly held definition.

<sup>4</sup> These seven ways are “1. As individuals engage with music, abstract concepts such as hope, meaning, and purpose are made concrete in the person’s lived experience, opening up paths to growth and healing; 2. Engagement with music provides a way to access and energize the imagination, leading to new, creative ways of listening, thinking, and being; 3. Experiences with music enables one to risk the experience of openness within a safe structured environment; 4. Music experiences provide access into the deeper, inner nature of being (including feelings, beliefs, and unconscious processes), and enable intentional integration of this dimension into one’s conscious experience in the world. 5. Music facilitates entry into altered states of consciousness and transpersonal experiences which may lead to insight or open avenues of healing energy. The literature in this area, particularly in GIM [Guided Imagery and Music], addresses some of the questions about spiritual experience raised by George et al. (2000); 6. Music opens avenues of communication not only between people but also between people and the divine; 7. The structure and familiarity of music provides comfort, reassurance, peace, and release.” (p.233)

A recent empirical study has also provided evidence for the relationship between music and spirituality. Penman and Becker (2009) studied physiological responses to music, finding that not only can music lead to an experience of spirituality, but that religious musical experiences bear great similarity to non-religious deep musical experiences. Their study examined *Pentecostal ecstasies* (n=10) - religious people who exhibit strong, almost trance like behaviour in response to music, and *deep listeners* (n=14) - persons who are not necessarily religious but who are profoundly moved by listening to music. They found that both groups exhibited similar responses to music, demonstrating stronger physiological responses to music they loved than people who were not ecstasies or deep listeners, and both tended to “describe their listening experiences in transcendent terms” (p. 63). This suggests that music is capable of providing a profound experience, not dependent on religion, which could be described as spiritual.

But how does this connection work? Within the field of medical ethnomusicology, Roseman (2008) asked whether referential and non-referential features of the song were responsible for healing; for “energizing her spiritual core” (p. 34). She mentioned musico-textual triggers as well as the instrumental reference to a television theme song, as pertaining to the referential component; while features such as rhythmic configuration, sound quality, mechanics, style of delivery, vocal timbre, technique and range, climax, intensity and overall form and structure as non-referential features. Her conclusion was that the two are complementary “in an overlaid continuum rather than as opposing or mutually exclusive views” (p.32).

It is this distinction that my research sets out to explore; does music facilitate the spiritual experience because of something internal to the music itself, or because of something outside of the music, which becomes attached to the music? I do this by firstly examining what is meant by a ‘spiritual experience’, as it relates to music. In the second chapter I examine the concepts of referential and absolute meaning, demonstrating how spirituality might be classified as either. I also examine the role of culture as it pertains to musical meaning, examining the effect that can have on the spiritual experience.

## 1.2 Circumscribing spirituality

What is ‘spirituality’? The term has no clear definition in contemporary Western parlance. It has only been the focus of scholarly research for the last few decades (Pearons & DiDuca, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997)<sup>5</sup>. As a result of this, and the complexity of the phenomenon, there is yet no consensus on its meaning (Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).<sup>6</sup> There is, however, agreement on the idea that it is distinct from religion. Historically spirituality and religion were synonymous, but today they are understood as being distinct (Jose & Taylor, 1986; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).<sup>7</sup> In essence, spirituality is now understood in terms of personal experience, or a dimension within each person, writes Stoll (1989), from a nursing perspective, whereas religion relates to formal structures (Hill, et al., 2000). This mirrors Allport’s (1966) distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religion, where *intrinsic* religion more closely relates to James’ (1902/1985) religious experience, and thus spirituality.<sup>8</sup> Religion therefore “serves as a vehicle for the expression of the person’s spirituality” (Allport, 1950, p.11). The two are not incompatible, but, as Elkins (1988) put it, religion no longer holds the monopoly on spirituality.

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<sup>5</sup> This resurgent interest is part of what David Tacey (2003), a writer on spirituality, called a *spirituality revolution*; a “people’s revolution ... [a] rebellion against the rise of materialism, inhumanity and economic rationalism.” (p.4) This is discussed further in the section on meaning below.

<sup>6</sup> The lack of consensus exists despite many attempts to try and define spirituality in its modern conceptualisation (Burkhardt, 1994; Dyson, Cobb, & Forman, 1997; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Ellison, 1983; Fisher, 1998; George, Larson, Keonig, & McCullough, 2000; Goldberg, 1998; Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Henery, 2003; Hill, et al., 2000; Hungelmann, Kenkel-Rossi, Klassen, & Stollenwerk, 1996; Lipe, 2002; Martsof & Mickley, 1998; McGrath, 1999; McSherry, Cash, & Ross, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Sheldrake, 2007; Stoll, 1989; Tanyi, 2002; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997).

<sup>7</sup> The process and impetus for this separation only reinforces the importance of spirituality as a phenomenon. However this lies beyond the scope of this thesis. For more information see (Beaudoin, 1998; George, et al., 2000; Hill, et al., 2000; Tacey, 2003; Turner, Lukoff, Barnhouse, & Lu, 1995; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997).

<sup>8</sup> I discuss James’ work in the next section, showing how his ‘religious experience’ is similar to what I am calling ‘spirituality’.

This idea of religion would not be accepted by all people, but reflects the current development in academic scholarship and popular society. Many who call themselves religious would reject this distinction, claiming that religion is ideally much more than formal structures. .



Despite spirituality's detachment from religion, it retains a strong sense of the sacred. This should be understood in terms of an *ultimate reality* or *ultimate truth*, as perceived by an individual (Hill et. al. 2000), rather than being restricted to the religious sense of something devoted to a deity (Sherrard, 1990). The sacred may involve the supernatural or metaphysical,<sup>9</sup> or it may be understood in more humanistic terms. What is important to an understanding of spirituality is that it involves a search for the sacred (George, et al., 2000).

Spirituality is therefore concerned with something more than what Hill, et al. (2000) called an ideology, activity or lifestyle. It is not simply a good experience. Rather, various writers have described spirituality in terms of a sense that “there's not nothing there” (Hay, 2007b, p.59); a sense of the ‘*numinous*’ (Otto, 1923, see discussion below); a ‘*deep primal source*’ (Tacey, 2003); or a ‘*presence that rolls through all things*’ (Wordsworth, 1798). It is about an aspect of life that takes on a divine character and meaning through its association with or representation of the holy, the *heilig* (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). Simply being in nature, even enjoying its beauty, for example, is not a spiritual experience unless there is a concomitant sense of profound connection with the cosmos that arises from that experience of nature.

Understanding spirituality requires understanding what is meant by ‘spirit’. Thompson (2005), in her book on Christian spirituality, proposed that the noun ‘spirituality’ refers to the capacity to experience the spiritual, where the adjective ‘spiritual’ describes the ‘spirit’.<sup>10</sup> One view of the spirit, based in Greek philosophy, posits that the spirit is distinct from the body and corporeality (Goldberg, 1998).<sup>11</sup> Consequently the spiritual

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<sup>9</sup> As Ehrlich (1997), a music writer, put it, “the material world is not the end of the matter”.

<sup>10</sup> In this sense spirituality relates to the spirit in the way that musicality relates to music. It is the way we realise this spiritual life, the quality or fact of being spiritual. In this sense a person is always spiritual, even if at any given moment they do not ‘feel’ spiritual, or have a spiritual experience. There is therefore an important distinction between being spiritual and the spiritual experience itself.

<sup>11</sup> Maslow (1964) identified this dichotomization between body and spirit in the distinction between science and religion. He noted that science has tended to pertain exclusively to the natural while religion pertains to the supernatural. However in Maslow's words, “dichotomizing pathologizes” (p. 13). The religious must be released from its constricted context and distributed in principle throughout the whole of life. I am arguing the same for spirituality.

experience is based not in this temporal, physical world, but in the supernatural or metaphysical realm.<sup>12</sup>

By contrast, the spirit can be conceptualized in terms of its Latin root, *spiritus*, meaning breath, as well as spirit (Goldberg, 1998; Tillich, 1967). Here the spirit is within the body, providing the life force or motivation, acting through the body. Where there is breath, there is power of life. Thus being dispirited is the opposite of being enlivened or motivated. It is in this sense that Peterson and Seligman (2004) described spirituality from a psychological perspective as the “source of the capacity for creativity, the ability to grasp the sacred, and the capacity for love, intimacy, harmony, growth, compassion, goodness and optimism” (p. 602). This is the sense of spirituality that I am adopting. It may pertain to something beyond the temporal and physical, it may involve the supernatural, but it is not restricted there. It also implicitly involves the force, the breath of temporal and physical life.

As Maslow (1970), the great humanistic psychologist, stated, spiritual values do not need supernatural concepts to validate them. Standing on top of a mountain, for example, does not need to include a concept of God for it to be spiritual. Rather, as Howard and Howard (1996) suggested in their discussion of occupation as a spiritual activity, spirituality may be best expressed in the midst of daily activity. Understood in this way, spirituality underlies every dimension of life. That is why Zinnbauer & Pargament (2005), writing from the discipline of positive psychology, claimed that it relates to biology, sensation, affect, cognition, behaviour, identity, meaning, morality, relationships, roles, creativity, personality, self-awareness and salience (p. 32).

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<sup>12</sup> Idealists during the Romantic Period conceptualized this in terms of a higher form of reality that is beyond this physical world but which pertains to a spiritual world (Bonds, 1997). Idealism prioritized spirit over matter, and so art was important because it was a central means by which to experience the realm of the spiritual or infinite. Thus the value of a piece of music was tied to its ability to reflect this higher ideal. In this context, instrumental music rose from a place of least importance to greatest importance.

E.T.A. Hoffmann, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century music critic, believed that true music eludes the ties that bind the other art forms to the physical world. Instead, the ideal, spiritual art “soars above physical reality to a realm of absolute, metaphysical experience” (Rumph, 1995, p.50). Music opens up to us an unknown kingdom, the spirit kingdom, which has nothing to do with our present sensory world. His belief was that music was at its greatest when it was unshackled to this present world. “Sound dwells everywhere, but the sounds – that is, the melodies – which speak the higher language of the spirit kingdom, reside in the human heart alone” (Rumph 1995, p.50).

Having considered the broad shape of spirituality, it is time to try and define it. However, rather than give a definitive definition, I propose to circumscribe it; identifying spirituality with respect to three key aspects, as a sort of index of spirituality. In this way I will draw boundary lines around the space within which it might be located.<sup>13</sup> I therefore propose that spirituality can be circumscribed with respect to three key aspects: ‘transcendence’, ‘connection’ and ‘meaning’. In the following three sections I will explore the basis for these as key aspects of spirituality. This then is my provisional definition:

Spirituality concerns the capacity for an awareness of a sacred connection that transcends corporeality and provides a sense of profound meaning.

I will now unpack each of those three aspects, with reference to their relevance to music. I intend to demonstrate that while each is important to spirituality, music has a great capacity to facilitate each one. Harvey (1999), a musicologist who has written extensively on spirituality, claimed that spirituality is *sensed* in music. If that is true then transcendence, connection and meaning will be sensed in music.

### **A) Transcendence**

Spirituality is said to be about **transcending** corporeality; transcending beyond one’s self (Ho & Ho, 2007; Martsof & Mickley, 1998) or one’s usual experience (Howden, 1992), beyond the limits of ordinary consciousness (Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2000). This transcending has been conceived of *vertically*, as in relating to a higher power such as God, the divine or the cosmos. This may be in terms of what Cobussen (2008), a music philosopher, called a ‘transcendent signified’; a definite idea of a higher power, or it may be an undefined sense of ‘something there’ (as described by Hay, 2007, in his

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<sup>13</sup> This is similar to Damasio’s (2004) use of a ‘provisional definition’ to discuss emotion. In a way not dissimilar to spirituality, emotion is also difficult to define. Therefore Damasio used the idea of a provisional definition because “new definitions [will most likely] change the ways in which we conceive these problems and carve out revised descriptions” (p.50).

empirical work on spirituality). Transcending has also been conceived of *horizontally*, as in relation to the limits of ordinary human experience in more existential terms (Elkins, 2001; Matthews, 2003). For example one can transcend one's ordinary sense of self as an autonomous individual, or one can transcend one's usual habits of fear and self-protectiveness (Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2000).

Transcendence has been considered central to spirituality. Dawson (1997), writing from the nursing field, described it as the essence of spirituality. Peterson & Seligman (2004) stated that spirituality is predicated on a transcendent (nonphysical) dimension of life. Kennedy & Kanthamani (1995), also from the field of Psychology, equated transcendence with spirituality, suggesting they both encompass an "overwhelming feeling of peace and unity with the entire creation, or profound inner sense of Divine presence" (p.334).

Relating this to music, there is considerable evidence for music leading to a transcendent experience.<sup>14</sup> Mick Jagger described moments of transcendence in music as moments when 'you're gone' (Ehrlich, 1997). Murphy, a religious writer, stated that music's rhythm, harmony and melody "energizes women and men to see beyond the limitations of temporal existence and to rise above them (1997, p.75).

Maslow's notion of '*peak experience*' relates closely to transcendence.<sup>15</sup> In his 'Theories of motivation' (1954) he identified what he called "peak experience" at the highest level of motivation (self actualization). Peak experiences are characterized by intense emotion; a sense of limitless horizons; a feeling of being more powerful and yet more helpless than before; great ecstasy, wonder and awe; a loss of a sense of time and space; a conviction that something extremely important and valuable had just happened; and a sense of being transformed and strengthened for daily life through that experience. Later he directly equated this with transcendence.<sup>16</sup> Maslow claimed that

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<sup>14</sup> It is not the only activity to facilitate this experience. Newberg and Waldman (2006) mention activities such as vigorous exercise and sexual activity as also triggering transcendence.

<sup>15</sup> See more information on Maslow's psychological research later in this section and in the section on 'Meaning'. My approach in this thesis is to deal with key authors, such as Maslow, progressively, as their work pertains to my discussion at the time.

<sup>16</sup> Maslow made this link in a conference discussion (edited by Krippner, 1972).

aesthetic events, especially music, could trigger such experiences. Subsequent research has shown that music is one of the most powerful antecedents of peak experience (Lowis, 2002). The more engaged the person is with music the more likely they are to have such an experience.

William James' (1902/1985) psychological study on religious experience was one of the first scientific explorations into phenomena such as I am describing as spirituality.<sup>17</sup> He noted that music has a strong relationship with religious experience.<sup>18</sup> He investigated people's religious experiences, finding that one characteristic typically involved was '*passivity*'. This is where the person feels as if their own will were in abeyance and even as if they were grasped and held by a superior power. This, I suggest, closely parallels transcendence. James stated that music, as opposed to speech, best portrays the meaning of those experiences. Because such mystical experiences are beyond the confines of rationalism, music alone has the best capacity to express or comprehend the experience.<sup>19</sup>

Gabrielsson (Gabrielsson, 2010; 2003) identified transcendence as an important aspect of musical experiences in his seminal project on Strong Experiences with Music (SEM).<sup>20</sup> He collected over 1,000 reports of strong experiences of music and from these identified seven major characteristics of musical experience, ranging from physical response to cognition to feeling and emotion.<sup>21</sup> One of the seven was what was termed '*Existential and transcendental aspects*'. Within this characteristic he identified three aspects; '*existence*', '*transcendence*' and '*religious experience*'.<sup>22</sup> He identified the

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<sup>17</sup> See more information on James' research in the sections on 'Connection' and 'Meaning'.

<sup>18</sup> I am equating James' term 'religious experience' with spirituality here because that is the term James used. That was done in a culture in which spirituality was synonymous with religion. Considering my earlier point about the separation of spirituality from religion, I propose that what James called 'religious experience' today we can call spirituality.

<sup>19</sup> "Many mystical scriptures are indeed little more than musical compositions" (James 1902/1985, p.4).

<sup>20</sup> See more information on this SEMs research in the next section on 'Connection'.

<sup>21</sup> The seven characteristics were i) General characteristics, ii) Physical reactions and behaviours, iii) Perception, iv) Cognition, v) Feelings/Emotions, vi) Existential and Transcendental aspects, and vii) Personal and social aspects. (see also Gabrielsson & Lindstrom Wik, 2000; Gabrielsson & Wik, 1995; Gabrielsson & Wik, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> The full content of these three aspects was 1. *Existence* – statements concerning the meaning of existence, intense feeling of living just now, pure existence, and an altered view of existence and life; 2. *Transcendence* – heavenly/extraterrestrial feeling, trance/ecstasy, out-of-body experience, experience of

following as features of transcendence in the musical experience; ‘*Extrasensory, magical experiences*’; ‘*Ecstasy or trance*’; ‘*Out-of-body-experience*’; ‘*Cosmic experience, merge with something greater*’; and ‘*Experience of other dimensions, other worlds*’ (2010, p.562-563). Spirituality was not a term they used in this study, but it seems that it is closely related to what they identified.

Csikszentmihalyi’s psychological concept of ‘*flow*’ (1990) also relates to transcendence.<sup>23</sup> Flow is a state of intense but effortless involvement in an activity, where people will participate in it for the sheer sake of doing it. It is characterized by complete concentration, total absorption in the activity, and even a distorted perception of time and a loss of self-consciousness. Csikszentmihalyi himself admitted that transcendence is often a part of the flow experience (see also Bernard, 2009; Csikszentmihalyi, 1993).<sup>24</sup> He claimed that music can induce the flow experience if it is seriously attended to (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Music helps organize the mind in this way. Bernard concluded the same (2009).

Evident in the concept of flow is an aspect of transcendence that is important for an understanding of spirituality. That is what I choose to call ‘**withdrawal ecstasy**’. I borrow this term from Panzarella (1980) who, also writing in the field of Psychology, used it to refer to a loss of contact with the world around.<sup>25</sup> His study broadened Maslow’s (1954) research on peak experience by incorporating styles of music other than Classical. He asked individuals about their “intense, joyous experience” (p. 71) of listening to music and discovered features closely associated with transcendence. Of the four factors<sup>26</sup> that emerged from his investigation, ‘*withdrawal ecstasy*’ identified a

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totality, cosmic experience/merging with something greater, and experience of other dimensions or other worlds; and 3. *Religious experience* – general religious experience, vision of heaven/life after this, spiritual peace/harmony, devout sacred atmosphere, contact/meeting with the divine/the sacred/religious confirmation, be addressed by spiritual/Christian message, seek/get in contact with God in prayer/song of praise, the music expresses a religious message, and religious doubt (Gabrielsson and Wik 2003).

<sup>23</sup> See more information on Csikszentmihalyi’s research in the following section on ‘Connection’.

<sup>24</sup> He also stated that flow provides “a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p.74).

<sup>25</sup> More information on Panzarella’s research is provided in the following two sections; ‘Connection’ and ‘Meaning’.

<sup>26</sup> Four factors emerged from people’s descriptions: *Renewal ecstasy*, where the world, though tragic and flawed, was experienced as better and more beautiful than had previously been thought; *Motor-sensory*

sense of loss of contact with the physical and the social environment. A perceptual narrowing occurs such that, like in flow, absorption leads to a distorted sense of reality. This was also found by Maslow (1954), who identified a loss of a sense of time and space in peak experiences.

Withdrawal ecstasy has been demonstrated clearly in music. Hills & Argyle (1998) investigated similarities between musical and religious experiences. They examined 230 participants, finding “strong evidence for the existence of a common mystical element in religious and musical experiences” (p.100). They concluded that ‘*timelessness*’ and ‘*loss of sense of self*’ were common to both religious and musical experiences (p.97); both instances of withdrawal ecstasy.

Physical responses are also often discussed as a important response to transcendence and therefore spirituality. But because they are a response to the experience rather than part of the nature of the experience itself, we can adequately consider spirituality apart from them, and so they will not be considered.<sup>27</sup>

## **B) Connection**

A second core aspect to spirituality seems to be a sense of **connection**. Howden (1992), in her doctoral thesis on spirituality, described connection as “the feeling of relatedness or attachment to others, and a feeling of oneness with the universe and/or universal element or Universal Being” (p.15). These are necessarily total, infinite or measureless, unitive experiences. Goldberg (1998), a nursing theorist, postulated that the various aspects of spirituality all appear to be products of a relationship. Similarly Burkhardt (1994) stated that spirituality is “experienced in caring connections with Self, Others,

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*ecstasy*, where physical and quasi-physical responses were felt; *Withdrawal ecstasy*; which involved Loss of contact with the physical and the social environment, and *Fusion-emotional ecstasy*, where fusion with the stimulus was experienced.

<sup>27</sup> Sloboda (1991) demonstrated that physical sensations such as shivers, laughter and tears, are reliably experienced in response to certain aspects of music. Similarly, Bicknell (2007) discussed the same physical responses arising from the experience of being overwhelmed or overpowered by music. But these are a byproduct of the experience and so are beyond the scope of this study. See the section on limitations of this research in Chapter 3.

Nature, and God or Higher Power” (p.19). Furthermore, Hay & Nye (2006), in their study on spirituality, found that a core category of spiritual experiences for children was ‘*relational consciousness*’. This consisted of an unusual consciousness or perceptiveness expressed in the context of how the individual related to other beings.

Laski (1968) identified this idea of connection in her Psychological study of transcendent ecstasy. She asked people to describe their experiences of transcendent ecstasy,<sup>28</sup> which she claimed are essentially mystical experiences (and therefore equivalent to spirituality for my purposes). Within these descriptions she identified a feature she called ‘*contact*’; a connection between the self and a higher-than-self identity which can be experienced as the self and the other becoming one in ‘*union ecstasy*’. These she regarded as the greatest form of ecstasy. Music was a frequent trigger for ‘*contact*’.

Connection can be experienced with a variety of entities, but it has been suggested that these typically include God or a higher power, oneself, other people, and the environment (Burkhardt 1994; Gomez & Fisher 2003; Martsolf & Mickley 1998). Connection with the ‘**supernatural**’, often referred to as God or a higher power, is the awareness of being linked to some force or entity greater than one’s self.<sup>29</sup> Connection to one’s self refers to an ‘**existential**’ wholeness, described by Ellison (1983) in terms that “the spiritual dimension does not exist in isolation from our psyche and soma, but provides an integrative force” (p.331). Connection with ‘**other people**’ is a deep awareness of one’s connectedness to fellow humans, often expressed through culture (Fisher, 1998). Fourthly, connection with the ‘**environment**’ is a belief that the natural world is sacred and that all of the cosmos is interconnected (Delaney 2003).

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<sup>28</sup> Experiences of *transcendent ecstasy* are “experiences characterised by being joyful, transitory, unexpected, rare, valued and extraordinary to the point of often seeming as if derived from a praeternatural source” (Laski, 1968, p.5).

<sup>29</sup> This sort of experience of connection in relation to music is seen also in the Theosophical tradition, where such composers as Scriabin, Holst and Ruth Crawford demonstrate a belief in special revelations from on high (Tick, 1991). According to this tradition, such beliefs center around an ancient wisdom and the importance of the brotherhood of man. Here we see a strong sense of mystery and of music as being a ‘soul experience’. According to this tradition, the only difference between an artist and a mystic is that the latter is further along the track on which they are both traveling.



Fisher (1998; Gomez & Fisher, 2003), coming from an educational perspective, made the point that these four domains are not isolated, but inter-related because they arise from the same essence - the same spirit. In this sense they are instantiations of a fundamental or overall sense of connection, such as is identified above. According to Tacey (2003), an Australian writer on spirituality, this sense of connection is possible because there are no separate parts in the universe - everything is in dynamic relationship with everything else.

Connection is fundamental to the experience of music. Small (1999), a musicologist, introduced the term '*musicking*' to make exactly this point. Music is not just about a set meaning contained in a musical work, it is about the social action of performing and listening. Music is a verb, not a noun, argued Small, because it is not a thing that we engage with, but something we do. A musical performance is something we take part in not just by performing, but in a plethora of ways, such as listening, dancing and even selling tickets. Small makes the point that music is an encounter between humans where meaning is generated. "The act of musicking brings into existence among those present a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act of musicking lies" (p.13). Those relationships, according to Small, can be at the level of individuals, society, the natural world and even the supernatural world. While this encounter is not always at a deep or sacred level, sometimes it is. When it is, I suggest it relates to spiritual connection.

Bogdan (2003) identified this in an article on the importance of musical spirituality, which she depicted as "embodied aesthetic experience" (p.90). She stated, "an aesthetic experience is . . . akin to . . . the collapse of ego boundaries, a sense of oneness with 'what is'" (p.85). Thus there is no duality between the listener and the music, the two become one.<sup>30</sup>

This is a key point in Harvey's understanding of the connection between music and spirituality. He used the term '*integration*' to convey the idea that in participating fully

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<sup>30</sup> Crawford (2005) identified the same thing in her criticism of the prevalence of a subjective/objective duality in Western forms of knowledge. She argued that such duality is unhelpful, pointing out that transcendence is fundamentally non-dualistic.

in the music, we become the music (Harvey, 1996). It ceases to be ‘one who knows’ and becomes ‘one knowing’.<sup>31</sup> He borrowed from Stockhausen (1989) who argued that we should not become conscious *of* the music but we should become conscious *as* the music, for we are the music. This is about unity; music integrates things – the listener and the music, the individual and the cosmos, the self and the supernatural or the other person – so that there is unity. This seems to be what Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) identified as ‘*Cosmic Experience, merge with something greater*’, or ‘*experience of totality*’. They exemplified the former with the comment “A total merging with the music or even with something greater, God or universe maybe – where the ego-experience was completely wiped out” (p.182). The same sort of thing is evident in Csikszentmihalyi’s (2002) *Flow*. Here music can act as a resource, generating what Durkheim (1995 [1912]) referred to as ‘*collective effervescence*’ – a sense that one belongs to a group with a concrete, real experience.

The same idea was evident in a follow-up to the SEM study by Gabrielsson’s co-author, Lindström Wik (unpublished), with the comment “I am in unison with the universe”. This work identified aspects in the SEM data that had a specifically religious focus. In particular, with reference to the current discussion, the aspect ‘*contact/meeting with the divine/sacred*’<sup>32</sup> was identified as the most central element for strong religious experiences of music. ‘*Seek/get in contact with God*’ was also identified. Other studies have also identified this notion of a fundamental connection with something greater than one’s self (Delaney, 2003; Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995; Murray & Zentner, 1989).

An important feature of connection is what I will call ‘**fusion**’. Again I borrow this term from Panzarella (1980) who described experiences of “fusion with the stimulus”, and “the experience of merging with an aesthetic object” (p.77). However, I suggest the need to go beyond Panzarella because he was concerned merely with the aesthetic

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<sup>31</sup> The process of dissociation may, at least to some degree, explain this feature of spirituality. Price and Snow (1998) describe dissociative states as “a process in which the individual maintains the integrity of self while transcending the physical reality of the mundane” (p. 260). The religious context encourages such healthy dissociative states, which suggests this may be quite involved in the experience of the spiritual.

<sup>32</sup> This described respondents’ experience of meeting God, something holy or something religious.

object, whereas I suggest that fusion occurs between other entities of connection as well. This seems to be what James (1902/1985) was identifying when he wrote about '*passivity*'.

There is considerable overlap between this notion of '*fusion*' and the notion of '*withdrawal*' that I discussed in the section on transcendence. Withdrawal is the sense of losing contact with the world around, whereas fusion is the sense of connection with another entity. Maslow (1971) described transcendence as: "the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than as means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos" (p.279). This closely parallels the instantiations of connection I discussed above (supernatural, self, others and the environment), suggesting that transcendence and connection are identifying aspects of the same phenomenon. One way to deal with this conflation is to consider transcendence as the transportation away from corporeality, and connection as that to which one has transcended. If transcendence involves the dissolution of the boundaries of self then that which is experienced is connection.

Zinnbauer & Pargamant (2005) made the distinction between substantive and functional approaches to religion (and by extrapolation, spirituality), where substantive approaches deal with its substance; particularly the sacred or transcendent, while functional approaches deal with the purpose it serves; how it is used. Transcendence and connection are both concerned with the substance of spirituality, hence their overlap. Whereas meaning, the third aspect, which I deal with next, is more concerned with its function. In this research I have sought to include both approaches.

### **C) Meaning**

A third key aspect that seems to be important to the spiritual experience is a sense of **meaning** gained as a result of the experience. This involves a subjective sense of *meaningfulness*: a feeling that one has a purpose or direction (Park, 2005), because

spirituality concerns people's cardinal or core values (Ho & Ho, 2007). Writing on the psychology of religion, Park (2005) noted there has been a resurgence of interest in the question of meaning for psychology in recent years. This resurgent interest has shown that there is a deep desire for meaning amongst humans (Martsolf & Mickley, 1998) and this is seen to be deeply associated with human existence and spirituality (Jose & Taylor, 1986; Paloutzian & Park, 2005; Park, 2005; Sawatzky, Ratner, & Chiu, 2005; Stanworth, 2004; Tillich, 1963). Indeed, Park (2005) made the claim that "meaning, then, is central to human existence" (p.296), and that is why it is central to religion. But that is also why it is important for spirituality. Tacey (2003) wrote about this resurgent interest in his book 'The Spirituality Revolution', claiming that there is an "urgent cry for spiritual meaning" (p.3) in response to the inadequacies of "the values and assumptions of mechanistic science and humanism" (p.2) that have characterized our society.

According to Assagioli (1974), Jung claimed that people have a need to reach an understanding of meaning and purpose in life, to believe it has purpose and value of a spiritual nature (Assagioli, 1974). This implies that life is more than biological and that there is potentially profound meaning, purpose or value in it, and that this is experienced within the spiritual domain (Burkhardt, 1994; Harries, 1993). While this does not necessitate a return to religious meaning, it often involves an intuition that "there's not nothing there" (Hay, 2007b, p.59).

Music is also fundamentally concerned with meaning (Cook, 1998a).<sup>33</sup> It has the capacity to communicate profound meaning, for it has been said by a philosopher to "express infinitely that which cannot be explained" (Jankelevitch, 1983, p.71), or by a religious aesthete, to bring order out of chaos, harmony to the soul and healing to spiritual pain, by bringing about a sense of the beyond that gives meaning and value to

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<sup>33</sup> Some say music communicates more clearly than spoken language - Mendelssohn is alleged to have said "A piece of music that I love expresses thoughts to me that are not too *imprecise* to be framed in words, but too *precise*" (le Huray & Day, 1981). This ties in exactly with Raffman's (1993) idea of *nuance ineffability*. Others, like Hanslick (1957/1854), claimed music is less precise; that it is like a silhouette, where we only recognize the original after being told what it is. This is Raffman's (1993) *structural ineffability*.

our lives (Mayne, 1987). According to Ryken (1989), another writer on religious aesthetics, “Art is not about things as they are, but things as they matter” (p. 26). Chapter two will explore the way this works; through Meyer’s paradigm of intrinsic and extrinsic meaning. Later in this section I will also explore how profound meaning can be handled. But my point here is that it seems that music relates closely to spirituality because music transacts in the type of profound meaning that spirituality is. As Wuthnow (1998) put it, they have the mutual ability to deal with an essential yearning for inspiration that exists within humanity; the sense of meaning that accompanies spirituality.

The importance of profound meaning in both spirituality and music is seen in Maslow’s (1954) idea that *peak experience* involved a conviction that something extremely important and valuable had just happened. It is also seen in the sense of being transformed and strengthened for daily life through that experience (described above), which was similar to Panzarella’s (1980) *renewal ecstasy*. Here he described the world, though tragic and flawed, being experienced as better and more beautiful than had previously been thought. Renewal ecstasy was the largest factor in the aesthetic experience for his participants. This implies that music has a great capacity to bring about this sort of meaning or perception of the world. Sometimes this meaning was contrary to reality, in that it contained the tragic and flawed yet that did not alter its goodness. But, paradoxically, that did not seem to matter.

An important feature of such profound meaning is that it may lie below or beyond the rational. The rational sense of meaning has been labeled as an ‘*overbelief*’ by Panzarella (1980). This is a term he borrowed from Laski (1968) to mean a “belief in more than is warranted by the evidence or in what cannot be verified” (p.20).<sup>34</sup> By contrast, pre-rational meaning is what Otto sought to identify in his widely referenced religious publication ‘The idea of Holy’ (Otto, 1923). The *numinous* is a ‘moment’ of consciousness that brings an awareness of a mystery that defies rationalization.<sup>35</sup> This

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<sup>34</sup> The difference between the two is taken up below in my discussion of the contrast between conceptual and experiential meaning.

<sup>35</sup> The numinous is characterized by a few things: what Otto called *creature feeling* – “the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures” (p.10). It is also characterized by *mysterium tremendum* – it grips or stirs the human mind in

mystery is a ‘wholly other’, which contains a strange fascination. Despite being pre-rational, these moments are very clearly grasped. Otto inferred that beneath the rationalizations of the experiences James (1902/1985) reported, lies this sense of the numinous.<sup>36</sup> Otto (1923) also stated that one’s experience of the numinous is comparable to an aesthetic experience, particularly music.

This idea of ineffability was evident in James’ (1902/1985) study of mystical experience, where two of the four characteristics he identified were ‘*ineffability*’ - where words are inadequate to describe the experience; and ‘*noetic*’ - a feeling but also knowledge of insights and truths beyond description. Both convey the sense of meaning in the experience. Ineffable meaning was also part of what Susanne Langer (1951) sought to describe; the idea that music articulates feelings that language cannot express. That is why, according to Cook (1998a), it was at the point in musical history when music was most encouraged to speak for itself (as in instrumental music of the Romantic period) that the most was written about it. Music seems so forcefully to want to mean something, yet the description escapes us. It is ineffable not because there are no words to describe it, but because there are not enough words.<sup>37</sup> In the same way, spirituality is ineffable, because it cannot be adequately known through rational concepts alone.

In order to adequately handle rational and pre-rational meaning, I draw on a distinction made by Rahner (1982), writing about religious aesthetics, between conceptual and

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response to a mystery inexpressible and above all creatures. This characteristic involves three aspects: i) a sense of awe (*tremendum*), such as the ‘fear of God’. This is something only the spirit of a person can access; it is not a ‘natural’ phenomenon in the ordinary sense of that word. ii) An ‘*overpoweringness*’ and *absolute unapproachability* – majesty in the awe-full sense of that word. This involves the “annihilation of the self” alongside “the transcendent as the sole and entire reality” (p.21). The personal self is made complete in relation to the transcendent reality. iii) *Energy* – the urgency, vitality, passion, and so on, of the numinous.

<sup>36</sup> It is notable that the German word in the title ‘*heilig*’ can be translated ‘holy’, as in the English translation of the book, or ‘sacred’. The idea of the ‘sacred’ relates to my discussion above about the importance of the sacred in the spiritual experience.

<sup>37</sup> This is an important point. In saying that both spirituality and music are ‘ineffable’ I do not mean that words cannot describe them at all, but that words are inadequate to describe them fully. One begins with words, but the words soon run out.

experiential knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Experiential knowledge concerns the original level of the cognitive awareness of an event, while conceptual knowledge concerns one's reflection upon that awareness. Experiential knowledge is that in which there is "the purely objective 'thing in itself' of a reality" (p.17), while conceptual knowledge is the 'clear and distinct idea' of that reality. For example, one can have a concept of having a baby, but the experience of having a baby is an entirely different, and much richer form of knowledge. It is in this sense that Crawford (2005) wrote about spirituality as a form of '*sapiential knowledge*', where '*sapere*' is the Latin for 'to taste'. Some experiences, she claimed, cannot be adequately dealt with by a rationally-conceptually dominated episteme because they are only known by taste.

Accordingly, spirituality (like music) is primarily an experience rather than a concept. Concepts can be involved as well, and must be held together with the experience. This is clearly seen in relation to religion. Wendy Beckett (1992), a religious art writer, suggested that it is through art that we sense the transcendent reality, whereas through religion we learn how to interpret it. However, concepts are not enough. Spirituality is not fundamentally about those concepts, it is about the apprehension of 'something there': a space characterised by an ineffable sense of profound transcendence, connection and meaning.

It was in this sense that Cobussen (2008) described spirituality as a *threshold*. A threshold is "the boundary between here and there" (p.3), the space between the perceived and the understood, between an experience and its sure interpretation. He described spirituality as the sense one might have of something rather than the interpretation of what that something is. Thus it is not about a transcendent signifier, such as God. It is about the space or the mystery that is intimated by the experience. It is an *a-topos*, an undecided zone where encounters can be examined but never definitively grasped. In my review of Cobussen's book (Atkins, 2009b), I cautioned against taking this uncertain wandering too far. Restricting spirituality to an absence (as in Certeau, 1992) instead of any sense of presence (as in Steiner 1989) is too constraining. Spirituality can involve a definite sense of connection, such as a transcendent signifier,

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<sup>38</sup> In Appendix A there is a more thorough discussion about ineffability, and experiential and conceptual knowledge, for there is insufficient space here to discuss this complex understanding fully.

so long as it is not limited to the rational concept of that. Spirituality (like music) is fundamentally an experience, not a concept; a sense of something rather than its interpretation; a threshold where one experiences ‘something there’. That is why we call it ineffable.

Raffman (1993), another music philosopher, described three characteristics of music which make this ineffability possible; music’s structure, its sensory nature, and its nuances.<sup>39</sup> Sloboda (2005b) applied that psychologically by relating each of those characteristics directly to the spiritual activity of worship. He stated that it is this gap between knowing and saying that “offers particular *affordances* for worship” (p.351, emphasis mine). Music **affords** worship in the sense that its physical characteristics are such that it invites the experience of it, just as a chair affords sitting in. It does not produce it in a mechanistic sense, but it allows the possibility of it. In the same way music affords spirituality because of its capacity to deal with ineffable meaning.

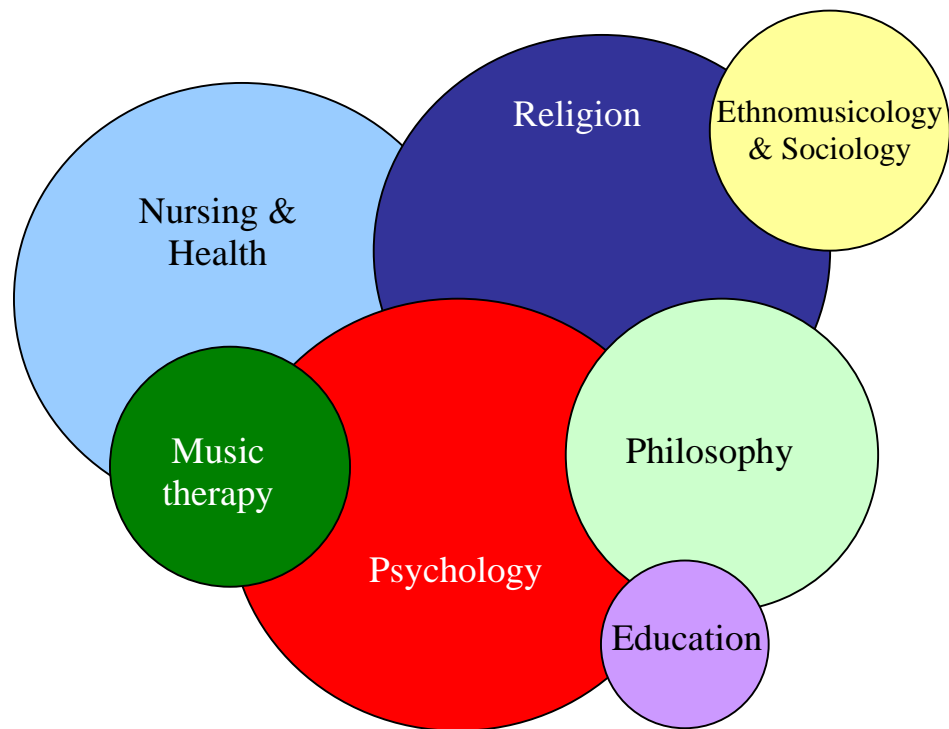
In conclusion, this chapter has sought to define the perimeter within which we might locate spirituality. It has drawn on literature from a wide range of disciplines, as the topic of spirituality is being examined in fields as diverse as psychology, nursing and health, religion, philosophy, music therapy, ethnomusicology and sociology, and education. Figure 1.1 is an attempt to diagrammatically represent the relative contribution of these fields to the study of spirituality. It is worth noting that the majority of this literature is theoretical or philosophical in nature, so what is lacking from a more thorough study of the phenomenon is empirical research. This thesis is an attempt to address that lacuna.

I now turn in Chapter 2 to the question of how music affords that sense of spirituality. Is it something extrinsic to the music, or something intrinsic?

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<sup>39</sup> She wrote about 1) *structural ineffability*, where we are subconsciously aware of the structures of the music, yet cannot say why we feel there is something more; 2) *Feeling ineffability*, where our knowledge of the music is sensory-perceptual, a ‘felt’ knowledge; and 3) *Nuance ineffability*, where we perceive more detail than can be accounted for or categorised.





**Figure 1.1** Contribution of existing literature to the research area of spirituality<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This figure represents an approximation of contribution, it is not based on any empirical data. It is therefore intended as a guide only.

## Chapter 2 – Spirituality and types of musical meaning

Having circumscribed spirituality as *the capacity for an awareness of a sacred connection that transcends corporeality and provides a sense of profound meaning*, and having examined the evidence for music's capacity to elicit such experience,<sup>2</sup> I now address the main question of this thesis: is spirituality best described as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience?

Leonard Meyer (1956) identified two major historic opinions as to what constitutes musical meaning, in his influential book on music psychology, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*:<sup>3</sup> referentialism and absolutism. Absolute meaning, coming from the Latin *absolutus* which means to 'separate off', is intrinsic to the music. It is the meaning of a piece of music contained within the music itself: it is intra-musical. "Musical meaning lies exclusively within the context of the work itself, in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art" (Meyer, 1956, p.1).

Referential meaning, by contrast, is extrinsic to the music. It relates to music's propensity to attract and maintain extra-musical references. "Music also communicates meanings which in some way refer to the extra musical world of concepts, actions, emotional states, and character" (p.1). These may incorporate images - those half forgotten thoughts of people, places or experiences triggered either consciously or unconsciously by the music; connotations - those associations to the music which are shared by a group within a culture; and moods - the sentiment or mood of the piece, arising from association.

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<sup>2</sup> I am deliberately avoiding saying that this type of experience is found *in* music, because that would imply an absolutist meaning. This type of experience may well arise from *within* the music, but it may equally be associated with the music, and so not in the music *per se*. That is the point of this research.

<sup>3</sup> See my comments below about the continuing validity of this dated research.

Absolute and referential meaning are not mutually exclusive. They can and do co-exist. For example, a piece of music can have meaning in terms of the technical structure of a melody (absolute), in addition to it being my grandmother's favourite song (referential).

Meyer (1956) further distinguished between two absolutist positions; '*formalism*' and '*expressionism*'. These are classic Aesthetic positions. **Formalism** is "the meaning of the music [that] lies in the perception and understanding of the musical relationships set forth in the work of art and that meaning in music is primarily intellectual" (p.3). By contrast Meyer described expressionism (**absolute expressionism**) in terms that: "these same [musical] relationships are in some sense capable of exciting feelings and emotions in the listener" (p. 3).<sup>4</sup> This taxonomy may be diagrammatically represented as in Figure 2.1.

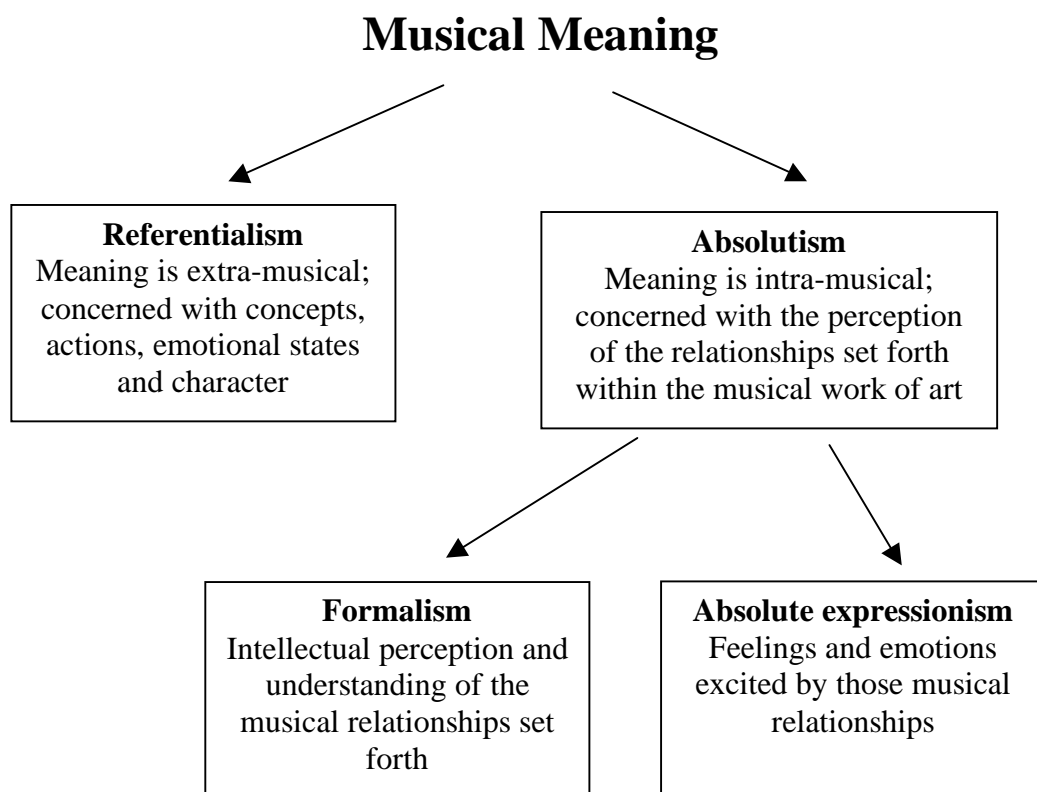


Figure 2.1 Meyer's Taxonomy of musical meaning

<sup>4</sup> He distinguished *expressionism* from *referentialism* because the former is intra-musical while the latter is not. For *absolute expressionists*, "expressive emotional meanings arise in response to music and ... these exist without reference to the extramusical world of concepts, actions and human emotional states" (p.3). For *referential expressionists*, "emotional expression is dependent upon an understanding of the referential content of music." (p.3).

Music has meaning, Meyer argued, when it points to, indicates or implies something beyond itself. It can do that through *designative* meaning, in which a stimulus points to things that are of a different kind to itself, or it can do that through *embodied* meaning, in which the stimulus points to things which are of the same kind as itself. In the former, music will refer to extra-musical associations (referential meaning), while in the latter it will refer to other internal events (absolute meaning).

Although Meyer's work is more than 50 years old now, it is still widely regarded as useful by a range of current scholars (Aiello, 1994; Gregory & O'Conner, 2002; Narmour, 1990; Schmuckler, 1989; Sloboda, 2005a)<sup>5</sup>. Some scholars have questioned the taxonomy because of the questionable nature of absolute meaning. Referential meaning is less contentious because it is clear that music can have extrinsic meaning. But the way in which music can *embody* meaning has been the source of debate. Scholars such as Chua (1999) have argued that the idea of absolute meaning is meaningless; a construction made up by philosophers in the early Romantic period, and, in reality, is unsustainable. He argued that it is not possible to have music without any extra-musical associations, and so "absolute music is an extramusical idea" (p. 6). But this does not seem to allow for music embodying something which is of the same kind as itself. It seems to take absolute meaning in its formalist sense and rejects that.

On the other hand, Kivy (1991) has argued that music, at least pure instrumental music, is not concerned with the world outside of itself, and in that sense is not concerned with meaning at all. Here absolute meaning is conceived in a formalistic sense. My contention is that music can have meaning that is absolute (internal) without being formalist, and Meyer's taxonomy permits that.

This thesis is not attempting to answer the conundrum of absolute meaning. It is simply accepting that there can be meaning either associated with or embodied by the music, and then asking how that relates to the phenomenon of spirituality. On that basis,

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<sup>5</sup> Bharucha described it as a "secure theoretical framework" (p.477). But one of the most resounding endorsements came from Aiello (1994), who reprinted the first chapter of Meyer's book in her book because of the "historical importance of his book" (p.3).

Meyer's foundational claim of a distinction between referential and absolute meaning (sometimes referred to as referential and non-referential), which is still accepted by some contemporary scholars, is suitable for the purposes of this thesis.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, spirituality will be referential (extrinsic) if it is found to be of a different kind to music, so that the music simply designates the spiritual. Conversely, spirituality will be absolute (intrinsic) if it is of the same kind as music, so that music embodies the spiritual. I now examine these two propositions in detail.

## 2.1 Referential Spirituality

*Spirituality will be referential (extrinsic) if it is found to be of a different kind to music, so that the music simply designates the spiritual.*

When someone makes the comment 'Darling, they're playing our song' they are identifying that the meaning of the music is of a different kind to the meaning of the relationship between the two people (according to J. B. Davies, 1978). This is referential meaning. In the same way, when a particular song brings to mind a sense of the spiritual then that can be said to be referential. This is what Raffman (1993) meant by saying we 'lend' the music a certain intentionality that it does not, of itself, possess. A particular song may, for example, come to represent one's connection with God or an experience of transcendence (both aspects of spirituality), even though it may not possess that intentionality inherently. In these cases, the experience will be referential.

Referential spirituality is apparent in Rouget's (1980) ethnomusicological work. He examined the role of music in various forms of trance,<sup>7</sup> claiming that in 'possession

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<sup>6</sup> Having said that, the notion of absolute meaning will be explored throughout this thesis. It will be important to determine in what conception of absolute meaning spirituality can be accommodated.

trance' music allowed the possessed person to identify with the Spirits he embodied. "The music is thus neither emotional, nor invocatory, nor incantatory; it is essentially identificatory" (p.323).<sup>8</sup> In other words, it is not some inherent aspect of the music that allows this connection, but music acting as a symbol, referring to the divinity, that allows the trance to occur.

Such designative meaning appears to operate like a language.<sup>9</sup> One thing seems to designate another without need for much similarity or logical necessity between them. Davies (1994), a music philosopher, developed a system to classify the ways in which things can have meaning, and this is instructive here. He proposed five types of meaning ranging from type A, which is a natural, unintended meaning, to type E, which is an arbitrary symbol system.<sup>10</sup> Language falls into his type E category because it is a completely arbitrary symbol system. However musical meaning appears to be more than simply a symbol system; it also has a more natural meaning. It does not seem to be completely natural (type A), although Cooke (1959) tried to argue that it is. Instead music seems to constitute types B (intentional use of natural significance) or D (intentional arbitrary stipulation of stand-alone meaning). A Wagnerian leitmotif would constitute a type D meaning in that its meaning is established by its use rather than by some inherent quality of the music and therefore it does not have the same meaning outside of that context.<sup>11</sup> Thus music seems to involve some natural elements, some intentional elements and some convention, which is not generalized across cultures.

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<sup>7</sup> I would claim that trance is a spiritual experience because it (potentially) involves all three aspects; transcendence, connection and meaning.

<sup>8</sup> Rouget was not claiming that all trance is identificatory. He described other types of trance as well, such as 'emotional trance' and 'communal trance', which do involve some emotional or inherent aspect or qualities of the music.

<sup>9</sup> There is much debate over just how music might be a language. This question is beyond the scope of this thesis, however the reader is referred to authors such as Aiello (1994), Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983), and Bernstein (1976)

<sup>10</sup> Davies' five types of meaning are: Type A – Natural, unintended meaning, where one causes the other, like dark clouds mean rain. Type B – Intentional use of natural significance, where there is an intentional use of type A meaning. Type C – Systematized, intentional use of natural elements, where you need to know the system to see the significance of the connection. Type D – Intentional, arbitrary stipulation of stand-alone meaning, where meaning comes partly from convention, but this is not a symbol system. Type E – Arbitrary meaning generated within a symbol system, like language.

<sup>11</sup> It is often in this sense that music has been called allegorical (Begbie, 2008; Jankelevitch, 1983) or metaphorical (Bernstein, 1976). Yet I would suggest that music precedes the metaphor. Music provides meaning, which we understand implicitly but not rationally, to which metaphors can be added to make logical sense of it. In this way we hear music, it moves us, we respond to it, and then a metaphor comes to

Musical spirituality may also be a type D meaning in the sense that it is designated by the music despite it being a somewhat arbitrary stipulation. In that sense it will be referential. This can be the case even if the meaning is ineffable or pre-conceptual. A piece of music may become associated with an ineffable sense of existential awareness, for example, even if the music and the awareness are of a different kind. This would be referential spirituality.

Meyer (1956) proposed that referential meaning can take the form of *images*, *connotations* or *moods*. Each of these is applicable to spirituality. Music can trigger *images* or thoughts of people, places and experiences that are spiritual in nature. This is common in the religious context. Bogdan (2003) described one such experience in her visit to a pontifical high mass. Here the music and its environment brought back a surfeit of memories of similar experiences. *Connotations* or shared associations can also be spiritual in nature. The significance of an African freedom song is based largely on just such connotations. It is the shared meaning that expresses the connection between people, where connection is one of the aspects of spirituality. Thirdly, *moods* can be spiritual. These are evident in Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik's (2003) existential and transcendence categories, such as '*heavenly/extraterrestrial feeling*', '*oceanic feelings*', '*spiritual peace/harmony*', and even possibly '*devout, sacred atmosphere*'. Music is able to designate such moods through learned association.

Music seems to be well suited to refer to spiritual things, even if what it is communicating is not the concept of those things, but some pre-conceptual awareness of their essence. Warren (2006) offered an analogy here, suggesting that spiritual meaning can be *played out* in a range of other, more rational or graspable meanings. For example, music that depicts Christ's death and resurrection can be played out in the sense that people hearing it might not think of that particular instantiation, but of other 'resurrections' such as night turning to morning, or sunshine after a storm.

Referential meaning does not always seem as if it is an extrinsic association. Schubert and McPherson (2006) demonstrated this in their music psychology discussion of

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mind and we say to ourselves "yes, that is what it was saying". This is still referential because the designated meaning is still external to the music, even if it is ineffable.

veridical and schematic processes. When unfamiliar music is encountered it is initially appropriated in a veridical sense; a one to one association, such as knowing what the next note in the melody ‘twinkle twinkle little star’ is because it has been rehearsed previously. Over time, however, those veridical associations may develop into schema. This is the knowledge of styles or larger organizational units, which allows us to predict what will happen on the basis of that style. This schematic knowledge is deeply ingrained, as it is operating at a sub-conscious level, and may become indistinguishable from what is truly natural.

Schubert and McPherson (2006) linked these processes<sup>12</sup> directly with Meyer’s (1956) concepts of absolute and referential meaning, such that referential meaning is a veridical process and absolute meaning is a schematic one. Relating that to spirituality, a certain piece of music might become associated with some aspect of the spiritual experience and thus form a veridical (referential) association. Over time these associations may develop into a schema in which a certain aspect or style of music becomes sub-consciously related to an aspect of spirituality, and is felt to be natural to the music itself (absolute). This does not mean that such schemas explain all absolute experiences, but that some spiritual experiences that seem as if they are coming from the music itself are actually a product of internalized (therefore subconscious) referential associations.

One final point is that it does not seem possible for spirituality to be referential if it is not understood as something that can be attained; a presence, or a transcendent signified. If spirituality is understood as a ‘productive void’ in which there is no signifier but just an empty space, as Cobussen (2008) described it, then there is nothing to refer to and it cannot be referential. Music would relate to spirituality, in that case, not as a medium through which the spiritual could be attained while the music becomes unnecessary, but as the place in which we could “catch a glimpse of ‘something’ that ... could be called spiritual” (Cobussen 2008 p. 104). This is at once a limitation of this view of spirituality, as I discussed in my review of Cobussen’s book *Thresholds* (Atkins, 2009b), and a reason to consider spirituality as a form of absolute meaning.

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<sup>12</sup> Their discussion of veridical and schematic processes is an application of Bharucha’s model (1987; 1994).



## 2.2 Absolute Spirituality

*Spirituality will be absolute (intrinsic) if it is of the same kind as music, so that music embodies the spiritual.*

If the music *embodies* the spiritual, if the spiritual is inherent in the perception and reception of music, as a feature of the music itself then it can be called absolute.

Returning to Davies' (1994) taxonomy of meaning, music can have type B meaning – 'intentional use of natural significance'. This seems to be where spirituality would fit if it were absolute – a sense of meaning arising from some natural signification that the music possesses. His main thesis was that the significance of music does not lie outside of the music, as in referentialism,<sup>13</sup> but as a property of the music. He examined emotion as the matter of music's significance, but I extrapolate from that to spirituality, to say that if the direction of Davies' argument is correct, then music may present the 'dynamic characteristic in appearance' (as Davies called it) of spirituality; modeling it through its pitch, rhythm and dynamics. Just as a Bassett Hound *looks* sad, so music has the dynamic characteristic that matches spirituality (it *feels* spiritual). To borrow White's (1992) description, music is a *simulacrum* of spirituality.

In this sense expression is present in the tonal forms (the music) and is not simply mediated through them, so that those forms can be done away with. As Harvey (1996) claimed, there is integration between the individual and the music such that mysticism (or spirituality) is in the very nature of music's working. "The music is neither an abstraction nor an outer object but an inner coming-to-life of something" (Harvey, 1999, p.32). Therefore "music is by its very nature spiritual" (p.82). It is in our connection with music that its meaning is realized and we become not "one who knows . . . but one knowing" (p. 9). To the extent that this may be true, spirituality will be absolute.

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<sup>13</sup> He stated that while music can have external references as it operates as a code, the power of music does not seem to depend on those codes.

Such a conception was evident in the focus on transcendentalism<sup>14</sup> and music's capacity to respond to that domain in the Romantic period. Romantic music became equated with the spirit, and the *spirit of the music*; the *geistiger* (Grey, 2009). All music embodies spirit (*Geist*), so the Romantics claimed, and so in a sense the spirit is the music; a *musikgeist* that takes hold of the music as its vessel. As Rothfarb (2005) put it, this spiritual source "animates the surface [of the music], unifies the whole, and guarantees its enduring aesthetic value" (p.140).<sup>15</sup>

Rothfarb (2005) contrasted spirituality with corporeality, as these are discussed in the work of August Halm. Corporeality refers to the surface of the music; the dynamic melodic, rhythmic and thematic content. Spirituality, however, resides subterraneously; (understood intuitively) between the lines of the music. This occurs when the work's dynamic course is concealed or musically too subtle to be readily perceived. Raffman (1993) described something similar as *nuance ineffability*, suggesting that the music is ineffable because one perceives greater detail than one can be rationally aware of.<sup>16</sup> Sloboda (2005b) suggested that this type of ineffability could relate to the spiritual experience of worship, because "there are contemplative states in which tiny, usually ignored details of experience are perceived in great clarity, as if for the first time. Musical experience may encourage such states" (p.354).

Sloboda (2005b) also related Raffman's (1993) other types of ineffability to worship (spirituality). *Feeling ineffability* identifies the way we can know a piece of music in terms of the feel of it, even if we cannot put that into words. This meaningfulness of the music is very powerful because it seems to want to be understood. Like language, music seems to want to 'say' something - not discursively, but in its feel. Sloboda (2005b) suggested that this sense is similar to the way in which one might expect to be spoken to

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<sup>14</sup> Though the idea of the supernatural was rejected from this.

<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, Nineteenth Century Romanticists believed that a good performance of a piece of music was one that captured the spirit the composer had intended to be present within that work. This idea is evinced in a quote from Francois-Joseph Fetis in a piano method publication from 1840; "The performer must contemplate the composer's work, seize its spirit, and then content himself with rendering it with all the facility of which he is capable" (Hunter, 2005, p.2). Hegel added "genius can consist solely in actually reaching in the reproduction the spiritual height of the composer and then bringing it to life" (ibid p. 6).

<sup>16</sup> Here the nuances are "a kind of evanescent corona shimmering around the structural frame of the piece" (p.91).

by God or some spiritual presence. This is not referential just because it concerns something outside of the music (ie. God). It is absolute because the music itself embodies the feeling that communication is present. It is, in a sense, the music ‘saying’ these things.

Raffman’s third type of musical ineffability, *structural ineffability*, also relates to spirituality in an absolute sense. Here the composition of harmonies, melody, rubato and so on, are said to be just ‘right’, even though they cannot be rationally explained. Bernstein (1959) identified this in a discussion about Beethoven, whom he claimed exemplified this quality. ‘Rightness’ is “the feeling that whatever note succeeds the last is the only possible note that can rightly happen at that instant, in that context” (p.29). This relates to spirituality in the way that spirituality is a sense of “the larger design of things” (Sloboda 2005b, p.352), which seems to be related to James’ (1902/1985) characteristic of the *noetic* (a knowledge of insights and truths beyond description).

Such an experience of spirituality does not seem to fit easily within the formalist aesthetic paradigm. Part of the development of instrumental music and the notion of *musikgeist* in the Romantic period was a refocusing of the value of music away from external referents and onto intrinsic qualities contained within its tonally moving forms (Grey, 2009; Hadreas, 1999). It is not that spirituality was denied in this process, but that it was dealt with in terms of the ‘spirit of the music’. <sup>17</sup> Hanslick (1957/1854), one of the leading proponents of the formalist position, identified spirituality but located it as a feature of the musical forms: “*As the creation of a thinking and feeling spirit, a musical composition has in high degree the capability to be itself full of spirituality and feeling. This spiritual content we demand of every musical artwork. It is to be found only in the tone-structure itself, however, and not in any other aspect of the work*” (p.31).

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<sup>17</sup> This is what Kivy (2000) was postulating in his discussion about ‘content-less music’, where the meaning lies in its form as opposed to its content. Music is unique among art forms because it alone can support such content-less meaning; the meaning of other art forms is bound to what the art depicts. If spirituality is to fit within this understanding of absolute music then it will fit here. In this case it is not a matter of content-less music because the form *is* the content (Stambaugh, 1989).

But can such an idea as spirituality really exist within the view that music only concerns itself, and nothing outside of that? Chua (1999) criticized absolute music at this point, as an unsustainable construction made up by philosophers in the early Romantic period. He argued that it is not possible to have music without any extramusical associations, and that "absolute music is an extramusical idea" (p.6). According to this view, a profound experience of music, such as spirituality, cannot exist merely within the musical forms. This does not need to mean that it is therefore referential but that it is not limited to formalism. Such an experience of music will involve a form of music's expression that lies beyond a purely intellectual understanding of the musical forms.

This is where Meyer (1956) distinguished *absolute expressionism* from *formalism*. While formalism focuses on the intellectual appreciation of music's forms that Hanslick and others pursued, absolute expressionism describes the feelings and emotions that are engendered in the listener as a result of those same tonally moving forms. It recognizes the importance of music's form, and discounts the need for extra-musical associations, while relaxing the prohibition on anything other than an intellectual appreciation of form.

I suggest therefore that, to the extent that spirituality is intrinsic to the music (absolute), it will be absolute expressionist and not formalist. As Levinson (1992) argued, "Bach's counterpoint is profound where Kuhnau's is not because of the kind of experience it provides, and the kind of vision into human and even metaphysical possibilities that it enables not just the possibilities of structural or grammatical combination that it so masterfully, to be sure, exemplifies" (p. 59).<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, spirituality, as one form of musical profundity, is not limited to music's forms but exists in the metaphysical possibilities that the music enables. In this sense, instead of saying that spirituality is *contained* by the musical forms, in the sense that an intellectual idea of an effective melodic structure might be, we could say it is *expressed* or *embodied* by them. This is different to saying that spirituality is referential, because the meaning arises from the music itself - it is inherent to it, even if it is not limited to the musical forms. Emotion relates to music in just this way, hence the focus of Meyer's (1956) book.

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<sup>18</sup> This statement is made in response to Kivy's (1990) idea of 'music alone'.

If music is a *window* to the divine, as Wolterstorff (1980) suggested, then spirituality is presumably merely something referred to by the music; it is external and thus referential. In this case the music could ultimately be done away with. If, however, spirituality is a *threshold*, as Cobussen (2008) suggested; something experienced in the space music creates, then it is intrinsic and thus absolute.

## 2.3 Spirituality and Emotion

In this discussion, I am claiming a degree of similarity between spirituality and emotion. I am suggesting that Meyer's taxonomy, which dealt with emotion, can also help identify spirituality. Emotion and spirituality seem to be similar types of experience; they overlap in some manner. Hints of this commonality are evident in the literature. Edwards (1746/1959) described 'religious affections' (emotions) as signs of genuine spiritual experience, because to not involve the affections is to remain intellectual and heartless. Arnold (1960) wrote about 'religious emotions' in psychology, which she understood to be emotions experienced toward God. In addition to the prototypical religious emotions such as reverence and awe (see Otto, 1936) she included love, joy and happiness. These serve to move people towards states of perfection and fulfilment. Sylvan (2002, 2005) used the term 'religious feelings' to describe what are essentially spiritual experiences, Maslow (1954) identified the importance of emotion in peak experiences, which I have claimed to be related to spiritual experiences, and Jose and Taylor (1986) claimed that spirituality is emotive.

Is spirituality therefore merely some form of strong emotion, or a complex of emotions? I propose that the relationship is not that simple. Koen (2008), in the Oxford Handbook on medical ethnomusicology, distinguished spirituality from emotion in listing them as two of the five factors of human functioning which facilitate health and healing; along

with physical, social and psychological aspects.<sup>19</sup> If they are distinct, how might we conceive of the distinction?

Damasio (2004), writing from the perspective of psychology, described emotion as a bioregulatory reaction – a reaction or response to a stimulus. Thus an experience triggers in the human being a reaction; an emotion, which Damasio suggested is aimed at promoting survival or well-being. In the same way Juslin and Västfjäll (2008) described emotion as an “affective response” (p.561); a temporary response to something experienced. I propose that this is different to spirituality because while emotion is a *reaction* or *response*, spirituality is an *awareness* or a sense of something sacred<sup>20</sup> (such as the *numinous*). Spirituality concerns the awareness of it whereas emotion is the internalised reaction to it. Music affords a sense of the spiritual, a space in which one can become aware of the spiritual, and the response to this is emotion. That is why music has been described as a doorway to the spiritual (Warren, 2006).

For example, a sense of fusion, in which one feels as if they have merged with, or become one with the music, is a spiritual awareness. It is a form of connection, as described in Chapter 1. This is not a response, but a realisation, a consciousness. This sense of fusion may be accompanied by a feeling of ecstasy, as described by Laski (1968). This is an emotion; a response or a biological reaction. To give another example, Otto’s (1923) ‘numinous’ describes an awareness of the mysterious sacred, perhaps a consciousness of God. This could be described as an emotion, as in Emmons (2005), but I suggest that it is better understood as an awareness; a perception or mental representation, which is a feeling. By contrast, awe or even fear are the emotion; the response to this feeling.

It appears then, that the point at which spirituality and emotion overlap is at the level of feelings. One can feel emotion (awe or ecstasy) just as one can feel the spiritual (numinous or fusion). Damasio (2004) drew a distinction between emotion and feeling,

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<sup>19</sup> He claims that it is in balancing these domains that health and healing are to be found. Music is a powerful agent in helping to balance these domains. His is a development of Marlarkey’s (1999) PIERS model which lists physical, intellectual, emotional, relational and spiritual domains of life

<sup>20</sup> I have defined ‘sacred’ in the glossary as ‘*An aspect of life that takes on a divine character, thereby rendering it an ultimate reality or ultimate truth, as perceived by the individual.*’

suggesting that, whereas emotion is a bioregulatory reaction, feeling is the *mental representation* of that reaction. It is the *perception* of the emotional state enacted in the body. It provides a “mental alert for the significance of the object that caused the emotion” (p.56).<sup>21</sup> That is why Freud (1929) described his notion of ‘oceanic’ experience as a feeling. (Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) incorporated this notion into their *existential and transcendence* category, which I have suggested concerns spirituality.)

Wilber’s (2000) psychological model offers one attempt at clarifying this distinction. In his tome on psychological functioning, he distinguished between *waves* and *streams*, suggesting that spirituality is a *wave*, whereas emotion is a *stream*. *Waves* are basic levels of consciousness that span the entire range from subconscious to super-conscious. He posited at least 13 such levels. It is the top level of the super-conscious that can be described as the spiritual level. The spirit transcends but includes the soul, the mind, the body, and so on (other levels). *Streams*, on the other hand, are the various developmental lines that run through the different levels. They may include cognition, morals, affects, needs, sexuality and so on.

Just as Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) described the relationship between religion and spirituality in terms of “interconnected planes of information” (p. 31), I suggest we can describe the relationship between spirituality and emotion as *interconnected planes of experience*. Spirituality and emotion, as waves and streams, are planes of experience that are distinct yet interconnected.

Accordingly, there is a spiritual *level* to our humanity, and music is able to relate to that level. But running through that and other levels are the emotions, which are the

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<sup>21</sup> Juslin and Västfjäll (2008) defined feeling as “the *subjective experience* of emotion” (p. 561 italics added). Hoeksma et al. (2004) also defined feelings as “the private mental experience of emotion” (p.354).

Some reject this distinction between feelings and emotions on the basis that feelings are emotions. As Mandler (1984) stated, “evaluative cognitive processes are central to the construction of emotion” (p.86). So too, James’ concept of emotion in terms of visceral experience was inadequate and needed the meaning element of the cognitive component as well (Mandler, 1990). My purpose is not to take up this complex debate but to position my use of the term emotion. I am suggesting that *when emotion is understood in a limited sense, as abstracted from feeling* then spirituality will be distinct from emotion. Where they are similar is at the level of feeling. Spirituality is a feeling but it is not an emotion.

manifestation of the music's relationship to the spiritual level. In this sense it is not that the music is spiritual, but rather that it relates to or affords the spiritual. As a result of the experience of this relationship emotions are felt; not emotions specified by the music, as music is non-propositional, but general emotions, or broad affective tendencies.

This distinction helps make sense of some empirical research. In their study of religious people, Dibben & Hanson (2002) found that emotional response can differ despite other aspects being constant. They examined musical experiences of individuals in a sacred and a secular context. They found that experiences in the two different contexts elicited the same physiological responses, and yet the intensity of emotion felt and the profundity of the emotional experience differed. Relating this back to Penman and Becker's (2009) finding that *Pentecostal ecstasies* and *deep listeners* have very similar core experiences of music, this suggests that it may be at the spiritual level that the two experiences in Dibben and Hanson's study were similar. There was a common awareness of something sacred, but the emotional response was different, influenced by factors relating to cognitive appraisal.<sup>22</sup>

If my positioning of spirituality and emotion, as similar yet distinct experiences of music, is correct, then it challenges the dominance of emotion as a key construct of significant experiences of music. Recent scholarship has focused predominantly on emotion (see for example Juslin & Sloboda, 2001), but I contend that emotion is not the primary construct of expression. It may be more common, but spirituality is at least as important and potentially more fundamental to the human experience, and therefore worthy of more scholarly attention.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cognitive appraisal may well be an important factor in the experience of music or spirituality, but it concerns the interpretation of what I have suggested is a core experience rather than the experience itself. Therefore it is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>23</sup> Hence instead of talking about "music as a language of emotions", as does Sloboda (2005a), we might talk about "music as a language of the spirit". Or instead of stating that "some sort of emotional experience is probably the main reason behind most people's engagement with music", as do Juslin and Sloboda (2001, p.3), we might state that "some sort of spiritual experience is probably the main reason behind most people's engagement with music".



The reason that the study of spirituality as a construct of profound musical experience has been regarded as a fringe topic to date, whereas the study of emotion has been central, may have more to do with cultural attitudes than scientific evidence. Hay (2007b; 1987) made the claim, based on his study on spirituality, that spiritual experience, though infrequently reported, is actually very prevalent if accessed in the right way. He reported the results of a national survey in Britain, called the “*Soul of Britain* review of the spiritual state of the nation” (2007, p.8), in which people were asked about their spiritual experiences. In 1987 they found that 48% of the national sample “felt they were personally aware of this kind of experience in their lives” (2007, p.8). In 2000 they repeated the core of the survey and found that figure had risen to 76%: a 60% increase. Hay (2007b) surmised that this rise was due not so much to a change in the frequency of spiritual experiences, as a reduction in social sanctions against such experiences. He argued that there is significant social pressure against admitting to spiritual experiences, possibly related to the pejorative sense about religion.<sup>24</sup>

Tacey (2003) also identified changing cultural values, in calling the recent rise in interest in spirituality a “people’s revolution” (p.4); a rising up from below, especially by the young, the disenfranchised and those who suffer. These changing values, along with developing methodologies, are permitting the sort of investigation that I am undertaking in this thesis, allowing me to investigate whether spirituality is as legitimately part of profound experiences of music as emotion is.

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<sup>24</sup> Hay (2007) also reported a study done in collaboration with Kate Hunt which found a large difference between what people were willing to discuss in public and what they felt free to discuss in private. 20 out of 31 people made unsolicited comments to the effect that this was a difficult and embarrassing topic to discuss. Yet the authors noted a shift towards a greater acceptance of spiritual awareness in recent years, possibly due to the separation of spirituality from religion. They posited two major forces responsible for this shift; “the violence with which extreme situations break in on one’s skeptical presuppositions – and the seductive beauty of the world, even in the midst of distress” (p.90).

## 2.4 The influence of Culture

This discussion of spirituality as a form of musical meaning would not be complete without reference to the vital role culture plays. Music does not operate in what Sloboda (1989) called a pharmaceutical way, by constraining a certain experience. If it did, a piece of music would mean the same thing to every person that listened to it. Music is not an autonomous enterprise (Geertz, 1983), it is a cultural phenomenon, whose meaning is developed within a cultural frame. That is why Cook (1998a) stated that we should not ask ‘what does the music mean’ but ‘what does the music mean *here*’. Music is never alone.<sup>25</sup>

Meyer (1956) stated that both referential and absolute meanings are learned, and this leaning is mediated by culture. This happens because the relationship between the music and the listener is a dynamic one. According to Becker (2001), they define each other through ever-evolving musical structures and listener responses. This occurs not on an individual level but within what Fish (1980) referred to as a ‘community of interpretation’. This community will respond to the music with a ‘pre-given comportment’ to listening that includes attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and behaviours (Becker, 2001). A useful term to encapsulate this process is Bourdieu’s (1977) term **habitus**. For Bourdieu a habitus is “a system of durable, transposable dispositions” (p.72) in which he described dispositions as “a way of being; a habitual state ... a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (p.214). Becker (2001) applied this to music, saying that a habitus of listening suggests an implicit inclination or disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect certain experiences, to move in particular ways and to interpret what is being experienced in certain ways.

An individual can operate effectively within multiple habitūs, according to Becker (2001). In the same way that an individual’s identity varies across contexts, so their sense of self as a part of their habitus of listening can vary. As the individual engages with a variety of music in a variety of contexts, she or he is able to take on various

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<sup>25</sup> A number of authors attempt to get at this idea. Kivy (1993) stated that we do not hear meaning coming *out of* music, we hear it *into* the music. Bicknell (2007) stated that the music itself is necessary but not sufficient to explain music’s significance. And Reimer (1995) stated that meaning is unperceived in the music and yet is experienced *in light* of it.

identities as they are projected in the music. This was demonstrated by Dibben & Hanson (2002). As I mentioned above, they found that although physiological responses to music within the religious and **non-religious** contexts were similar, interpretations were different. Music in the religious setting was considered more emotional and more powerful. It follows that where spirituality involves an interpretation of an experience, such as in the religious context, these experiences will also be considered more spiritual. Conversely, if spirituality is apparent in the non-religious context it will have less to do with referential associations and more to do with absolute meaning. I expect therefore, that context will have an effect on the reporting of spirituality.

The role of habitus in spiritual meaning is evident in Rouget's (1980) work on trance. As I mentioned above, he described music's role in possession trance experiences as identificationary. And yet in other forms of trance, which are based more on natural properties of the music, such as 'emotional trance' and 'communal trance', culture also had an influencing role. Garrett (1987) also dealt with spirit possession in a Western setting. He claimed this is a kind of theatre where the experience of the sacred is communicated through culturally comprehensible words and gestures to the believing community. Similarly Gade (2002) discussed the use of music for the purposes of internalization of religious ideas. She argued that through the music people evaluate themselves and thus internalize the religious structures.

The importance of habitus does not mean, however, that spirituality is necessarily constructed by it. Just as there are aspects of human expression and response that appear to transcend culture, such as Ekman & Friesen's (1971) empirical work on facial expressions,<sup>26</sup> so there seem to be culture-transcending underpinnings to the world's music (Koen, et al., 2008). These include a proclivity toward shared features of pitch, rhythm and consonance.<sup>27</sup> In relation to this Thompson described the "complex

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<sup>26</sup> Their study showed that for people from very different habitūs, with negligible opportunity to experience the other habitus, "the association between particular facial muscular patterns and discrete emotions is universal" (p.124).

<sup>27</sup> Sloboda (1985) noted a proclivity toward certain responses to general musical features, such as regulated pitch systems, use of scales and root notes, constancy of beat and the somatic effect of rhythm. Thompson (2010) added a sensitivity to pitch contour, a perception of similarities in octaves, sensitivity to relative pitch, sensitivity to consonance and dissonance, grouping of proximal pitches, sensitivity to

interplay between early predispositions and enculturation” (p.760). Hay and Nye (2006), writing about spirituality in children, suggested there is reason to suspect that spirituality may transcend culture because it involves an underlying awareness which culture can either develop or repress. They reported studies that indicated that children are acutely aware of spirituality, but then with maturation this perception diminishes.<sup>28</sup> This suggests that culture plays a role of reinforcing or repressing rather than mediating spirituality.

There is, therefore, a need to find a middle ground between what Becker (2001) called the isolationism of the formalist perspective and the relativism of the extreme cultural theories. Neither view can be discounted because both have received incontrovertible evidence; one from the Sciences and the other from the Humanities. Both music and spirituality have culture-transcending, as well as culture-specific dimensions. Through music the sense of spirituality is both developed and adopted for use by those within the habitus, because music has the capacity to influence habitus in addition to being influenced by it. As Geertz (1983) put it, the arts help individuals within the context develop sensibilities about their world. These sensibilities help materialize a way of experiencing life. Through the arts they are made visible, tactile and (in the case of music) audible to the senses and through the senses to the emotions where members can reflectively address them. In this sense, the arts are more than simply a reflection of dominant ideologies, they are also a means by which they can be created or adapted.

Having said all that, the main purpose of this study is not to determine those cultural influences. Rather, it is to investigate the degree to which spirituality is a referential or an absolute experience, *whatever influence culture may have had*. To some degree this factor of culture is accounted for in my research design, but beyond that I am examining

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temporal stress, and to levels of stability of various pitches. Becker (2001) also noted a common feature of basic arousal to music.

<sup>28</sup> Two studies are important to their case here. One by Tamminen (1991) noted high levels of reports of religious or spiritual experience by younger children, but by the age of around 12-13 there was a sharp decline in the number of such reports. The second study by Francis (1987) showed a collapse of religious interest in British children from ages 8 to 15. These studies indicated that there is a decline in spiritual experiences as children move into teenage years. Hay and Nye (2006) tied this in with the development of Enlightenment thinking and the religious scepticism that typically accompanies that (around 12 years of age). Whether that is the explanation, it does seem that the developing influence of culture works to repress spirituality rather than develop it.

the core experience, as discussed in Chapter 1, *irrespective of how that was mediated*. This, therefore, is a limitation of this study.

### *Habitus of listening in this Study*

One cultural distinctive that places a high value on both music and spirituality is Christian Pentecostalism. I stated in section 1.2 that spirituality is not dependent on religion, and yet religion is a common vehicle for the expression of spirituality. Therefore Christian Pentecostalism is not only a valid culture in which to examine spirituality, but one in which it is quite likely that spiritual experiences will be evident. I introduce this habitus here because it will be used in the design of this study.<sup>29</sup>

Pentecostalism is a movement within the Christian church that started in America early in the 20th Century.<sup>30</sup> The value it places on music has been noted by Dibben and Hanson (2002), who considered it a major cultural influence, and Becker (2001), who described it as a “faith that is dependent upon music to structure its religious services” (p.149). The value it places on spirituality is evident in its ideal of responding to the Holy Spirit (Bridges, 1997) or living in the spirit; empowered and enlivened (Burgess, McGee, & Alexander, 1989). In this sense it implies a focus on the spirit as opposed to the word (Dibben & Hanson 2002). Price & Snow (1998) described this as the difference in focus between sentimentality and theology. It is not that non-Pentecostals do not express the same faith concepts, but that they do this in a more dialectic as opposed to relational manner. Pentecostalism includes a desire for and expectation of supernatural manifestations, or demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, within which personal experience is highly valued. This results in a more free-flowing proceeding and a greater intensity of experience or emotional reaction (Becker, 2001; Prentice, 1985; Zimmerman, 1986).

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<sup>29</sup> In Chapter 3 (Methodology) I discuss in more detail how Pentecostalism is utilised to examine the effect of culture on spirituality.

<sup>30</sup> Synan (1997) noted that it has become the fastest growing 'denomination' and is now second only to Catholicism among Christian denominations.

These distinctives suggest that Pentecostals' experience of spirituality will more likely be absolute expressionist than referential or formalist. By contrast, people who do not subscribe to the Pentecostal ideals are more likely to have a greater focus on the word or objective rationality, consequently having experiences that are more referential in nature.

"Music is a central, ubiquitous aspect of worship for Pentecostal churches" (Penman & Becker, 2009, p.52); so much so that even the prayers and preaching can have a musical lilt to them (Cox, 1995). This is not to say that music is unimportant in other habitūs, but that the expectations differ (Miller & Strongman, 2002). In this way music operates as a *resource*, which De Nora (2000) described as something used and manipulated by the agent to create, enhance, sustain and change subjective, cognitive, bodily and self conceptual states. This includes the idea of getting people into an attitude of worship. Becker (2001) referred to music as the "driving force" (p.149) to help participants forget about external influences and focus on God. Miller & Strongman (2002) suggested that the music is designed to "charge emotionally and elicit particular feelings" (p.8). This operates on the social level as well as the individual level, by contributing structure and shaping collective crowd emotion.

## 2.5 Summary and Hypotheses

The aim of this thesis is to investigate whether musical spirituality is better accounted for as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience. In order to do that I needed to clarify how spirituality was to be dealt with. This was the purpose of Chapter 1. I positioned spirituality as distinct from religious practices, but concerned with the spirit or breath of life. I proposed that spirituality be circumscribed with reference to three aspects: transcendence, connection and meaning. I concluded Chapter 1 by stating that both spirituality and music are essentially ineffable, in that words are inadequate, and as such need to be dealt with as experiences rather than concepts.

In Chapter 2 I took up the theoretical framework for this thesis in Meyer's distinction between referential and absolute meaning. I discussed referential meaning as meaning that is extrinsic to the music, being of a different kind to the music. I examined the possibility that spirituality is referential, in that music designates the spiritual rather than embodying it. I concluded that spirituality would be referential to some degree. I then discussed absolute meaning as meaning that is intrinsic to the music, being of the same kind. I examined the possibility that spirituality is embodied by the music, arising from it such that the music never becomes supplementary to it. I concluded that there is strong evidence that this will be the case. However, spirituality will not be intrinsic in the formalistic sense, but in the sense that Meyer deals with emotion; absolute expressionism. Spirituality will thus operate as a form of expression arising from the music itself, rather than being an intellectual appreciation of its forms.

I followed this by recognizing spirituality and emotion as being interconnected planes of experience. I positioned spirituality as a level of consciousness and emotion as a stream, thus allowing for great similarity between them. Yet I maintained that they are distinct phenomenon, thus underscoring the need for research into spirituality as well as emotion.

I then discussed the influence culture can have on musical spirituality. I discussed the role of a habitus of listening and identified Pentecostalism as one such habitus for use in this study. I concluded that culture would have an influence even if spirituality were not determined by it.

As a brief overview of a complex and wide-ranging topic, this literature review provides some indications about what we know and what we don't know. At the end of Chapter 1 I gave an indication of the relative contribution of various academic disciplines to an understanding of spirituality. There has been a considerable contribution from the perspective of health, including nursing, medical ethnomusicology and some fields of psychology such as positive psychology. Psychology itself, including music psychology, has made a large contribution, though more theoretical than empirical, and

mostly within the last few decades. The fact that spirituality is a notion that has been around for a long time has not been greatly considered, and so comparisons of today's understanding with that of say the Romantic period or medieval mysticism are limited. Religion itself has not made a large contribution to the contemporary discussion, partly because aesthetics in religion is a very minor discipline. The comparison of spirituality with other phenomena such as emotion has received little attention. Finally, there have been some important contributions from sociological disciplines, though more often related to non-Western cultures. All these factors have contributed to the focus of this study, and many of them will be addressed by this research.

I now make the following specific hypotheses:

### **Hypotheses**

- 1) **Spirituality will be better accounted for as an absolute experience** – Generally speaking, spirituality will be accounted for as referential to some degree, but it will be better accounted for as an experience that one senses in the music itself, not rationally but intuitively. This will arise not in the sense of an intellectual appreciation of form (*formalism*), but in the sense of an expression that the music affords (*absolute expressionism*).
- 2) **Spirituality will be as important as emotion in significant experiences of music** – Spirituality will be evident; experienced in ways similar to emotion. Yet a distinction will be apparent in the sense of spirituality being an awareness where emotion is a response.
- 3) **Culture will influence but not determine spirituality** – Culture will influence both referential and absolute spirituality. It will not define spirituality, but will operate to either develop or repress the phenomenon. There will be two sub-questions for Study I:
  - a. **Spirituality will be influenced by habitus** - Pentecostals will be more focused on the emotionality and the visceral sensuality of the experience,



which will result in a greater emphasis on absolute expressionism instead of on referentialism or formalism. By contrast, non-Pentecostals will be more focused on the word or objective rationality, thus resulting in a stronger emphasis on referentialism.

- b. **Spirituality will be influenced by context** - Religious experiences will be more emotional, powerful and spiritual than non-religious experiences. To the degree that spirituality is present in the non-religious context it will be more likely to be *absolute* rather than *referential* because of the expected lack of spiritual references in the non-religious context.

## 2.6 Structure of this thesis

This research comprises two studies. Chapters 3 to 6 deal with Study I, while Chapters 7 to 11 deal with Study II. Chapter 12 presents the general discussion and conclusions for the whole thesis, while appendices follow that. A glossary of terms is offered before the Appendices.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used for Study I. Chapter 4 and 5 present the results from the qualitative data for Study I. There are four parts to this qualitative analysis and these are described in more detail in Chapter 3; i) conceptions of spirituality; ii) spirituality in general descriptions of music; iii) spirituality as it relates to referential meaning; iv) spirituality as it relates to absolute meaning. Chapter 6 presents the results from the quantitative analysis of Study I. Each of these results chapters contains a discussion section, in which I draw together the salient points, as well as summaries of key findings.

Chapters 7 to 11 deal with Study II. This was an expanded version of Study I, containing some important amendments that are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 contains the methodological considerations pertinent to Study II. Chapters 9 and 10

present the qualitative results from Study II using the same four parts as in Study I. Chapter 11 presents the quantitative results for Study II.

In Chapter 12 I draw together all the threads from both studies in order to offer conclusions as well as suggested directions for future research.

Table 2.1 Outline of this thesis

Chapter	Title	Description
	Admin	
	Acknowledgements	
	Abstract	
1	Literature Review – Spirituality and music	Examination of link between spirituality and music
2	Literature Review – Spirituality and musical meaning	Examination of referential and absolute spirituality, as well as emotion and the effect of culture
<b>STUDY I – <i>Spirituality amongst religious participants</i></b>		
3	Methodology	Overview of methodology pertinent to Study I
4	Qualitative results part A - Spirituality & General Descriptions	Evidence for spirituality in the qualitative analysis of the spirituality and the general description questions
5	Qualitative results part B - Referentialism & Absolutism	Evidence for spirituality in the qualitative analysis of the referential and absolute questions
6	Quantitative results	Results from Quantitative analysis of data
<b>STUDY II – <i>Spirituality amongst religious and non-religious participants</i></b>		
7	Introduction to Study II	Literature review and overview of the rationale for Study II
8	Methodology	Overview of variations to methodology pertinent to Study II
9	Qualitative results part A - Spirituality & General Descriptions	Evidence for spirituality in the qualitative analysis of the spirituality and the general description questions
10	Qualitative results part B - Referentialism & Absolutism	Evidence for spirituality in the qualitative analysis of the referential and absolute questions
11	Quantitative Analysis	Results from Quantitative analysis of data
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		
12	Discussion and Conclusion	Overview of the thesis, summary of findings, and general Conclusions
References	References	
Glossary	Glossary	
Appendices	Appendices	Supporting and auxiliary documentation

## **STUDY I**

## Chapter 3 Methodology

The empirical component of this thesis was based on two studies. This chapter explains the design, execution, analysis and limitations and assumptions of Study I.<sup>1</sup>

The primary research question is whether spirituality is better accounted for as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience. Within that, there were three primary hypotheses;

1. Spirituality will be better accounted for as an absolute experience.
2. Spirituality will be as important as emotion in significant<sup>2</sup> experiences of music
3. Culture will influence but not determine spirituality

The third hypothesis contained two sub-hypotheses:

- a. Spirituality will be influenced by habitus
- b. Spirituality will be influenced by context

### 3.1 Design issues

A descriptive study such as this was chosen because the systematic study of spirituality is still in its infancy, requiring greater clarity, and such descriptive studies allow both the testing and generating of hypotheses (Bowling, 1997). It was a phenomenological study, aimed at examining recent experience. Sloboda (2005b), amongst others, suggested that such experiences are best examined from a phenomenological perspective. Similarly, Panzarella (1980) concluded his research by showing how the experiences he investigated seemed to lie beyond the existing theories of the day. He suggested that was because the landscape was changing and it is only phenomenological

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<sup>1</sup> A large part of this study was presented in my paper in the *MusicHumana* journal (Atkins, 2009a)

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘significant’ is used here primarily because that was the term used in the title of the questionnaire. I recognise that this term has statistical implications, and these are utilised in the reporting of results in this thesis. However, it was considered that for a lay-person, as most participants were, the statistical implications of this word would not be relevant, and so its non-statistical meaning of something worthy of attention would be implied.

reports that are able to “portend what future values are being moulded by present experience” (p. 83). Finally, it was a mixed methods design, involving both qualitative and quantitative data.

The third hypothesis; the effect of culture, was examined using a between-subjects comparison of Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Christians, and a within-subjects comparison between a musical experience within the religious context and the non-religious context. See Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 The 2 x 2 design: Pentecostal/non-Pentecostal habitus and religious/non-religious context.

		<i>Habitus</i>	
		<b>Pentecostal</b>	<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>
<i>Context</i>	<b>Religious experience</b>	Musical Experiences	
	<b>Non-religious experience</b>		

The habitus distinction was between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal participants. Section 2.4 identified Pentecostalism as a key habitus for the experience of spirituality. This habitus was chosen because members would be likely to be comfortable with the notion of spirituality, and because spiritual experiences were likely to arise from it.<sup>3</sup> Because it is a cultural influence within the Christian church, participants would align themselves more or less strongly with the ideals of this habitus, thus allowing a comparison between the spiritual experience of those who regarded themselves to be Pentecostal and those who did not.

The context distinction was between experiences in religious and non-religious contexts. If spirituality is merely a product of a religious context then it will not be present in the non-religious experience. Therefore this study included a within-subject comparison of experiences within the religious context to those outside it. Such a within-subject comparison allows more clarity as less variation is expected (Bowling

<sup>3</sup> Therefore Pentecostalism is only one of many possible habitus that could have been chosen. It was selected because of its suitability and because of the researcher's access to resources.

1997). Within this comparison it was possible to hold many personal factors roughly constant in order to determine the extent to which spirituality was merely a product of religious context.

This two by two factorial design was based on a research project described by Dibben & Hanson (2002).

### *Defining spirituality*

One of the challenges for this research was how to deal with the idea of spirituality. There is no generally accepted definition. Rather, as Koenig (2008) concluded, it is an individual consciousness for which people define for themselves what it is and what it means. Therefore, rather than choose one definition or measurement indicator from the literature, I decided to allow the participant to use their own definition of spirituality and then examine what they meant by that. This allowed simplicity in the questionnaire, but it also allowed a comparison to be made between aspects of spirituality proffered by the participant and those with which I circumscribed it in the first chapter.

In Chapter 1, I positioned transcendence as one of the three key aspects of spirituality. But transcendence is also a phenomenon in its own right, being experienced in relation to music. Therefore it can act as a parallel to spirituality; bearing very similar distinctives. This is useful because spirituality can be defined in a variety of ways, some of which differ a great deal from the circumscription of spirituality I outlined in the previous two chapters. For example, it is possible that a participant may not classify their experience as spiritual on the grounds that it did not refer to the divine. Yet if it did include a sense of transcendence then I would argue it was a spiritual experience. It is important to be able to identify such an experience as spiritual in a phenomenological sense, even though the participant did not identify it as such in a conceptual sense. For that purpose, this parallel comparison of transcendence is useful.

## 3.2 Data Collection

### *Participants*

117 participants were drawn from the Christian church community<sup>4</sup> within Australia and internationally. This community was selected because it represents one broad set of aesthetic and spiritual traditions. Although spirituality is not limited to the religious or Christian context, it was thought that this limitation would provide participants who were more comfortable with the term 'spirituality'. Furthermore, the Christian community has maintained a significant aesthetic tradition over a long period of time (see for example Begbie, 2008) and so profound musical experience in the religious context should not be foreign to them.

The stipulation for involvement was simply that participants needed to be a part of a church and that they had an interest in or significant experience of music within that environment. It was the religious context that was of primary interest because Study I was seeking the most readily available source of spiritual experiences to examine for referential and absolute meaning. The non-religious context was used as a comparison. Furthermore, participants needed to be people who have had a significant experience, or at least an interest in music because the questionnaire was asking about significant experiences and the data would not be useful if the experiences were not significant.

Participants were solicited in a variety of ways. Participation was invited from a number of key churches in the Sydney metropolitan area. These churches were selected on the basis of their strong commitment to music, the measurement of which was determined by data from the National Church Life Survey (National church life survey, 2001). In addition, participants were drawn from Wesley Institute - a Sydney based Arts College, a number of professional or para-church groups, such as the Organ Society of Sydney, the Church Musicians Guild and some church-based choirs. Some use of internet usegroups was made in order to solicit participants, particularly from other countries. Other participants were either acquaintances of the researcher or of other participants.

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<sup>4</sup> This then is a probability sample which provides an estimate of a population (Ross & Grant, 1996).



The Pentecostal / non-Pentecostal distinction was created by asking participants how Pentecostal they considered themselves,<sup>5</sup> and what they meant by the term ‘Pentecostal’.<sup>6</sup> These ratings were used to divide participants into the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups. Because participants were drawn from a wide variety of churches both within Australia and from overseas, the study was able to consider Pentecostalism broadly, rather than simply one church’s interpretation of it.

As Figure 3.1 demonstrates, however, a third group appeared. This comprised a sizeable group rating Pentecostalism at the mid-point: 5 out of 10 (n = 25). This indicated a large group of participants who were unwilling to either agree or disagree with Pentecostalism. There are various possible reasons for this response.<sup>7</sup> Because of the size of this group, and because it sat on the mid-point, it could not be assimilated into the other two groups. It was, therefore, referred to as the ‘Mid-point group’.

The non-Pentecostal group comprised 35% (n = 41) of participants. This included 14.5% of participants (n = 17) who gave Pentecostalism its lowest possible rating: 0. This represented a relatively large group who sought to distance themselves from the ethos of Pentecostalism. Conversely, 43.6% (n = 51) of participants considered themselves to be Pentecostal. That included 9.4% (n = 11) of participants who rated Pentecostalism at its highest rating: 10.

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<sup>5</sup> The question read: “To what extent, if at all, do you hold to ‘Pentecostal’ ideals?” See Appendix B.

<sup>6</sup> The question read: “What does ‘Pentecostal ideals’ mean for you?”

<sup>7</sup> A comprehensive examination of possible reasons why this group existed, along with a look at evidence from the qualitative data, is covered in Appendix D.

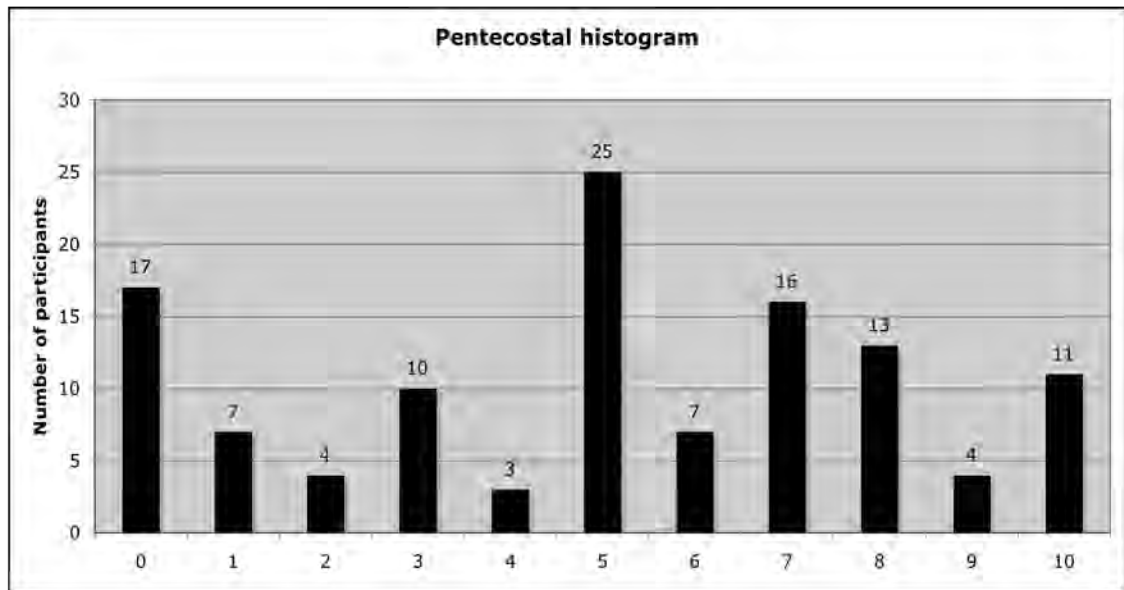


Figure 3.1 Level of agreement with the Pentecostal habitus: 0 = no agreement, 10 = strong agreement (Question A7 in Appendix B)  
n = 117

Ratings of participants' personal agreement with Pentecostalism were compared with ratings of the level of Pentecostalism of the church they attended (questions 6 and 7 in Appendix B) to determine whether there was a disparity between the habitus in which an experience happened and the cultural values of the individual. The correlation between the two was high: ( $r=0.75$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=101$ )<sup>8</sup>, which suggests a strong relationship. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the individual's own rating of Pentecostalism was taken as a valid measure of their habitus of listening.

Participants were gathered from a wide range of locations to try to balance demographic characteristics such as age, gender and musical background. It was considered prudent to examine the influence these factors might have on perceptions of spirituality, even though other studies have found they have negligible effect on experiences of music (for example, Panzarella, 1980).<sup>9</sup> Table 3.2 details these demographics.

<sup>8</sup> All correlations were Pearson bi-variate correlations.

<sup>9</sup> Panzarella found that there was no effect of age, gender, education, or musical ability in 'intense joyous experiences of listening to music'.

Table 3.2 Demographic characteristics of the Participants involved in this research

Age (years)				
	Entire sample	Pentecostal	Non-Pentecostal	
Youngest	18	18	23	
Oldest	77	77	76	
Average age	37	34.6	44.5	
Median Age	30	28	40	
Category				%
Gender % of sample				
	Entire sample	Pentecostals	Non-Pentecostals	
Males	52	49	61	
Females	48	51	39	
Musical Background % of sample				
	Entire sample	Pentecostals	Non-Pentecostals	
None	6	2	7	
Novice	14	17	7	
Some experience	32	33	37	
Experienced	35	32	32	
Professional	13	16	17	
Country of Involvement % of sample				
	Entire sample	Pentecostals	Non-Pentecostals	
Australia	90	94	93	
International	10	6	7	

n=117

A complete table of demographic characteristics, including the Mid-point group, can be found in Appendix F. This is an updated version of Table 3.2.

### ***Questionnaire Design***

This study utilised a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to provide good balance between confidentiality, simplicity in researching a complex

topic, convenience with limited resources, and contextual relevance (Babbie, 1990; Czaja & Blair, 2005; Phelps, Ferrara, & Goolsby, 1993; Punch, 2005; Ross & Grant, 1996). The questionnaire facilitated a planned and detailed analysis of an individual's experience in such a way that comparisons will be able to be made with other groups or populations. This was important for exploratory research such as this.

One of the difficulties with self-report questionnaires is that there is no opportunity to probe participants' understanding (Bryman, 2001). Particularly with open-ended question, if responses are vague or brief there is no possibility of going deeper. This was addressed by encouraging participants to complete the questionnaire in a quiet place and time, as well as by encouraging them to be as thorough as possible.

Contextual relevance was important because data of the nature requested here would be very difficult to obtain within the laboratory setting. Major extant studies researching experiences of music have preferred the method of post-experience self-reports (such as Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik, 2003; Laski 1968; Maslow 1954; Panzarella 1980; Sloboda 1991). Therefore it was considered best to adopt such a self-report questionnaire to access defining moments in an individual's biography.

The questionnaire sought to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Both were considered important because this study sought to test a theory of musical meaning as well as explore a relatively unresearched dimension of experience – spirituality. According to Punch (2005), testing a theory and exploring a new dimension are key foci for quantitative and qualitative research. Because referential and absolute meaning are multidimensional and complex, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative questions to try to capture the widest range of information possible.

Quantitative data were gathered using closed questions, as they are quick to answer and easy to score (according to Ross & Grant, 1996). The main format was the Likert type scale, on which participants could range in their response from 'very much' to 'not at all'. This scale was utilized because of its unambiguous response categories (Babbie, 1990). The choice of an 11 point scale (rating 0 to 10) was made to facilitate fine measurement as well as simple conversion to percentages.

Qualitative data, in the form of open-ended questions, were also sought. Such questions are especially useful to ascertain what is important for a participant, as well as to seek information that might afford a variety of understandings (Neuman, 2006; Punch, 2005). Phenomena such as spirituality and music are complex, so qualitative questions were used because of the capacity of that type of question to deal with complexity. Furthermore, topics that may be intimidating and that potentially include deeply personal experiences of music and spirituality, are best investigated via open-ended questions where the respondent can use their own words (Bernard, 1988; Smith, 2004).

The questionnaire attempted to avoid the use of jargon, because it has the potential to confuse (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Two terms were, however, deliberately used.

*Pentecostal* was used because it is a term in common usage within the Christian church from which these participants were drawn, and thus was expected to be comprehensible. *Spiritual* was used because the way in which people understand this term is an important aspect to this research. For both terms, participants' own conceptions were sought.

There was a potential difficulty concerning response bias. Respondents were asked to contemplate their experiences in a way, and to a depth, that they may never have done before. This may have influenced their responses, in that they may not have felt at liberty to report exactly what they felt or experienced for fear of being misunderstood. Neuman (2006) stated that engagement with some topics causes people to engage in *ego protection*; minimizing the bad and maximizing the good. Participants may therefore have regarded their spiritual experiences as sufficiently sensitive to prevent honest reporting. Laski (1961) made the point that embarrassment can be an issue when a topic calls on people's views that might be regarded as eccentric or silly. Nevertheless, she argued that this did not adversely affect people's willingness to participate in her study on the whole. Efforts were made in the present study to circumvent this potential difficulty by reinforcing the anonymous nature of the responses and calling for honesty and thorough detail in the introduction to the questionnaire.

### ***Questionnaire Format***

The questionnaire was self-administered and was distributed between February and April 2006. Two formats were devised. One format was distributed by mail and the other by email. Apart from formatting considerations, they were identical. The length of this questionnaire, being six pages in total, was aimed to maximize information while minimizing participation hindrance (as Czaja & Blair, 2005 recommend). Further consideration was given to layout to facilitate navigation and include instructions to guide the participant. The questionnaire contained four sections. These sections are summarized here and discussed below. The questionnaire itself is included in Appendix B.

1. Introduction
2. Section A – Demographic detail (Question 1 – 8)
3. Section B – Religious experience
  - Question 9                      Description of the experience
  - Question 10                   Strength of the experience
  - Question 11 & 12           Referentialism
  - Question 13                   Emotion
  - Question 14 – 16           Transcendence
  - Question 17, 18           Spirituality
  - Question 19, 20           Absolutism
  - Question 21                  Musicians
4. Section C – Non-religious experience
  - Question 22                   Description of the experience
  - Question 23                   Strength of the experience
  - Question 24 & 25           Referentialism
  - Question 26                   Emotion
  - Question 27 – 29           Transcendence
  - Question 30, 31           Spirituality
  - Question 32, 33           Absolutism
  - Question 34                  Musicians

### ***Introduction***

The questionnaire opened with a preamble introducing the survey as a study of significant experiences of music. Efforts were made to downplay the focus on spirituality so as to minimize any priming effects. These included telling participants that this was a study of significant experiences of music rather than spirituality, and placing questions about spirituality later in the questionnaire, after participants had described their experience in general.

The first page contained some explanatory notes on how to use the Likert type scale, as well as a comment that the term 'church music' should be understood in the widest possible way (see Appendix C). Following this, an ethics statement for the University of New South Wales was provided (see Appendix D). Further introductory comments, about the nature of the research, who was conducting it and why it was important, were given either verbally or in some short written paragraphs, depending on whether questionnaires were handed out in person or sent via mail.

### ***Section A***

This section focused on demographic information. The first three questions requested the participant's age, gender and musical background. Participants rated themselves on these questions. The fourth and fifth question were included to allow identification of the church, should that be needed, in order to obtain more information regarding the degree of Pentecostal influence. Question five located the individual geographically. Question six and seven sought information on the extent of Pentecostal influence both for the individual and for their church. Question six was asked to determine whether there was a difference between the views of the habitus of the church and those of the participant.

### ***Section B & C***

Section B and C were the main sections, dealing with the experience of music. These

were identical sections, the only difference being that section C asked about the non-religious experience whereas Section B asked about the religious experience. Bias produced by the ordering of these two sections was addressed by swapping the order of the sections for some participants. 80 participants answered section B first, while 37 answered section C first. This was not balanced because all paper versions placed section B first and only some of the email versions placed section C first, and there were 26 paper and 91 email versions received. Because these two sections asked the same question about different experiences, I will consider them simultaneously from here on.

The *General description* question (Q9 of section B and Q22 of section C)<sup>10</sup> was modeled on Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik's (2010) study in which they asked respondents to provide detailed descriptions of a strong experience of music. This was included first not only because easily answered factual questions at the beginning help engender improved participation (Babbie, 1990; Neuman, 2006) but also simply to allow the participant to relive the memory before answering questions about it. Participants were encouraged to be as detailed as possible. The remaining questions in each section asked about specific aspects of the experiences detailed here.

The *strength* question (Q10 and Q23)<sup>11</sup> asked how strong the experience was. As this questionnaire was aimed at the most powerful or stirring experience the participant could think of, it was an opportunity to gauge just how strong they considered their strongest experience to be. Penman and Becker (2009) found that the strength of musical experience does vary between people. It is possible, perhaps especially amongst people with less interest or experience in music, that their experience will not be particularly strong.

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<sup>10</sup> The question read: "Please describe in as much detail as you are able, an experience of church music that you found particularly powerful or stirring. This could include a time when you were either in the congregation or up the front leading. If no particular instance comes to mind then please describe what it is normally like for you when the music is powerful or stirring. What was the music like? What was the context? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? How did it make you feel?" See Appendix B.

<sup>11</sup> "How strong was this experience?"



The *referential* questions (Q11-12 and Q24-25)<sup>12</sup> were designed to gauge the extent to which the experience was due to external referents. Along with the questions about absolutism (19-20 and 32-33), these questions were focused on the main research question – whether spirituality is an extrinsic or intrinsic phenomenon of music. The first question (11 and 24) asked for a rating, offering some suggestions of elements typically identified as being referential (such as memories, ideas, concepts, etc.), while the second question asked participants to explain what those references were.

Because emotion is such an important aspect of significant musical experiences, including both referential and absolute experiences, the *emotion* question (Q13 and Q26)<sup>13</sup> was included to determine the level of emotion experienced. This allowed a comparison to spirituality, given the similarities discussed in Chapter 2. It was important to determine how much spirituality is a part of emotional experiences, and emotion is involved in spiritual experiences. Furthermore, asking about a non-spiritual aspect of the experience was a way of drawing attention away from spirituality, to help limit demand characteristics.

There were three *transcendence* questions (Q14-16 and Q27-29); i) ratings of being *overtaken*,<sup>14</sup> ii) ratings of *losing track of time, space or self as an individual*,<sup>15</sup> and iii) ratings of being *transformed or strengthened* by the experience.<sup>16</sup> These three questions were taken together as an index of transcendence in the experience. The literature on transcendence discussed in Chapter 1 presents a variety of facets, but these three were chosen because they appeared repeatedly in the literature, and because they cover as wide a scope as possible of what might be included in a transcendent experience. This series of aspects was chosen instead of using the technical term ‘transcendence’, to minimise the use of jargon.

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<sup>12</sup> “To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. represented by the music?” and “What were those memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. that were significant for you?”

<sup>13</sup> “To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions?”

<sup>14</sup> “To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself?”

<sup>15</sup> “To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual?”

<sup>16</sup> “To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience?”

The *spirituality* questions (Q17-18 and Q30-31)<sup>17</sup> examined the extent and nature of spirituality for the participant. The first question sought to discover the extent to which the subject regarded the experience as being spiritual. The second question asked the participants to define their own understanding of spirituality as it pertained to that particular experience. It should be noted that this was not a question about spirituality in general, but spirituality as it related to that experience of music. These questions were deliberately placed later in the questionnaire to minimise the extent to which participants thought they were answering a questionnaire about spirituality.

It was in the responses to these four qualitative questions (*spiritual*, *general descriptions*, *referential* and *absolute*) that I was looking for evidence of the key aspects of spirituality (Transcendence, Connection and Meaning). Transcendence was examined through quantitative questions as well, though largely so that it could be compared to spirituality. Other than this the three aspects were not explicitly questioned because the purpose was to examine spirituality as it is represented by the participants.

The *absolute* questions (Q19-21 and Q32-34)<sup>18</sup> attempted to gauge the degree to which the experience was intrinsic to the music. The first question asked participants to rate the degree to which the experience was due to something within the *music itself*. Some suggestions as to the meaning of the term *music itself* were provided in an effort to standardize the use of this concept. The second question asked for more detail about what it was about the music that they found significant.

The final question (Q22 and Q35)<sup>19</sup> asked about the importance of the *performers and performance*. It was possible that the experience was significant because of the performer or the performance itself rather than the music itself (absolutism), what the music referred to (referentialism) or something spiritual about the experience. This

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<sup>17</sup> “To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual?” and “What does ‘spiritual’ mean for you in this instance?”

<sup>18</sup> “To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the music itself? (For example was it due to the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?)” and “If so, please describe what it was about the music that you found significant.”

<sup>19</sup> “To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the performers or performance?”

question allowed that idea to be examined.

### ***Pilot Study***

After the completion of a draft version of the questionnaire, two churches were asked to provide participants for a pilot study. These churches were chosen because of their exemplification of the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal styles of worship. They were considered capable of providing a reasonably large number of participants, being larger churches. Questionnaires were sent to the churches to be distributed amongst attendees who volunteered to participate.

The response rate was very low (around 2%).<sup>20</sup> This may have been due, at least in part, to a lack of personal contact with the sampling group and other constraints on the participants selected. It may also have been due to the specificity of the information sought, such that many people may not have felt they were able to contribute. From this pilot study some minor modifications were made, including clearer instructions and examples for some of the questions. The above discussion of the questionnaire relates to the final version, not the pilot version.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Every effort was made to ensure this research was carried out ethically. Appendix D details the ethical agreement made with participants, but this included subsection to the University ethics committee, voluntary participation, anonymity on the questionnaires, no long-term storage of contact information, commitment to anonymity in future publications, and storage of data at the University where it would not be released except as demanded by law.

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<sup>20</sup> According to Mangione (1995) this is an unacceptable response rate. However this was only for the pilot study. The response rate for the main study was much better – around 17%, though it is not possible to provide an exact figure considering the use of internet groups and questionnaires being passed on by other participants.

### ***Impact of the Researcher***

The lack of direct contact between the investigator and subjects provided minimal opportunity for influence at the data collection stage of the research. Nevertheless, research design can contain implicit assumptions about causal links and processes that researchers need to take into account (Oppenheim, 1992). Therefore I acknowledge my personal belief in the reality and significance of spirituality as experienced with music, and my experience of, and belief in, the Christian God as the source of those experiences. I am conscious of my own potential bias towards finding results that support my own beliefs. I recognise that I am potentially more inclined to interpret qualitative responses according to my own beliefs; finding support for spirituality in comments that are ambiguous, and developing paradigms in ways that reflect my own opinions. I am aware that this can also affect the interpretation of quantitative data, such as in determining cut off points, and in interpreting factor analyses.

However, great care has been taken to prevent these biases from unduly influencing results. All interpretation of data, and especially the qualitative data, was done in consultation with an independent researcher. Frequent discussions concerning all aspects of the research design and interpretation, were held with my supervisor, who operates with different biases. Thorough reviews of the literature were conducted to endeavour to present paradigms (such as the aspects of transcendence, connection and meaning) that were fair to the greatest range of literature. Interpretations of the data were presented in a number of conference and other peer-review situations, to seek objective feedback. Finally, every effort was made to keep personal beliefs and agendas out of the discussion of this data. This is never completely achieved, but due to the nature of the topic I was very aware of the need to do this.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative responses were subjected to content analysis, which, according to Bryman (2001), provides for the objective and systematic study of such self-reported material.<sup>21</sup> I began with a deductive approach, analysing content according to the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 1. But this was done reflexively, looking for common material that lay outside of these aspects, with which to adapt the framework if necessary. The *Improved/aided/transformed* category was added as a result of this adaptation. As Rubin (2011) suggests, this allowed an operational definition to be developed, then tested as the work proceeded. This was important so that the study would be replicable, and because of the wide-ranging views on spirituality. Categories were refined over time to what is presented here, and anything that did not fit within these categories was mentioned in the ‘other’ category. According to Bryman (2001) and Sheppard (2004), this combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches allows a good semblance of reality while maintaining integrity with the literature.

The precise definition of categories, along with the allocation of comments into categories was developed through discussion with an independent researcher and my supervisor. Any discrepancies were discussed and a compromise reached. The categories related to the three aspects of spirituality determined in Chapter 1 in the following way: Transcendence was identified with the *Transcendence* category, Connection was identified with the *Supernatural*, *Existential*, *Other people and Environment* categories, and Meaning was identified with the *Improved/aided/transformed* and the *Meaning* categories.

Comments were coded such that any mention of a category received one mark, but not more than one mark, per participant, per condition, per question.<sup>22</sup> For example, the comment “Wow, God is massive. The building added to this feeling” (participant 16)

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<sup>21</sup> Bryman (2001) wrote that content analysis is an approach “that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner” (p.180). Its aim is to produce quantitative accounts of the material in terms of categories specified by rules.

<sup>22</sup> Thus it was possible for one response from a participant to receive a mark in more than one, or even all the categories (per condition, per question). But no comment could score more than once on each category (per condition, per question).

scored one mark each for supernatural, environment and emotion. It would not have received more than one mark for emotion even if it had added a further comment such as “It filled me with happiness”.

Tallies for each category were thus calculated as an aggregate of the number of participants who made a comment relating to that category (per condition, per question). This conversion of qualitative data to quantitative data allowed simple comparisons of tallies. In reporting the results, these comparisons are supported by descriptions considered to be representative of participants’ comments.

Two categories need special mention. Gomez & Fisher (2003) described the category **‘environment’** in terms of the “physical, eco-political and social environment” (p. 40). In the context of the present research, this is taken to represent not only this, but also, as part of the physical world, the created musical environment. Therefore a person can have a sacred connection with the created music, such as in a flow experience where one feels at one with the music, or there could be a connection with the performance space, where one feels deeply connected to, or ‘caught up’ in the physical environment in which the music takes place.

Another category **‘Improved/aided/transformed’** centred on the idea of the experience benefiting the person in some way. It bears some parallels to Howden’s (1992) spirituality characteristic of *innerness or inner resources*. It also relates to Gabrielsson’s (2010) category of *Personal and Social aspects*, with its sub-category *New insights, possibilities, needs*.

The ‘mid-point’ group, discussed under ‘Participants’ (above) was not included in analyses of Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus, but they were included in all other analyses in Study I. This was deemed reasonable because the initial analyses looked for evidence of spirituality in all comments from all participants because it was seeking to examine the evidence for spirituality irrespective of cultural mediation. The habitus comparison (Pentecostal / non-Pentecostal) was added to see whether, for those two habitus, there was a significant difference in the evidence for spirituality.

In addition to the qualitative data, results also dealt with the quantitative data. This analysis was more deductive in that it sought confirmation for an existing proposition; the location of spirituality within existing theories of musical meaning (Sheppard 2004). The quantitative data were analysed using a variety of statistical methods, as described in Chapter 6. The statistical functions in Excel and SPSS were used for these calculations. Statistical reporting was mainly limited to descriptive statistics, utilising inferential statistics only where it was deemed essential.

### 3.4 Limitations and Assumptions

Exploratory research such as this is necessarily limited in scope. The first limitation concerned the type of research. It was primarily descriptive research, which attempted to explain *what* was happening rather than commenting on *why* or *how* these things occurred (Neuman, 2006) Punch 2005. Such description was considered useful because of the infancy of the study of spirituality, as it allowed for hypotheses to be generated for future research. Some comments on the *why* and *how* are presented in the final chapter.

The second limitation concerned the type of music. This research did not control for the type of music involved, apart from limiting it to church music in the religious context and secular music in the non-religious context. All music was accepted, being left to the participant to choose. Ethnomusicological research has shown that the music that is related to spirituality is often non-Western music. However, there is also often an implicit assumption that the standard for understanding and evaluating music is a 'Western' one (Koen, et al., 2008). A broader view is needed. Hence, no limitations were set on the music involved here, because the purpose was to see how spirituality related to music *whenever* spiritual experiences occurred. This leaves open the question of whether different styles of music have differing effects on spirituality.

Furthermore, there was no attempt to limit this research to instrumental music alone. It is possible that lyrics could have an effect on the experience of spirituality, but, again,

the purpose here was to see how spirituality related to music *whenever* spiritual experiences occurred.

The third limitation concerned physical correlates. Being a behavioural study, this study did not examine the neurological correlates of spirituality and music. This is a growing field that is generating some important findings about the functioning of the brain during musical experience (Ashbrook & Albright, 1997; Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Koelsch et al., 2004; Levitin & Menon, 2005; Livingstone, 2005; Schmahmann, 2006; Zatorre, 2005) and during spiritual activities (d'Aquili & Newberg, 1999; Joseph, 2001; A. Newberg, 2003; A. B. Newberg, 2006; Persinger, 1983), that raise questions about possible causes for these experiences. However, as I stated in the first limitation, such questions of causation were beyond the scope of this study. Chemical and hormonal correlates were also beyond the scope of this study. There is growing evidence for changes in levels of chemicals and hormones during both music and spiritual activities (Bicknell, 2007; Borg, Andree, Soderstrom, & Farde, 2003; Infante et al., 2001; Tooley, Armstrong, Norman, & Sali, 2000). This can lead to debates about whether spiritual experiences can be induced or replicated using these entheogens (Hood, 2005), possibly because spirituality is “rooted substantially in our physical nature” (Hay, 2007b, p.39) . But these issues are not addressed in this study because they are not necessary for an understanding of the nature of the spiritual experience. This is taken up in the comments about implications for future research in Chapter 12.

The fourth limitation concerned the effect of culture. The study made only a limited attempt to control for the influence of culture. The impact of the matrix of cultural influences on music's experience is a complex issue, and understanding that matrix was not the main purpose of this research. Instead, the study focused on understanding the relationship between spirituality and music irrespective of whatever mediating influence culture may have on it.

The fifth limitation concerned a possible priming effect. Despite efforts to minimise bias, it is possible that since recruitment was made via church contact points, participants were primed to make responses relating to spirituality and the supernatural. This was a deliberate limitation because Study I sought to determine the possibility of



spiritual experience in any context. If that could be established then a wider sample, in which potential priming could be controlled for, could be engaged to see whether spirituality is present for the population in general. That was the purpose of Study II. Furthermore, even if such priming did occur, it would not influence the examination of those experiences of spirituality as being either referential or absolute.

A sixth limitation concerned the definition of spirituality. I have proposed a circumscription of spirituality in terms of three key aspects, not claiming that this is adequate to 'define' the phenomenon. Therefore, when I refer to "spirituality" throughout this dissertation I am referring to something that is yet to be precisely defined. This thesis will hopefully help lead towards such a definition, but for the time being it is necessary to live with this imprecision. It follows that when I refer to spirituality in my results and conclusions I am referring to spirituality as it has been delineated in this thesis, nothing more.

A seventh limitation concerned the comparison between spirituality and emotion. I have focused on these two phenomena as key experiences of music, recognising that they are not the only possible experiences of music. Gabrielsson (2010) demonstrated that there are a wide variety of experiences of music, of which emotion and spirituality are just two. This thesis is focused on spirituality, and utilises a comparison with emotion because of its proximity to the spiritual experience.

An important assumption in this thesis concerned ratings of spirituality. The qualitative analysis was conducted using participants who rated spirituality high as well as those who rated it low. One may imagine that those who rated spirituality low would have different responses to the categories of spirituality examined than those who rated spirituality high, thus warranting a further comparison. This was not done for three reasons. Firstly, there was insufficient space in this thesis to examine all possible variations. Secondly, my focus was on how the experience of spirituality was described *whenever it was present*. If it was not regarded as being present by some participants then that did not matter. Thirdly, relating to the previous point, it is possible that some participants claimed the experience was not spiritual, even though some of the categories of spirituality were present. This would arise because of a difference in the

labelling of ‘spiritual’. Due to these factors, it was decided to include data from all participants.

## Chapter 4 – Qualitative Analysis of Spirituality and the General Description Questions

Qualitative data were collected via four questions.<sup>1</sup> The first question discussed here<sup>2</sup> examined participants' own conception of spirituality. The second sought evidence of spirituality in the general descriptions of the experience, while the third and fourth questions were aimed at the primary research question – whether spirituality is better explained as a referential or absolute type of meaning. The following two chapters detail the evidence for spirituality in each of those four questions.

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Where examined</i>
Spirituality	“What does ‘spiritual’ mean for you in this instance?”	Section 4.1
General description	“Please describe an experience of music you have had that was particularly significant. This might include a performance you attended, one in which you performed, an instance of listening to a recording, an intimate gathering or something else.”	Section 4.2
Referentialism	“What were the ‘ideas associated with the music’ that were significant for you?”	Section 5.1
Absolutism	“Please describe what it was about the music that you found significant.”	Section 5.2

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<sup>1</sup> These questions are found in Appendix B - question 18 and 31 related to spirituality, 9 and 22 related to general descriptions, 12 and 25 related to referential meaning, and 20 and 33 related to absolute meaning. The two questions for each relate to the two contexts – the religious and non-religious experience.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the order in which the questions appeared on the questionnaire, but the order in which I am dealing with them in this results section. The *Spiritual* question was placed later in the questionnaire, as discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), in an effort to minimise response bias. It is described first here so as to build a clear picture of how spirituality was understood by participants, before comparing that to evidence of spirituality in the descriptions of the experience.

## 4.1 Conceptions of spirituality

### *Context within the Questionnaire*

After having described their experience of music in general terms, and having described the referential and absolute aspects, participants were asked whether they would consider their experience spiritual, and what they thought that meant. This aspect is dealt with first in this analysis because the pattern of participants' responses about spirituality here can then be compared with the way in which they responded to spirituality in other questions (see sections 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2).

Responses to the question “what does ‘spiritual’ mean for you in this instance?” (Question 18 and 31 – Appendix B) were analysed with respect to the key aspects of spirituality discussed in Chapter 1: transcendence; connection with the supernatural, with existential self, with other people and with the environment; and profound meaning. Three other aspects were added, emerging from the data: not spiritual, other and emotion. These are all defined in the reporting of the results below.

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 show the variation in the frequency of mentions of the different categories, across different habitūs and context. Following these is an examination of each category in turn, looking for reasons for these discrepancies.

Table 4.1 Responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the *Spiritual* question

	<b>Pentecostals</b> (n=51)		<b>Non-Pentecostals</b> (n=41)		<b>All participants</b> (n=117)	
	Religious count (%)	Non- Religious count (%)	Religious count (%)	Non- Religious count (%)	Religious count (%)	Non- religious count (%)
<i>Transcendence</i>	10 (19.6)	8 (15.7)	5 (12.2)	12 (29.3)	18 (15.4)	25 (21.4)
<i>Supernatural</i>	43 (84.3)	24 (47.1)	31 (75.6)	7 (17.1)	95 (81.2)	41 (35.0)
<i>Existential</i>	12 (23.5)	15 (29.4)	10 (24.4)	7 (17.1)	30 (25.6)	36 (30.8)
<i>Other people</i>	2 (3.9)	2 (3.9)	3 (7.3)	2 (4.9)	7 (6.0)	6 (5.1)
<i>Environment</i>	0	3 (5.9)	1 (2.4)	3 (7.3)	2 (1.7)	9 (7.7)
<i>Improved, aided or transformed</i>	16 (31.4)	10 (19.6)	9 (22.0)	2 (4.9)	33 (28.2)	21 (18.0)
<i>Meaning</i>	12 (23.5)	7 (13.7)	4 (9.8)	3 (7.3)	22 (18.8)	14 (12.0)
<i>Not Spiritual</i>	0	6 (11.8)	0	5 (12.2)	0	14 (12.0)
<i>Emotion</i>	3 (5.9)	6 (11.8)	6 (14.6)	6 (14.6)	13 (11.1)	14 (12.0)
<i>Any Spiritual comment</i>	51 (100)	41 (80.4)	38 (92.7)	28 (68.3)	113 (96.6)	90 (76.9)

Notes:<sup>3</sup>

1. Percentages are calculated as the percentage of participants in that group that mention that category. Totals do not sum to 100% because participants were able to mentioned more than one category.

2. Mid-point group (n=25) is included in addition to the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups for 'all participants', even though it is not included in other analyses.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These notes also apply to Table 4.2 and Table 5.2.

<sup>4</sup> The 'mid-point group' was included in these figures, and in the qualitative descriptions discussed below because the primary aim for this qualitative data was to examine the evidence for spirituality in all responses from all participants (ie. irrespective of cultural mediation). The habitus distinction (Pentecostal / non-Pentecostal) was added to see whether there was a difference in the responses by the two groups.

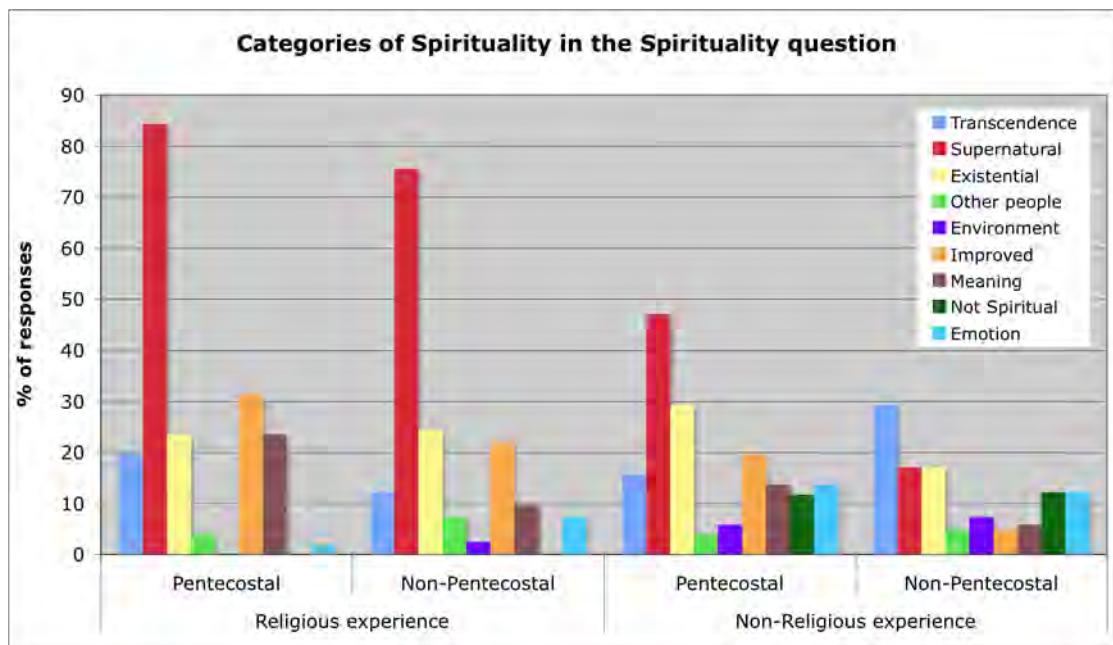


Figure 4.1 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality in the Spirituality question for the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups. Religious and non-religious contexts are compared.

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

The idea of transcendence included something beyond, higher than or outside of the ordinary physical or human experience. For example: “Beyond self, daily, ordinary, earthly, human experience” (P 104)<sup>5</sup>. According to some this involved thought processes: “Lifting one’s thoughts to a higher plane” (P 14), but according to others it did not: “A metaphysical experience that involved emotion and psychology but not rational thought processes” (P 87). This may be related to the element of ineffability that was seen in descriptions of experiences as ‘unexplained’, ‘beyond intellectual’, and even ‘taken to another perspective’. Another apparent idea was “get lost” (P 48), presumably referring to becoming lost in the experience, in the sense of losing track of time and space.

<sup>5</sup> ‘P’ is the participant number. Quotes will be referenced like this from here on. Names have been removed for reasons of confidentiality.

Chi squared<sup>6</sup> tests indicated that there was no significant difference between either religious and non-religious context, or Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus<sup>7</sup> for this category.<sup>8</sup>

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

Comments relating to some form of supernatural power, typically God, were the most frequent. 81% of participants made some explicit comment about God in their comments about the religious experience. For example: “Nourished and nurtured and protected by something more powerful than and outside of myself ~ a divine presence” (P 92), or “A tangible encounter with God that feeds an intangible part of us that makes us who we are” (P 57).

This large number of comments was expected considering these were religious people. However, 35% of participants also regarded the supernatural as important in the non-religious experience. It would be reasonable to expect no reference at all to the supernatural in the non-religious context. Some of the references were to an indirect experience of the supernatural such as being reminded of God, for example: “An appreciation for something which only God could have created. I see God in beauty and this was an instance of amazing beauty” (P 98). Other comments related to a direct experience of the supernatural, such as: “There was the sense that God was using the song to communicate with me” (P 85).

There was a significant effect of context only for the non-Pentecostal group ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 9.89, p < .01$  with Bonferroni<sup>10</sup> correction).<sup>11</sup> The Pentecostal group showed no

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<sup>6</sup> Chi squared tests are used for these analyses because they are a simple test of the likelihood that the observed frequency is different from the expected frequency just by chance (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). In these results, expected frequencies are calculated as an average of the number of religious and non-religious, or Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal comments.

<sup>7</sup> The reader is reminded that the religious / non-religious contrast is a *context* contrast, whereas the Pentecostal / non-Pentecostal contrast is a *habitus* contrast.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics are not reported for non-significant chi squared tests, as p values were all >.05.

<sup>9</sup> The number of participants here is 92, being the combined total of the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups. The midpoint group (described in Chapter 3) was not included.

significant difference. This may indicate a demand characteristic, in that participants felt that an answer relating to God was expected, and that is why it was apparent in both contexts. Nevertheless, these results indicated, firstly, a difference of approach between the two habitūs, and secondly, the importance of the supernatural in experiences of spirituality for all of these participants, even outside of the religious context. Chi squared tests also indicated no significant difference between habitūs for either of the contexts.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being*

The second largest number of comments related to existential ideas. 26% of participants in the religious context and 31% of participants in the non-religious context commented on spirituality as having something to do with human existence. For example: “The music took me to an exalted level of awareness . . . touching an inner wellspring of existence” (P 3), or “experiences that go to the core of who I am, and how I see the world and myself” (P 20). One participant commented on the relationship with his ‘entire being’. Sometimes this was expressed in terms of the human spirit, such as participant 91 talking in terms of “spirit to spirit”, meaning human and God, or participant 82, who described music as speaking to people’s spirit.

These existential ideas bore an interesting relationship to emotion. Some comments related the two concepts together. For example: “The musical experience for me, is a matter of ‘the SOUL’, which is defined as – ‘The animating and vital principle in humans, credited with the faculties of thought, action, and emotion’” (P 21). However, at other times emotion was not a part of this existential spirituality, because the experience of spirituality – the soul – was at a ‘deeper level’ than emotion: “‘Spiritual’ in this instance is referring to something which is not essentially physical (cannot be seen/touched), or emotional, but is essentially within the soul of a person” (P 56). This supports the idea presented in Chapter 2 of spirituality being an awareness, but emotion being a response.

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<sup>10</sup> When Bonferroni corrections are mentioned they refer to 28 pair-wise comparisons made, so the p value has been adjusted such that a comparison against  $p=.05$  is retained.

<sup>11</sup> Chi squared tests such as this, which used more than two comparison groups utilised the Yates correction.



Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between either religious and non-religious context or Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus for this category.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

A small number of participants (6%) reported a sense of connectedness with other people involved. For example: “Drawn together as one . . . there's a sense of connection that seems spiritual and is difficult to explain . . . we ‘feed off’ each other, as it were, to rise to intangible heights of expression with a certain unspoken unity” (P 104). This involved a sense of ‘harmony’, or ‘love’. A sense of empathy was often involved, particularly in examples of music that involved accompanying drama, such as opera, music theatre or movies: “A small 'spiritual' or humanistic link with performers’ experience was felt” (P 55).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious and non-religious context. There did not appear to be any difference for Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus either, but significance levels could not be tested because cell counts were too small.<sup>12</sup>

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

References to a sacred connection with either the creation of music or the performance space were small in number. One example is: “Enjoying the music in a deep, emotional way” (P 105).

Just 1.7% of participants for the religious experience and 7.7% for the non-religious experience reported such a connection with the musical environment. This suggested

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<sup>12</sup> Statistical results for Chi squared analyses are only reported in this study when cell sizes are > 5. Yet in the case of this category, the number of comments was equal or quite similar (3 and 2), suggesting even without the use of statistics that there were no differences.

that, in the religious experience in particular, the focus was not on the musical environment, and even where it was on the environment, it was with a view to a supernatural connection. For example: “Connection with and relationship to God. Vital presence. Music aided that focus” (P 101). A couple of comments further underscored the spirituality of the environment by relating comments about music to comments about God: “God was part of the music” (P 107).

There did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus here, though cell sizes were too small to test significance levels.

**Improved / aided / transformed** - *A sense of having been personally improved, aided or transformed by the experience*

Participants mentioned being ‘inspired’, ‘uplifted’, motivated’ as well as being reminded that they were beautiful. For example: “God has got a hold of my own spirit and heart and is doing something in me that is transforming, renewing, strengthening, empowering me and making me more into His image” (P 52).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between contexts, and there did not appear to be a difference between habitus.<sup>13</sup>

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Comments were included in this category only if they contained explicit references to meaning. The number of mentions of this category was similar to the previous category. One such comment referred to “a deepening of my understanding of [God’s] love and mercy” (P 103). Another comment referred to the idea of God’s intentional use of the song to communicate with the participant (P 86). Often, reference was made to God but, at other times, especially in the non-religious context, it was a connection to a “deeper reality” (P 48). One further comment mentioned the notion of awareness that I focused on in chapter two: “The music took me to an exalted level of awareness” (P 3). Other

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<sup>13</sup> Some of the cell sizes for habitus were <5, so chi squared tests could not be used to test significance levels.

terms relating to this category included ‘reveal’, ‘God speaking’, ‘meaning’, ‘awareness’, and ‘visions of reality’.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between contexts, and there did not appear to be a difference between the two habitūs.<sup>14</sup>

Related to, but not included in this category of meaning, were comments that referred to the ‘inexplicability’ of the experience. This was also described as being ‘beyond intellect’ or ‘unexplained’. Here we see the ineffable nature of such experiences, which are not dependent on rational thought but are nevertheless profound. There was some overlap here with transcendence. Such comments were not included in this category of meaning, and yet they demonstrate the breadth of this category.

### **Not spiritual**

There were a number of comments (12%) explicitly referring to the experience as being ‘not spiritual’, but only in the non-religious experience. These were typically simple comments such as “Nothing spiritual” (P 106). Participant 18 was tempted to make such a report for the religious experience, but then resigned himself to a state of confusion: “It is not really spiritual - or is it? How does one really know a Spiritual experience from a human emotive (fleshly) response?” Furthermore, when asked to what degree the experience was spiritual he rated it 5 out of 10.

There appeared to be more comments in the non-religious context, though statistics could not confirm this as cell sizes were small.

Evident in these comments was a distinction between transcendence and the divine. For example, the experience is “related to the realm beyond where we are now. In this sense it wasn't really [spiritual]. It was something beyond me - beyond my experience but it wasn't divine which is what I often think of when I think of Spiritual” (P 86). This demonstrates how important the role of interpretation is for (at least) some of these

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<sup>14</sup> Again some cell sizes were <5 so chi squared analyses could not be used.

participants, wherein spirituality is for them about the presence of the concept of the divine.

These findings are in line with the quantitative question about religious spirituality<sup>15</sup>, in which only two participants rated spirituality at its lowest rating ('0') in the religious context, and 20 participants (17.1%) rated it thus for the non-religious context. This indicates that while spirituality may not have been an important element for many of the experiences, therefore leading to lower scores, it was completely absent in only a small number of instances. While it could be argued that spirituality in the religious environment is a demand characteristic (see the fifth limitation in chapter 3), the fact that 77% of all participants made at least some mention of spirituality in the non-religious context underscores its importance, at least for these participants.

This category does not appear in subsequent sections, as it was only ever mentioned in relation to this question.

### **Other**

A number of comments related to ideas somewhat tangential to those discussed above. The idea of 'searching' discussed by Cobussen (2008) as integral to spirituality, was mentioned, though only once. Connection, in its various instantiations, has already been identified in this section, but one comment also mentioned connection in general terms, not specifically related to the supernatural or self or others or the environment. Perhaps related was one comment referring to the alignment of thinking and feeling. This is perhaps referring to what Harvey (1996) described as 'integration'; the idea that spirituality includes an integration of otherwise segmented parts and we become not "one who knows' ... but 'one knowing'" (p. 9).

The idea of being 'stilled' by the experience was also apparent. This idea is central to the 'New-Spiritual Music' movement of recent years (Cobussen 2008). This is related to the notion of 'withdrawal' identified by Laski (1968) - where a force of energy has

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<sup>15</sup> This question asked "To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual?"

dissipated.<sup>16</sup> This is somewhat related to ‘withdrawal ecstasy’, which I included in transcendence (section 1.2). Yet ‘being stilled’ has more to do with one’s physical response than with their experience of the spiritual, and just as I positioned physical responses outside of the scope of this study in section 1.2-A, so this idea of being ‘stilled’ is also outside of this purview.

Other ideas included a sense of ‘true life’ or ‘reality’; such that what was experienced is ‘right’ in a profound sense. This may be related to another comment referring to a ‘virtual experience’. The provision of ‘energy’ was mentioned, as was reference to ‘creativity’. One participant mentioned “God ministering to me” (P 82), which seems closely related to the SEM categories of *‘be addressed by spiritual/Christian message’* and *‘seek/get in contact with God in prayer/song of praise’* (Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik 2003). The importance of the music to the experience was also mentioned.

### ***Emotion and spirituality***

In this study, emotion was treated not as a category of spirituality but as an interconnected plane of experience, allowing a comparison with experiences of spirituality. Emotion was mentioned 27 times across the two contexts here.<sup>17</sup> This included ‘peace’, ‘joy’, ‘empathy’ and ‘euphoria’, as well as a general reference to ‘emotion’. General feelings were also identified, such as ‘felt good’. The term ‘uplifted’ was included, despite it being relevant also to the element ‘Improved, aided or transformed’.

There was considerable evidence for a degree of proximity of emotion to spirituality in these responses. Several comments referred to both emotion and spirituality, for example: “the music engaged the depths of my emotion, and hence went beyond the physical to the spiritual” (P 45). Yet other comments expressly stated that the spiritual experience was not about emotions, or not limited to them: “Beyond physical, mental or

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<sup>16</sup> Laski posited that ecstatic experiences were of two sorts; intensity and withdrawal.

<sup>17</sup> Evidence for emotion or emotion terms was sought in the same way that evidence for categories of spirituality was sought – within the content analysis.

In addition, responses discussed here come from all participants, not just Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups.

emotional experience” (P 36). There were five such comments in the religious experience and three in the non-religious experience. Conversely, some experiences were regarded as emotional but not spiritual. “It was not spiritual, just emotive” (P 108).

Of particular interest for this thesis was to gauge whether spirituality was as frequently reported as emotion.<sup>18</sup> This was achieved by comparing the number of participants who mentioned either at least once.<sup>19</sup> Figure 4.2 graphs these results. Emotion was mentioned by 13 participants in the religious experience and 14 in the non-religious experience (11.11% and 11.97% respectively – see also Table G-1), which was considerably less than the number of participants who mentioned one or more elements of spirituality (113 and 90 participants respectively). Chi-square analyses, using the number of spiritual mentions used as the observed frequency, and the number of mentions of emotion as the expected frequency, revealed significant differences for both the religious ( $\chi^2(1, N=117) = 79.37, p < .0001$  with Bonferroni correction) and non-religious experiences ( $\chi^2(1, N=117) = 55.54, p < .0001$  with Bonferroni correction).<sup>20</sup> There was no significant difference between contexts  $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 3.05, p = .08$ .) This result was largely due to the question, which asked specifically about the spirituality of the experience. The next three sections of this qualitative analysis (sections 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2), which do examine the musical experience, will further investigate this contrast.

Figure 4.2 (and Table G-1) presents the same comparisons according to habitus. Spirituality was mentioned by many more participants than was emotion for both the Pentecostal ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 68.48, p < .0001$  with Bonferroni correction) and non-Pentecostal habitus ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 37.40, p < .0001$  with Bonferroni correction). The difference was slightly smaller in the non-religious context (see Table 4.1 for

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<sup>18</sup> One might raise the concern that there is only one category for emotion, but six for spirituality, and that therefore this is not a fair comparison. However the emotion category was very broad, taking in many possible types (for example, positive, negative, simple, complex, etc.). By contrast the categories relating to spirituality were much more specific; targeting much smaller aspects of the phenomenon. Therefore I claim that the comparison of emotion with spirituality is a fair one.

<sup>19</sup> Because there were seven categories of spirituality but only one of emotion, a fair comparison was achieved by counting any mention of one or more categories as just one mention of spirituality. So if a participant mentioned supernatural they received one mention of spirituality, and if they mentioned supernatural and connection with others they still only received one mention of spirituality.

<sup>20</sup> For these Chi squared analyses, comparing spirituality and emotion, the expected frequency was taken as the frequency of mentions of emotion.

frequencies), but it was still significant. Furthermore, there was no difference between habitūs in terms of the total number of mentions of emotion or spirituality ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 1.08, p = .30$ ). These findings support the idea that while emotion is often involved in the spiritual experience, it is not the same thing as spirituality. Neither habitus nor religious experience has any effect on that.

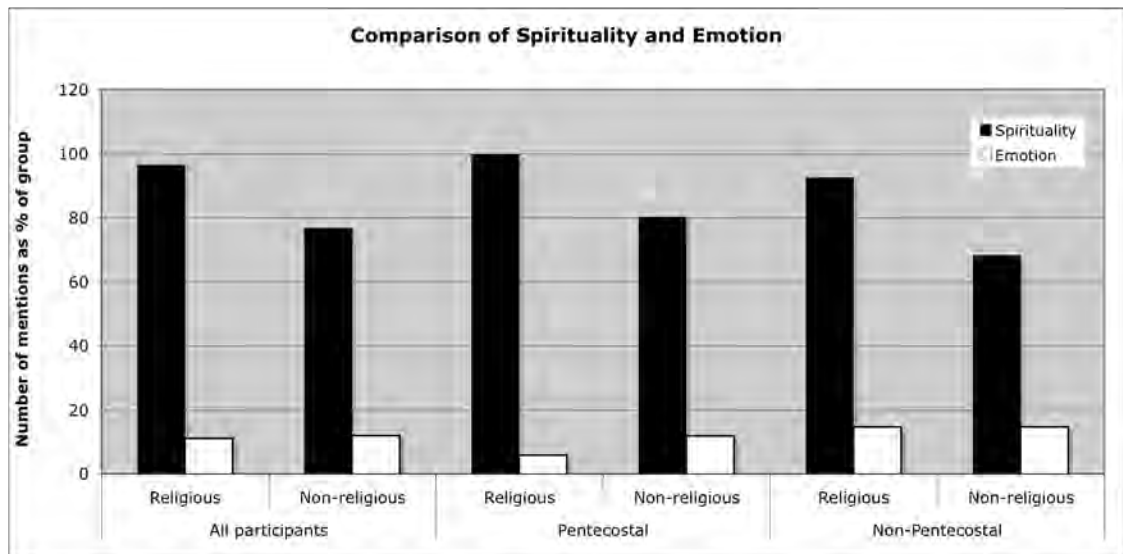


Figure 4.2 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus and religious and non-religious contexts

## Discussion

The contribution of this section has been to establish how these participants used the term *spirituality*. Having identified which categories of spirituality are important to these participants, I will be able to contrast those with categories of spirituality identified in the questions about the musical experience (sections 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2). This provides a background to the main research question about whether spirituality is better described as intrinsic or extrinsic to the music.

There was strong support for the presence of spirituality. All of the aspects of spirituality, proposed in chapter one, were present, for both religious and non-religious

experiences, and the number of comments indicating the experience was not spiritual was small in the non-religious context and zero in the religious. The most popular category was *supernatural*, for both religious and non-religious contexts. This could be explained by the sample population, which consisted of religious people.

*Transcendence* seemed to complement *supernatural*. For non-Pentecostals in the non-religious context *transcendence* was the most frequently mentioned category. In other conditions, where *supernatural* was stronger, *transcendence* was less well represented. This may be an indication that there was no need to make explicit comments about transcendence when comments were made about the supernatural; that the latter assumed the former. However, there was insufficient data to confirm this.

One of the connection categories, *existential*, was mentioned reasonably frequently, but the other two, *other people* and *environment*, were not. This seemed to indicate that these religious participants focused on spirituality as something pertaining to the divine, and the personal impact of that, rather than on the more human elements of people and music. It may be that the elements were there, but simply did not come to mind when describing spirituality.

Comments relating to *not spiritual* also indicated that spirituality was sometimes understood in conceptual terms, relating to the divine, in preference to experiential terms. If, instead, spirituality was treated as an experience, lying beneath religious signification (referring back to my distinction between experiential and conceptual knowledge), then those experiences may instead have been designated spiritual. The remainder of the ‘not spiritual’ comments indicated that some significant experiences of music are more about an emotional response to something else, rather than any element of spirituality. In other words, not all significant experiences of music are spiritual.

*Improved* was quite well represented, which is in line with existing research demonstrating the personal benefit that spiritual experiences can bring (Fisher, 1998; George, et al., 2000; Goldberg, 1998; Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Lipe, 2002; Lowis & Hughes, 1997; Nelson, 1997; Renz, Mao, & Cerny, 2005; Stoll, 1989). *Meaning* operated similarly.



For only two of the categories (*supernatural* and *not-spiritual*) were there differences between religious and non-religious context. For those two categories it may have more to do with external associations to the experience than to spirituality itself. This may be due to these participants' religious background, which may have created expectations about how to interpret certain experiences. This may also be why the difference for *supernatural* was only apparent in the non-Pentecostal habitus. It may indicate that this habitus links the supernatural specifically with religious experience, whereas the Pentecostal habitus is not as inclined to do that. All of this, along with the absence of any other differences, would support the notion of spirituality as a form of experiential knowledge, lying beneath the contextual association of religion.

The number of comments from Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals was not statistically different for any category. This was an unexpected finding, suggesting that there was minimal difference between these two cultural habitūs in terms of spiritual experience. If, as I proposed in Chapter 2, emotional intensity and supernatural manifestations, as opposed to a focus on the word and rational objective rationality, were what separated Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals (respectively) then these data indicated that such aspects of the experience were not a fundamental part of spirituality. If they were, a greater distinction between the habitus should have been evident.

Support for the importance of spirituality in experiences of music was given by the contrast between spirituality and emotion. Spirituality was mentioned far more often than emotion, which is expected because the question focused on that. But if spirituality were merely a complex of emotions, or a type of strong emotion, then one might expect more mentions of emotion than were given. Some comments intimated a similarity between spirituality and emotion, but other comments suggest that, despite their proximity, spirituality is not simply a strong emotional encounter. The focus of comments tended to be on God and the cynosure of the experience rather than the nature of the experience (as in what it felt like). This was true even for non-religious experiences. These findings suggest that spirituality is a deep awareness of something to which emotions are a response; the experience was significant not just because of an emotional response in general but because of the focus of that response – for example

the supernatural or transcendence. This is exemplified in the comment “feeling God’s presence” (P 29). This participant is identifying an awareness of ‘God’s presence’ as the reason for the sense of spirituality in the experience, rather than emotions.

### Summary of findings

The findings from the spirituality question can be summarized as follows:

- i) There was strong evidence for the recognition of spirituality in experiences of music. Very few experiences were regarded as being not spiritual, even in non-religious contexts. The ones that were show that not all significant<sup>21</sup> experiences of music are spiritual.
  - o The focus was on elements of spirituality that relate more to the divine or metaphysical than on humanistic elements, possibly because of the religious background of these participants. Of these, the presence of *transcendence* and *supernatural* seemed to be complementary.
- ii) Context had an effect on only two categories; *supernatural* and *not-spiritual*. The remaining categories of spirituality were just as frequently reported in both contexts.
- iii) There was no difference between the frequency of comments by Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals for any of the categories. Therefore this habitus had no effect on these findings.
- iv) Spirituality and emotion were seen to be interconnected planes of experience. Yet there were some indications that spiritual experiences were not simply the result of emotion. The degree to which participants treated spirituality as a conceptual interpretation, rather than an ineffable experience, may have been a factor here.

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<sup>21</sup> The reader is reminded that the term ‘significant’ here is not used with statistical implications, but is used in a general sense to mean ‘worthy of attention’. This term was used in this way in the questionnaire.

## 4.2 General Descriptions

### *Context within the Questionnaire*

This was the first question in the questionnaire asking about the musical experience. Having answered some preliminary demographic questions, participants were asked to provide a general description of the religious and then the non-religious experience. These descriptions were expected to be very general, so that spirituality could be observed here if it were present. While the previous section (4.1) specifically asked about spirituality, that question appeared later in the questionnaire. This general descriptions question was earlier in the questionnaire so that any mentions of spirituality by participants here would be spontaneous.

### *Results*

Responses to the general description questions (question 9 and 22 – Appendix B) were analysed with respect to the same categories of spirituality as in section 4.1. The number of comments relating to each category is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Responses to each of the categories of spirituality in the *general descriptions* question

	Pentecostals (n=51)		Non-Pentecostals (n=41)		All participants (n=117)	
	Religious count (%)	Non- Religious count (%)	Religious count (%)	Non- Religious count (%)	Religious count (%)	Non- religious count (%)
<i>Transcendence</i>	6 (11.8)	5 (9.8)	5 (12.2)	3 (7.3)	12 (10.3)	8 (6.8)
<i>Supernatural</i>	32 (62.8)	2 (3.9)	22 (53.7)	1 (2.4)	71 (60.7)	3 (2.6)
<i>Existential</i>	7 (13.7)	2 (3.9)	4 (9.8)	2 (4.9)	13 (11.1)	5 (4.3)
<i>Other people</i>	5 (9.8)	2 (3.9)	2 (4.9)	3 (7.3)	9 (7.7)	7 (6.0)
<i>Environment</i>	5 (9.8)	4 (7.8)	4 (9.8)	7 (17.1)	12 (10.3)	13 (11.1)
<i>Improved, aided or transformed</i>	6 (11.8)	5 (9.8)	7 (17.1)	1 (2.4)	18 (15.4)	7 (6.0)
<i>Meaning</i>	21 (41.2)	3 (5.9)	16 (39.0)	1 (2.4)	47 (40.2)	10 (8.6)
<i>Emotion</i>	21 (41.2)	17 (33.3)	17 (41.5)	12 (29.3)	50 (42.7)	37 (31.6)
<i>Any spiritual comment</i>	43 (84.3)	18 (35.3)	30 (73.2)	16 (39.0)	94 (80.3)	42 (35.9)

n=117

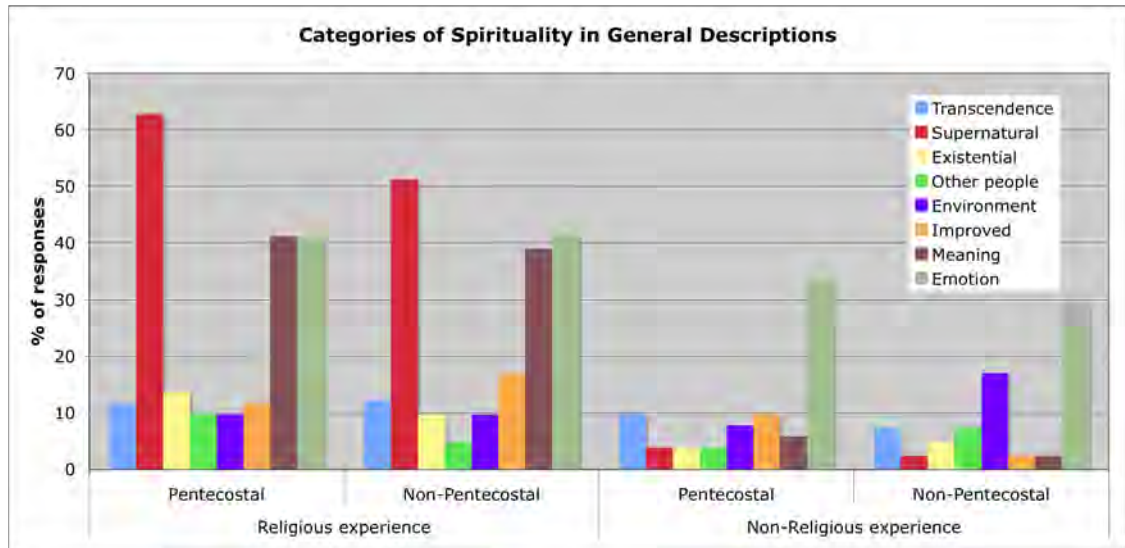


Figure 4.3 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality in the General Descriptions question for the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

There were only a small number of comments relating to transcendence in both contexts. For example: “Losing your own identity temporarily” (P 32), or “I just get taken away. All concerns, fears etc. fade away in the moment” (P 13). Participants indicated that the music played a large role in this phenomenon: “I just find myself getting lost in the music” (P 29), or again “For me listening to a symphony orchestra live is more ‘spiritual’ eg. losing your own identity temporarily” (P 32).

Several of these comments focused less on the transcendent notion of *withdrawal ecstasy*, which concerns the loss of contact with the world around, and more on the notion of *fusion*, which relates to connection. Hence many of the comments that hinted at transcendence (and which were marked as transcendence) were focused more on the category *supernatural*. For example: “I was able to lose myself in the music and totally focus on God” (P 70). It was as if the transportation that occurred was to God, and so comments focused on that identity rather than the process of being transported. This was evident in this comment: “I particularly respond to songs that express the twofold nature of God, His transcendent majesty and His humble loving immanence” (P 88).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious and non-religious contexts. This appeared to be the case for Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus as well.<sup>1</sup>

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world*

A large number of references (61% in the religious context) related to the supernatural. For example: “The presence of God felt very real at this time” (P 41). Even in the non-religious context there were three such comments. Many of the religious comments related to the lyrics in the music. For example: “The words ‘stir it up in our hearts Lord’ just made me break out weeping and crying to the Lord” (P 17). Yet there was also evidence of it being related to the music itself. “The music would become an aid to

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<sup>1</sup> Some cell sizes were <5 so chi squared tests could not be used to validate this.

worshipping or communicating with God” (P 69). Even so, there were indications that the significance of what was happening was not due to the music *per se*, but to something beyond that, which the music facilitated: “I wouldn't have said that it was the music which caused this - rather it was the connection of our spirits” (P 91).

Some of the religious comments only implied the supernatural, and so were not counted. For example: “[the music could] express something of God’s nature” (P 47). This is different from an experience of connection with God, such as the same participant’s later comment “caught up in his presence”.

There appeared to be many more comments in the religious context for both *habitus*. This could not be verified by chi squared tests as some cell sizes were <5, but logic would suggest that there was a difference. The strong presence of this category for the religious experience reflected the same trend for the Spirituality question (above). However, there appeared to be a lot less mentions of this category in the non-religious context for both *habitus*. This may indicate that participants’ focus in the non-religious experience was not on things such as the supernatural and so these were not mentioned, even though the spirituality question indicated that often they were there. This suggests some effect of religion.

There also appeared to be no effect of *habitus* for this category.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one’s own being*

This category received only a small number of comments (11% and 4%). For example: “I was certainly moved in my spirit, in my heart” (P 86). Sometimes these were references to extra-musical ideas: “I was struggling with a few of life’s challenges at the time and this simple demonstration of worship met me where I was at and spoke volumes” (P 57). Other comments related this connection to the music itself: “‘soul uplifting’ – sometimes with the ‘grandeur’ of the music; at other times with a sense of tranquillity/peace” (P 74).

One comment made mention of the importance of the link between one's connection with one's self and with God. This suggested that the connection with God is dependent on one's existential state. "It also depends a lot on how you're feeling about your life, your spiritual life to begin with" (P 94).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no difference between religious and non-religious context, and there also appeared to be no difference between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

Only a few participants mentioned a connection with other people (8% and 6%). For example "It was at an all-ages venue where Goths and skaters hang out . . . I felt a connection with them at that moment" (P 48), or this one, where the participant is talking about the congregation singing together unaccompanied: "it felt like we were totally united" (P 100).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious and non-religious context, and there appeared to be no difference for Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus either.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

A moderate number of comments referred to this category (10% and 11%). For example: "the experience of what is greater than oneself, or oneness with the beauty and wonder of creation" (P 33). The word 'atmosphere' helped capture this idea. This comment demonstrated a proximity to transcendence: "the fuller the sound and the louder it is helps me to be less self-conscious about what I am singing" (P 56). It seems that it was the musical environment that afforded the sense of transcendence. Many other comments related to the musical environment but these were not what could be regarded as sacred connections and so were not counted.

The physical environment in which the experience took place was also reported: “The experience is made powerful because it is sung by candlelight in a darkened church in which the focus is the newly kindled Paschal Candle, which represents Christ” (P 27). Such examples have a strong referential element, and yet the physical environment can also be more absolutist, such as when participant 33 described the Berlin Philharmonic playing in Paris and how “the experience owed a lot to the occasion and place.”

Chi squared tests indicated no evidence of a significant effect of context, and there did not appear to be an effect of habitus either.

**Improved, aided or transformed** – *a sense of having been personally improved, aided or transformed by the experience*

This idea was apparent in some comments (15% and 6%): “These can be really powerful, cleansing, renewing experiences” (P 47). The word ‘uplifted’ exemplified this. “I entered the performance feeling depressed, and through the combination of the dance and music (which was very loud, full and uplifting) I left changed” (P 72).

While there appeared to be many more mentions of this category in the religious context, chi squared tests indicated that that difference was not significant ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 2.29, p = .13$ ). There also did not appear to be an effect of habitus.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

This category received a comparatively large number of mentions, at least for the religious context (40% compared with 9% for the non-religious context). Comments reflected a variety of ways in which the experience was meaningful. Some wrote of being ‘struck’ by something in the experience, others of ‘becoming aware of’, or ‘sensing’ something, such as the presence of God. Participant 57 wrote that the experience “spoke volumes” to him. While others found the music enabled them to reflect deeply on things. Also evident was music operating not simply, but within the whole matrix of human experience. For example: “The music & words in context with the message and my situation made the time of worship very meaningful for me” (P 37).



The sense that these experiences were ‘real’ or ‘right’ was apparent, and that there was an ‘honesty’ about them.

Some comments explicitly implied that the meaning came from God: “God was able to speak clearly in that time” (P 16), or “the Lord spoke clearly through what we had sung” (P 23). Meaning often came from the lyrics, yet these were not independent of the music: “Generally the most stirring experiences are when the meaning of the words seems compatible with the melody & arrangement of the music” (P 72); or “both the musical harmony and lyrics spoke of difficulty turning into change” (P 101). Such comments indicate that meaning is not completely predicated on the words, but that these form an important part of the total experience. One participant described how this might happen in writing that the melody “evoked the scenes that were being described in the words” (P 51). Furthermore, there was evidence of meaning in the music without need of words. This participant referred to a salsa dance band playing music in which “I felt like there was meaning to the songs” (P 51).

One of the reasons so many mentions were made of this category in the religious experience may be that many participants were focused on the whole ‘worship’ experience rather than just a musical experience. Several participants wrote in terms of worship; for example: “This simple demonstration of worship met me where I was at and spoke volumes” (P 57). Such descriptions were included because they are merely identifying the wider context within which the music played a vital role. In that sense, worship could be said to be no different to the broader experience of a recital in the Opera House, for example.

While this describes the religious context, the non-religious context was quite different. Chi squared tests indicated that the number of mentions there was significantly lower ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 23.57, p < .0001$  with Bonferroni adjustment). There were some comments pertinent to meaning, but the general sense was that there was less of a sense of meaning coming through the non-religious experience. Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant effect of habitus for these results.

## **Other**

A number of other ideas relating to spirituality were apparent in these responses. Some words used to describe the experience included ‘intense’, ‘absorbed’, ‘passionate’, ‘captivating’, and even ‘flow’, as well as ‘deep’. Sometimes the experience was described as having a simplicity to it. Some experiences involved ‘silence’, ‘space’ or ‘stillness’ that, in the religious context, was associated with reverence. One participant also referred to the ‘cohesion’ of the experience.

The effect was a feeling of ‘energy’ or ‘alertness’, as well as of ‘life’, ‘well being’, being ‘alive’, ‘at home’, ‘fresh’, ‘freedom’ and ‘vigour’. Often crying or other visceral responses accompanied the experience. Occasionally participants mentioned being humbled by the experience, or surrendering to it. These descriptive terms were only mentioned by a couple of participants.

Comments were often much less detailed for the non-religious experience than for the religious experience. This could be because these religious participants had more interest in the religious experiences, or because they found them more powerful. Participant 87 explicitly stated this: “my secular music experiences have never been as powerful as any of my Christian music experiences”.

## ***Emotion and Spirituality***

Around one third of all participants made reference to the experience involving emotions (43% religious and 32% non-religious – see Figure 4.4). Emotions included ‘peace’, ‘passion’ ‘ecstatic, happy and free’, ‘relaxing’, ‘awe’ and ‘delight’. Spirituality was described as a feeling: ‘felt safe’, ‘feel positive’, and ‘feeling a bit down’. Words like ‘moving’, ‘stirring’ or ‘powerful’ were not counted amongst mentions of emotion because they are regarded as describing the effect of the emotion rather than the emotion itself, and ‘stirring’ and ‘powerful’ were used in the question<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The question wording read “Please describe in as much detail as you are able, an experience of [Church] music that you found particularly powerful or stirring ... “

Many occurrences of emotion related to music's referents: "James Taylor . . . told a story of loss of loved one. Played a song written to the deceased wife . . . a deep emotional state of loss, coupled with tears of sadness" [sic] (P 46). Some related to aspects of the experience accompanying the music: "There was a passion in her eyes" (P 49). Other comments referred to the emotionality of the music itself: "It was very moving, emotional music" (P 19), despite that being in conjunction with other referents. "I recall times of worshipping within the church congregation and responding emotionally (especially tearfully) to both the sentiment of the music and the presence of the Spirit" (P 88).

Spirituality was mentioned at least as frequently as emotion in every condition (see Figure 4.4 and Table G-2), and more frequently in the religious habitus overall ( $\chi^2(1, n=117) = 10.41, p < .025$  with Bonferroni adjustment), and by the Pentecostal group in the religious habitus in particular ( $\chi^2(1, n=51) = 9.44, p = .002$  with Holm's adjustment<sup>3</sup>). This demonstrates that not only is spirituality as prevalent as emotion in descriptions of non-religious experiences, but in religious experiences it is more prevalent. This is consistent with the limitation regarding priming effects. This is a significant finding, considering this was an open question merely asking about the experience in general. This supports the second hypothesis, stating that spirituality will be as important as emotion.

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<sup>3</sup> Holm's adjustment is a less conservative method than Bonferroni, for controlling for the familywise Type I error rate - the probability of rejecting at least one true null hypothesis when it is actually true (Roback & Askins, 2005). It therefore provides more statistical power.

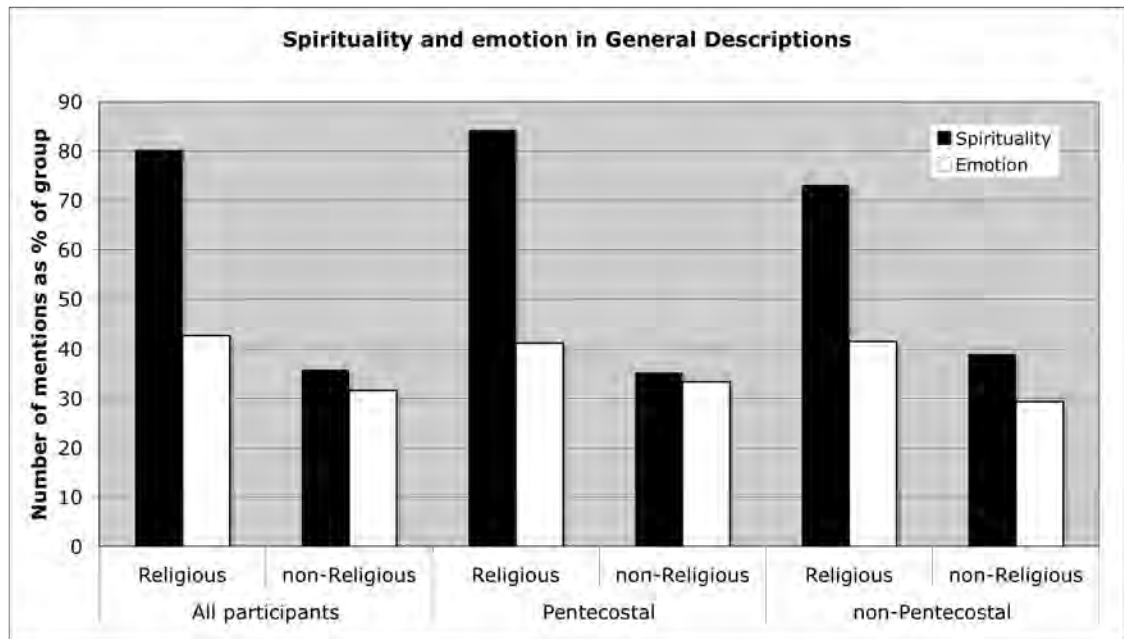


Figure 4.4 Comparison of mentions of spirituality and emotion between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus and religious and non-religious contexts, for the general descriptions question.

While there was no overall effect of habitus ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 0.16, p = .68$ ), there was an effect of context on spirituality, with significantly more comments made in the religious context than the non-religious one ( $\chi^2(1, n=117) = 19.88, p < .001$  with Bonferroni adjustment). By contrast, there was no effect of context on emotion.

This similarity between spirituality and emotion was confirmed and nuanced by individual comments: “It felt like holy ground in that there was a stillness and a quiet reverence” (P 23); or participant 56 who wrote about times when “[I] sing my own song to God ... The way I feel at these times is 'overwhelmed'”.<sup>4</sup> It was as if emotion and spirituality were both aspects of the same experience. As participant 79 put it: “This song, I think, focused my emotions and thoughts to look to God”. Here we see the response of emotion to the awareness of the spiritual; God. That is what this comment conveys: “The music and lyrics were an artistic and metaphoric expression of my emotional state ... The feelings were one of not feeling isolated in these emotions and

<sup>4</sup> Not all comments mentioning emotion also mentioned any spiritual categories. Particularly in the non-religious experience many mentions of emotion were simply that: “*I was struck by how powerful the emotional reaction was to the song - a reaction of freedom, and validation - like the song had summed up for me how I was feeling*” (P 85).

reassurance of a normal human experience which many people went through” (P 101). The emotions here are a response to the death of the participant’s father and leaving her homeland; grief. However, the sense of connection with other people and of meaning, which I suggest are instances of spirituality, were an ineffable sense about the situation, to which emotion was the response. It was ineffable because she stated that it was an experience “which I found difficult to express in words”.

## Discussion

If spirituality is an important part of significant experiences of music then it should be evident in the general descriptions people give of their experience. These results showed that this was indeed the case. All of the categories of spirituality, as well as other ideas related to spirituality, were mentioned. Furthermore, comments about spirituality were just as prevalent as emotion in the non-religious context, and much more so in most of the religious contexts. These findings demonstrate the importance of spirituality as a feature of the musical experience. They suggest that significant musical experiences should be considered not simply with respect to emotion but also to spirituality.

*Supernatural* seemed to absorb some of the comments from *transcendence*. Participants seemed to be more focused on the notion of fusion (relating to connection) than on the notion of withdrawal ecstasy (relating to transcendence). Kennedy & Kanthamani (1995) described transcendence in terms of two aspects; an “overwhelming feeling of peace and unity with the entire creation”, and a “profound inner sense of Divine presence” (p. 334). The second aspect was more prevalent than the first in comments from the participants. Furthermore, out of the list of the aspects of transcendence described by Gabrielsson (2010), only a couple were reported with any frequency in this study.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These aspects of transcendences included i) *Heavenly/Extraterrestrial feeling*; ii) *Trance, ecstasy*; iii) *Out-of-body-experience*; iv) *Experience of totality*; v) *Cosmic experience, merge with something greater*; and vi) *Experience of other dimensions, other worlds*.

Religious context did have some influence on spirituality, however, even if it did not define it. The categories of *supernatural* and *meaning* were clearly influenced, and yet they were the only two. *Transcendence*, *Existential*, connection with *other people* and the *environment*, and a sense of having benefited from the experience were all equally present in the non-religious and religious contexts. This is important, as it suggests that, while there may be aspects of spirituality which are perhaps more susceptible to religious signification and the religious context, there are other aspects to spirituality which are not. This represents only a partial confirmation of hypothesis 3b; that spirituality will be influenced by religious context. Conversely hypothesis 3a; that spirituality will be influenced by habitus, was not supported.

The influence of religious context also highlighted the distinction between spirituality and emotion. I have already stated that there were at least as many comments about spirituality as about emotion, thus supporting the second hypothesis. However, there were more comments about spirituality in the religious context, further supporting the idea that spirituality concerns an awareness; one which is given extra rational signification in the religious context, whereas emotion is the response to that awareness.

There is a potential difficulty in that experiences in the religious context were sometimes regarded, not just as musical experiences, but as worship experiences. In one sense worship is a wider concept, because it involves more than just the musical experience. Worship presumably<sup>6</sup> involves an orientation toward a deity which music may facilitate. However, this is no different to any musical experience that occurs within a context that is wider than the music itself. A concert hall environment, attending a performance of an idolised performer, the dynamic of relationships with others in the audience, all of these involve the music operating within a complex of factors. As Sloboda (2005a) put it, music is best understood in terms of “the whole process of being a biological human inhabiting a physical and social world” (p. 167), and worship is just one instance of that.

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<sup>6</sup> A definition for the term ‘worship’ was not sought or provided in the questionnaire, and so I go with Sloboda (2005b) and “assume for the moment a shared intuitive understanding of the concept” (p. 347).

Some of the other terms used in participants' descriptions tapped into ideas present in extant research. For example, 'energy' relates to the existential categories in Gabrielsson's study (2010); 'Aura' seems to relate to the existential category of *pure being*; and 'engrossed' relates to the cognition element of *changed experience of situation*, in addition to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) *flow*. Other terms, such as 'stirring' or 'deep', related to a cross section of elements. The word 'stirring', for example, could mean a stirring of the spirit or of the emotions, it could refer to the effect of the music or of the content of the experience's referents.

Lyrics were mentioned a number of times in the participants' comments and they were often related to the referential ideas discussed above. However, sometimes they seemed to relate to the experience as a whole, not just its concepts: "One particular time ... was when worship moved to the one word 'Holy' and was repeated again and again" (P 71). Other comments indicated that although lyrics might be significant, they cannot be disassociated from the music and thought of as merely rational ideas: "the lyrics were more than just words with a catchy tune" (P 98), and "the music and lyrics expressed more than mere words" (P 101). There was evidence of a connection between lyrics and music: "Generally the most stirring experiences are when the meaning of the words seems compatible with the melody and arrangement of the music" (P 72).

The above findings showed the support that was evident for the experience of spirituality in participants' general descriptions of their powerful experiences of music. It was significant that there was so much evidence of spirituality, because the question was not asking about spirituality *per se*, but the experience in general. In comparison to the question about spirituality, *supernatural* was the most frequently mentioned category in both, though less so in the non-religious context. *Meaning* was more prevalent here, particularly in the religious context, and emotion was mentioned much more frequently in this question. Context had only a limited effect in both questions, and habitus had virtually no effect at all. In both questions, emotion and spirituality were seen to be interconnected planes of experience, with some distinctions as well as similarities. Given this evidence of how spirituality was experienced by these participants, we can now examine the evidence for such spirituality in the referential and absolute aspects of the experience. This is done in the following chapter.

## Summary of findings

The findings from the General Descriptions data can be summarized as follows:

- i) There were many unsolicited mentions of spirituality, involving all categories. Within these was evidence for both referential and absolute meanings. Some aspects of spirituality appeared to have a more referential nature, such as *Supernatural* and *Meaning*. This may indicate that when experiences have both referential and absolute meaning they are more powerful.
- ii) Emotion and spirituality were seen to be interconnected planes of experience, with spirituality being at least as prevalent as emotion in all conditions. Yet they were distinct, with spirituality in the religious context being more prevalent.
- iii) Context had some effect on these experiences, with referential meaning being a larger factor in the religious context. This was particularly relevant to the categories *supernatural* and *meaning*. However, other categories were unaffected by context, thus indicating that spirituality is not a product of context.
  - Religious context typically involves a wider focus on worship, rather than just musical experience.
- iv) Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus had no significant bearing on experiences of spirituality.
- v) Lyrics were often important to the experience, and were typically regarded as an aspect that cannot be disassociated from the music.



## Chapter 5 Qualitative Analysis of Referential and Absolute meaning

Having discussed how participants conceptualised spirituality, and having looked for that in their general descriptions of their experiences, this chapter examines the presence of spirituality in responses regarding the referential and absolute dimensions of the experience.<sup>1</sup> These two constructs were described in Chapter 2 as the two main ways of conceptualising musical meaning. Therefore, evidence of spirituality in the referential question will suggest that spirituality is extrinsic to the music, while evidence of spirituality in the absolute question will suggest that spirituality is intrinsic to the music. This will allow direct examination of the first hypothesis.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.1 Referential spirituality

Meyer (1956) described referentialism as music's propensity to attract and maintain extra-musical associations to concepts, actions, emotional states, and character. Participants were therefore asked about their significant experiences of music (already described in section 4.2): "What were those memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. that were significant for you?" (Question 12 and 25 – Appendix B.) These responses were examined for evidence of the various categories of spirituality, which would support the idea that spirituality is a referential experience. That is the focus of this section. Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 detail the number of participants who mentioned each of the relevant categories.

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<sup>1</sup> Questions 12 & 25, and 20 & 33 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The first hypothesis being "Spirituality will be better accounted for as an absolute experience – It will be accounted for as referential to some degree, but it will be better accounted for as an experience that one senses in the music itself, not rationally but intuitively. This will arise not in the sense of an intellectual appreciation of form (*formalism*), but in the sense of an expression that the music affords (*absolute expressionism*)".

Table 5.1 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the *Referential* question

	Pentecostals (n=51)		Non-Pentecostals (n=41)		All participants	
	Religious count / %	Non- Religious count / %	Religious count / %	Non- Religious count / %	Religious (n=111) count / %	Non- religious (n=113) count / %
<i>Transcendence</i>	2 / 3.92	2 / 3.92	4 / 9.76	0 / 0	7 / 6.31	2 / 1.80
<i>Supernatural</i>	33 / 64.71	3 / 5.88	21 / 51.22	0 / 0	71 / 63.96	4 / 3.60
<i>Existential</i>	15 / 29.41	6 / 11.76	6 / 14.63	1 / 2.43	29 / 26.13	11 / 9.91
<i>Other people</i>	8 / 15.69	2 / 3.92	2 / 4.88	2 / 4.88	14 / 12.61	9 / 8.11
<i>Environment</i>	1 / 1.96	0 / 0	1 / 2.44	3 / 7.32	3 / 2.70	5 / 4.50
<i>Improved, aided or transformed</i>	4 / 7.84	2 / 3.92	4 / 9.76	0 / 0	10 / 9.01	2 / 1.80
<i>Meaning</i>	3 / 5.88	2 / 3.92	2 / 4.88	0 / 0	11 / 9.91	2 / 1.80
<i>Emotion</i>	16 / 31.37	18 / 35.29	12 / 29.27	13 / 31.71	39 / 35.14	43 / 38.79
<i>Any spiritual comment</i>	43 / 84.31	12 / 23.53	28 / 68.29	6 / 14.63	91 / 81.98	29 / 26.13

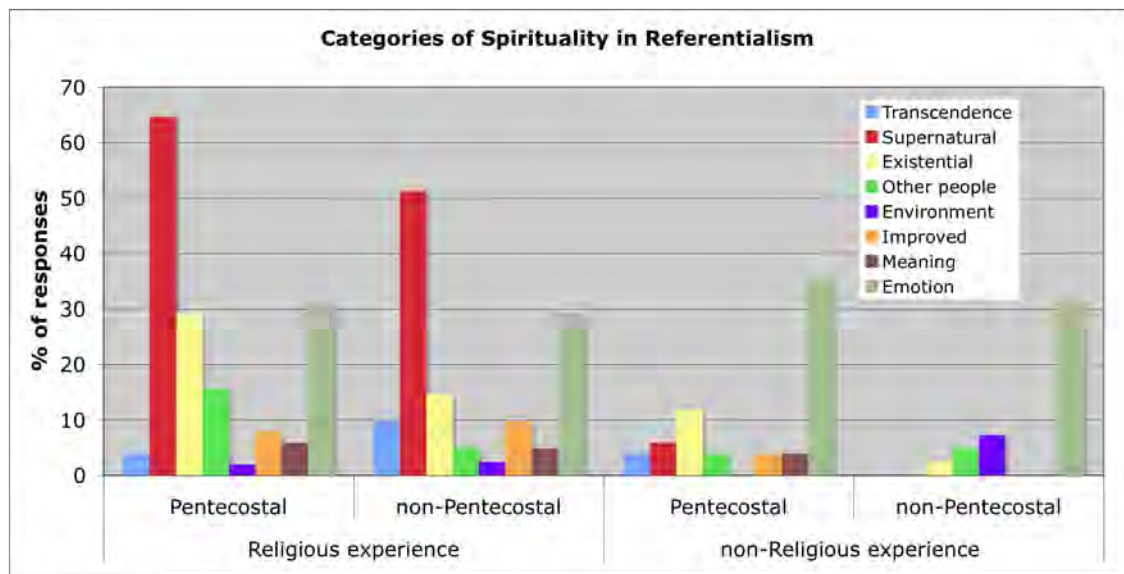


Figure 5.1 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the referential question for the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

Just 6% of all participants made a comment relating to this category in the religious experience and 2% in the non-religious experience. For example: “I think of the music

as being very positive and uplifting (for the most part) and so I appreciated being teleported from the norm of life for a while” (P 79). This category was reported much less frequently than for the spirituality question (section 4.1).

The number of references in the religious context seemed to be higher than in the non-religious context for non-Pentecostals, but cell sizes were too small to test for significance levels. There did not seem to be a difference for habitus.

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

Once again this category was the most highly represented overall. A large proportion of comments about the religious experience (64%) referred to the supernatural. A typical example is: “Real sense of connectedness to God and the sentiments of the words” (P 109). By contrast, very few responses were made in the non-religious context (4%). The comments that were made referred to an indirect experience of God, such as being reminded of His character or presence: “it usually reminded me of God's faithfulness, His promises, or His character towards me” (P 78).

There appeared to be many more comments in the religious context. Due to some small cell sizes this could not be tested significantly, yet logic would indicate that this was the case. If so, it would indicate that this category has a strong referential component, which is evident mainly in the religious context. In the non-religious context the music does not refer to the supernatural. There did not appear to be any effect of habitus.

References to the supernatural did not always equate with a sense of spirituality. Participant 32 focussed on the supernatural in her referential comment: “Repentance or need for forgiveness, acknowledgement of God's perfection contrasted with our imperfection”, and yet her rating of spirituality was only 3 out of 10. Admittedly, this was anomalous, in that the majority of comments referring to the supernatural also accompanied strong ratings of spirituality. Nevertheless, it demonstrated that references to spiritual categories do not always mean an experience of spirituality.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being*

There were quite a few references to an existential connection, especially in the religious context (26% religious and 10% non-religious). For example: “Who I am in relation to Almighty God” (P 37). Comments sometimes reflected the state of one's self, such as ‘broken’ or ‘well-being’. Another comment used the term ‘existential’: “The connection I felt to the music is often linked to the expression of unarticulated experience - the sense of giving words to that which has not been spoken. For me this has often been existential” (P 87).

There appeared to be a difference between contexts, but chi squared tests indicated that this was not significant, even when habitus was also taken into account ( $\chi^2(1, n=92) = 5.33, p=.42$  after Bonferroni correction). There did not appear to be any effect of habitus.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

A small number of comments referred to a connection with other people (13% and 8%). Sometimes this related to a sense of unity at the time, and sometimes it related to a felt connection with others who were conspicuously absent: “I believe it's to do with the fact that I'm alone here now - family and friends (so many of them) are abroad or gone before us. So I feel ‘closer’ to them, and yet am conscious of their absence” (P 74). Other responses intimated an empathic relationship with the performers. “The hopelessness of the people, and the sadness of the wasted life of the actress and her attempt to explain herself to them. I'm not sure I identified with these feelings, but rather empathised with them” (P 97).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between contexts even though there seemed to be more comments by the Pentecostal group for the religious experience (8 versus 2). There did not appear to be any effect of habitus.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

Overall, this category received the least amount of support (3% and 5%). One example was “Felt like I was in the music and it was in me” (P 16). This category was not limited to the music; sometimes it related to the whole experience: “It was the rhythm and seeing a sexy man on stage and the aliveness, energy of the music and the vibe from the crowd - everyone got into it” (P 31). Other times it referred to the performer. One comment in particular indicated that the significance of the experience was “not really conveyed through the music, but due to the performers themselves” (P 29). Other comments related to other aspects of the environment, such as the “beauty of the scenery” - physical environment (P 36) and “memories of a cultural era” - social environment (P 37).

Some comments referred to a connection between two aspects of the music, such as the fit of the words with the music, or performers and sound, but these were not considered to be aspects of spirituality. Other comments mentioned the music in terms of the significance of the experience lying beyond the music: “The idea of Taize is to lose the music and enter prayer beyond the words” (P 40). Yet this was not considered to be a connection with the musical environment, so much as a comment on the inability of music to adequately explain the experience – something that will be taken up in the next chapter. The lack of support for this category probably has more to do with it not being a referential aspect to the experience.

Cell sizes were too small to determine whether there was any significant effect of context or habitus on this category.

**Improved / Aided / Transformed** – *a sense of having been personally improved, aided or transformed by the experience*

Just 10 people mentioned this category in the religious experience, and two in the non-religious experience. Ideas included “*emotional healing*” (P 17), being “*provided for, looked after, loved and cared for*” (P 92), and “*personal experiences where I believe God has intervened in my situation*” (P 72). Words such as ‘uplifting’ and ‘empowerment’ were also used. The line between this category and emotion was not always clear. For example ‘relief’ was counted only as an emotion despite it having something of an element of being aided.

Cell sizes were too small to determine whether there was any significant effect of context or habitus on this category. Nevertheless, religious reports again tended to focus on the divine, such as on God’s assistance: “God used the words of that chorus to speak to me and motivate me” (P 97). There did not appear to be a difference between habitūs.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Responses in this category were very similar to the previous category. Comments were limited to those in which the meaning was of a spiritual nature rather than an emotional nature. For example, “the high emotion and significance, a feeling of sorrow and triumph” (P 15) was deemed an emotional meaning and so was discounted as an element of spirituality. Spiritual meaning included comments such as “The incomparable effectiveness of music in conveying the message of the gospel” (P 21). Participants wrote about being ‘challenged’ or ‘reminded’ or ‘realising’ something afresh when indicating that the music referred to a sense of meaning.

As was the case for the previous category, there appeared to be more comments for this category in the religious context than in the non-religious one (10% as opposed to 2%), yet chi squared tests were unable to be used due to small cell sizes. There did not appear to be any effect of habitus. Taken together with the previous category (which is similar), these findings indicated that a sense of meaning or benefit is not a major part of what the music refers to.

## **Other**

Referential comments contained a number of other ideas pertinent to spirituality. Several comments related to spirituality in some general sense, not identified in the other categories. These included ‘ecstasy’, ‘worship’, and “longing for a better world” (Participant 34), as well as ‘spiritual’ and ‘connection’. Effects of the experience included somatic references such as to ‘dancing’, ‘passion’ and ‘freedom’. The experience was also described using terms such as ‘gentle’, ‘space’, ‘beautiful’ and an overall sense of the aspects coming together in some holistic way.

## ***Emotion and spirituality***

Emotion was mentioned in both religious and non-religious contexts (35% and 39% respectively). For example: “The music moved from gentle and melancholy to full, free, and triumphant, and my internal feelings moved on the same journey” (P 72). A broad range of emotions was mentioned, from simple emotions such as ‘sadness’ and ‘anger’, to more complex emotions such as ‘loneliness’, ‘shock’, ‘longing’ and ‘awe’.

A number of comments identified similarities between spirituality and emotion: “Whilst there were no words, it was really tapping into my emotional (soul) and Spirit in a way that I cannot explain” (P 58). It was in this sense that the term “spiritual emotion” (P 4) was noted. Other comments referred to emotion as the result of the spiritual encounter: “However the depth of emotion experienced was the result of a tangible connection with an experience of relationship, not merely the enjoyment of an emotional piece of music” (P 73), or as a response to it: “awed by reality of what lyrics were about. Reassured of God’s reality, love. Wonder of God, His greatness. Peace, joy, loved” (P 36). Here, spirituality was the awareness of something to which emotion was the reaction.

A comparison of the number of mentions of spirituality or emotion, graphed in Figure 5.2 (and Table G-3), shows that spirituality was mentioned at least as frequently as emotion. There appeared to be less mentions of spirituality for each of the non-religious groups, particularly for non-Pentecostals, but these differences were not significant once

Bonferroni adjustments were made.<sup>3</sup> However, in the religious context there were significantly more mentions of spirituality than emotion ( $\chi^2(1, N = 117) = 69.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Habitus had no impact on this finding.

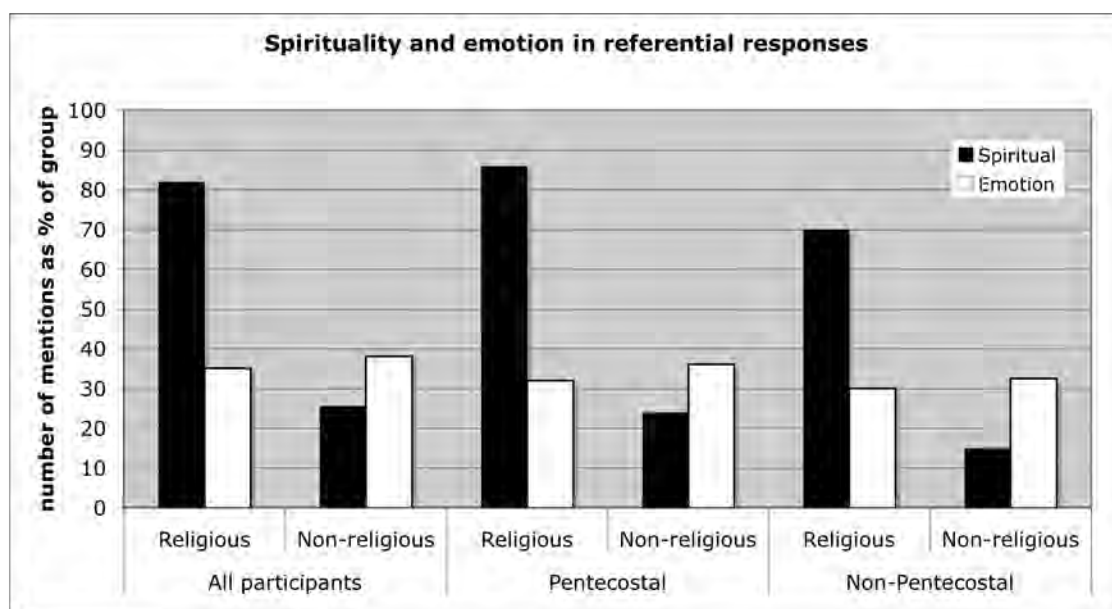


Figure 5.2 Comparison of mentions of spirituality and emotion between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus and religious and non-religious contexts, for the referential question

## Discussion

These results show that spirituality is, in some respects, a referential experience. Spirituality was mentioned just as frequently as emotion in the non-religious context, and more frequently in the religious context. Meyer (1956) confirmed that music could refer to emotions. There was support for all of the categories of spirituality, and especially for *supernatural* and to a lesser extent *existential*.

<sup>3</sup> As I have mentioned before, the lack of difference for the habitus groups may be due to a lack of statistical power (the probability that the test will reject the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is actually false) rather than the absence of a difference.



The remaining categories were much less frequently mentioned, with *transcendence*, *supernatural*, *improved* and *meaning* receiving no comments from the non-Pentecostal habitus in the non-religious context. Furthermore, the frequency of comments relating to most of the other categories (apart from *supernatural* and *existential*) was generally lower in this question than it was in the general descriptions question (section 4.2). Taken together, this suggests that spirituality is referential in only certain respects. Some categories, like *supernatural* and *existential*, are more related to referential meaning than others, like *environment* and *improved*. In other words, some categories of spirituality are of a different kind to music, wherein the music simply designates them. However, most of the categories of spirituality are not implicated in this way; it explains only part of the experience of spirituality.

Transcendence is an interesting case in point. It was mentioned less frequently here than might have been expected, considering that Gabrielsson (2010) found this to be a major factor in one of his seven characteristics of musical experience. This is possibly because it was taken up in the *supernatural* category, although that only accounts for the religious experience. A better explanation is that while transcendence may be an important part of the experience of spirituality, it is not part of the referential experience of music. The same is probably the case for *other people*, *environment*, *improved* and *meaning*.

Spirituality was seen to be similar to emotion in the number of participants who mentioned each. However, the differences in the non-religious context, and the greater number of mentions in the religious context for all groups, suggests some dis-similarity. Some comments also identified emotion as a response to the spiritual encounter. The above comments about referential meaning in the religious experience may indicate where that distinction lies. All of this confirms the second hypothesis, that spirituality will be as important as emotion in these experiences.

Context had an effect on those categories that were more referential in character. There were many more comments about *supernatural* in the religious context, and for *existential* there appeared to be more, but the difference was only just outside of the

level of significance. The number of spiritual comments in general was also greater in the religious context. These differences may well be due to the religious nature of these participants. Yet it demonstrates that, at least for religious people, the referential dimension to spirituality is affected by context. If spirituality is a referential phenomenon then different contexts will afford different associations and thus different degrees of spirituality.

The lack of any effect of context on the remaining majority of categories suggests, however, that spirituality is not a product of context. Spirituality is not a product of habitus either, because there was no effect of habitus for any of the categories here. Even for *Emotion* there was no significant difference between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus.

In conclusion, I note that just because categories such as *supernatural* have a strongly referential aspect to them does not mean they cannot also have an absolute aspect. A connection to the supernatural may involve associations afforded by the music (referential), but that is not necessarily the same thing as an experience of the supernatural. An awareness of the supernatural that comes from the music itself (absolute) may also be involved.

### **Summary of findings**

The findings from the referential question can be summarized as follows:

- i) Spirituality is in some respects a referential experience. All the categories of spirituality were evident, and referential spirituality was reported at least as frequently as referential emotion. A connection with the supernatural and with the existential self was central to this referential meaning.
  - o However most categories of spirituality were infrequently mentioned with regard to referential meaning, indicating that spirituality is only referential in some respects.

- ii) Spirituality was seen to operate in a similar, yet distinct way to emotion. There was evidence of emotion operating as a response to the spiritual encounter.
- iii) Context only affected *supernatural*, which demonstrated a strong referential character. This shows that spirituality is not a product of context. It also suggests there may be a link between referential meaning and religion.
- iv) There was no effect of Pentecostal v non-Pentecostal habitus.

## 5.2 Absolute spirituality

Music can also have *absolute* meaning. Here, meaning lies only within the music itself, in the experience of the relationships set out within the work of art. This was examined by asking participants what it was about the music itself (such as the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc.) that they found significant.<sup>1</sup> These responses were examined for evidence of categories of spirituality. Strong evidence of spirituality here would suggest that it is internal to the music.

Chapter 2 identified the difficulty in determining exactly what absolute meaning means. Two issues were identified in this section that have relevance here; lyrics and referential associations. Firstly, lyrics are not technically part of ‘true’ absolute meaning because they bring in extra-musical associations. In the Romantic period, when absolute music was at its zenith, instrumental music enjoyed a special status, because it highlighted the intrinsic qualities contained within music’s tonally moving forms and did not require external referents to convey meaning. Yet, in this question, lyrics were often reported. These experiences have not been discounted because often there was an apparent inter-relationship between the importance of the music and the importance of the lyrical content. Only comments that just mentioned lyrics were discounted. In some comments it was not possible to distinguish the role of lyrics and music. These comments were left out.

The second issue was the appearance of what seemed to be referential associations in these responses about absolute meaning. Two points can be made here. Firstly, some of these comments were indeed referential and, hence, were not included in this analysis. Meyer (1956) stated that music could have both extra-musical and intra-musical meaning at the same time. Because participants were not experts in this distinction, but were only informed of it very briefly, some degree of ‘bleed’ between the two ideas is understandable. Nevertheless, such comments were not included in the analysis below.

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<sup>1</sup> Questions 20 and 33 on the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Secondly, some of the comments that have been included below appear to be referential, yet I contend that they are not. This is because they relate not to *associations* made by the music, but to a *direct experience* of the music. If they related to *associations* made with extra-musical ideas then they would be referential. But the comments I have included are *direct experiences* of the music itself; experiences that emanate from the music, or that are afforded by the musical features.

The results of the number of comments relating to each of the categories of spirituality in the absolute question (Question 20 and 33 – Appendix B) are detailed in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3.

Table 5.2 Frequency of responses to each of the categories in the content analysis for *Absolute* question

	Pentecostals		Non-Pentecostals		All participants	
	Religious (n=45) count / %	Non- Religious (n=47) count / %	Religious (n=36) count / %	Non- Religious (n=38) count / %	Religious (n=105) count / %	Non- religious (n=109) count / %
<i>Transcendence</i>	1 / 2.22	1 / 2.13	4 / 11.11	1 / 2.63	6 / 5.71	2 / 1.83
<i>Supernatural</i>	6 / 13.33	2 / 4.26	5 / 13.88	2 / 5.26	18 / 17.14	5 / 4.59
<i>Existential</i>	3 / 6.67	1 / 2.13	1 / 2.78	1 / 2.63	8 / 7.62	1 / 0.92
<i>Other people</i>	1 / 2.22	1 / 2.13	3 / 8.33	0 / 0	6 / 5.71	2 / 1.83
<i>Environment</i>	3 / 6.67	2 / 4.26	4 / 11.11	1 / 2.63	8 / 7.62	5 / 4.59
<i>Improved, aided or transformed</i>	0 / 0	2 / 4.26	0 / 0	1 / 2.63	0 / 0	4 / 3.67
<i>Meaning</i>	5 / 11.11	2 / 4.26	1 / 2.78	1 / 2.63	7 / 6.67	4 / 3.67
<i>Emotion</i>	12 / 26.67	9 / 19.15	6 / 16.67	7 / 18.42	26 / 24.76	25 / 22.94
<i>Any spiritual comment</i>	15 / 33.33	10 / 21.28	13 / 36.11	6 / 15.79	38 / 36.19	20 / 18.35
<i>Musical components</i>	27 / 60.00	35 / 74.47	20 / 55.56	27 / 71.05	59 / 56.19	75 / 68.81

Note: n varies because of missing data.

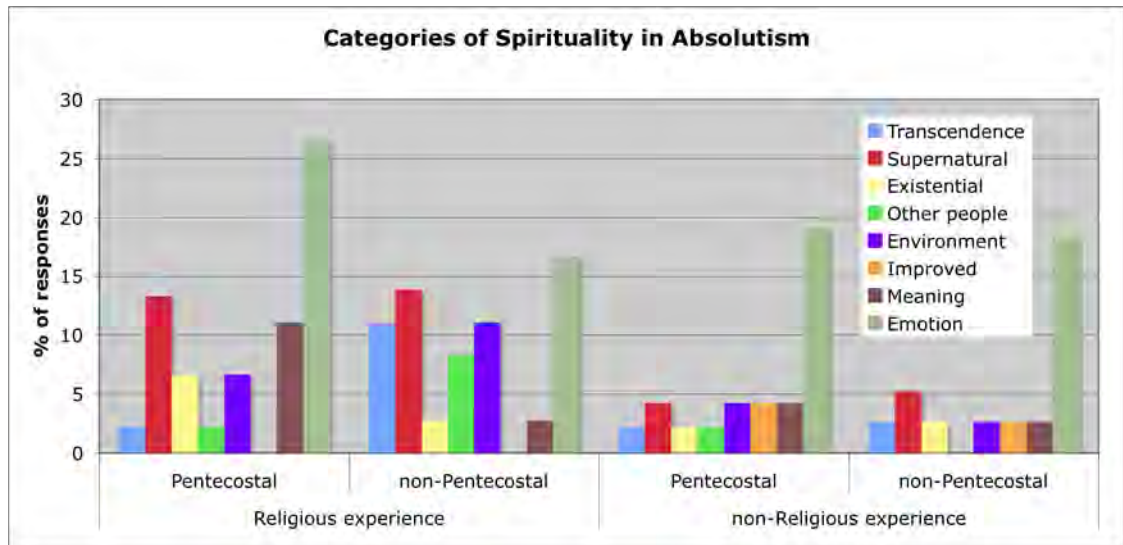


Figure 5.3 Frequency of responses to each of the categories in the content analysis for the absolute question for the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

Only a small number of comments referred to transcendence (6% religious and 2% non-religious). For example, “There is a rare beauty that we understand and that resonates with us and calls us beyond ourselves” (P 104). The small number of comments here may be due to a perception that this question, asking about the ‘music itself’,<sup>2</sup> was seeking information about aspects of the music that bring the experience, rather than the nature of the experience those aspects bring about. Therefore, they focused on the components of the music rather than the experience arising from those components.

This seemed to be the case for Participant 98, who answered this question solely in terms of the musical components: “The excellence of the performance. The style of the music - jazz is very soothing and yet vibey all at the same time. The harmony of the instruments.” Yet comments in her general description imply something approaching spirituality: “I have recently started going to jazz performances and find the music very stirring. There is something about the honesty of it that really intrigues me.” And her referential comments suggested a definite element of transcendence: “the music just transports you to a different era and you are as it were transported to another time and

<sup>2</sup> The question read “please describe what it was about the music [itself] that you found significant” (See Appendix A)

place.” This suggests that the ‘music itself’ may well be transcendent, even though that is not what participants thought to write. It may also be because this question was virtually last on the questionnaire.

There did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus here.<sup>3</sup>

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

Although this received more comments than most other categories for this question, the numbers were not high (17% religious and 5% non-religious). This was a similar number to the referential question for the non-religious context (4%), but much less for the religious context (64% in the referential question). One example was “It's an intense experience where I am pouring out the emotion and worship of God in me through my voice ... through the harmony” (P 31). Although more comments were made in the religious experience, chi squared tests indicated that that difference was not significant. There did not appear to be any effect of habitus either.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being*

The small number of comments here (8% religious and 1% non-religious) was considerably fewer than for the referential question (26% and 10% respectively). One example is: “Music is a language and speaks to our sub-conscious” (P 72). Some comments referred to the music speaking to the heart, others to the nature of life. There did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

A small number of participants (6% religious and 2% non-religious) made comments that reflected a sense of unity with others brought by the music: “The music brings the togetherness of the congregation” (P 64). There did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus.

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<sup>3</sup> Cell sizes were <5 and so chi squared tests were unable to be used.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

Again a small number of comments referred to this category (8% and 5%). For example, “The music has a haunting quality that the melody flows into your soul” (P 108). One might have expected there to be more comments pertaining to this deep connection with the music environment, considering this question was about the music itself. Instead the frequency was similar to other categories. There were more comments here than in the referential question, but only for the religious context (8% religious and 5% non-religious as opposed to 3% religious and 5% non-religious). The limited evidence of this category in both this question and the referential question indicates either that this is not a major aspect to the experience of spirituality, or that it was simply not reported. The reason for this could be that people simply did not think to express a feeling of connection with the music when it was the music they were discussing.

In the religious context this connection was sometimes expressed in conjunction with other categories of spirituality. For example “The music led us to worship, the atmosphere of the crowd and glimpse of heaven also contributed” (P 55). Other than this, there did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus.

### **Improved / Aided / Transformed**

A very small number of comments related to this element (4% non-religious and 0% religious). For example: “the complexity and beauty of the music gave me hope” (P 53), or “The music was there to help them and lift them to greater effort” (P 96). There did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

The number of comments relating to this category (7% and 4%) was similar to the Referential question. Sometimes comments related to the individual’s philosophy of music in general: “I believe that music is a language, and it speaks directly to our sub-conscious/non-literal aspects” (P 72). Others described how the music was meaningful:



“The music triggered the experience, helped communicate an understanding” (P 33). Again there did not appear to be any effect of context or habitus.

### **Other**

A number of comments related to qualities of the music that are conducive to the spiritual experience. These included ‘simplicity’, ‘complexity’, ‘power’, ‘energy’, ‘beauty’, ‘sensitivity’, ‘freedom’, ‘familiarity’, ‘creativity’ and ‘ease of listening’. There was reference to a unity of the music’s parts and the quality of the music. Other comments referred to the involvement of one’s body, such as the music “resonating in all the different areas of your body” (P 87). There were also a number of comments referring to spirituality in a general sense. These included ‘haunting’, ‘worship’, ‘universal belonging’, ‘mystical’, ‘holy’ and of course ‘spirituality’. Related to this were comments referring to the ‘rightness’ of the various aspects. One such comment was that “[the music] hit the spot” (P 56).

### **Musical components**

In addition to the categories of spirituality discussed above, there are some musical components unique to this question. Many of the responses (59 religious and 75 non-religious) to this question mentioned one or more of the musical components (melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) as being important for the experience. Gabrielsson (1989) observed surprisingly few references to the musical structure, and music terms in descriptions, even amongst musicians, but because this question specifically targeted these musical components, more comments were evident.<sup>4</sup>

These musical components were usually identified as being important in an unspecified way. However, amongst them were indications that it was those components that were responsible for the spirituality of the experience. For example, “simple repeated melodies, harmonies and phrases . . . went right to the heart of worship” (P 5), or

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<sup>4</sup> The question read: “To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the music itself? (For example was it due to the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?)” (See Appendix A.) In addition, a number of comments mentioned other musical components, including ‘simplicity’, ‘tempo’, ‘layering’, ‘volume’ and ‘dynamics’, ‘flowing’, ‘being catchy’, ‘sensitivity’, ‘fullness of sound’, ‘modulations’, ‘repetition’, ‘silence’, ‘musical style’, ‘arrangement’, ‘tone’ and ‘improvisation’.

“Rhythm is obviously an important factor in specific types of music events - such as rave/trance parties. This creates an altered state of consciousness” (P 87).

### *Emotion and spirituality*

Approximately one quarter of all participants mentioned emotion (25% religious and 23% non-religious). This was higher than any single category of spirituality but lower than the number of responses about emotion in the referential question (35% religious and 39% non-religious). Comments here tended to refer to emotions in general, or the ‘feel’ of the music, rather than the specific emotions conveyed. For example: “The volume of the music was particularly powerful in stirring my emotions” (P 88), or “Rhythm, volume, instruments/voices influence how you feel” (P 72).

Comments described a link between emotion and the components of music: “the rhythm, volume, use of combinations of instruments/voices etc can all influence how you feel” (P 72). However, there were indications that while such characteristics could be emotive and important for the experience, something more was needed for the experience to approach spirituality: “The emotion expressed in the music due to melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments etc. certainly aids the person to connect with inner emotion - the same lyrics sung in monotone or out of tune with no accompaniment would have difficulty producing the same emotional result. However the depth of emotion experienced was the result of a tangible connection with an experience of relationship, not merely the enjoyment of an emotional piece of music” (P 73).

As was the case in the referential results, spirituality was mentioned at least as frequently as emotion in these comments (see Figure 5.4 and Table G-4). There was no significant difference between them in the non-religious context ( $\chi^2(1, N = 117) = 1$ ,  $p=0.317$  for the overall result), and in the religious context there were significantly more mentions of spirituality than emotion ( $\chi^2(1, N=117)=5.54$ ,  $p=.019$ ). For the Pentecostal group this difference was not significant, but it was still in the same direction, and the lack of significance may be a result of lack of statistical power. This showed that spirituality was just as significant in absolute experiences as emotion, and more prevalent in at least some religious experiences.

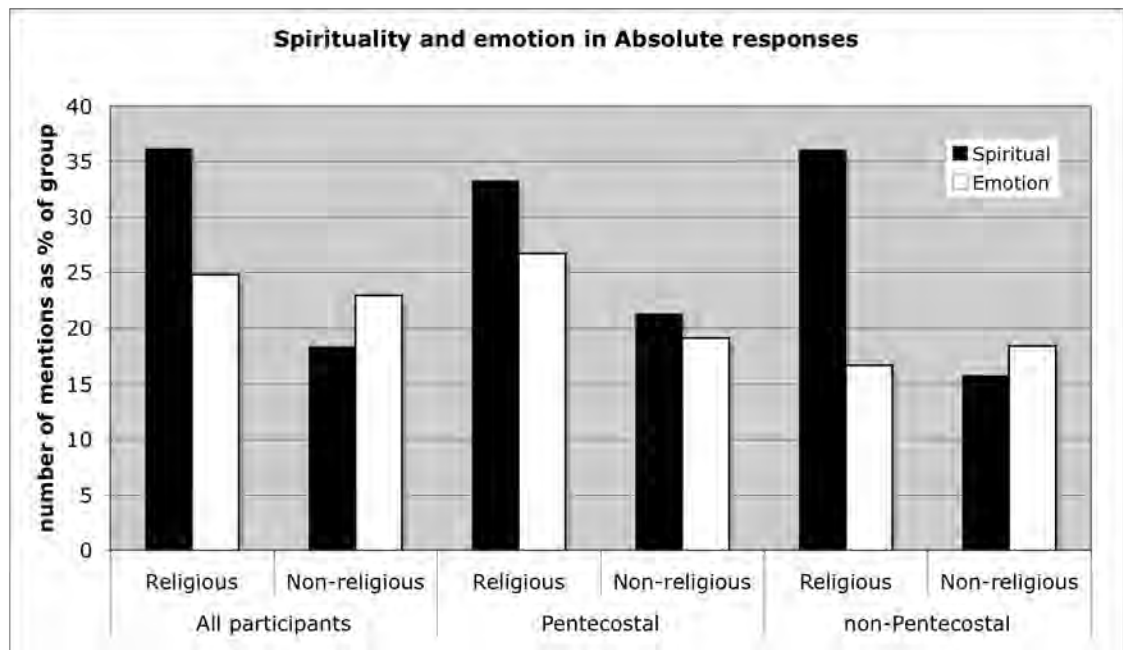


Figure 5.4 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus and religious and non-religious contexts for the Absolute question

### *Lyrics*

A large number of participants (35% religious and 22% non-religious) mentioned lyrics in these descriptions of the ‘music itself’. There was a perception that music could and should include ideas relating to lyrics. For some the music was incidental: “It wasn't so much the the music itself but the words that were sung” (P 27). However, for the majority, lyrics were mentioned together with other absolutist features: “The pace and melody, words and harmonies” (P 15).

This does not mean that the lyrics were simply an important addition. A number of comments indicated that there was a vital interaction between the two: “I find it difficult to separate the music from the lyrics ... and to me that's its significance” (P 74), or “if there is text, the music supports the text and echoes its meaning” (P 6). This is why comments including lyrics were not discounted. The significance of the experience was due to both working together.

It might be argued that the involvement of lyrics is a product of limited musical knowledge. Those who are not well educated in music may not have the musical language with which to describe the experience, and so they import external references to help. However, this was not found to be the case. As Table 5.3 shows, it was the more experienced musicians who mentioned lyrics in their discussion about the ‘music itself’. The comment: “It wasn’t so much the the music itself but the words that were sung”, was made by participant 27, who was an experienced musician, and “the pace and melody, words and harmonies”, identifying lyrics as being on par with musical features, came from participant 15, who was a professional musician. This suggested that participants included lyrics in discussing the ‘music itself’ not because they lacked the technical language with which to describe the experience, but because they felt that this technical language alone was inadequate for describing such a significant experience. The more experienced participants often felt this lacuna more acutely.

Table 5.3 Number of comments mentioning lyrics according to musical background

<i><b>Musical background</b></i>	<i><b>Religious</b></i>	<i><b>Non-religious</b></i>
None	1	1
Novice	5	4
Some training	4	4
Experienced	15	8
Professional	8	4

### ***Formalism vs Absolute Expressionism***

In discussing absolute meaning, Meyer (1956) contrasted formalism and absolute expressionism. The former has an intellectual focus, whereas the latter concerns the expression that arises. Referring back to my point at the beginning of this section about comments that appear to be referential but are not, it could be said that absolute expressionism contains the capacity for direct experience, while formalism does not. Formalism is restricted to an intellectual appreciation of the technical aspects of the music itself, whereas absolute expressionism allows not only emotional experience but

the feeling of experiencing things outside of the music, such as profound spiritual connections. Therefore, this section further divides spiritual absolute comments into formalism and absolute expressionism (see Figure 2.1).

The distinction between *formalism* and *absolute expressionism* was constructed using the following categorisation from the quantitative data (discussed in depth in the next chapter). Those experiences that received high ratings ( $\geq 8$ ) for *Absolute* but low ratings ( $\leq 5$ ) for *Emotion* and *Referential* were regarded as formalist. Such an experience would involve minimal emotion and would not be the result of extra-musical referents, yet it would be largely a result of the music itself. By contrast, those experiences that received high ratings ( $\geq 8$ ) for *Emotion* and *Absolute* but low ratings ( $\leq 5$ ) for *Referential* were classified as absolute expressionist (see Table 5.4). Such an experience would be much more emotional and would involve extra-musical referents, yet would not be largely a result of the music itself. This categorisation resulted in 13 cases of formalism and 10 cases of absolute expressionism across both religious and non-religious experiences.

Table 5.4 Classifications for the categorisation of formalism and absolute expressionist musical meanings

	<b>Formalism</b>	<b>Absolute expressionism</b>
<b>Emotion</b>	Low	High
<b>Absolutism</b>	High	High
<b>Referentialism</b>	Low	Low

### **Formalism**

Of the 13 cases of formalism (out of 117), 11 commented on musical elements such as melody, rhythm, etc. Only one comment included any of the spiritual categories; Participant 14 mentioned being uplifted by the music. Ratings of spirituality (discussed in Chapter 6<sup>5</sup>) were typically low for these responses. Two experiences (both from the same participant) rated spirituality 9 out of 10, two more rated it 7 but the remainder rated 5 or lower. This suggests a disjunction between spirituality and formalism.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 6 contains the results for the quantitative data, including ratings of spirituality.

Although these formalist experiences were strong (as indicated by all scores on the ‘strength of experience’ element being above 5, with several scoring 8 or 9), they were generally not regarded as being strongly spiritual.

Participant 10 was an anomalous case. He demonstrated a classic formalist focus, yet he considered that to be spiritual. Having only some musical training, this 53-year-old male focussed on classical music such as “Bach or Mozart, often Gibbons and the early Latin masses”. Ratings for the absolute question were high for both experiences (10/10). Ratings for the referential question were very low (0/10 and 2/10) and emotion was rated 5/10 for both experiences. Spirituality was rated very high (9/10 for both) and he proffered the comment “all music is spiritual”. This was, therefore, an example of formalism being related to spirituality. However it was a conception of spirituality that was quite different from that used in this thesis, for he made no reference to any of the categories of spirituality in any of his responses, apart from suggesting that spirituality is about transcending beyond the physical. This sounded very much like the Nineteenth Century Romantic idea of spirituality. In 117 responses to this study, this was the only one of this nature.

### **Absolute expressionism**

Ten cases clearly fit the quantitative criteria used here for absolute expressionism, yet only five mentioned one or more elements of spirituality. Two comments mentioned the supernatural, one mentioned existentialism and four mentioned the musical environment. Apart from this, there were no other references to spiritual categories. There was some sense that, although the music itself was important, there was something more involved. “At first I thought that it was related to the quality of the music but after giving it some thought I think it is more to do with the context and heart behind it” (P 81). This was also described as being difficult to put into words (P 3). However, ratings of spirituality were mostly very high for these 10 responses. The responses from the religious context all rated spirituality 10/10, and from the non-religious context three comments rated it 5/10 or lower and the remainder were 8/10 or higher. This suggests there is some potential for a link between absolute expressionist experiences and spirituality.

## Discussion

These results showed that spirituality was, to some extent, a type of absolute meaning. Every category of spirituality received some comments in both contexts, except for *improved* in the non-religious context. A number of comments made reference to spirituality arising from the musical components. Furthermore, the number of participants mentioning spirituality was never significantly less than the number mentioning emotion.

However, evidence for spirituality as a form of absolute meaning was limited. The number of comments for the various elements was low; usually lower than it was for the referential question. In addition, categories such as *transcendence* and *environment*, which one might have expected to be mentioned frequently with respect to the musical features, were mentioned by less than 10% of participants.

The reason for this limited evidence seems to have more to do with the participants' focus in answering this question than with spirituality not being absolute. It appears that participants were focused on components of the music itself rather than the experience arising from those components, which is, on face value, what the question was asking. That is why emotion also received relatively few mentions. The number of comments about spirituality was not significantly different from the number about emotion for the non-religious experiences, and it was greater than for emotion in the religious experiences – the same trend as in the referential question. One would expect that if spirituality is simply not a type of absolute meaning then it would be mentioned less frequently than emotion, for it is well attested that emotion has much to do with absolute meaning (see Meyer's work). However, that was not the case.

The fact that this question was near the end of the questionnaire may have had something to do with this. Participants may have felt that they had already commented on the nature of the experience in previous questions and so did not do so again. In addition, spirituality may have been mentioned infrequently because the components of music are unable to adequately account for the significance of the experience. This was evident in the lack of support for spirituality as a type of formalist meaning. (four

participants rated spirituality strongly, but none of these mentioned any of the spiritual categories.) Formalism takes absolute meaning to its limits, denying it any significance apart from the musical forms themselves. This was seen to be incompatible with spirituality, as I have circumscribed it. If spirituality is understood as a sense of transcendent connection with the sacred, then it makes sense that this cannot be accounted for purely in terms of the musical forms.

Absolute expressionism, on the other hand, demonstrated some evidence of compatibility with spirituality. Evidence was limited, partly due to the small number of cases that fit this designation (10 out of 117 participants), but that may be because the questionnaire was not designed to specifically test this distinction. Nevertheless, evidence suggested that spirituality was best thought of as an expression of the music rather than something limited to the musical components. Spirituality was experienced through these musical components, and emanated from them, but was not fully contained or explained by them.

This may be why lyrics were often mentioned as part of the music that gave rise to the spiritual experienced. Lyrics are technically outside of the music itself, yet they seemed to play a complementary, almost symbiotic role with the music in facilitating a sense of spirituality. Lyrics seemed to define the experience of spirituality. Just as Cook (1998a) stated that music presents un-nuanced emotions, so it presents an un-nuanced sense of spirituality, which lyrics can help define. Referring back to the distinction in Chapter 1 between conceptual and experiential knowledge, it is as if lyrics provide the concept that defines the experience of music.

This does not mean that lyrics therefore bring with them referential meaning. Lyrics can communicate an absolute experience; one that comes from within the music itself; a sense of something that is embodied by the music; a direct experience. They are not limited to referring to external associations. But they do communicate concepts, thereby nuancing experiences of spirituality. Furthermore, this was not a product of a limited musical background, such that those without the technical understanding of music to explain the experience invoked lyrics to help. To the contrary, lyrics were mentioned more often by more experienced musicians.



It may be, therefore, that lyrics were frequently mentioned in an attempt to get at the significance of the experience precisely because there was a sense that the musical components were unable to fully account for that. This does not mean that spirituality is a product of lyrics, but that spirituality is not a product of the musical components. The musical components are necessary but not sufficient for this type of experience. My conclusion from all of this is that the first hypothesis is supported; spirituality is best described as an absolute experience. Its significance lies beyond a formalist experience, concerning instead something music can express. The referential results (section 5.1) showed that spirituality is only referential in some respects. The absolute results suggest that, if the focus is on the nature of the experience rather than just the music components, then absolute expressionism is the type of meaning best able to account for spirituality.

The second hypothesis, stating that spirituality will be as important as emotion, was again supported by the presence of at least as many comments about spirituality as about emotion in each of the conditions. The distinction between the two was also supported, with more comments about spirituality in the religious context overall, as well as individual comments which made the distinction. The notion of emotion as the result of a spiritual connection was apparent.

There was no support for the third hypothesis. There were no significant differences between religious and non-religious context. This may be partly due to low frequencies and therefore a lack of statistical power. But it does suggest that spirituality, as an expression of the music, has little to do with religious context. There was also no difference between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus. On face value this suggests that habitus has no bearing on the absolute experience of music, however, taken together with results discussed in the previous sections, it appears that there was insufficient difference between these particular habitūs to render a different experience of the music itself. Taken together, these results suggest that culture has negligible impact on spirituality resulting from the music itself. This may indicate that there is a level of musical and spiritual experience that lies below the level of enculturation.

## Summary of findings

The findings from the absolute question can be summarized as follows:

- i) There was some evidence for spirituality as an absolute experience.
  - All the spiritual categories were mentioned and comments about spirituality were as prevalent or more prevalent than emotion.
  - Yet there were generally fewer comments about spirituality here than for the referential question (91 and 29 comments for the religious and non-religious groups respectively in the referential question, and 38 and 20 for the religious and non-religious groups respectively in the absolute question - see Table 5.1 compared with Table 5.2). This may be because participants focused on formalist meaning, which does not identify spirituality. Spirituality is better categorised as absolute expressionist; focusing on the nature of the experience.
  - Lyrics played a complementary role in the spiritual experience, defining the concept of the experience. This was not a result of a limited musical background, but an indication that the spiritual experience cannot be fully accounted for by the musical components.
- ii) Spirituality was at least as frequently mentioned as emotion (in terms of quantity and quality), suggesting it may be as important as emotion in significant experiences of music.
- iii) Context and habitus had no significant effect on these results. This suggests there may be a level of musical and spiritual experience that lies below the level of enculturation.
  - The habitus distinction used in this study seems to be insufficient to identify any effect of culture.

### 5.3 Comparison of the four Qualitative questions

Having examined the qualitative questions individually for evidence of spirituality and its relationship with referential and absolute meaning in music, I now make some comparisons between the four qualitative, open-ended questions - *spirituality*, *general descriptions*, and *referential* and *absolute* meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6<sup>2</sup> compare the presence of the various categories across the four qualitative questions. They allow us to see whether categories present in the spiritual question were also there in the other questions. Of the eight categories for the religious experience (including emotion) chi squared tests revealed that five had significant differences across the four questions (see 5).<sup>3</sup> *Supernatural* was mentioned less in the Absolute question than the other three questions. *Existential* was mentioned less in the Absolute than the Spiritual and Referential question, and more in the Spiritual than General descriptions question. *Improved* was mentioned less in the Referential than the Spiritual question, and although chi squared tests could not confirm this, it would seem logical to conclude that it was mentioned less in the Absolute question as well. *Meaning* was mentioned more in the General Descriptions question than all the other questions. *Emotion* was mentioned less in the Spiritual question than all of the others.<sup>4</sup> The remaining three categories: *Transcendence*, *Other people* and *Environment* were mentioned a similar number of times across the four questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Questions 18 and 31, 9 and 22, 12 and 25, and 20 and 33 respectively

<sup>2</sup> Appendix F presents this material in a different format – comparing the number of comments for each category across the four questions on a line graph.

<sup>3</sup> Individual chi squared tests were also calculated to determine where the difference lay, once an overall difference was established. See also Table G-5 in Appendix G.

<sup>4</sup> These results should be taken cautiously, as some of the cell sizes were quite small, and a lack of significance may be due to a lack of statistical power rather than the absence of a difference.

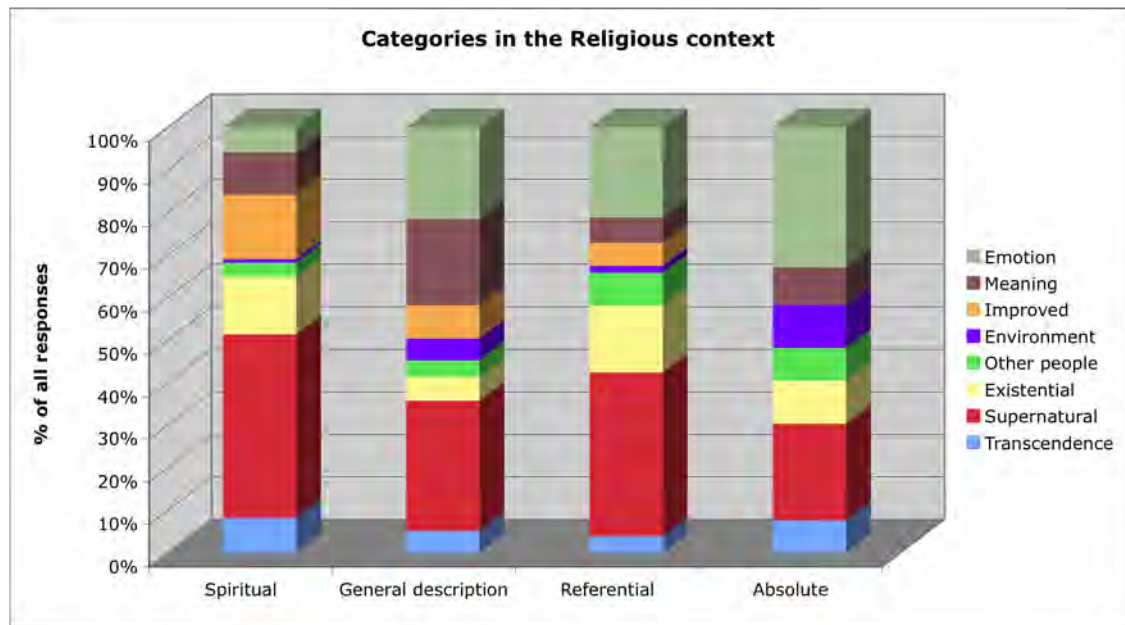


Figure 5.5 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality and emotion for each of the four qualitative questions in the religious context from all participants

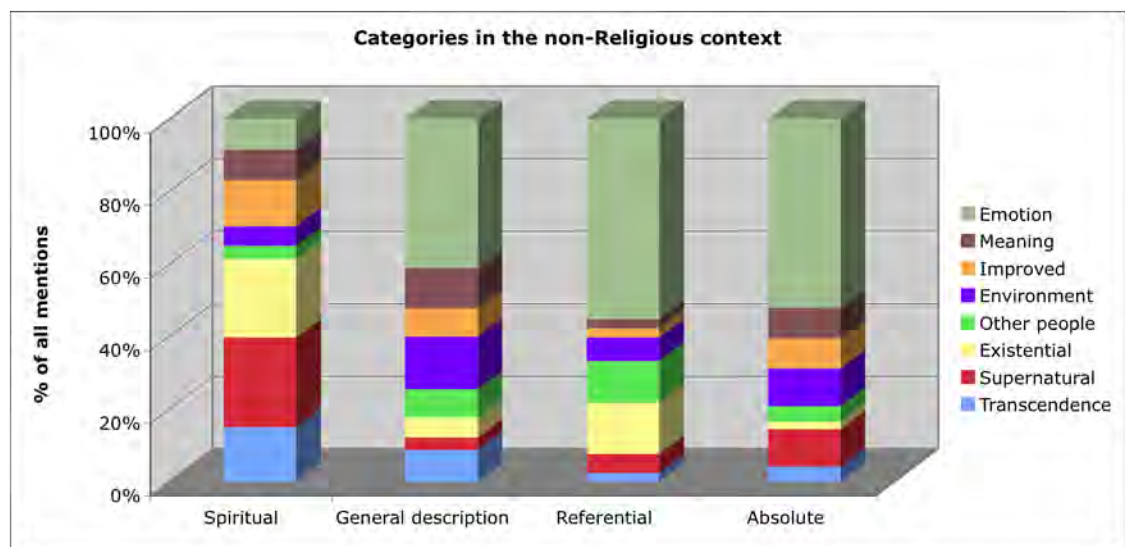


Figure 5.6 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality and emotion for each of the four qualitative questions in the non-religious context for all participants

Table 5.5 Chi squared test results for the religious experience

	Qualitative questions				Chi squared test	
	Spiritual	General Descriptions	Referential	Absolute	<i>overall</i> $\chi^2$	p value
<i>Transcendence</i>	18	12	7	6	6.95	0.59
<i>Supernatural</i>	95	71	71	18	48.38	<.001
<i>Existential</i>	30	13	29	8	16.85	<b>0.006</b>
<i>Other people</i>	7	9	14	6	3.67	2.4
<i>Environment</i>	2	12	3	8	0.45	4.02
<i>Improved</i>	33	18	10	0	22.37	<.001
<i>Meaning</i>	22	47	11	7	42.33	<.001
<i>Emotion</i>	13	50	39	26	24.15	<.001

3 degrees of freedom

n=117

Note: 1. p values include Bonferroni correction

2. Cell sizes <5 were not included in these chi squared tests

Of the spiritual categories (ie. excluding emotion) *supernatural* was consistently the largest component in the religious context, whereas in the non-religious context it was less frequently mentioned, especially for the general description, referential and absolute questions.

For the non-religious experience many cell sizes were <5 and so chi squared tests could not be conducted. Where they could some differences were found (see Table 5.6). There was no difference between the Spiritual and General descriptions question for *Transcendence*. The other questions for *Transcendence* and *Supernatural* could not be tested due to small cell sizes, but it can be logically concluded that 41 > 4 or 5. A similar situation applies for *Existential*. *Other people* and *Environment* received equivalent numbers of comments across the questions. For *Improved* there was no difference between the Spiritual and General descriptions questions, but logically it would seem that there were more mentions for Spiritual (21) than for Referential (2) or Absolute (4). For *Meaning* there was no significant difference, though this may be due to lack of statistical power. Finally, *Emotion* was mentioned less in the Spiritual question than either the General descriptions or Referential questions.

Table 5.6 Chi squared test results for the non-religious experience

	Qualitative questions				Chi squared test	
	Spiritual	General Descriptions	Referential	Absolute	<i>overall <math>\chi^2</math></i>	<b>p value</b>
<i>Transcendence</i>	25	8	2	2	-	-
<i>Supernatural</i>	41	3	4	5	-	-
<i>Existential</i>	36	5	11	1	44.67	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<i>Other people</i>	6	7	9	2	-	-
<i>Environment</i>	9	13	5	5	4.13	1.99
<i>Improved</i>	21	7	2	4	-	-
<i>Meaning</i>	14	10	2	4	-	-
<i>Emotion</i>	14	37	43	25	17.37	<b>.005</b>

3 degrees of freedom

n=117

Note: 1. p values include Bonferroni correction

2. Cell sizes <5 were not included in these chi squared tests

The next set of figures, Figure 5.7 and Figure 5.8, graph the differences between habitūs.<sup>5</sup> These graphs are similar to the patterns that were evident in Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6, showing again that there was minimal effect of habitus.<sup>6</sup> *Environment* received a larger share of comments in the non-religious non-Pentecostal condition, and *transcendence* seemed to take some ground from *supernatural* in the same condition. Emotion showed a similar pattern with the variation that it occupies a slightly larger component also in the same condition. However, all of these variations were small.

<sup>5</sup> See also Table G-6 and Table G-7 in Appendix G.

<sup>6</sup> Inferential statistics have not been calculated here because too many of the cells were <5.

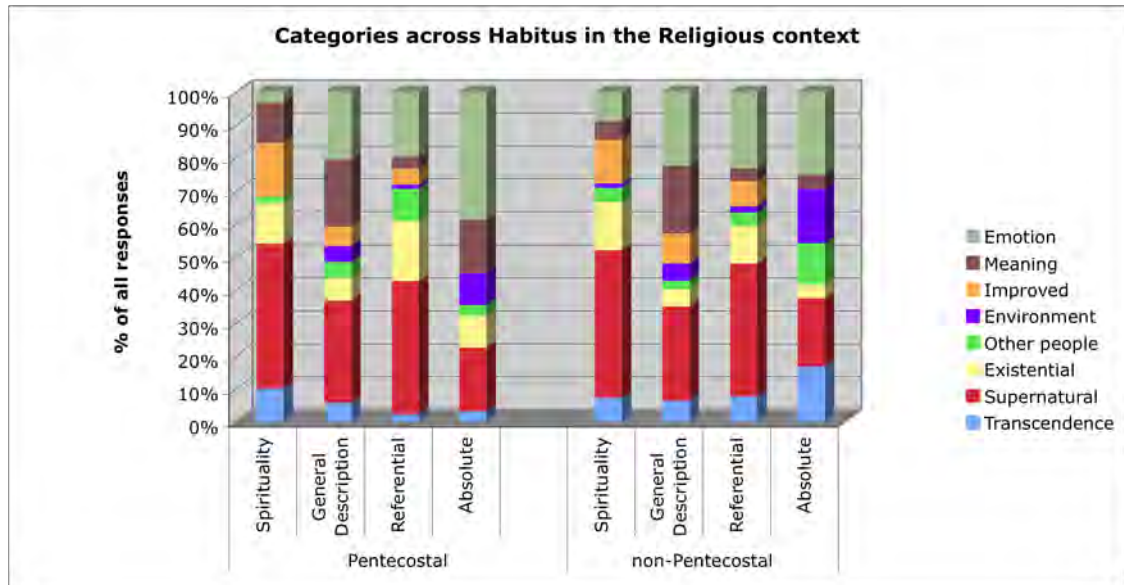


Figure 5.7 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality and emotion for each of the four qualitative questions, according to habitus, for the Religious context.

Notes:

1. ' % of responses ' is the percentage of the participants in that group who made a comment relating to that category.
2. 'Mid-point ' group is not included in these figures

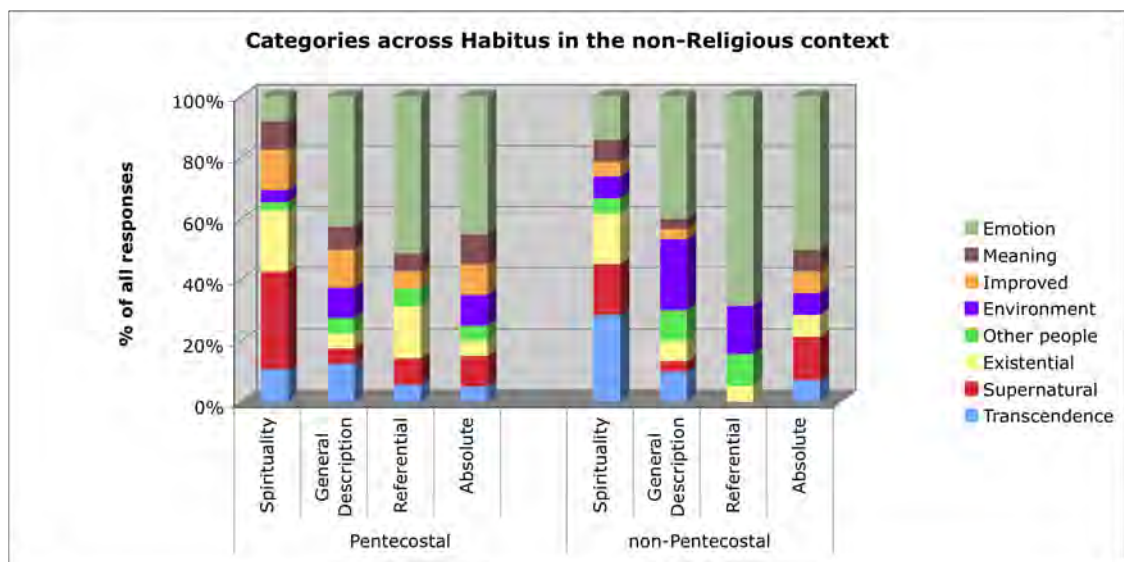


Figure 5.8 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality and emotion for each of the four qualitative questions, according to habitus, for the non-Religious context

There were some differences between the referential and absolute questions. *Supernatural* was more frequently mentioned in referential meaning, but only in the religious context. *Existential* was more frequently mentioned in referential meaning, except in the non-religious, non-Pentecostal condition. *Environment* was more frequently mentioned in absolute meaning, except in the same condition. *Meaning* was more frequently mentioned in absolute meaning, especially in the religious Pentecostal condition. *Emotion* was as frequently mentioned in both types of meaning. However each of these differences is small, promoting the notion that spirituality is accounted for by both types of meaning, yet neither can do so completely.

Comparing the four qualitative questions also allows a comparison of the relationship between spirituality and emotion.<sup>7</sup> Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10 graph these comparisons. What is notable here is that emotion never comprised more than 40% of all comments in the religious experience (absolute question) and 60% in the non-religious experience (referential questions). Apart from the referential and absolute questions in the non-religious experience, emotion never comprised more than half of all responses. Furthermore, in no question does it comprise more than two thirds of all responses. To the contrary, in all general descriptions of the religious and non-religious experiences spirituality comprises the majority of all comments. This is an important finding in light of the dominance of emotion in scholarly work on musical experience in recent years (see Chapter 2). It supports the second hypothesis, stating that spirituality will be at least as important as emotion.

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<sup>7</sup> In no way am I claiming here that spirituality and emotion are the only types of musical experience. I am merely focused on spirituality, and emotion because of its proximity to the spiritual experience.



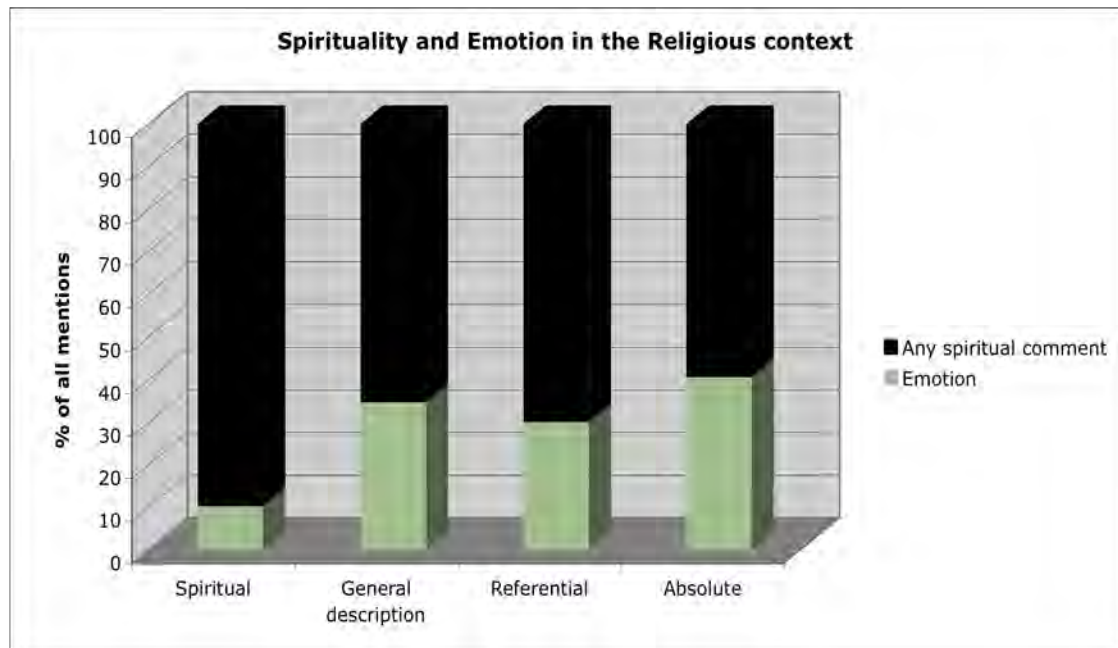


Figure 5.9 Comparison of the number of mentions of spirituality and emotion in each of the four qualitative questions for the religious context for all participants

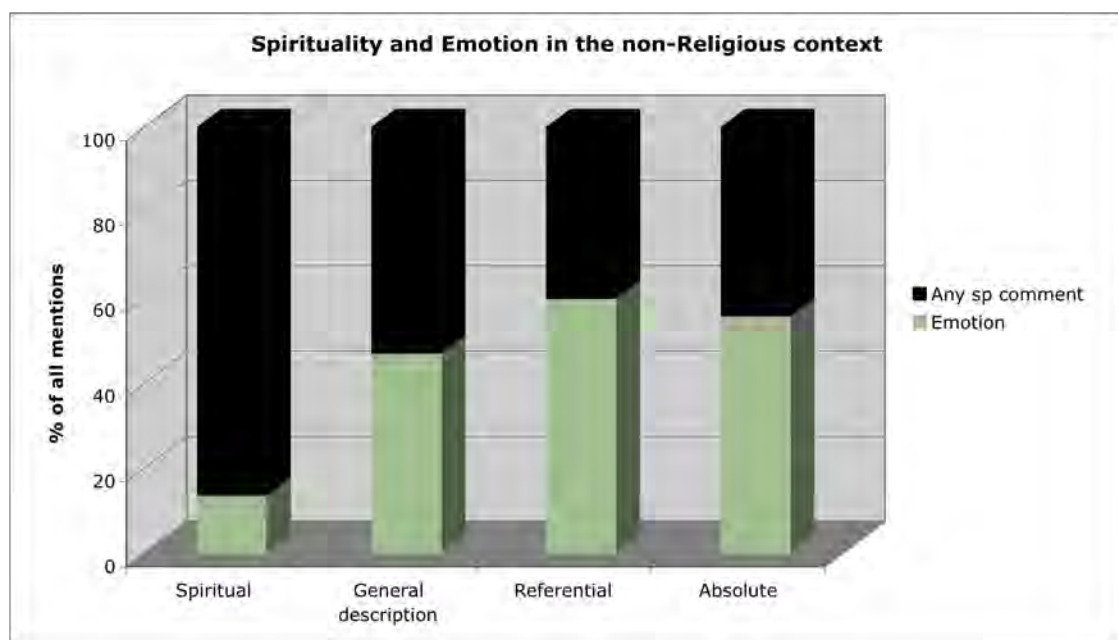


Figure 5.10 Comparison of the number of mentions of spirituality and emotion in each of the four qualitative questions for the non-religious context for all participants.

## Chapter 6 Quantitative Analysis

The previous two chapters detailed the results of qualitative responses to powerful musical experiences with respect to spirituality, general descriptions of the experience and referential and absolute meaning. This chapter examines the quantitative questions on the questionnaire,<sup>1</sup> to determine whether spirituality is better accounted for as a referential or absolute experience (the first hypothesis). The second and third hypotheses - the relationship with emotion and the effect of culture - are considered throughout.

### 6.1 Spirituality and Musical Meaning

#### Factor Analysis for types of Musical Meaning

To explore the relationship between spirituality and referential or absolute meaning a factor analysis was conducted on responses from the quantitative questions in the questionnaire. This was chosen because it identifies the interrelationships among a large set of observed variables and reduces that data by grouping a smaller set of variables into factors that have common characteristics (Pett, Lackey, & Sullivan, 2003). In both the religious and non-religious context there were nine core questions (see Table 6.1). These formed the six central elements for the investigation. They are ordered according to the questionnaire and the corresponding question numbers from the questionnaire are provided (see Appendix B for the details of each question).

Varimax rotation was used to obtain maximum separation of the factors. The data from the religious and non-religious experiences for each individual were pooled in order to

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<sup>1</sup> The quantitative questions are found in Appendix B – questions 10, 11, 13-17, 19 and 21 for the religious experience, and then 23, 24, 26-30, 32 and 34 for the non-religious experience.

provide a larger data set and to maximise variation.<sup>2</sup> This provided a maximum total data set of 234 entries. Rating scales used ranged from 0 - 10.

Table 6.1 Questionnaire elements

<i><b>Question number</b></i>	<i><b>Core Question</b></i>	<i><b>Description<sup>3</sup></b></i>	<i><b>Central Element</b></i>
10 & 23	Strength	The strength of the experience	<b>Strength</b>
11 & 24	Referential	The extent of referentialism in the experience	<b>Referentialism</b>
12 & 25	Emotions	The level of emotion in the experience	<b>Emotion</b>
14 & 27	Overtaken	First element of transcendence	<b>Transcendence</b>
15 & 28	Lose Track	Second element of transcendence	
16 & 29	Transformed	Third element of transcendence	<b>Spirituality</b>
17 & 30	Spirituality	The level of spirituality perceived in the experience	
19 & 32	Absolute	The extent of absolutism in the experience	<b>Absolutism</b>
21 & 34	Performance	The importance of the performers or the performance itself for the significance of the experience	

Table 6.2 reports the factor loadings for the factor analysis. The first three factors were reported despite the third factor having an Eigenvalue of less than 1 (0.9). This was done to include evidence of referential and absolute meaning as well as spirituality. Strong factor loadings ( $\geq 0.4$ ) are in **bold** font. The 0.4 level was chosen because it provided clear differentiation between the factors.

<sup>2</sup> The data for each element therefore included ratings for the religious and the non-religious experience for each participant.

Data from the 'mid-point' group was included in these analyses.

Data are pooled because at this point the thesis is concerned with examining spirituality wherever it occurs. In section 6.3 (below) I examine context and habitus separately to see whether those factors had an influence on the experience of spirituality.

<sup>3</sup> These descriptions are for the reader only. They were not used in the questionnaire.

Table 6.2 Factor analysis of the pooled questionnaire data

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>		
	1 Spirituality	2 Absolute	3 Referential
Strength	<b>0.74</b>	0.13	0.33
Referential	0.13	0.05	<b>0.95</b>
Emotions	<b>0.76</b>	0.10	0.34
Overtaken	<b>0.90</b>	0.08	0.10
Lose track	<b>0.82</b>	0.12	0.03
Transformed	<b>0.89</b>	-0.10	0.03
Spiritual	<b>0.86</b>	-0.16	-0.06
Absolute	0.04	<b>0.85</b>	0.02
Performance	0.00	<b>0.86</b>	0.06
% of Variance	48%	18%	10%
Eigenvalue	4.24	1.72	0.94

n = 234

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Elements are presented in the order they appeared in the questionnaire.

The nine elements loaded clearly onto three distinct factors. The first factor was a very strong factor, accounting for almost half of the total variance. This factor aligned with six of the nine elements from the questionnaire, with the weakest loading being 0.74. These six elements included all of the spiritual-related elements (*overtaken*, *lose track*, *transformed* and *spiritual*)<sup>4</sup>, which received the highest loadings, and then *strength* and *emotion*. This factor thus seemed to be identifying a sense of spirituality, which was also related to strength and emotion, and so it was labelled the ‘Spiritual factor’.

This factor underscored the importance of spirituality in the experience of music. Accounting for such a large percentage of the variance, these figures showed that spirituality was the strongest factor. This may be partly due to four of the nine elements being about spirituality. The high loading of emotion here supported the link between spirituality and emotion. It suggested that the significance of the music might be equally described as emotion or spirituality. The high loading of *Strength* indicated that it was the strongest experiences that received the highest ratings of spirituality and/or emotion.

<sup>4</sup> Elements are always referred to in *italics*. Therefore the reader can know that, in Chapter 6 and 11, terms in italics are typically referring to elements of the questionnaire.

The second factor, which accounted for 18% of the variance, received high loadings from the absolute element as well as the item dealing with performers and performance. There were no other high loadings on this factor, so it was, therefore, identifying that the meaning of the music itself, which is related to the performers involved in the experience, is separate from anything else. Therefore it was tentatively labelled the ‘Absolute factor’.

The third factor, representing 10% of the variance of the data, received a high loading only from the *referential* question. It also received weaker loadings from *strength* and *emotion* (around 0.3). The eigenvalue was below 1 for this factor, yet it was included because it identified the other of Meyer’s two types of meaning; referential. This factor was therefore identifying referential meaning as separate from either absolute meaning or spirituality. It was therefore labelled the ‘Referential factor’.

### **Factor Analysis Comparison across Contexts**

Two additional factor analyses explored differences in the ratings scales between religious and non-religious contexts for all 117 participants. Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 summarise the factor analyses for each context. As before, factor loadings greater than 0.4 were highlighted, and the third factor included, showing both types of meaning, even though the eigenvalue was below 1.0.

Table 6.3 Factor Analysis of the religious context

	<b>Factor</b>		
<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<i>1</i> <i>Spirituality</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Absolute</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Referential</i>
Strength	<b>0.69</b>	-0.03	<b>0.50</b>
Referential	0.02	0.22	<b>0.91</b>
Emotions	<b>0.67</b>	0.23	0.35
Overtaken	<b>0.86</b>	0.07	0.12
Lose track	<b>0.80</b>	0.18	-0.06
Transformed	<b>0.85</b>	0.04	0.04
Spiritual	<b>0.88</b>	0.02	-0.02
Absolute	0.05	<b>0.82</b>	0.14
Performance	0.12	<b>0.81</b>	0.08
% of Variance	46%	17%	10%
Eigenvalue	4.14	1.51	0.88

n = 234

Table 6.4 Factor Analysis of the non-religious context

	<b>Factor</b>		
<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<i>1</i> <i>Spirituality</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Absolute</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Referential</i>
Strength	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.42</b>
Referential	0.11	-0.05	<b>0.92</b>
Emotions	<b>0.66</b>	0.20	<b>0.46</b>
Overtaken	<b>0.82</b>	0.29	0.22
Lose track	<b>0.77</b>	0.21	0.16
Transformed	<b>0.87</b>	-0.00	0.11
Spiritual	<b>0.86</b>	-0.07	-0.06
Absolute	0.05	<b>0.85</b>	-0.03
Performance	0.13	<b>0.83</b>	0.05
% of Variance	47%	16%	11%
Eigenvalue	4.23	1.44	0.96

n = 234

Comparisons of these two analyses with the overall analysis (Table 6.2) indicated only minor differences. Once again the three factors appeared clearly and distinctly, showing spirituality to be distinct from absolute and referential meaning. The factor loadings across the two contexts were fairly similar. One notable difference was the increased loading of *strength* onto the absolute factor in the non-religious experience. This suggested that the music itself involved a sense of strength in the non-religious experience that was not so relevant in the religious experience. In addition, *strength* was

related to the referential factor for both contexts, whereas it was not in the overall analysis. This suggested the importance of this element, as it became clearer when the contexts were separated out. Another difference between contexts was the appearance of *emotion* as a moderately correlated element with the referential factor in the non-religious context. Overall however, context had minimal effect on these findings.

This questionnaire asked for experiences that were “significant, powerful or stirring”, so it was expected that the spread of *strength* scores would be very positively skewed. That was not entirely the case. As Figure 6.1 demonstrates, although there was a positive skewing, there was a spread of scores across the upper half of the range. This spread was justification for the inclusion of this element in the factor analyses.

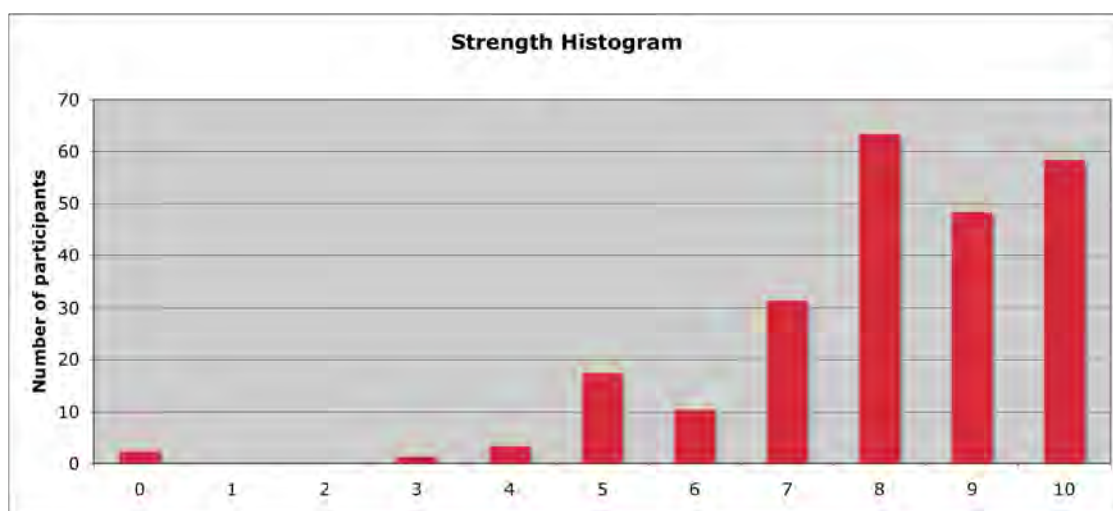


Figure 6.1 Spread of scores for the *strength* element in the questionnaire, collapsed across religious and non-religious contexts

### Factor Analyses Compared across *habītūs*

Comparisons of *habītūs* were then made to examine the influence of culture on these findings. Three groups<sup>5</sup> were used because of the anomalous nature of the mid-point group. Table 6.5, Table 6.6 and Table 6.7 detail these analyses. Factor loadings greater

<sup>5</sup> These three groups were explained in the Methodology Chapter. They consist of the Pentecostal group, the non-Pentecostal group and the mid-point group who rated Pentecostal alignment as 5 on a scale of 0 to 10. The mid-point group is included in these analyses.

than 0.4 were again highlighted, and the third factor included even though the eigenvalue was less than 1.0 for Table 6.5 and Table 6.6.

Table 6.5 Factor Analysis for the Pentecostal Group

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>		
	<i>Spirituality</i>	<i>Absolutism</i>	<i>Referentialism</i>
Strength	<b>0.77</b>	-0.01	0.23
Referential	0.05	0.15	<b>0.93</b>
Emotions	<b>0.78</b>	-0.07	0.35
Overtaken	<b>0.92</b>	0.09	0.05
Lose track	<b>0.81</b>	0.14	-0.04
Transformed	<b>0.86</b>	-0.09	-0.08
Spiritual	<b>0.86</b>	-0.12	-0.06
Absolute	0.02	<b>0.83</b>	0.26
Performance	-0.04	<b>0.91</b>	-0.06
% of Variance	47%	19%	11%
Eigenvalue	4.24	1.71	0.95

n = 234

Table 6.6 Factor Analysis for the Mid-point Group

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>		
	<i>Spirituality</i>	<i>Absolutism</i>	<i>Referentialism</i>
Strength	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.42</b>	0.34
Referential	0.11	-0.04	<b>0.96</b>
Emotions	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.53</b>	0.34
Overtaken	<b>0.87</b>	0.12	0.17
Lose track	<b>0.76</b>	0.34	0.04
Transformed	<b>0.88</b>	-0.06	0.13
Spiritual	<b>0.88</b>	-0.17	-0.02
Absolute	0.06	<b>0.85</b>	-0.01
Performance	-0.05	<b>0.85</b>	-0.04
% of Variance	45%	20%	11%
Eigenvalue	4.05	1.79	0.96

n = 234



Table 6.7 Factor Analysis for the non-Pentecostal Group

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>		
	<i>Spirituality</i>	<i>Referentialism</i>	<i>Absolutism</i>
Strength	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.55</b>	0.06
Referential	0.21	<b>0.88</b>	0.02
Emotions	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.44</b>	0.07
Overtaken	<b>0.89</b>	0.22	0.07
Lose track	<b>0.81</b>	0.19	0.05
Transformed	<b>0.91</b>	0.13	-0.03
Spiritual	<b>0.91</b>	-0.07	-0.08
Absolute	0.05	-0.24	<b>0.85</b>
Performance	-0.06	0.36	<b>0.79</b>
<hr/>			
% of Variance	53%	16%	11%
Eigenvalue	4.74	1.4	1.0

n = 234

The 3 factor analyses produced similar patterns to the overall factor analysis reported in Table 6.2. For all three groups the first factor was the ‘Spirituality factor’, accounting for more than 45% of the variance in each case. The three factors were clearly delineated, with the recurring exception of the elements of *strength* and *emotion*.

Two differences between the Pentecostal groups were noted. Firstly, the referential factor accounted for more of the variance for the non-Pentecostal group, making it the second factor. So, for non-Pentecostals, extra-musical associations accounted for a greater proportion of the variance than for other participants. This may have been an indication of an emphasis being placed on more rational factors than the emotional, experiential focus that characterised Pentecostalism, as discussed in Chapter 2.

A second, and accompanying difference related to the elements *strength* and *emotion*. For the Pentecostal group, these elements loaded onto only the first factor. This was the same as in the overall analysis. However, for the remaining two groups, these two elements also loaded onto the absolute factor for the mid-point group and the referential factor for the non-Pentecostal group. This suggested that while strength and emotion were part of the spiritual experience for the Pentecostal group, they were also part of the absolute experience for the mid-point group and the referential experience for the non-

Pentecostals. This was interpreted as indicating that referential meaning was quite important for non-Pentecostals.

## 6.2 Transcendence Index

The term ‘transcendence’ was avoided in this questionnaire, to reduce confusion. Instead, transcendence was measured using a transcendence index (TI). Scores from all participants on the three transcendence elements (*overtaken*, *lose track* and *transformed*) were averaged to create this. A Chronbach’s Alpha test of reliability revealed a strong coefficient ( $\alpha=.84$ ). A correlation of this index with each of its elements is reported in Table 6.8.<sup>6</sup>

Table 6.8 Correlations of the Transcendence Index with the three transcendence elements

	<i>Transcendence Index (TI)</i>	<i>Overtaken</i>	<i>Lose track</i>	<i>Transformed</i>
<b>Overtaken</b>	0.91*	1.00		
<b>Lose track</b>	0.89*	0.72*	1.00	
<b>Transformed</b>	0.89*	0.74*	0.66*	1.00

\* Significant correlations ( $p<0.01$ )

n = 233

These correlation coefficients were high. This was to some extent expected, because they were correlations of a score with its composite parts. The weakest correlation was between *lose track* and *transformed*, which, at 0.66, still supported the inter-related nature of these elements. The fact that correlations between transcendence elements were not even stronger shows that they were measuring slightly different things. This was to be expected, considering that *lose track* refers to a relationship with time and space, whereas *transformed* refers to the nature of affect that the experience brought about. Yet as I argued in Chapter 1, the overall combination of these elements is a good indication of the concept of transcendence.

<sup>6</sup> All correlations were Pearson bi-variate correlations.

From here on I refer to the transcendence index (TI) as the transcendence element, or *transcendence*.

### **Transcendence and Spirituality**

In Chapter 1, I claimed that transcendence was central to spirituality. Therefore, measuring transcendence independently of spirituality allowed an alternative measure of experiences that may have been spiritual. This was considered important because of the wide usage of the term ‘spirituality’ and the possibility that people may not label an experience as such even though it may involve characteristics of spirituality. Consequently, it was important to test the degree of similarity between spirituality and transcendence to determine how similar they were.

Initially this was examined using a simple correlation between *spirituality* and *transcendence*. This resulted in a strong correlation (0.78), which indicated a close relationship between the two elements, while still allowing for some differentiation. To further support this finding a correlation was calculated between both *spirituality* and *transcendence* and the other elements of the questionnaire. These results are reported in Table 6.9.

This showed the similarity between spirituality and transcendence in terms of their relationships with other elements in the study. None of the elements resulted in large differences between correlations with spirituality and transcendence.

Table 6.9 Correlations of spirituality and transcendence with other elements from the questionnaire

	<i>Spiritual</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>
Spiritual	1	
Transcendence	0.78*	1
Strength	0.50*	0.66*
Referentialism	0.12	0.22*
Emotions	0.56*	0.67*
Overtaken	0.74*	0.91+
Lose track	0.59*	0.89+
Transformed	0.79*	0.89+
Absolutism	-0.04	0.05
Performance	-0.14	0.06

n = 230

\* Significant correlations ( $p < 0.01$ )

+ These significant correlations are potentially inflated because transcendence is defined as an average of these elements.

*Strength* did appear to have a somewhat stronger relationship with transcendence than with spirituality. This suggested that a high degree of transcendence was more likely to accompany a strong experience, whereas a high degree of spirituality was less dependent on the strength of the experience. Yet the relationship with spirituality was still quite strong. A similar relationship existed with *emotion*. The correlation with transcendence (0.67) was stronger than with spirituality (0.56). Again, this suggested that emotion was somewhat more important in the experience of transcendence than it was in the experience of spirituality, though the difference in correlation coefficients was not large.

The correlation between spirituality and *lose track* (0.59) was lower than for the other transcendent elements (*overtaken* 0.74 and *transformed* 0.79). This may indicate where spirituality and transcendence differed. Perhaps, for these participants, spirituality had less to do with the transcendent idea of withdrawal ecstasy and more to do with the connection idea of fusion, discussed in Chapter 1.

These results confirmed that the phenomenon of transcendence was very similar to that of spirituality. They also showed that the three elements of transcendence utilised in this

study were measuring something similar. There were points of distinction between spirituality and transcendence, but these were small.

### 6.3 The effect of culture

The third hypothesis for this study, stating that culture will influence but not determine spirituality, was examined with respect to Pentecostal habitus, as a between-subjects variable, and religious context, as a within-subjects variable. A repeated measures MANOVA analysis was conducted on these two variables to determine whether there was an overall effect on the seven dependent variables for all participants.<sup>7</sup> A comparison of means is depicted in Table 6.10 as well as Figure 6.2 to Figure 6.8. Results from the MANOVA indicated that there was no significant combined effect of habitus with context ( $F(7,168)=0.55, p=0.84, \eta_p^2=.028$ ). Within that there was a significant effect of context, but not of habitus. The following sections discuss the results of the habitus and context variables in detail.

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<sup>7</sup> These seven variables include all of the core questions (Table 6.1), but using the transcendence index rather than the three transcendence elements.

Table 6.10 Comparison of Mean and Standard Error across Pentecostal Groups and Religious and Non-religious Contexts.

		Pentecostal		Non-Pentecostal		Mid-point	
		<i>Religious</i>	<i>Non-religious</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Non-religious</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Non-religious</i>
<b>Strength</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.91	8	8.56	7.49	8.72	6.96
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.19	0.27	0.22	0.28	0.26	0.46
<b>Referential</b>	<i>Mean</i>	6.52	6.65	6.93	6.1	7.56	7.2
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.41	0.39	0.46	0.48	0.37	0.42
<b>Emotion</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.56	7.15	8.05	6.46	7.4	6.68
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.26	0.31	0.23	0.33	0.53	0.44
<b>Transcendence</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.14	5.31	7.19	4.98	7.6	4.63
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.36	0.41	0.34	0.42	0.44	0.57
<b>Spirituality</b>	<i>Mean</i>	9.21	4.83	8.42	4.05	8.68	5
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.28	0.48	0.31	0.52	0.39	0.66
<b>Absolute</b>	<i>Mean</i>	6.17	7.23	6.1	7.22	5.76	6.12
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.36	0.39	0.39	0.43	0.5	0.54
<b>Performance</b>	<i>Mean</i>	5.10	7.31	4.83	7.34	4.48	5.5
	<i>Std Error</i>	0.38	0.44	0.43	0.49	0.56	0.65

n = 232

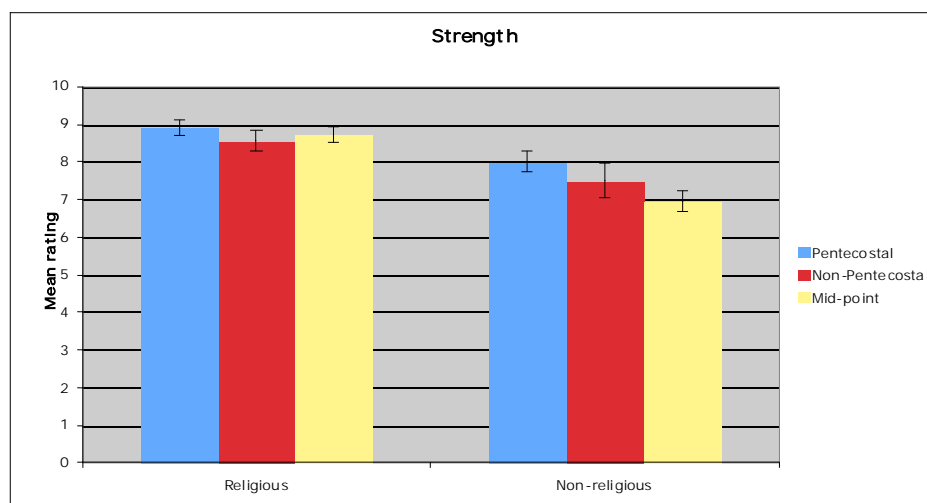


Figure 6.2 Comparison of mean ratings for *strength* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

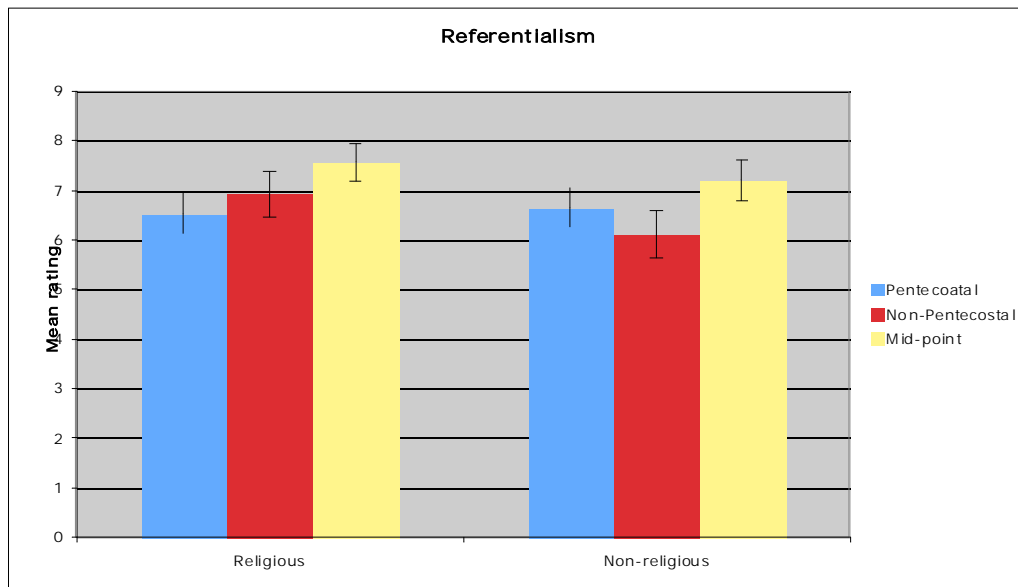


Figure 6.3 Comparison of mean ratings for *referential* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

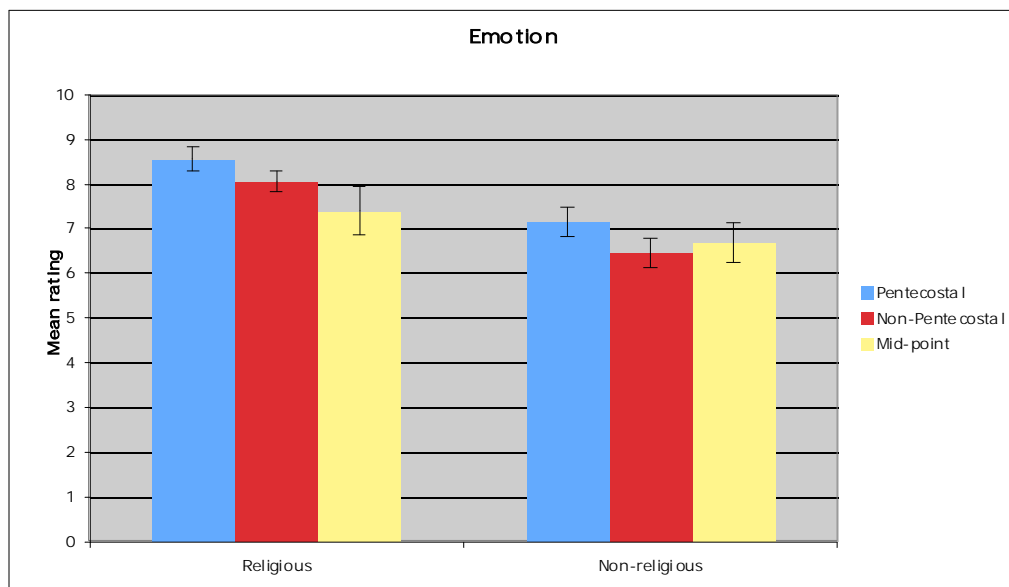


Figure 6.4 Comparison of mean ratings for *emotion* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

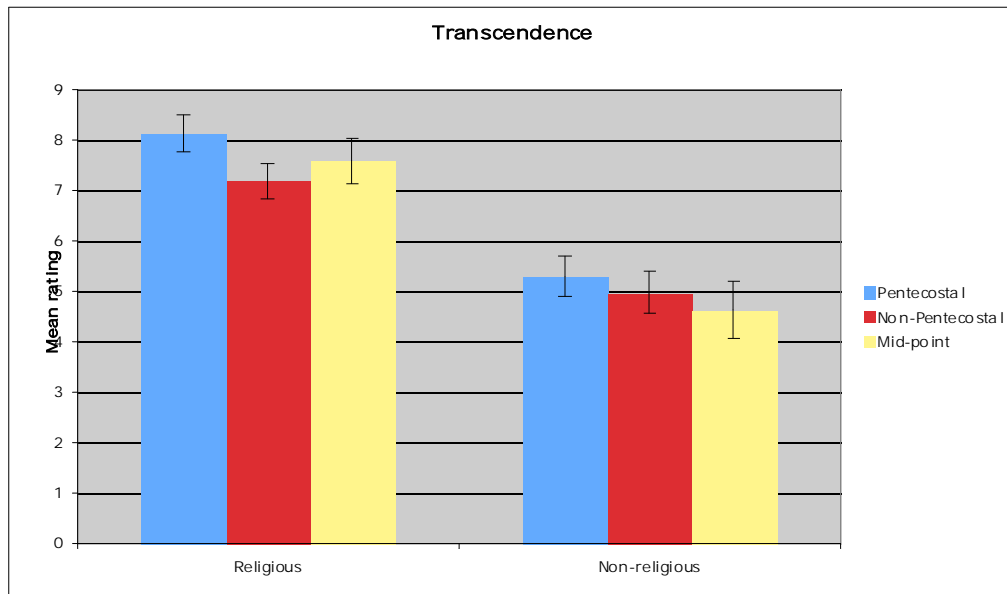


Figure 6.5 Comparison of mean ratings for *transcendence* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

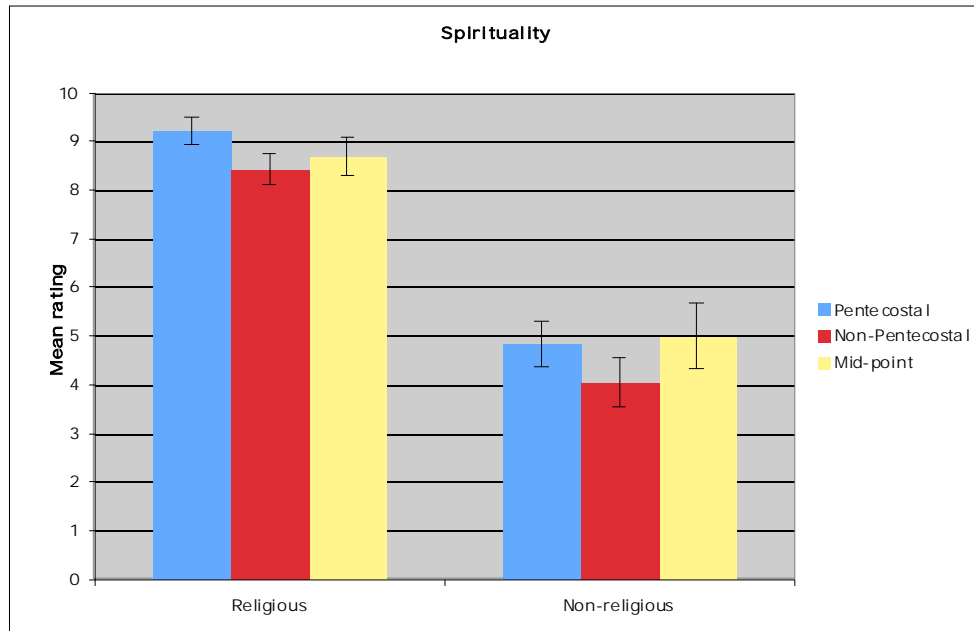


Figure 6.6 Comparison of mean ratings for *spirituality* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error



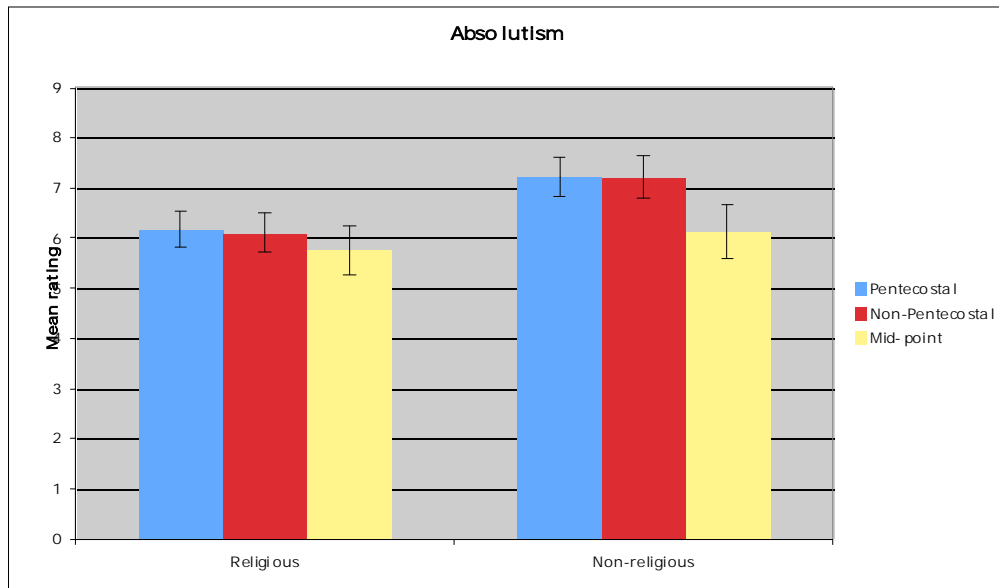


Figure 6.7 Comparison of mean ratings for *absolute* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

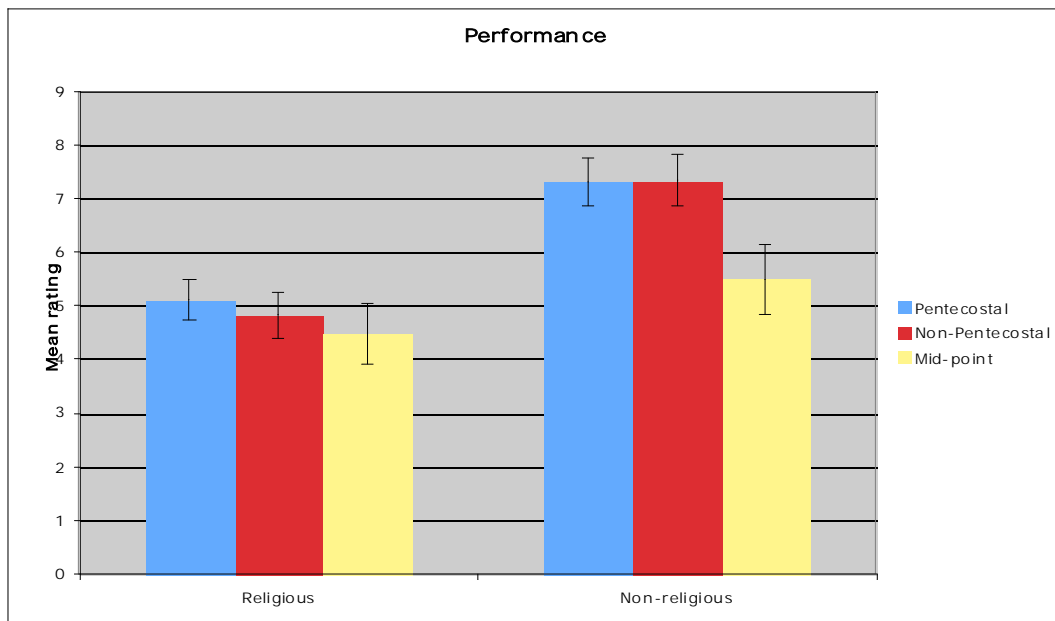


Figure 6.8 Comparison of mean ratings for *performance* across context and habitus.

n = 117

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

## The effect of Habitus

The effect of Pentecostal habitus on the experience of spirituality was firstly examined through correlations between ratings of Pentecostalism<sup>8</sup> and other elements from the questionnaire.<sup>9</sup> This revealed only one significant relationship; *Pentecostalism* correlated with *Age* ( $-0.24$   $p < 0.01$   $df = 115$ ), suggesting that people who aligned themselves more with Pentecostalism tended to be younger. This one difference was significant, according to an ANOVA ( $F(2, 112) = 3.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).<sup>10</sup> This was also evident from the median ages (Pentecostal = 28 years, non-Pentecostal = 40 years and mid-point group = 25 years). It was noted that both the oldest (77 years) and the youngest participant (18 years) in this study were in the Pentecostal group. All other elements of the questionnaire were unrelated to Pentecostalism.

The three habitūs were then compared using a simple comparison of means and standard errors for the 6 main elements, as detailed in Table 6.11 (and in Figure G-3 through to Figure G-8 in Appendix G). A MANOVA was used to test for differences between these means, and it was found that there were no significant differences between habitūs for any of the elements ( $F(9, 168) = 0.948$ ,  $p = 0.49$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .048$ ). There was a trend, such as Pentecostals rating *spiritual* higher than non-Pentecostals, but this difference was not significant. ANOVAs were also conducted on the effect of habitus, treating religious and non-religious contexts separately. (Interactions between context and habitus are dealt with in the section 6.4.) No significant differences were found there either.

This lack of significant difference was in line with the qualitative data, which also found no difference for habitus. Figure 6.9 shows the percentage of comments made by each habitus in the general descriptions of the experiences. The lack of evident difference there might have been due to the small number of comments, and thus statistical power.

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<sup>8</sup> Question 7 – Appendix B.

<sup>9</sup> Data for the mid-point group is included here, as it has relevance to the discussion of the effect of habitus on spirituality.

<sup>10</sup> This element was not included in the overall MANOVA because it was not a variable that varied within subjects.

However, the evidence here of the same pattern demonstrated that there was no effect of habitus.

Table 6.11 Comparison of ratings for questionnaire elements, according to Habitus

		Strength	Referential	Emotions	Transcendence	Spiritual	Absolutism
Pentecostal	Mean	8.38	6.57	7.81	7.26	7.07	6.72
	Std Err	0.16	0.29	0.2	0.19	0.34	0.27
Non-Pentecostal	Mean	8.02	6.51	7.26	6.66	6.23	6.66
	Std Err	0.19	0.33	0.22	0.25	0.4	0.28
Mid-point	Mean	7.84	7.38	7.04	6.67	6.84	5.94
	Std Err	0.29	0.28	0.35	0.32	0.46	0.39

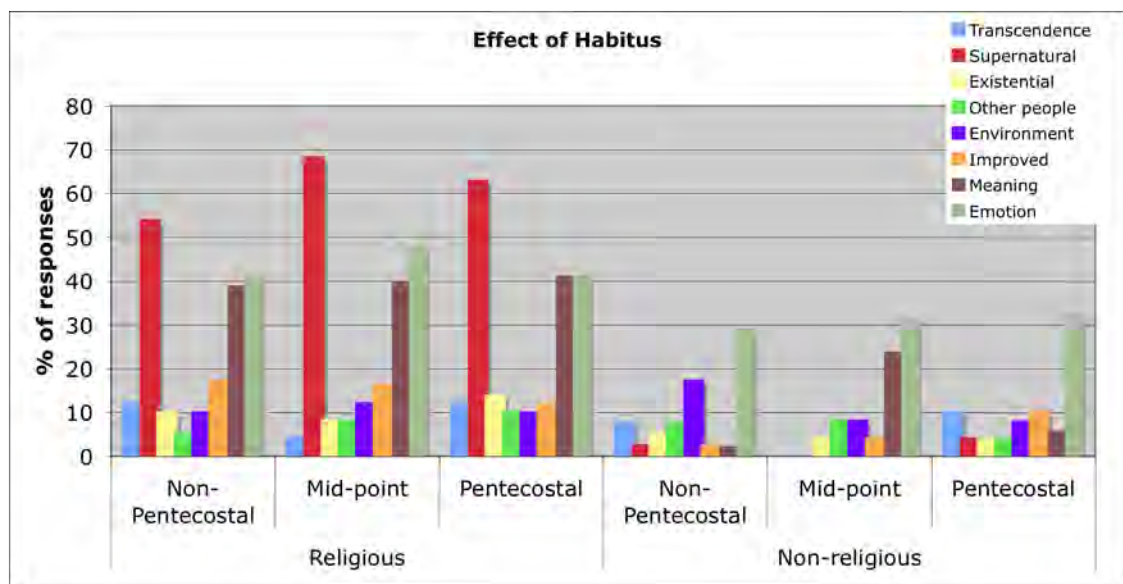


Figure 6.9 Qualitative categories of spirituality and emotion in the General Descriptions question across three habitūs and two contexts.

n: non-Pentecostal = 41; Mid-point = 25; Pentecostal = 51

Note: a table of percentages is presented in Table G-8.

## The effect of Context

If spirituality is a robust phenomenon then quantitative ratings of its elements should be present not only within the religious context but also in non-religious context.<sup>11</sup> Table 6.12 and Figure 6.10 show comparisons of the two contexts for the six central elements from the questionnaire for all participants.

Table 6.12 Comparison of means across religious and non-religious context

	Religious Experience		Non-religious experience	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Error</i>
<i>Strength</i>	8.69	0.12	7.55	0.18
<i>Referential</i>	6.89	0.26	6.55	0.25
<i>Emotion</i>	8.10	0.17	6.75	0.20
<i>Transcendence</i> <sup>12</sup>	7.67	0.20	5.03	0.26
<i>Spirituality</i>	8.81	0.18	4.57	0.30
<i>Absolute</i>	6.05	0.23	7.02	0.25
<i>Performance</i>	4.87	0.25	6.94	0.30

n = 117

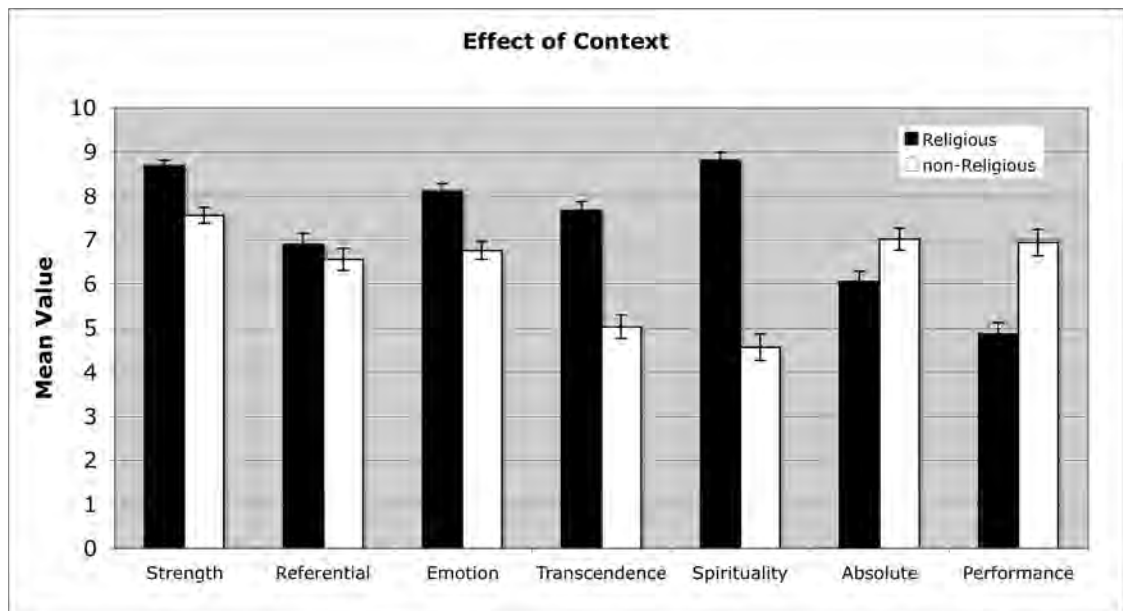


Figure 6.10 Comparison of means between religious and non-religious contexts

n = 117

<sup>11</sup> The reader is reminded that each participant provided information on one experience in the religious context and one in a non-religious context.

<sup>12</sup> The reader is reminded that I am referring here to the transcendence index, or composite score of the three transcendence elements from the questionnaire.

Error bars show +/-1 standard error

These data suggested several effects of context. A MANOVA showed that there was an overall effect here ( $F(9,168)=19.08, p<.01, \eta_p^2=.506$ ), and a series of ANOVAs confirmed there were significant differences for all nine elements except for *referential* ( $F(1,176)=0.85, p=0.36, \eta_p^2=.005$ ).<sup>13</sup>

For most of these differences it was the religious experience that had the higher ratings. Only for *absolute* and *performance* was the non-religious experience rated higher. Just as the overall factor analysis (Table 6.2) showed a relationship between *performance* and *absolute*, these findings showed that both the music itself and the performance of it were rated higher in the non-religious experiences. Lower ratings for *performance* could have been a reflection on a lower quality of performance or performers in the religious context, as many churches use non-professional musicians. One participant made a comment about the poor quality of music, but then many others made comments to the opposite effect, for example “*the music was done very well*” (P 78). Alternatively, the difference could have been an indication that such issues were simply less important in the religious context. Lower ratings for *absolute* may have been due to a more referential focus in the religious context, as was evident in the large number of comments about elements such as *supernatural* in the qualitative data.

Taking these two elements together, it seemed that the musical experience (not necessarily the music itself) had a different quality across the contexts, with the music itself, including its production, being a greater factor in the non-religious setting. One example of this was participant 69, who described the non-religious experience in these terms: “Mark Knopfler is awesome on guitar! Also, the sheer volume of music, yet so crisp and clear, gradually building and building then exploding in awesome melody”. Yet the religious experience involved something more - the melody, harmony, rhythm

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<sup>13</sup> Significant differences were found for *strength* ( $F(1,176)=18.23, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.094$ ), *emotion* ( $F(1,176)=29.80, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.145$ ), *overtaken* ( $F(1,176)=45.53, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.195$ ), *lose track* ( $F(1,176)=13.15, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.070$ ), *transformed* ( $F(1,176)=70.80, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.287$ ), *spiritual* ( $F(1,176)=112.89, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.391$ ), *absolute* ( $F(1,176)=8.51, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.046$ ) and *performance* ( $F(1,176)=27.35, p<0.01, \eta_p^2=.134$ ).

and instruments “plus the words, - but also dependent upon place, company, life situation etc”.

Ratings for the *referential* element did not differ between the two contexts. Mean ratings were moderately high (6.89 and 6.55), indicating that this was an important, though perhaps not central, element in all experiences. This was an important result because it indicated that although the qualitative data intimated that there was more referential meaning relating to spirituality in the religious context, the results here indicated that this was not the case for referential meaning in general.

The largest effects of context were for *spiritual* and *transcendence*. Ratings were higher in the religious context, yet they were not un-important in the non-religious context. They were around the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the non-religious experience (4.57 and 5.03 out of 10, respectively), which suggested that even in the non-religious experience there was some sense of something spiritual and transcendent.

*Strength* and *emotion* were also rated higher in the religious experience. This suggested that the religious experience was stronger and more emotional than the non-religious experience, as well as being more related to spirituality and transcendence. This was supported by qualitative evidence that non-religious experiences related to things of this world (for example “The way the music set the tone to the movie ... it was as if the music was used to show the emotions and the thoughts of the characters because nothing else could have” P 94), whereas religious experiences related to the sacred (for example “The words, the feelings that those words were conveying and the wonderful grace and mercy that God has for us” P 93).

## 6.4 Discussion

These quantitative data showed that spirituality was largely independent of both referential (extrinsic) and absolute (intrinsic) meaning. Factor analyses consistently placed *spiritual* apart from *referential* and *absolute* and none of the spiritual-related

questionnaire elements loaded onto the same factors as *referential* or *absolute*.

Correlations between *spiritual* and *transcendence* and the two types of meaning (referential and absolute) elicited low and non-significant correlations. How can this be explained? Does this mean that spirituality is neither something within the music nor something arising from association with it? I respond to these questions with reference to the qualitative results discussed in previous chapters.

Firstly, it must be taken into account that there were more questionnaire elements relating to spirituality, including *transcendence*, (4 of the 9 elements) than either referential (1 element) or absolute (2 elements) meaning. This was, to some degree, the reason spirituality was such a strong component to the experience, accounting for almost half of the variance in the factor analyses. Yet that did not account for the spiritual elements not loading onto the referential and absolute factors.

Secondly it was noted that, while there was evidence from the qualitative data for the presence of spirituality in both the referential and absolute dimensions of the experience, that evidence was not strong. The number of mentions of categories of spirituality was not large, and was often fewer for referential and absolute meaning than for the general descriptions of the experience, and particularly for the descriptions of spirituality (see Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6). Hence, the quantitative findings confirmed that spirituality was not exclusively a referential or absolute phenomenon.

To nuance that, section 5.1 (referential meaning) showed that only some categories of spirituality, such as *supernatural*, demonstrated strong referential tendencies. From that, I concluded that spirituality does have a referential dimension to it, but this only partly explained the experience of spirituality. When spirituality was considered as a whole, rather than in its categories, as was done in the qualitative analysis, it was seen to be not entirely a referential experience. Certain facets may have been referential, but as a unit spirituality could not be fully accounted for by the associations that became attached to the music.

Turning to absolute meaning, section 5.2 indicated that qualitative evidence for spirituality in the absolute experience of music was limited because the ‘music itself’

was understood by participants to relate to the components of the music rather than how those components were experienced. This was not the case for all participants. Some did comment on their experience of the musical components, hence there was some presence of categories of spirituality. So why was there no link in any of the factor analyses in the quantitative data? I suggest it was because the rating scale question here was answered on the basis of a focus on components of the music, even though in the qualitative answers people went beyond this focus to state why the experience might have been significant. This is an important point, as it would imply that the significance of the experience lies beyond the components of the music itself.

Similarly, in the qualitative data there was no evidence of spirituality arising from a formalist conception of music, but there was the possibility of spirituality being an absolute expressionist experience. This was supported in the quantitative data by an evident link between *emotion* and both *spiritual* and *transcendence*. If the absolute question had been understood as asking about the expression that might arise from the music itself (absolute expressionist) then one could have expected *emotion* to load with that question. *Emotion* did not load with that question, which reinforced the idea that this component was understood in a limited, formalistic sense.<sup>14</sup>

It was also noted that *strength* did not load onto the absolute factor in most of the analyses, and yet it did load onto the spiritual factor. This implied that the strength of the experience was distinct from whether or not it was a result of the music itself. Again, this reinforced the idea that absolute meaning was seen to relate not to the nature of the experience, but to components of the music itself. This must be qualified with the finding that *strength* did load onto the absolute factor for the non-religious context.<sup>15</sup> There was evidence that the music itself was more important in this non-religious context, with the focus in the religious context being on something more, something sacred. Yet there was still no indication of a relationship between spiritual elements and absolute meaning. I concluded from this that the spiritual experience was something

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<sup>14</sup> Emotion did load onto the Absolute factor for the Mid-point group, but I have excluded this group from discussions on the basis that I can do little more than speculate on the reasons for its composition and therefore its effect on habitus.

<sup>15</sup> It also loaded for the Mid-point group, but once again this group is not taken into consideration in this thesis.



different from a component of the music itself, even if that was regarded as being a strong experience. However, it may still have related to the expression that can arise from that music itself, and in that sense spirituality was absolute expressionist.

Taking all this together, I conclude that while spirituality did have a referential component, and while the music itself was integral to the experience, it was at the same time more than these. It was not simply an association of the music because if it were, spirituality would have loaded strongly with referentialism. Nor was it merely a component of the music itself, because if it were, spirituality would have loaded strongly with absolutism. If absolute meaning were taken in an absolute expressionist sense rather than a formalist sense the results may have been different. In Section 5.2 (absolute spirituality) I discussed this distinction, arguing that spirituality was best thought of as an expression of the music (absolute expressionism) rather than something limited to the musical components (formalism). That would better account for spirituality, because in this chapter, spirituality appeared to be an awareness that arose from the encounter with the music. Similar to the way in which music expresses emotion, music afforded an awareness of spirituality.<sup>16</sup> This was an awareness that lay beyond rational associations, even if it included them, just as it lay beyond the components of the music itself, even though they were essential to the experience.

This idea was amply captured in this comment: “I sat there and was uplifted by the timeless language of the music while watching the time-honoured ritual. The music took me to an exalted level of awareness ... It was as if the music spoke a very different language and communicated beyond words, cutting through to a base meaning revealing an inner truth, touching an inner wellspring of existence. The music spoke of a deeper reality, outside the confines of words and narrow interpretations.” (P 3)

Implicit in the above conclusions has been an assumption about the close relationship between spirituality and transcendence. These data confirmed that assumption, in accordance with the literature (Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995; Martsof & Mickley,

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<sup>16</sup> There is a sense in which the spiritual experience is not an expression, like emotion is. It is not something expressed by the music, but something experienced in connection with it. Therefore it may be better to take Meyer’s term ‘absolute expressionism’ and render it ‘absolute experience’ for our purposes here.

1998; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). There were some minor differences between the two, such as spirituality being less correlated with *strength*, *emotion* or *lose track* than was transcendence. The latter difference confirmed the distinction I made in Chapter 1 between transcendence as withdrawal ecstasy and spirituality as fusion (see Panzarella, 1980). I therefore suggest that transcendence be considered a subset of spirituality. Spirituality involved transcendence but could involve other things as well, such as rational significations related to the search for the sacred (George, et al., 2000).

The second hypothesis, stating that spirituality would be as important as emotion, received support here. *Emotion* consistently loaded onto the same factors as *spiritual*, and correlations between the two were consistently significant. There were some differences, such as the loading of *emotion* but no spiritual elements onto the referential factors for the non-religious context and the non-Pentecostal habitus. Yet, overall, these results supported the idea that spirituality and emotion were interconnected planes of experience. This developed the finding of section 5.3 (overview of the four qualitative questions), which found that spirituality occupied a large proportion of the responses. Not only was spirituality a prevalent part of powerful experiences of music, it was interrelated with emotion. There were differences but the two phenomena were also related.

I have already stated that context had some effect on these findings. Religious experiences were stronger and more emotional, spiritual and transcendent than non-religious experiences. This was in line with Dibben & Hansen's (2002) finding; that religious experiences were more intense and profound than non-religious ones, despite physiological responses being similar. By contrast, the music itself and performance aspects were less important, suggesting that the religious context was focused on something more than the music; it was focused on the sacred dimension.

Spirituality was still observed in the non-religious context. It was still the major factor there, accounting for almost half the variance. This is an important point: spirituality was not simply an effect of context. Higher ratings in the religious context may simply have been because of the added dimension of rational signification (as seen in the extra references to the supernatural, for example). One might conclude that an ineffable sense

of spirituality was experienced in the non-religious context, but in the religious context there was an added dimension of conceptual signification that made the experience more pronounced. In this sense, spirituality involved both the concept and the experience (the distinction made by Rahner, 1982, discussed in Chapter 2). It involved an ineffable experience of the sacred, onto which conceptions were added.

The second measure of culture in this study - habitus – showed no effect on spirituality. Pentecostals tended to be younger, which suggested age may be a factor in this habitus. Apart from that, there were no significant differences. Referential meaning played a larger and stronger role for non-Pentecostals, emphasising the rational aspect to the experience. This was in line with Price and Snow (1998), who proposed that the Pentecostal focus was on sentimentality rather than theology. However these data did not support the idea that Pentecostals are more emotional than non-Pentecostals, or even that they found music to be more powerful. Hypothesis 3a was therefore rejected; there was no difference between these two habitus in terms of the experience of spirituality. That may have been, in part, due to all participants being associated with the Christian church. Even though conceptual understandings may have differed, there seemed to be a common underlying core to these experiences of music that transcended habitus and rational signification.

These issues relating to similarities within the religious context would have been addressed if the study had compared religious people with non-religious people. That was the purpose of Study II.

## Summary of findings

The findings from the qualitative data on significant experiences of music can be summarized as follows:

- i) Spirituality was not exclusively a referential or absolute experience. Some external associations were involved, and the music itself was integral, but spirituality lies beyond these. It was, rather, an ineffable awareness that arises from the encounter with the music.
  - o Spirituality and transcendence were closely related, differing mainly in terms of withdrawal ecstasy and fusion.
- ii) Spirituality was as frequently mentioned as emotion, with the two being seen to be interconnected planes of experience.
- iii) Religious and non-religious context had some effect on spirituality – Religious experiences were stronger and more emotional, transcendent and spiritual, and they were more focused on something beyond this world; the sacred. Yet spirituality was not a product of context.
- iv) Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal habitus had no effect on the spirituality of the musical experience. Conceptual understandings may have differed but the experience itself was similar. This may be because there was insufficient distinction between these habitūs.

## **STUDY II**

## Chapter 7 Introduction to Study II

### **Rationale for Study II**

In Study I it was found that spiritual experiences were frequently part of significant musical experiences for religious people. To some degree these were a referential experience, and to a larger degree they were an absolute experience, and yet not in a formalist sense but as an absolute expressionist experience, with the spiritual awareness being embodied by the musical forms. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported.

Spirituality was seen to be at least as prevalent as emotion in most conditions, thus supporting the second hypothesis. In addition, the third hypothesis was partially upheld in that, while habitus showed no significant effect on spirituality, context did. Religious experiences were stronger, more emotional, and more likely to be regarded as spiritual. Referential meaning was more prevalent in the religious experiences too.

The aim of Study I was therefore achieved: to identify spiritual experiences from participants who were likely to report them. Since the results strongly supported the hypotheses the logical next step is to determine whether this applies also to non-specialist participants, who may not have the same predilection to spirituality; non-religious participants. This would subsequently deal with the fifth limitation mentioned in Chapter 3, regarding potential priming for spirituality. That was the purpose of Study II.

To set that up I first need to deal with some issues that arose from Study I. These form part of the background to the rather minor alterations to the methodology for Study II. In this chapter I therefore discuss issues concerning participants, absolute expressionism, emotion and lyrics.

## Participants

The primary difference for Study II was the inclusion of non-religious participants. Study I was deliberately limited to religious participants (as I stated in the limitations section of Chapter 3), but that leaves it open to the criticism that the findings are only relevant to religious people, with the possible conclusion that spirituality is a product of religion. Context had a demonstrable effect, indicating that religion does influence the experience of spirituality. So there was a need to examine this phenomenon with regard to non-religious people.

In Chapter 1 I argued that religion no longer holds the monopoly on spirituality (Elkins, et al., 1988). A distinction has grown up between the two such that spirituality can be thought of as concerning the experience whereas religion can be thought of as concerning the structures (Hill, et al., 2000; Stoll, 1989). Therefore, it is plausible that non-religious people could report spiritual experiences as well. This would be in line with Maslow's (1964) comment that religious experiences<sup>1</sup> have a core, which, if one could un-shell the experiences from the tradition that surrounds them one would find great similarity between them. If this were the case then it would suggest that spirituality is not a product of religion. This needed to be tested. Study II therefore expanded on Study I by investigating experiences of spirituality for people of all religious persuasion. I expected that religion would have some effect on spirituality, but that this effect would be limited, such that spirituality would not be a product of religion.

The inclusion of non-religious participants had relevance to some of the other aspects of this research as well. One of those was the effect of habitus, or lack of it, in Study I. Based on the literature presented in Chapter 2, indicating that habitus (culture) does have an important role to play in the experience of music, it was most likely that the reason no effect was found was because these habitūs were too similar. It may also have

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<sup>1</sup> Maslow's religious experience bears great similarity with spirituality as it is expressed here.

been in part due to the comparisons being within-subject comparisons. Study II therefore dropped the comparison of Pentecostal habitus, and instead sought a comparison between subjects of various religious affiliations.

### **Absolute Expressionism**

Another aspect of Study I was the unexpected finding that spirituality was not more clearly related to absolute meaning, given the first hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> I suggested in section 5.2 (absolute spirituality) that this may have been because participants focused on components of the music itself rather than the nature of the experience of that music. However, it was difficult to gain a clear indication of whether absolute expressionism could account for the experience of spirituality, in contrast to formalism. There were indications that the significance of the experience lay beyond the components of the music itself, yet that was not conclusive. Study II addressed this by some alterations to the questionnaire, as discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 8).

### **Spirituality and emotion**

In Chapter 2, I discussed the relationship between spirituality and emotion, which I described as interconnected planes of experience. I suggested that the distinction could be understood in terms of spirituality being a *level* of consciousness and emotion being a *stream* flowing through those levels. I concluded that spirituality was concerned with an awareness or a feeling of something sacred (such as the *numinous*), whereas emotion concerns the response to that awareness. This was evident in comments from Study I, such as the following: “we were given the freedom to just be with God. To talk to him,

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<sup>2</sup> The first hypothesis in Study I read: Spirituality will best be accounted for as an absolute experience – It will be described as referential to some degree, but spirituality will be best described as an experience that one senses in the music itself, not rationally but intuitively. This will arise not in the sense of an intellectual appreciation of form (*formalism*), but as a form of expression that the music affords (*absolute expressionism*).



journal, just sit in his presence or to listen for His voice ... The experience gave me a sense of peace, and an ability to be still, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally” (P 85). Here we see the feeling or perception of the spiritual awareness (connection with God, profound meaning) as distinct from the response of emotion.

Study I verified a strong link between spirituality and emotion, but responses ranged from treating them synonymously to deliberately distinguishing them. Some participants commented that the experience was spiritual and not emotional. However, this was typically a comment on value, not on the presence of emotion. It was not that emotions were not involved, but that the significance of the experience could not be accounted for simply by emotion; there was something more. Many comments expressed spirituality as a feeling: “it also made me feel at one with the Lord” (P 107), “I felt like there was meaning to the songs” (P 51), and “I would often feel God's presence” (P 62). This suggests that while there can be feelings of emotion, there can also be feelings of spirituality, where feelings are the perception or subjective experience of something. Study II will continue to examine this relationship between spirituality and emotion, in the light of the available contrast between participants of varying religious affiliation.

### **Music and Lyrics**

In Study I, lyrics were often mentioned with reference to absolute meaning. Sometimes lyrics were incidental to the experience, but often they were reported as being quite integral; as if there existed a sort of symbiotic relationship between the two. For example: “The music and spoken word flowed together. Songs were connected by music in a predictable way and worship continued through spoken word which flowed into the next song. The music complemented the lyrical content of the songs in a logical way and the structure of the melodies were such that they were comfortable to sing” (P 41). Since absolute meaning is not technically concerned with lyrics<sup>3</sup> it is

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<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to consider this from a historical point of view. In Plato's time music was primarily based on poetry and song was the model of fundamental music. Instrumental music was a derivative

important to better understand the role of lyrics, to determine whether spirituality is a result of the music or of the lyrics.

In the literature, there is considerable evidence for an overlap between music and language. Juslin and Laukka (2003) noted a connection between vocal and musical expressions of emotion.<sup>4</sup> Omar Ali & Peynircioglu (2006) also found that music and language were involved in the experience of emotion in music, with melodies being more dominant than lyrics. They found that lyrics increased the emotion associated with sad or angry music, but they decreased the emotion of happy or calm music. Studies on the evolution of music also note the similarity between music and language (see for example, Fitch, 2006).

It was originally Serafine et al. (1984; 1986), then, later Crowder et al. (1990) who proposed that this relationship between music and lyrics be understood as the *integration effect*. Melody and text are integrated in the way they are represented in memory. This is not a holistic storage; where music and lyrics are so integrated that they become one unit and cannot be separated. Nor is it a simple composite representation; where the components are stored individually.

The integration effect has been further nuanced, largely through the field of neuroscience. According to Patel: "as cognitive and neural systems, music and language are closely related" (Patel, 2008, p.417). Levitin and Menon (2003, 2005) noted that the same neural structures that create meaning in language are also involved in processing music. Sacks (2007) wrote about studies of brain dysfunction, showing how music can

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abstraction for him, whereas for us today, song is a derivative mixture (Dorter, 1978). Instrumental music really came into its own in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. (Note: this ascendancy of instrumental music pertains mainly to Western Art music, and the influence of discourse surrounding that. There were no doubt, other forums for music at the time in which lyrics played a different role.) Here the objective was 'pure' music; music without words (Cook, 1998b). Before that it was believed that lyrics only served to sully the music and dilute its spiritual powers. This was a major shift from previous eras, and indeed many indigenous cultures, in which instrumental music was always subservient to the word. While the idea of such 'purity' is contested today (see for example Chua, 1999), the importance of instrumental music remains. According to this view, lyrics are not considered to be part of the 'music itself'.

<sup>4</sup> In a review of 104 studies of vocal expression and 41 studies of music performance, they found similarities in the accuracy with which basic emotions were communicated, as well as in the emotion-specific patterns of acoustic cues used.

influence the use of language. Other studies have shown that, while there is a distinct hemispheric dominance for the processing of music and lyrics (Yasui, Kaga, & Sakai, 2009), language in music (lyrics) appears to be qualitatively different from language on its own (Jeffries, Fritz, & Braun, 2003; S. Samson & Zatorre, 1991)<sup>5</sup>

It is becoming clear that, as Sammler et al. (2010) put it, “lyrics and tunes are processed at varying degrees of integration” (p. 3572). There is a degree of integration in terms of semantics. Galizio and Hendrick (1972) found that the acceptance of the message portrayed through the lyrics is increased when it is coupled with a melody. More recent findings have shown that music is capable of priming semantic meaning, just as words are, because they both activate the same brain mechanisms, such as the N400 (R. Gordon, Schon, Magne, Astesano, & Besson, 2010; Koelsch, et al., 2004; Schon et al., 2010).<sup>6</sup> It has been shown that semantics and structure are processed independently (Besson, Faita, Peretz, Bonnel, & Requin, 1998; Bonnel, Faita, Peretz, & Besson, 2001), and yet they form a Gestalt (Peynircioglu, Rabinovitz, & Thompson, 2008). That Gestalt is not dependent on semantic meaning because, as Crowder et al. (1990) found, lyrics and music are associated in memory even when the lyrics are nonsensical. Thus Osuna (2011) concluded that “neuro-cognitive processing of music and lyrics is separate in a semantic sense, but more integrated at a syntactic level” (p.41). These differences in semantic processing may have something to do with music’s capacity to communicate ineffable meaning.

Ginsborg and Sloboda (2007; see also Stevens, McAuley, & Humphreys, 2000), argued that words and music are not simply *integrated*, but *associated* in memory. They found

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<sup>5</sup> Jeffries et al. found that right hemisphere brain activation while lyrics are sung does not mirror left hemisphere brain activation when those same lyrics are spoken. Samson and Zatorre found evidence for the use of dual memory codes. Verbal memory encoding consistently related to the left temporal lobe structures, whereas melodic encoding could depend on either or both temporal lobes, depending on whether it was encoded with or without the verbal cues. Thus, the context in which the tune is heard effects the way it is processed; “the words actually form part of the stimulus that defines the tune” (p. 803) when words are involved in the initial encoding process.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon et al. found that N400, which is a marker of semantic processing, was elicited with regard to melodies as well as words. This shows that “words and melody are closely interwoven in early stages of cognitive processing” (p.9) because they share neural resources. The related fMRI study by Schon et al. (2010) found robust interactions between words and melody in songs in a network of brain regions typically involved in language and music perception.

that, while sometimes errors in either words or melody affected recall of the other one, a higher proportion were separate; with participants being able to recall one component despite making an error in the other. They concluded that words and melody are recalled in *association* with one another, where retrieval of one enables retrieval of the other. But they are not *integrated*, such that failure to recall one invariably leads to failure to recall the other. Such association is automatically activated (Peretz, Gagnon, Hébert, & Macoir, 2004).

If *integration* is understood in the sense of being homogenized, then it is this sense that is not supported by researchers such as Peretz, Radeau & Arguin (2004), who noted a flexibility about the connection, not based on the original coupling. This seems to arise, they suggested, from abstract information such as rhythmic congruency; from the recognition of particular stress patterns. This is a symmetrical bidirectional connection. Therefore I will refer to this interaction between music and text as the *association effect*.

In light of that, this research was based on the assumption that lyrics, when present, do not define the experience. Rather, it is the association of lyrics and music together that defines it<sup>7</sup>. Where, in Study I, participants mentioned lyrics in relation to the music itself, we do not need to discount that impact on the basis that it arose from something that is not technically part of the music itself. The lyrics had become *associated* with the music, and the combined effect is what is reported. Or, more pointedly, it was the combined effect that gave rise to the spiritual experience. It may be that the lyrics contributed a rational element to the ineffable or pre-rational musical sense (although the poetry of ‘good’ lyrics can be just as musical as the music), but that does not mean the experience of spirituality was therefore a result of the lyrics and not the music. It was a result of the combination, or the association.

Study II will seek to test that assertion. It will investigate the role that lyrics play in spiritual experiences of music. I predict that spirituality will be sensed in the experience as an associated whole - a deep connection that music, together with its lyrics, allows -

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<sup>7</sup> This is in addition to the role of culture and habitus in defining the music.

not just in the lyrics themselves.

## Hypotheses

The driving hypotheses for Study II are as follows:

- 1) **Spirituality will best be accounted for as an absolute experience** – It will be accounted for as referential to some degree, but it will be better accounted for as an experience that one senses in the music itself, not rationally but intuitively. This will arise, not in the sense of an intellectual appreciation of form (*formalism*), but in the sense of an expression that the music affords (*absolute expressionism*). [This remains unchanged from Study I]
- 2) **Spirituality will be as important as emotion in significant experiences of music** - Spirituality will be evident; experienced in ways similar to emotion. Yet a distinction will be apparent in the sense of spirituality being an awareness whereas emotion is a response.
- 3) **Spirituality will not be a product of religion** – The experience of spirituality will be similar for religious and non-religious people, even if conceptual interpretations differ.
- 4) **Lyrics will have negligible impact on the experience of spirituality** – There will be some difference between music with and without lyrics, but these differences will not be central to the experience of spirituality.



## Chapter 8 Methodology

### Design Issues

Study II was an extension of Study I, therefore much of the methodology was replicated. Consequently, this chapter deals only with alterations to the methodology of Study I. The primary research question, *Is the spiritual experience better accounted for as a referential (extrinsic) or an absolute (intrinsic) experience*, remained unchanged. However, the sub-hypotheses relating to factors that might influence that primary question were changed. The hypothesis regarding the impact of Pentecostal habitus was dropped for two reasons: primarily, because the population sample used in Study II was not limited to Christian religious people and, secondly, because that cultural distinction proved to have minimal impact in Study I. Instead, Study II focused on a post-hoc between-subject condition of religion, allowing a comparison of experiences by religious people with those by non-religious people.

The second sub-hypothesis in Study I concerned a within-subject condition of context that compared experiences within the religious context with those outside of it. The condition that all participants were religious raised the obvious question of the extent to which the findings were simply a factor of their religious beliefs. The second study aimed to redress this by targeting participants from outside the religious context as well, thereby allowing inter-subject comparisons. This was therefore still a consideration of the role of habitus, but taken from a wider angle.

## Data Collection

### *Participants*

Study II sought participants from a broad range of religious and non-religious backgrounds. This was achieved by targeting a range of choirs, music groups, music societies, music ‘usergroups’ on the internet, musicians’ website guest books, university music departments and personal associates of the researcher. The only criterion for involvement was that participants found music to be powerful in their experience, and were willing to complete the questionnaire. In this way, the widest possible spread of religious experience (not limited to Christian) was sought. This composition allowed inter-subject comparisons. Since Panzarella (1980) encountered a poor response rate for his study on the phenomenology of aesthetic peak experience, and since that was also the case for Study I, the recruitment process was made as broad as possible to gain a reasonable number of participants. The response rate for Study II was around 27%, though it is not possible to provide an exact figure considering the involvement of internet groups and websites, and questionnaires being passed on by other participants (“viral promotion”).

This resulted in a diverse group of participants (see Table 8.1). Over 250 people responded to the questionnaire. Some were rejected, as the questionnaires were left partly incomplete or were obviously answered without serious consideration. This left 172 completed questionnaires. An incentive for participation was offered, in the form of a 50 dollar music voucher, to try to encourage people to complete the questionnaire. Such incentives are frequently and legitimately used in research today (Singer & Bossarte, 2006). This assisted participation rates a little, but it may have been the cause of some of the ill-considered responses. However only a quarter of the responses qualified for this reward, as a result of the timing of this initiative, and it was not considered to have had an adverse effect on the quality of the legitimate results received.



A wide cross section of demographic characteristics was sought. The distribution of these can be seen in Table 8.1.<sup>1</sup> The effect of religiousness was examined by comparing participants on the basis of their ratings of religiousness (question 7a in Appendix H). Figure 8.1 graphs these ratings. From these, a group formed who rated religion at its lowest rating (1 out of 5 – 36% of participants). This represented a clear desire amongst some to be disassociated from religion. This group, therefore, became the ‘non-religious’ group. The ‘religious’ group was formed from those who rated religion  $\geq 4/5$ , because these were clearly people who considered religion important to them and because it formed a group of equivalent size to the non-religious group (n=61 non-religious and 63 religious). That left an intermediate group in the middle, for whom religion is neither of central importance nor expressly unimportant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Data here was obtained from questions in section A of the Questionnaire found in Appendix H.

<sup>2</sup> Data for this ‘intermediate’ group is included in Table F-1 of Appendix F.

Table 8.1 Demographic characteristics of Participants

<b>Participants (N = 172)</b>			
<b>Age (years)</b>			
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious
Youngest	<b>18</b>	18	19
Oldest	<b>92</b>	85	90
Average age	<b>35.8</b>	35.0	37.3
Median age	<b>27</b>	20	27
<b>Category</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
	Number (%)		
	<b>Entire sample (n=170)</b>	Religious (n=63)	Non-Religious (n=61)
Males	<b>73 (42.94)</b>	27 (42.86)	30 (49.18)
Females	<b>97 (57.06)</b>	36 (57.14)	31 (50.82)
<i>Total</i>	<i>170 (100)</i>	<i>63 (100)</i>	<i>61 (100)</i>
<b>Musical Background</b>			
	Number (%)		
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious
None	<b>12 (7.06)</b>	5 (7.94)	5 (8.20)
Novice	<b>13 (7.65)</b>	5 (7.94)	7 (11.48)
Some experience	<b>43 (25.29)</b>	16 (25.40)	18 (29.51)
Experienced	<b>66 (38.82)</b>	27 (42.86)	20 (32.79)
Professional	<b>36 (21.18)</b>	10 (15.87)	11 (18.03)
<i>Total</i>	<i>170 (100)</i>	<i>63 (100)</i>	<i>61 (100)</i>
<b>Country of Involvement</b>			
	Number (%)		
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious
Australia	<b>135 (79.41)</b>	54 (85.71)	44 (72.13)
International	<b>35 (20.59)</b>	9 (14.29)	17 (27.87)
<i>Total</i>	<i>170 (100)</i>	<i>63 (100)</i>	<i>61 (100)</i>

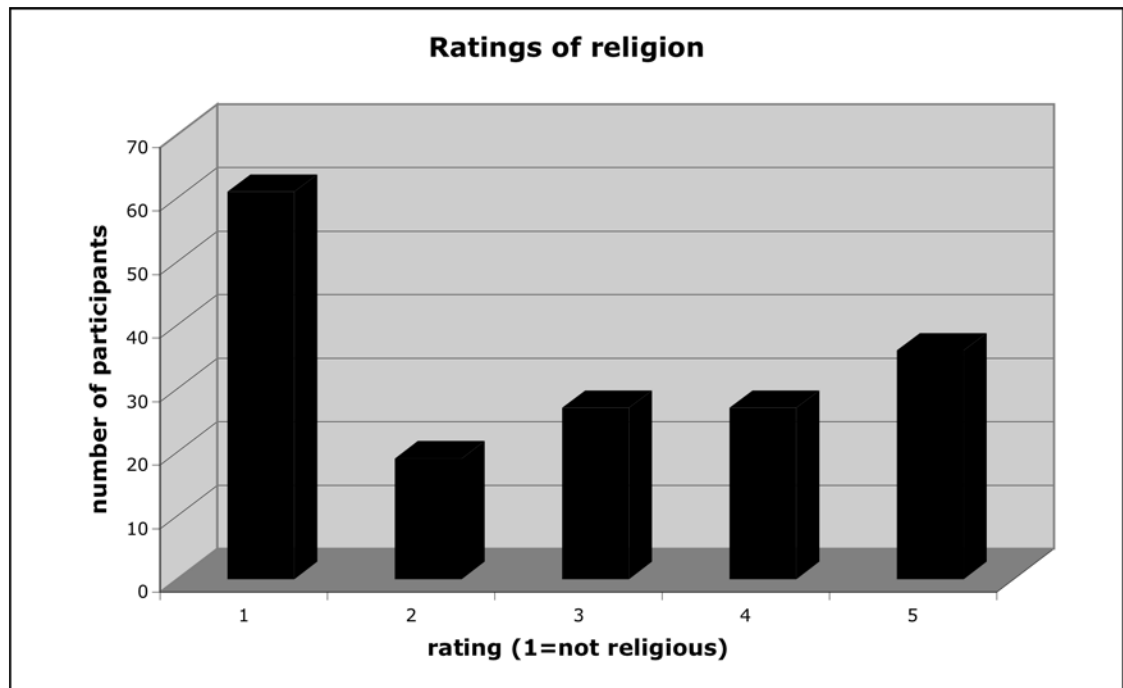


Figure 8.1 Histogram of ratings of religiousness

n=170

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 92 years<sup>3</sup>. There were more young people: 45% of participants aged between 18-25, due largely to the involvement of numerous students from university music departments. There was minimal difference in age according to religious group, with the non-religious group having a slightly higher mean age (37.3 v 35 years respectively). Gender was reasonably balanced, with only a slight dominance of females (57%). This slight dominance of females was in line with other phenomenological research (Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik, 2003; Panzarella, 1980). Once again, religion had only a slight bearing on age, with the non-religious group being evenly spread across gender. In terms of musical background, the majority of participants were on the more experienced end of the spectrum. This was the case across religious groups. This may be, in part, because of the type of groups targeted, such as Universities, choirs, and musician's websites. It might suggest that people who have significant<sup>4</sup> experiences of music tend to be more involved in music (performing instead

<sup>3</sup> See histogram in Figure L-1, Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup> The reader is reminded that the term 'significant' here is not used with statistical implications, but is used in a general sense to mean 'worthy of attention'. This term was used in this way in the questionnaire.

of listening),<sup>5</sup> which would be in line with Lowis (2002).<sup>6</sup> Panzarella (1980) also found that such peak experiences enticed individuals to play their instrument more. Most participants (78.5%) were from Australia,<sup>7</sup> though 35 were from overseas. Countries included Great Britain (19) and the Netherlands (2), as well as one person each from Algeria, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada, China, Greece, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain and Taiwan.

### *Questionnaire Format*

Once again, a questionnaire was used. I argued for the validity of this method in chapter three, and this was confirmed by the data of Study I in a comment from one participant, expressing why it is difficult to examine this type of experience in the laboratory setting: “this sort of experience cannot be intentionally produced” (P 4). Therefore, the questionnaire format from Study I, seeking both qualitative and quantitative data, was used again, with only minor revisions. Appendix H details the question wording, and Table 8.2 outlines the focus for the questions. I will discuss here only the variations to the questionnaire from Study I.

The title of the questionnaire was changed to “*Significant experiences of music*” in an attempt to conceal the fact that this questionnaire was looking at spirituality and, hence, minimise demand characteristics. Other measures aimed at the same issue are described below. Apart from that there were no significant changes to the preamble and introduction.

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<sup>5</sup> A comparison of performing versus listening is not included in the main part of this thesis. Some investigation was done, and that is presented in Appendix J, but there was not space in this thesis to adequately deal with this issue.

<sup>6</sup> Lowis concluded that “people who measured high on musical involvement (according to the measure used here) were more likely to have [peak] experiences triggered by playing a musical instrument (i.e., active condition) or listening to music (i.e., passive condition) than those who did not.” (p.358)

<sup>7</sup> Australia is the country where the study originated.

## Section A

There were a few small changes to the demographic information questions. Question 4<sup>8</sup> was added to examine the level of musical training attained. Whereas Study I sought to investigate the impact of musical background on spirituality, Study II extended this to look at the effect that musical training might have on these experiences as well.

Questions 5 and 6<sup>9</sup> were decoy questions aimed at reducing the salience of question 7<sup>10</sup>. Of particular interest here was the level of religiousness of the participant (question 7). Yet, rather than ask that in isolation, and therefore risk creating a demand characteristic in the following responses, questions 5 and 6 were also asked. Question 7 was deliberately worded in such a way as to be inclusive of any religion.

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<sup>8</sup> Q4: "What is the highest level of technical musical training you have received?"

<sup>9</sup> Q5: "To what extent are you involved in community activities? and What community activities are you most often involved with?" Q6: "To what extent do you enjoy spending time in nature? and What is your favourite activity?"

<sup>10</sup> Q7: "To what extent are you religious? and What, if any, religion do you belong to / practice?"

Table 8.2 Description of the Questionnaire Structure

<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>Introducing the questionnaire</b>	
<b>Section A</b>	
<b>Demographic Detail *</b>	
<b>Section B</b>	
<i>Question</i>	<b>Content</b>
8	Description of the experience
9	Strength of experience
10, 11	Referentialism
12-13	Absolutism
14	Combination *
15	Emotion
16 - 18	Transcendence
19, 20	Spirituality
<b>Section C</b>	
<b>Supplementary Questions</b>	
<i>Question</i>	<b>Content</b>
21, 24, 25, 29	Effect of Lyrics *
22	Deep experience *
23, 27, 30	Absolutism *
26, 28, 31, 32	Referentialism *
33	Final comments *

\* Questions were modified or added from Study I

## Section B

Most of the questions in this section were the same as in Section B and C of Study I. The order was slightly changed, to put the absolute and referential questions together. Question 14<sup>11</sup> was the only addition. While efforts were made to distinguish between absolute and referential meaning<sup>12</sup>, question 14 was added to investigate whether the experience might be the result of both meanings.

<sup>11</sup> Q14: "To what extent is the significance of this experience due to a *combination* of the 'ideas' and the 'music itself'? (Rather than one or the other)"

<sup>12</sup> One of those efforts was the inclusion of this explanation: "It is possible to think of a musical experience as being significant either because of the *music itself* or because of the *ideas associated* with the music. Think of the *music itself* as meaning the technical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, etc. Think of the *ideas associated* with the music as meaning the ideas that become associated with the music, the thoughts in the lyrics or program notes, or the memories or emotions that can become attached to it."

The wording of some of the questions was changed. The General Descriptions question (8)<sup>13</sup> was changed to be inclusive of non-religious people as well as religious. It made suggestions for the participant's description, which included "emotional" and "spiritual".

The referential question (10)<sup>14</sup> referred to the 'ideas associated' with the music, rather than listing 'memories, ideas, concepts and emotions' as in Study I. This was done for the sake of simplicity and readability. This question was also contrasted to the 'music itself', seeking greater clarity between the two types of meaning. A similar contrast was provided in the absolutist question (12)<sup>15</sup>.

### Section C

This third section was new. It involved a series of supplementary questions aimed at seeking more detail on some of the issues probed in Section B. The role of lyrics was examined with four questions, asking whether lyrics were present (24)<sup>16</sup>, and whether the participant regarded them as important for the significance of the experience.

Question 29<sup>17</sup> was added to the later questions as a verification of question 21<sup>18</sup>. These questions were designed to examine the association effect that seemed to be evident in Study I.

Question 22<sup>19</sup> was an extension of the examination of lyrics, and an examination of the idea that the experience can lie deeper than either referential or absolute meaning. There

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<sup>13</sup> Q 8: "Please describe an experience of music you have had that was particularly significant. This might include a performance you attended, one in which you performed, an instance of listening to a recording, an intimate gathering or something else. Please provide the *title(s)*, *style*, *performance details*, *context in which you experienced this*, *your reaction*, *etc.* You might also consider: *Was it emotional, spiritual etc.? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? And so on*"

<sup>14</sup> Q10: "To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the 'ideas associated' with the music (and not the 'music itself')?"

<sup>15</sup> Q12: "To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the 'music itself' (and not the Music's 'associations')?"

<sup>16</sup> Q24: "Did the music in this experience include lyrics?"

<sup>17</sup> Q29: "The lyrics had nothing to do with the significance of this experience."

<sup>18</sup> Q21: "The lyrics were an integral part of this experience; take them away [for example, replacing the words with humming] and it would not have been as significant."

<sup>19</sup> Q22: "There was something about this experience that was *deeper* than just the music or its words."

was some mention in the responses in Study I of the experience ‘meeting deep needs’ or one’s ‘inmost being’, or going ‘to the core’. It is ideas like this that motivated this question about ‘something deeper’. If the significance of the experience lay deeper than the lyrics, deeper than the music itself and its associations, then that may have been an indication of an awareness of spirituality, as was posited in Chapter 1. This question was designed to examine those ideas more objectively.

Three questions (23, 27, 30)<sup>20</sup> further examined the idea that the experience, and the level of spirituality felt, was a result of absolute meaning. These questions, exploring different facets of absolute meaning, were distributed throughout the questionnaire. Question 27 explored the link between absolute meaning and spirituality.

Four questions (26, 28, 31, 32)<sup>21</sup> further examined the idea that the experience, and the level of spirituality felt, was a result of referential meaning. Again, the different questions sought to tap into the various facets of referential meaning; in particular, thoughts (26), ideas (28) and memories (32), as discussed by Meyer (1956). Question 31 explored the link between referential meaning and spirituality.

A final question was added to allow people to express any further thoughts not covered by the questionnaire. Only one question was dropped from Study I for Study II. The last question in sections B and C of Study I,<sup>22</sup> asking whether the significance of the experience was due to the performers or performance, was seen to be similar to the absolutist question and so was regarded as unnecessary.

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<sup>20</sup> Q23: “The significance of this experience related to something in the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation. It was not connected with anything more than this ‘music itself’.” Q27: “Whatever level of spirituality I experienced was related more to the ‘music itself’ than the meaning of the words or some other ‘association’.” Q30: “It was the *quality* of the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation that made this experience significant.”

<sup>21</sup> Q26: “This music made me think of things and it was these thoughts that made the experience significant.” Q28: “It was the ‘ideas associated’ with the music, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that made this experience powerful.” Q31: “It was the ‘ideas’ the music referred to, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that I found to be spiritual.” Q32: “This music brings back memories and it is these that make it powerful.”

<sup>22</sup> That question read: “To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the performers or performance?”



### *Distribution*

The questionnaire was distributed in a variety of ways. 23.8% of responses came through direct email distribution, in which the questionnaire was directly emailed to participants (see Appendix I). 61.6% came through an online survey to which people were directed.<sup>23</sup> 14.6% responded on paper copies returned to the researcher either directly or through the post. Table 8.3 shows how this influenced ratings on the core questions.

Table 8.3 Average ratings for each of the types of questionnaire

<b>Qnr format</b>	<b>Electronic</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Age (years) *	30.0	31.2	64.5
Religion *	2.4	2.9	2.6
Strength	8.8	8.9	9.1
Referential	5.8	6.3	6.5
Absolute	7.2	7.8	8.2
Emotion	7.9	8.3	8.7
Overtaken	7.6	7.8	8.1
Lose track	7.4	7.0	6.7
Transformed	7.5	7.3	7.7
Spiritual	5.7	6.3	7.1

\* These questions were rated out of 5, all other ratings were out of 10.

Chi squared tests were conducted on those items that appeared to be different and it was found that only on *Age* did distribution format have any significant effect ( $\chi^2(2, N = 172) = 24.539, p < 0.001$ )<sup>24</sup>. All other variables were unaffected by the mode of distribution.

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<sup>23</sup> The format of this replicated the format of the E-questionnaire (Appendix I).

<sup>24</sup> Yate's correction was used in Chi squared analyses in this thesis when expected values were small (Furr, 2010).

## Data Analysis

The data analysis for Study II closely resembled Study I, therefore most of it is not discussed again. One difference was that the qualitative spiritual category *Improved / Aided / Transformed* used in Study I was dropped in favour of the category *Meaning / Value / Purpose*. Both of these categories were used in Study I, yet the results were similar, indicating considerable overlap. The *Improved / Aided / Transformed* category was designed to pick up on the idea of the self being benefited rather than ‘dissolved’ in the process of connection. It was dropped in favour of the *Meaning* category, in an effort to reduce complexity. *Meaning* picked up on most of the same ideas, as well as being more central to the concept of spirituality. Furthermore, the *Improved* category was also quite similar to the quantitative question in the transcendence index that asked whether the participant was transformed or strengthened by the experience. Most of the comments referring to this category came from participants who rated transcendence elements at least 8/10.

The question on musical training (question 4) was analysed by dividing participants into three groups based on level of training; *Beginners* had received either no training at all or only very introductory levels, such as ‘a few music lessons’ or ‘high school’. *Intermediate* contained those who had received at least a few years of training, up to the equivalent of grade 7 level. Finally, *Advanced* participants were those who had been trained, or were currently undergoing training at grade 8 or university degree level.

Analyses comparing religious and non-religious groups do not include the intermediate group discussed under ‘Participants’ above. The reason is that these analyses sought to examine the difference between the evidence for spirituality amongst religious and non-religious participants, so the intermediate group was not of interest. All other analyses in these results are focused on evidence for spirituality wherever it occurs, and so involve all participants, including the intermediate group.

### ***Inter-rater reliability***

Two independent judges rated responses to the four open-ended questions on the questionnaire. After an initial discussion as to the boundaries around the categories in question, the author and one independent judge rated responses. There was 76.14% agreement in the coding of all responses, with the highest being for the referential question (77.14% agreement) and the lowest being for the absolute question (74.38% agreement). It was not surprising to see some discrepancy, considering the difficulty in establishing boundaries around many of the categories. For example, deciding whether ‘stronger force’ (P159) falls within the supernatural category, or ‘dramatic’ (P155) is an emotion, was not an easy task. Furthermore, the second judge was not familiar with the categories before performing this task, which led to some discrepancies such as the rating of any relevant idea, rather than only explicitly strong or fundamental ones. When there was disagreement in ratings between judges, discussion took place until agreement was reached. Coding was subsequently revised when necessary. If agreement could not be reached the comment was not included.

### **Limitations**

The main limitation pertinent to Study II, in addition to those discussed for Study I, was the lack of control of culture or habitus. It was recognised in Chapter 2 that culture has a significant influence in shaping meaning in music, which probably includes spirituality. Assuming that is the case, Study II makes no effort to control for this influence. Instead it is focused on the experience of spirituality *however that is mediated*; that is, irrespective of the mediating influence of culture. Although religious context was used in Study I to examine the effects of culture, the comparison of religious groups in Study II is not used to examine culture, primarily because we do not know where that experience occurred. The religious person may or may not have had that experience in the religious context, and so we cannot be certain that comparing religious and non-religious people is the same as comparing religious and non-religious context or habitus.

## Chapter 9 Qualitative analysis of Spirituality and General Descriptions Questions

Following the pattern of Study I, the next two chapters deal with the four qualitative questions from the questionnaire in Study II.<sup>25</sup> In the order that they are dealt with in this results section, I first examine participants' understanding of spirituality (Q 20, section 9.1), to compare against the unsolicited evidence of it in general descriptions of the experiences (section 9.2), as well as in both referential (section 10.1) and absolute (section 10.2) meaning.

### 9.1 Analysis of the Spirituality Question

Responses to question 20 (Appendix H) provided information on how participants understood spirituality. This was important so as to establish how participants understood spirituality, as no definition was provided. Responses here could then be compared to spontaneous reports of spirituality in subsequent questions (sections 9.2, 10.1 and 10.2). This question was placed after the other key qualitative questions to minimise the possibility of priming participants for a spiritual response. Therefore, having explored the experience itself, participants were asked, "To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual?" (Q19) and then, "What does 'spiritual' mean for you in this instance?" (Q20). This section examines responses to the second question.

Responses from all participants were content analysed with respect to the key aspects of spirituality discussed in Chapter 1; transcendence, connection and meaning. Responses that did not fit within those three aspects were included in the 'other' category. For this

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<sup>25</sup> These four questions are questions 20, 8, 11 and 13 in the order they are dealt with here. See Appendix H.

question alone, an additional category; ‘not spiritual’, was added to capture those comments that resisted the term ‘spirituality’. In each of the qualitative analyses, emotion was also examined (though as a separate category to spirituality), thus providing an established response type against which spirituality could be measured. The frequency for each of these categories is shown in Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1.

Table 9.1 Number of participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality, and emotion, for the *Spirituality* question<sup>26</sup>

	<b>All participants</b> n (%)	<b>Religious</b> n (%)	<b>Non-Religious</b> n (%)
Supernatural	35 (20.3)	28 (45.9)	4 (6.7)
Existential	42 (24.4)	14 (23.0)	14 (23.3)
Other people	10 (5.8)	6 (9.8)	4 (6.7)
Environment	12 (7.0)	5 (8.2)	5 (8.3)
Transcendence	43 (25.0)	15 (24.6)	16 (26.7)
Meaning	16 (9.3)	5 (8.2)	5 (8.3)
Emotion	32 (18.6)	5 (8.2)	10 (16.7)
Any spiritual comment <sup>27</sup>	117 (68)	52 (85.2)	36 (60)
Not Spiritual	18 (10.5)	17 (27.9)	5 (8.3)

N=172

**Note:** Percentages are calculated as the percentage of participants in that group that mentioned that category. Totals do not sum to 100% because participants were able to mentioned more than one category.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> The “All participants” column includes the intermediate group who rated religion 2 or 3 out of 5. The examination of the qualitative categories below also includes all participants. Only when I refer to religious or non-religious participants in particular does this analysis exclude the intermediate group.

<sup>27</sup> Figures for ‘any spiritual comment’ were not simply an aggregate of all six categories of spirituality. Participants were able to mention more than one, or even all six categories. In calculating ‘any spiritual comment’, each participant was only rated once for mentions of a spiritual category, regardless of whether they mentioned one, two or even six categories. This was done to provide a fairer comparison; one category of emotion versus one category of spirituality.

<sup>28</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, any reference to each category was counted as one comment about that category. This meant that participants could mention more than one category, but be rated on no more than one mention for each category. So for example, a participant might make two comments about connecting with God and one comment about transcendence. This would be rated as one mention of *supernatural* and one of *transcendence*. Consequently, these percentages are the percentage of participants in that group who rated that category, and therefore the columns do not add up to 100%.

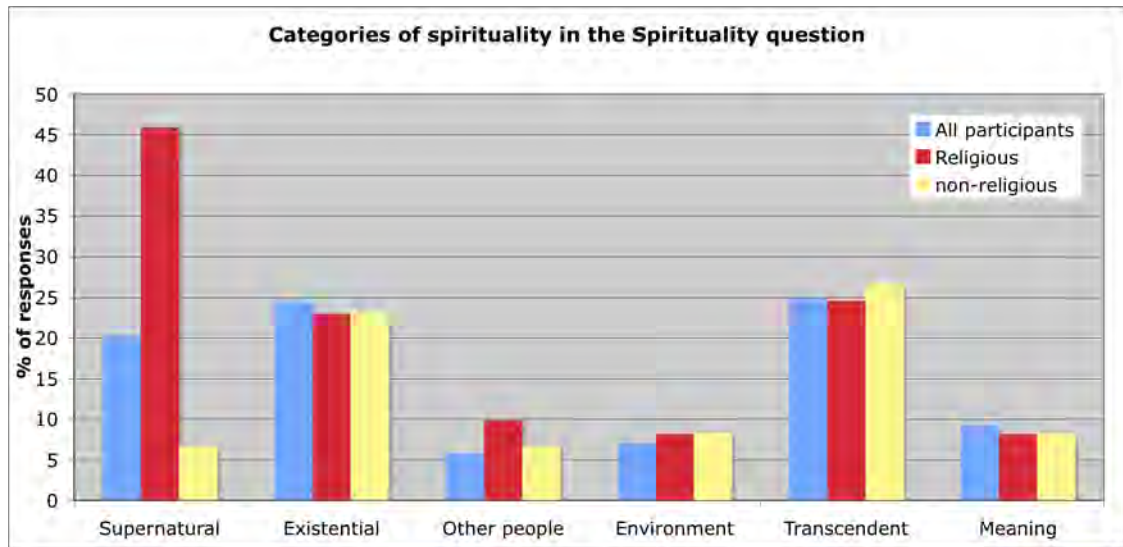


Figure 9.1 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality, as a percentage of total responses, for all participants and according to religious group

Note: ‘Emotion’, ‘Any spiritual comment’ and ‘not spiritual’ are not included in this graph despite appearing in the table because they are not categories of spirituality. These items are dealt with below.

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

One fifth of all participants mentioned some sort of connection to the supernatural. This was the third most frequently represented category, after *Existential* and *Transcendence*. One example is from participant 62: “[the music] brought me to an experience of God and his presence in all creation”. The subject was not always ‘God’, for example, “I had a connection with a higher being or force” (P 11). Occasional reference was made to a connection that lay on the fringe of this category, for example, “stronger force” (P 159) or “something greater than me” (P 59). These were not included in the tally as their meaning was somewhat ambiguous.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was a significant difference between religious groups ( $\chi^2(1, n = 124) = 17.24, p < .001$  with Bonferroni correction), showing that religious people were more likely to mention a connection with the supernatural.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being*

This category received the second highest number of comments, after *transcendence*.

One quarter of all participants commented on this aspect of an intimate, personal connection with the music, suggesting that it was a significant component of the experience of spirituality in music. Comments such as “I felt a change in being, a change in perception of my own purpose in life” (P 55) characterised this category.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups, suggesting that this category had little to do with religious commitment.

There was some indication that this experience of the self could be a form of transcendence. One participant wrote that performances were an opportunity to “leave the practical and mundane world and spend time exploring/ experiencing my inner world” (P 118). This indicated a departing from the physical world, perhaps just to an inner world of the self, or perhaps to that ‘otherworldliness’ of transcendence as well; “some sort of transcendence, a feeling of being outside of normal reality, a deeper sense of self” (P 103). This may be explicable in terms of transcendence and existential connection being concomitant realities; they (can) involve each other.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

Comments expressing a sacred connection were present, but not abundant. This category was the least represented in this question, with only six percent of participants making such comments. A typical example is: “this was based around just four people, all putting thousands upon thousands of fans into a joined experience” (P 163) or “a coming together of two souls feeling the same feeling” (P 39).

In categories such as this one, it was important that the connection was, according to the researchers’ perception, sacred (expressly profound), not simply present. Several comments referred to other people, often in a way in which it was not possible to tell how deep the connection was. For example “people had come together to make and share something so beautiful” (P 80). Such comments were not counted.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

Seven percent of participants made a comment about environment. Some referred to a wider environment in which the experience was felt, such as “Feeling engaged with a wider vision for the world that is in line with God's plan for creation” (P 117). Others focused more on the music and on absorption, or ‘flow’: “being totally 'in the moment', being true to the moment” (P 40). Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant effect of religion.

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

Transcendence scored the highest number of mentions, appearing in one response out of every four. Typical examples included “being taken out of myself and transported (mentally) to some other place” (P 131), or “connect with something greater than the tangible” (P 133). This was sometimes associated with trance; “some kind of trance that one reaches where one doesn't not feel part of ones own body” (P 94). Some comments were close to the supernatural category, such as “taken to a higher plane” (P 75). This particular comment was placed in the transcendent category because there was an obvious element of transportation away from the ‘common experience’ (as Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik 2003 express it), and a ‘higher plane’ refers more to a state or position than to an entity, which characterised the supernatural (See Gomez & Fisher 2003). This highlighted the inter-relatedness of the various aspects of spirituality.

While there was evidence of both withdrawal ecstasy and fusion (as I described them in Chapter 1), data showed that something was happening on the personal level as well. Experiences were sometimes described as uplifting or transformative, as providing a sense of well-being, or even a sense of revelation about oneself.



Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Virtually every comment contained an implicit reference to some form of meaning gained from the experience, but this category required explicit comments about the provision of meaning, value or purpose. Just fewer than 10 percent of participants made comments that were placed in this category. Examples included a reference to a meaning that comes from the music, such as “Listening to the Adagio at this time and being completely one with its message” (P 55), and a sense of personal meaning gained from the encounter, such as “I leave a performance renewed, usually with some personal reflection and contemplation going on” (P 118). One comment also touched on a wider sense of meaning: “part of a greater good” (P 141). The category was also described in terms of ‘inspiration’, ‘understanding’ and ‘renewal’, which relates to James’ (1902/1985) *noetic* knowledge. Other comments mentioned the idea that there was a sense of rightness or contentment or wellbeing in the experience. This related to Raffman’s (1993) *structural ineffability*.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups for this category.

### **Other**

The content analysis identified a few themes that were not captured by the categories above. There was a general notion of some sort of power being involved. People wrote of the experience being powerful or intense, of feeling overcome or overpowered. This was not regarded as a connection with the supernatural because it referred to a general sense rather than a specific entity. Such experiences were not negative or fearful. Otto (1923) identified something similar in the *numinous*, which he said involved a sense of dread that was at the same time fascinating or appealing. Further comments included the notion that the experience was unique or extraordinary or, at least, unusual, and that it was somehow inexplicable, ineffable or intangible: “It can't be explained in words but only felt by the heart” (P 164).

### **Not spiritual**

Just over 10% of participants stated that their experience was not spiritual. (Most of these rated the level of spirituality experienced [Q19] as 2 or 1 on a scale of 0-10.) This occurred when the experience did not fit the participant's own definition of spirituality. Sometimes that definition pertained to God or some religious element, whereas the experience did not: "Spiritual means connection with God. In this case I was just playing a song ... and was thus not spiritual" (P 22). This was particularly true for religious people. The comment, "I take 'spiritual' to mean 'sense of presence/communication with a spiritual being'. I did not feel that at all in this instance" (P 91), was made by someone who rated religion at 4 out of 5.

Since I was interested in what spirituality meant for them in that experience, these comments were classified as 'not spiritual'. At other times, the definition pertained to something beyond themselves, whereas the experience was deeply intra-personal. "I don't see it as spiritual - there is no external object or being at all" (P 108). Others contrasted spiritual with emotional, suggesting that the experience revolved around the latter not the former. Others felt that the term did not mean much at all.

It appeared that more religious people mentioned this category than non-religious people, but that difference was not found to be significant. The initial Chi squared test was significant ( $\chi^2(1, n = 123) = 6.17, p = .013$ ) but once Holms adjustment for multiple comparisons was applied, the result was no longer significant. The small numbers involved did lead to a lack of statistical power, which may have accounted for the lack of significance here.

### ***Emotion and spirituality***

Emotion operated in this study, not as a category of spirituality, but as a related phenomenon, thus allowing for comparison. A range of emotions was evident, from simple emotions such as 'happy' to more complex emotions such as 'peace' (which was frequently reported) or "pure love and amazement and awe" (P 96). Most participants, however, wrote about emotion in a general sense, using the terms 'emotions' or

‘feelings’. For example: “it is a strong emotional experience” (P 67). Typically, the emotions involved were intense, deep emotions. More than one participant mentioned ‘overwhelming emotions’.

There were significantly more mentions of spirituality<sup>29</sup> (117) than emotion (32 – see Figure 9.2) ( $\chi^2(1, n = 172) = 225.78, p > .001$  with Bonferroni correction). This confirmed that spirituality was more prevalent than emotion in descriptions of spirituality. The 32 comments about emotion suggested that there was some overlap between them. This could be conceived as spirituality being a type of emotion, such as in this comment: “Spiritual as in it being overwhelming with emotion [sic]” (P 100), or for participant 84 who mentioned feeling ‘spiritual joy’. Alternatively, spirituality was described as a feeling, with no reference to common emotions: “Something that cannot be seen or touched; some kind of trance that one reaches where one doesn't not feel part of ones own body” [sic] (P 94, emphasis added) or “feeling some connection that goes beyond of you” [sic] (P 69, emphasis added).

Spirituality was otherwise expressed as being distinct from emotion. For example: “it lifted my spirits but left me feeling peaceful or at peace” (P 104). This was evidence for the distinction I made in Chapter 2 in which spirituality was an awareness of something, to which emotion was the response.

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<sup>29</sup> This is the value for ‘any spiritual comment’, not the individual categories of spirituality.

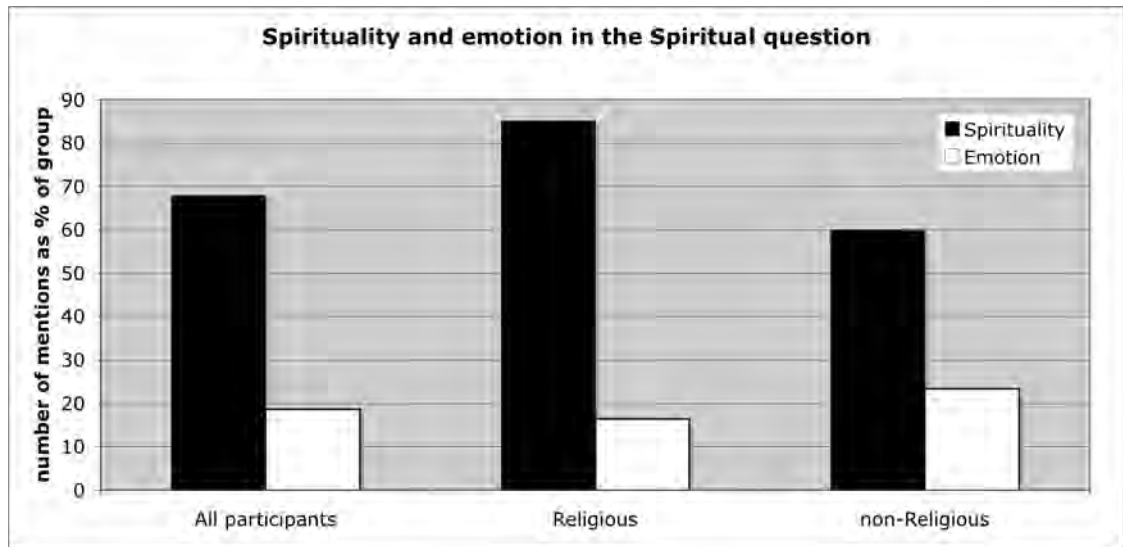


Figure 9.2 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion for all participants and between religious and non-religious participants for the Spiritual question<sup>30</sup>

Religion had a negligible effect on these results. There appeared to be a smaller difference between spirituality and emotion for the non-religious group, yet this difference was still significant ( $\chi^2(1, n = 61) = 34.57, p > .001$ ).

## Discussion

This section examined participants' explanations of their understanding of spirituality (Q 20) in the context of their musical experience. Examining how participants understood spirituality in this question allowed comparisons to be made with evidence for spirituality in responses to the referential and absolute aspects of the music (sections 10.1 and 10.2) and in the experience of music in general (next section), thus answering the main research question.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because each is the percentage of that group who made comments about either spirituality or emotion. It was possible for participants to mention both or neither.

<sup>31</sup> The main research question is: 'Is the spiritual experience best described as a referential (extrinsic) or an absolute (intrinsic) experience?'

These data provided compelling evidence for the presence of spirituality as a phenomenon of music. Ten percent of participants made a point of saying that the experience was not spiritual, yet that was not typically a rejection of spirituality *per se* so much as an indication that this experience did not relate to spirituality as they conceived it. For the remaining 90%, all categories of spirituality were mentioned. Furthermore, both religious and non-religious participants mentioned categories of spirituality significantly more often than emotion. While this was largely due to the focus of the question, it did indicate that participants did not simply revert to emotional language to describe spirituality. This confirmed the importance of the phenomenon of spirituality not only for religious people, as in Study I, but also for non-religious people.

Spirituality was sometimes mentioned in a general sense, such as *sublime* or *mythical* as well as *spiritual* or *the spirit*, but most often it was mentioned in relation to transcendence, connection or meaning. *Transcendence* was the most frequently reported category (43 mentions). This included the notion of *withdrawal ecstasy* that I discussed in Chapter 1; feeling as if one had left corporeality behind.

Connection was also frequently mentioned, though mainly in two of its four categories. Connections with one's *existential* self (42 mentions) and with the *supernatural* (35) were the next most reported categories, while connections with the *environment* (12) and *other people* (10) were the least reported. This demonstrated the relative strength of each of these categories of spirituality, showing that some were more central than others.

As a general sense of connection, the notion of fusion (being part of or at one with some cosmic or larger whole) was evident. Words such as 'unifying' or 'oneness' were used to describe this connection. It was also described as being "in tune with the universe" (P 72), or "at one with the experience" (P 99). Other comments referred to being caught up in some large sense of unity or oneness, or a "grand scale event" (P 162).

Responses demonstrated some overlap between categories, such as between *transcendence* and *supernatural* or *existential*. In Chapter 1, I discussed the overlap between the aspects of connection and transcendence, suggesting that if transcendence

means being transported beyond one's self (Martsolf & Mickley, 1998) then that to which one is transported is the object of connection. Therefore, I contend that descriptions of "experiences of wholeness and unity", which Penman & Becker (2009, p. 63) described in transcendent terms, are better understood in terms of connection. So too, in this comment from the SEM study, we see both aspects, including *withdrawal* and *fusion* ecstasy: "boundaries are wiped out, [and] I am one with the universe" (Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik 2003, p. 182). It is a sense, and an experience, of a universal bond between human, nature and 'something there' (Hay 2007).

These ideas of withdrawal and fusion also related to the third aspect, *meaning*, in the sense that spirituality is about a search for ultimate meaning, or the sacred. For some participants at least, this meaning was found in association with being part of something much bigger than themselves. It may be in this sense that being caught up in something powerful, and the sense that this was right or good, were involved. *Meaning* was not strongly represented, but that may have been due to the focus of participants, who were commenting on the *substance* of spirituality, not on its *function* (as distinguished by Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

This relationship between the categories demonstrated that they were tapping into the same essential nature of the experience. The additional ideas expressed in the 'other' section, such as power, uniqueness and intangibility or ineffability, may be thought of as characterising the experience of transcendence, connection and meaning. They were not included in tallies for those categories because they were not specifically relevant to them.

These data also indicated that spirituality was not exclusively a product of religion. Only in one category (*supernatural*) did religious people make significantly more mentions than non-religious people. This suggested that religion did have some influence on spirituality, namely on the interpretation of the experience as pertaining to some sort of higher power. This was evidence of Laski's (1961) 'overbelief', or Spickard's (1993) distinction between the experience and the language used to express it. Referring to the distinction made in Chapter 1, between conceptual and experiential knowledge, these findings suggested that religion could affect the conceptual

understanding of spirituality, in terms of the concept of a supernatural connection, but that it did not affect the experience of spirituality.

Religion was, however, not the only interpreter of these experiences. Participant 108 used a different interpretation that focused on the internal workings of the individual: “I don't see it as spiritual - there is no external object or being at all ... It's all IN me, not outside”. This reinforced the importance of dealing with spirituality *before* its interpretations – just as Otto (1923) attempted to deal with the sacred (heilig) *before* its interpretations; as the numinous. This meant dealing with it as an experience that may be hard to conceptualise. As participant 161 wrote, it was “something significant that touches you in a way you can't describe”.

There was considerable overlap between spirituality and emotion. Although this question asked about spirituality, 32 participants mentioned emotion. Just as in Study I, various participants identified emotion as being either linked with, lying beyond, or in place of, spirituality.<sup>32</sup> Some comments expressed emotions as a response while other comments expressed an experience or awareness of some ‘deeper reality’, something more than ‘bioregulatory reactions’, as Damasio (2004) referred to emotions. They expressed an awareness of ‘something there’, as Hay (2007) put it. These findings supported the idea that spirituality and emotion are interconnected planes of experience, and indicated that spirituality was at least as important as emotion in that it was as frequently mentioned, and more so in reference to this qualitative question.

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<sup>32</sup> For example these comments from Study I - “*beyond physical, mental or emotional experience*” (P 36), or “*the music engaged the depths of my emotion, and hence went beyond the physical to the spiritual*” (P 45).

## Summary of findings

The findings from the spirituality question can be summarised as follows:

- 1) There was strong evidence for spirituality in significant experiences of music – all six proposed categories were identified in participants' own definitions of spirituality.
  - Three of the categories were frequently mentioned; *Transcendence*, *Existential and Supernatural*, while three were less frequently mentioned; *Other people*, *Environment* and *Meaning*. The first three are, therefore, more central to the spiritual experience according to these participants.
  - An interrelationship between the categories was evident.
  - Ten percent of participants claimed the musical experience was not spiritual, in that their experience did not fit what they considered spirituality to be.
- 2) Spirituality and emotion were seen to be interconnected planes of experience
  - Emotions involved were typically intense emotions.
  - Emotion was typically a response, whereas spirituality was an awareness or perception of 'something there'.
- 3) Spirituality was not a product of religion.
  - Religious people were more likely to mention the category *Supernatural*.
  - Religion provided an interpretation of the experience, yet this only accounted for some aspects of spirituality, indicating that the experience preceded the interpretation.
  - Religion was not the only interpretation possible.



## 9.2 Analysis of the General Description Question

The first music-related question on the questionnaire (question 8 – Appendix H) asked participants to provide a general description of their strong experience of music. This section examines those responses, looking for evidence of the six categories of spirituality, as discussed above. The results are detailed in Table 9.2 and Figure 9.3.

Table 9.2 Number of participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality, and emotion, in the General Description of the experience.

	All participants n (%)	Religious n (%)	Non-Religious n (%)
	n=172	n=63	n=61
Supernatural	8 (4.7)	7 (11.5)	1 (1.7)
Existential	15 (8.7)	4 (6.6)	5 (8.3)
Other people	22 (12.8)	5 (8.2)	5 (8.3)
Environment	30 (17.4)	10 (16.4)	10 (16.7)
Transcendence	16 (9.3)	1 (1.6)	8 (13.3)
Meaning	17 (9.9)	7 (11.5)	7 (11.7)
Emotion	76 (44.2)	34 (55.7)	26 (43.3)
Any spiritual comment	74 (43)	27 (42.3)	24 (40)

N=172

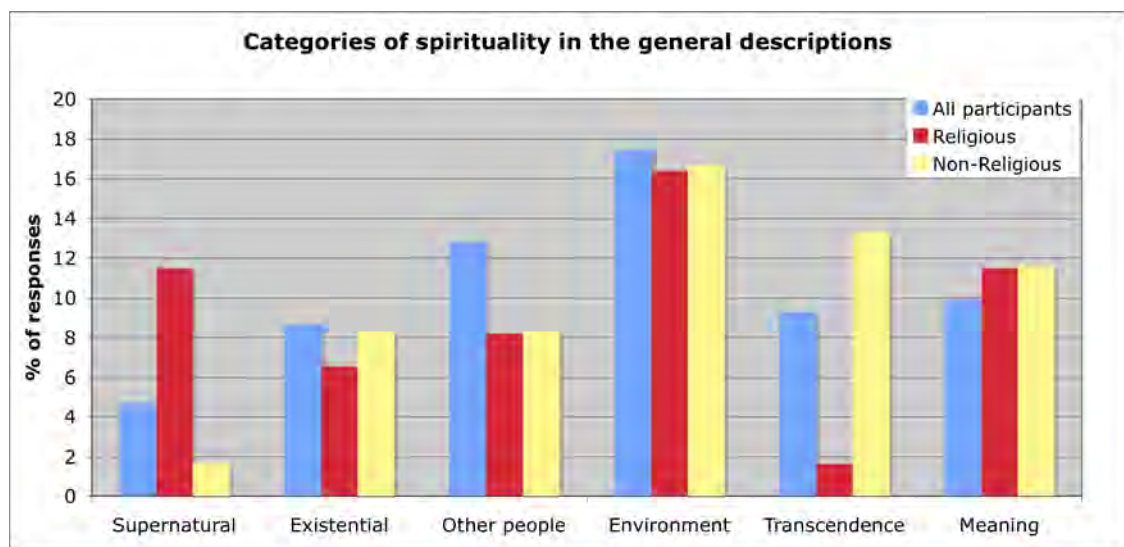


Figure 9.3 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the General Description of the experience as a percentage of total responses.

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

This was the least represented category, with only eight participants making such mention. Most often, this was related to God. For example: “I felt God's presence as we sung to Him” (P 137). Such theistic comments all came from people in the religious group. Another comment came from the non-religious group, and referred to an unknown entity: “[We] sensed another presence in the room” (P 65). Sometimes the experience reminded the person of some aspect of God or the connection they had with him, while at other times it brought a direct sense (feeling) of his presence. Furthermore, one comment described the connection as being after the experience, rather than during it, while lying in bed at home, thanking God for the experience (P 11).

There may have been an effect of religion (7 comments by religious people and 1 from non-religious), as there was in the *spiritual* question. But as cell sizes were not both >5 a chi squared test could not test for significance. One observed difference was the reporting of a ‘being’, rather than ‘God’, by non-religious participants.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being*

Fifteen participants made reference to this sort of connection. This deep experience of the self related to the heart: “It always feels as though it opens up my heart and lets joy and hope flood in” (P 53), or to the soul: “[it] made the soul sing too” (P 40). There was a sense of connectedness between all the parts of one's being: “My mind and body felt stimulated and connected” (P 15). Important here was the sense that one does not simply listen to music in the same way that one might do an activity, but that it becomes inexorably part of one's self: “I FEEL music right through my core. I don't hear it with my ears - it is inside me” (P 116). This comment was somewhat related to the *environment* category, in that it hinted at a profound connection with the music. Nevertheless, it related better to the existential category because of its focus on the impact on ‘the core’. Another comment; “total relaxation” (P 17), at one level related to an emotion, but at another level related to a state of being brought about by the music.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

22 participants made reference to this category. Most often they were focused on the idea of being connected with others who were also involved in the music: “I felt at unity with the people around me” (P 74). Sometimes this was a feeling that was expected to last well into the future: “the act of sharing it connected me with those people forever” (P 34). Other comments referred to a connection between a listener and a performer: “When close friends of mine performed this piece I was even more moved because people I loved were performing music I loved” (P 145). Participant 115 identified a connection with someone through music in general, rather than through a specific experience, when he described (in the General Description question) how he saw his Dad play when he was five, before dying when he was just seven: “Since then I enjoy playing & listening, sort of like a connection to him.”<sup>33</sup>

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

Of all the categories of spirituality, this was the most frequently mentioned. 30 people made reference to either the musical or physical environment surrounding the experience. Comments relating to the musical environment focused on being caught up in the music, not unlike the idea of *flow*. For example “It felt as though my inhibitions were gone and for those few minutes I realised a medium through which I completely forgot about everything except the music I was playing” (P 6). This was also the case as a listener: “one feels as if they are part of the music and not merely a listener” (P 125). Other related terms included ‘absorbed’, ‘totally engrossing’, and ‘in the zone’. One

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<sup>33</sup> The question of whether there is a difference in the experience when one is listening as opposed to playing is taken up in Appendix J.

participant wrote about “how amazingly well I was playing (!), with no seeming control over what I was doing!” [sic] (P 28). Sometimes this included something like a sense of déjà vu: “it seems like I always knew it” (P 69). It also, at times, involved a connection with the musical instruments being played: “I was able to really connect with my guitar” (P 148).

The second sense of this category was a connection with the physical environment. The degree of description in some of the responses indicated just how significant the physical space was. Participant 57 wrote about “a sensory, non-musical element to my reaction, due to the context (the darkness of the church, the smell of incense and flowers, the quiet purposefulness of the clergy as they removed everything from the altar and the sanctuary)”. While this was not part of the music itself, it certainly contributed to the musical experience. There was also a wider sense of connection with the environment spanning a longer period of time: “An overwhelmingly strong sense of connection with the history of the building, the city, the country, the planet and the universe” (P 109).

Chi squared tests indicated that the number of comments was not significantly different for both religious groups.

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

Almost one in ten participants wrote about this sense of moving beyond the ordinary. Often the word ‘transcendence’ was used: “[it] meant to me that humans could indeed create powerful beauty and soaring transcendence together.” Others described what that might mean: “Being totally swept away by the music and forgetting my surrounds” (P 14), or “I had a sort of out of body experience where I was watching myself play. It was intense, timeless and over very quickly” (P 25). Here the distortion of time is apparent, or withdrawal ecstasy. Sometimes transcendence referred to leaving this place, as for participant 14 above, while at other times, it referred to being transported to another place: “I felt like I was on a higher plane of existence” (P 33).

Some comments were located on the periphery of this category. Participant 72 wrote of feeling “my body dancing without my mind being involved”. While this was not counted as a transcendent comment, because it was not specific enough, it was very much like descriptions of trance, which are transcendent. Related to this was the following idea: “I felt that my singing was taken over and that it was not me whose voice I could hear” (P 4). Again, this was not really transcendence in the sense of moving beyond something, but it implied being taken over by something bigger, and that draws in the ideas of *fusion* discussed in Chapter 1.

It appeared that more non-religious participants reported this category (8 as opposed to 1), yet chi squared tests indicated that that difference was not significant once the Bonferroni adjustment was made ( $\chi^2(1, n = 124) = 5.67, p = .31$ ). This may be due to low cell counts, and so we cannot be certain whether religious participants may have described their experience in terms other than transcendence.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Ten percent of participants said that this was part of their experience. One participant wrote of a “feeling of ... incredible clarity of purpose and meaning” (P 103). In every one of these comments, the meaning that was spoken of was profound: “sounds that evoked such meaning in the audience that a number left with tear-stained cheeks” (P 146). The significance of those meaningful encounters could have long-term effects: “whatever happens in life I’ll be fine if I have this music to listen to” (P 96). ‘Purpose’ is one word sometimes used to describe this, and it was clear that only some experiences provided this: “It is definitely of spiritual significance, in a way that gives more purpose than other forms of music” (p 23). The notion of ‘rightness’ was expressed by some participants: “I felt like ... I was ‘coming home’ spiritually” (P 33) and “I felt a sense of perfect belonging, like I was meant to be here. Everything just felt right” (P 26). It was as if, in music, for a moment, the struggle of life and its inherent inadequacy was left behind and perfection was attained.

Again, chi squared tests indicated that the number of comments from both religious groups was not significantly different

## Other

A number of comments and terms did not fit the categories described above. The most significant of these was a general sense of spirituality. 31 participants used the word ‘spiritual’, including its derivatives. That alone made it the most frequently reported aspect of spirituality (18%).<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, when other spiritual-related terms such as ‘animated’ or ‘magical’, ‘ecstatic’, ‘numinous’, ‘other worldly’, and ‘mystical’ were included, it became a very prominent aspect of the description of the experience of music.

An overall sense of connection was also evident. The sense of *fusion* was apparent in these responses. One participant mentioned a connection to a “universal sadness” (P 37) that was brought about by the music. Another described it as the “complete integration of everything in transcendent musical experience” (P 62). This aspect was reported less frequently here than for the spirituality question. For some, there was a sense of being overtaken or overwhelmed by some greater reality of which one is a part. For others, there was a sense that one was caught up into something greater, or transported to another realm. Sometimes this involved a sense of withdrawal ecstasy. For example: “for those few minutes I realised a medium through which I completely forgot about everything except the music I was playing” (P 6). Nevertheless, this could bring about a heightening of self rather than its dissolution: “I felt that I was on autopilot, yet at the same time hyper-aware and with everything under absolute control” (P 25).

A number of terms were used to describe the effect of this experience: ‘cathartic’, ‘intense’, ‘satisfying’, ‘overwhelming’, ‘stimulated’, and ‘freedom’. A term like ‘yearning’, although also an emotion, related to the searching aspect of spirituality that George et al. (2000) discussed. The range of terms used illustrated the idea that there are not enough words to describe an ineffable experience: “The music touched me so deeply beyond what words can convey” (P 55).

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<sup>34</sup> The reader is reminded that this general designation of spirituality was not included as one of the categories of spirituality, nor was it counted within another of the categories. This was done because the categories were looking for specific aspects of the phenomenon rather than a general identification of it, which could be picked up as it has been done here.

Mention was made of physical responses to these experiences, including tears, goosebumps, shivers, chills, was 'breathtaking', and even 'orgasmic', and made them want to dance. This was in line with Gabrielsson's (2010) findings, but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

### ***Emotion and spirituality***

Almost half (44%) of participants mentioned emotion (see Figure 9.4). Simple and complex emotions were mentioned. Some comments touched on interesting aspects of emotion such as the positive experience of negative emotions: "sense [of] deep sadness being present but not in a 'dark' way" (P 37), or emotion's ineffability: "it's a feeling only music can touch" (P 96). There was sometimes a sense of unexpected emotion or of being overcome: "not expecting this level of emotion at all", or "I started crying. It was completely unexpected" (P 83). Behind these expressions was often a deep life issue, such as the death of a loved one, as if the music touched these issues in some sub-conscious way.

There was no significant difference between the overall number of comments relating to spirituality (74) and to emotion (76). This showed that spirituality was just as much part of these significant experiences as emotion. When comments that mentioned spirituality in some general sense (such as 'spiritual') were included, there were 82 comments relating to spirituality. Although this was more, the difference between spirituality and emotion was still not significant. There was also no significant difference between spirituality and emotion for either the religious or non-religious groups. The religious group appeared to rate emotion more frequently, but this was not a significant difference.

Some people described their experience as both emotional and spiritual. This may be partly due to the suggestions made in the introduction to the question.<sup>35</sup> One comment stated that the music was "so moving that it's spiritual" (P 167). Others suggested the

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<sup>35</sup> The question contained the following explanation: "Please provide the title(s), style, performance details, context in which you experienced this, your reaction, etc. You might also consider: Was it emotional, spiritual etc.? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? And so on. "

experience was spiritual but not emotional: “it wasn't emotional as such, but has vital importance regarding my spirituality with music” (P 19). These comments were usually related to a flow type experience of connection with the music. The focus was consequently not on an emotional feeling but on a sense of “how amazingly well I was playing (!), with no seeming control over what I was doing!”[sic] (P 28), which related to the connection with environment discussed above. Religion had no significant effect on these findings, even though there appeared to be more mentions of emotion by religious people.

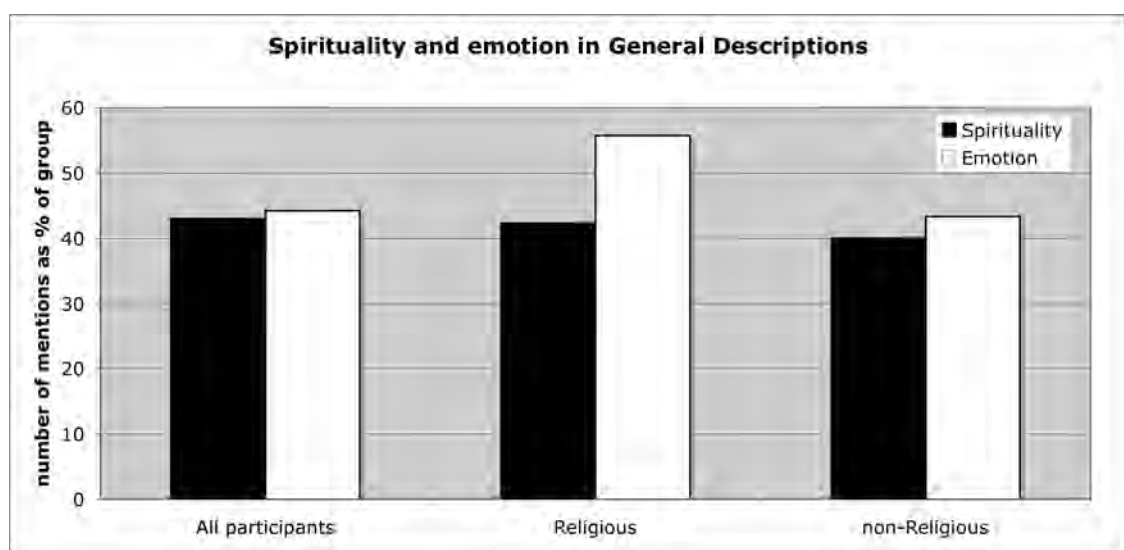


Figure 9.4 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion for all participants and between religious and non-religious participants for the General descriptions

Some comments indicated that while spirituality and emotion were both present, they were distinct: “It was emotional and spiritual at the same time” (P 61). While most comments did not seek to contrast the two, a number described spirituality in terms of a feeling: “oratorio performances were always tinged with a special spiritual feeling” (P 41), and “Feeling of being transported elsewhere, of incredible clarity of purpose and meaning” (P 103).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Other comments included: “A very spiritual feeling at a time of some loneliness” (P 100), “I have perceived a feeling of total relaxation” (P 17), “I felt removed from my body” (P 28), “A feeling of not being aware of self” (P 39), “Some people would probably call this spiritual experiences. I don't have words for it. I guess it makes me feel like I am more then just a body. It is as if for a moment I am



## Discussion

Spirituality was clearly evident in these general descriptions of musical experience, showing that it was an important aspect to the musical experience. The three key aspects of spirituality - connection, transcendence and meaning - were all evident. Two of the categories of connection (*environment* and *other people*) were the most frequently reported (30 and 22 mentions) while a third, *supernatural*, was least mentioned (8). Evidence of a profound connection with the music (*environment*) was of particular note. This question especially permitted a glimpse of the profound way in which people can be 'caught up' into the music, perhaps 'possessed' by it, in such a way that it can even feel as if they have always known it. This connection with the musical environment was the most frequently reported category. Yet, more frequent than any of the categories, was reference to spirituality in some general sense. The total number of participants who mentioned spirituality was no different from the number who mentioned emotion, which, taken together with the other findings, supported the hypothesis that spirituality will be as important as emotion in significant experiences of music.

The number of comments in each category was somewhat different from the number in the spirituality question (see Figure 9.5). The most frequently mentioned categories in the spirituality question (*transcendent*, *existential* and *supernatural*) were the least mentioned in the general description, and vice versa.<sup>37</sup> This is an intriguing finding, which could be explained by the focus of the question. The spirituality question was

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*detached from daily life.*" (P 67), and *"I felt like I was numb lost within time and space so driven by the music and that's why I felt like breaking away from the focused self and look at myself to realize how much I was enjoying the moment"* (P 73).

The following comment might be simply referring to emotion, though the 'heart' is often associated with spirituality: *"It always feels as though it opens up my heart and lets joy and hope flood in to the point where I feel a heaviness (not unpleasant) in my chest"* (P 53).

The following comment mentioned both feelings of spirituality and feelings of emotion: *"I felt my body dancing without my mind being involved, like a kind of trance, and a feeling of bliss stayed with me for some hours afterwards"* (P 72).

<sup>37</sup> Apart from the categories *other people*, *environment* and *meaning* these differences between the spirituality and the general descriptions questions were significant: *Supernatural* -  $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 16.95, p < .001$ ; *Existential* -  $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 12.79, p = .005$ ; *Transcendence* -  $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 12.35, p = .006$ . *Emotion* was also significantly different -  $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 17.93, p < .001$ .

focused on spirituality as an aspect of the nature of the experience, whereas the general description question was focused on describing the experience. Hills and Argyle (1998) noted some difference in their comparison of musical and religious experiences. Their findings differed, in that they found that some aspects of transcendence, such as ‘loss of sense of self’, were higher for musical experiences than religious ones. However, they regarded this as counter-intuitive, thereby suggesting that the findings of this study were not unexpected. The focus of the question may have led some to write nothing about a spiritual experience even though it may have been present. (This is a limitation of self-report studies.) The high ratings of spirituality discussed in Chapter 11 indicate that this may well have been the case.

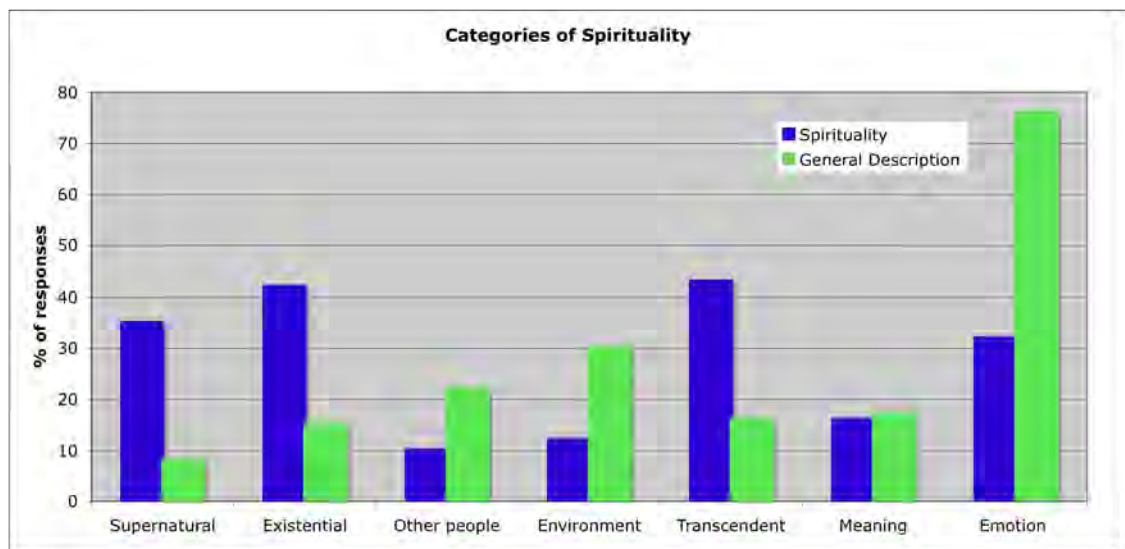


Figure 9.5 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality, as a percentage of total responses, comparing the General Description and the Spirituality question

This general descriptions question most closely resembled Gabrielsson’s (2010) SEM study, and particularly the SEM category *Existential and transcendent aspects*, so it is instructive here to make some comparisons. The first of his three components, *existential aspects*, bore much similarity with this study. There was not the same focus on a sense of life or being as was reported in the SEM study, but that may be simply the way comments were expressed in this thesis. For example, participants here mentioned

mind or body or soul, rather than life. The fact that the SEM study was conducted with Swedish people and then translated into English may also have affected the terminology used. The second SEM component, *transcendental aspects*, was very similar to my findings. All the aspects they identified were also evident in this study. The main difference in this thesis was that ideas related to the sense of cosmic unity were not included under transcendence but under connection. This is a taxonomic issue, since Gabrielsson did not have a connection category.

The third aspect in the SEM study, *religious experiences*, is mostly relevant here, although my focus was broader, not being limited to religion. That is why their first aspect, *general religious experience*, was not apparent in this study. Instead, there was a strong presence of general spiritual experience. This again may have been due to language or culturally specific terminology. The remainder of the categories were present, though often in a spiritual sense rather than specifically relating to a religious idea. It was only the final aspect in the 2003 study, *religious doubt*, that was not at all apparent in this study, because that dealt with doubt about God's existence or care. Taken together, these findings show that there was a great deal of similarity between the findings of the SEM project and this study, and that some of the findings here further nuance those of the SEM project.

Spirituality was just as frequently mentioned as emotion in these experiences of music, which supported the second hypothesis of Study II.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between emotion and spirituality was expressed in a variety of ways, from the two being mentioned in tandem, to the rejection of spirituality (which typically related to a definition based on religion), to the rejection of emotion (due to a preferred focus on the connection with the music), to an interconnection between spirituality and emotions that were not simple but deep or profound. There was some recognition of a distinction between the two, with spirituality often referred to as a feeling relating to some awareness of something sacred or transcendent. This led me to describe them as interconnected planes of experience.

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<sup>38</sup> This hypothesis read: "Spirituality will be as important as emotion in significant experiences of music - Spirituality will be evident; experienced in ways similar to emotion. Yet a distinction will be apparent in the sense of spirituality being an awareness where emotion is a response."

Religion had no significant effect on the reporting of spirituality. There appeared to be some effects, such as more *supernatural* comments by religious people and more *transcendence* comments by non-religious people, as per Study I, but none of these were significant. It is possible these differences may have been significant if the number of participants was greater and more statistical power had been available, especially considering the differences for the spirituality question. Nevertheless, these data did indicate that religion only had an effect on the interpretation of an experience. That seems to be the sentiment in this comment: “I think it's probably the feeling religious people get when they're at church singing emotional hymns and feeling connected to everyone and being inspired and that's why they feel god's talking to them” (P 96). Hence, where religious people were drawn to an explanation in terms of God or a higher power, non-religious people tended toward an explanation in terms of transcendence. This suggested that the experiences of religious and non-religious people were equivalent. It was the interpretation that differed. This finding supported and nuanced the third hypothesis.

## Summary of findings

The findings from the general descriptions of significant experiences of music can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Spirituality was evident in general descriptions of musical experience, confirming that it was an important part of significant experiences of music
  - *Environment* was the most frequently reported, with all other categories also reported.
  - The most frequently reported categories in the spiritual question (*Transcendence, Existential and Supernatural*) were the least frequently reported in this question – possibly due to the focus of the question.
  - Some interrelationship between the categories was evident, including *fusion* and *withdrawal ecstasy*.
- 2) Spirituality was as important as emotion, as there was no difference between the number of participants who commented on either. They were also seen as distinct yet interconnected planes of experience.
- 3) Spirituality was not a product of religion.
  - Differences in *supernatural* and *transcendence* may have been significant if more statistical power were available.
  - Religion did appear to influence the interpretation, but not the experience, of spirituality.

## Chapter 10 Qualitative Analysis of Referential and Absolute Meaning

In the previous chapter, I examined the way participants described spirituality and then evidence for spirituality in their general description of their significant musical experience. In this chapter, I examine how spirituality is involved in the referential and absolute aspects of those experiences. Section 10.1 looks at the referential, and section 10.2 the absolute, aspects of those experiences.

### 10.1 Analysis of the Referential Question

After describing the experience in general, participants were asked about the degree to which the experience was due to ideas and associations outside of the music (referential content). They were then asked what these associations were (question 11 – Appendix H). Responses to this open-ended question were then analysed for occurrences of each of the six categories of spirituality. Results from this analysis are shown in Table 10.1 and Figure 10.1.

Table 10.1 Number of participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality, and emotion, for the *referential* question

	All participants n (%)	Religious n (%)	Non-Religious n (%)
	n = 172	n = 63	n = 61
Supernatural	12 (7.0)	12 (19.7)	0 (0)
Existential	9 (5.2)	0 (0)	7 (11.7)
Other people	18 (10.5)	7 (11.5)	8 (13.1)
Environment	13 (7.6)	4 (6.6)	6 (10)
Transcendence	6 (3.5)	1 (1.6)	4 (6.7)
Meaning	12 (7.0)	6 (9.8)	5 (8.3)
Emotion	36 (20.9)	16 (26.2)	9 (15.0)
Any spiritual comment	56 (32.6)	24 (39.3)	22 (36.7)

N=172

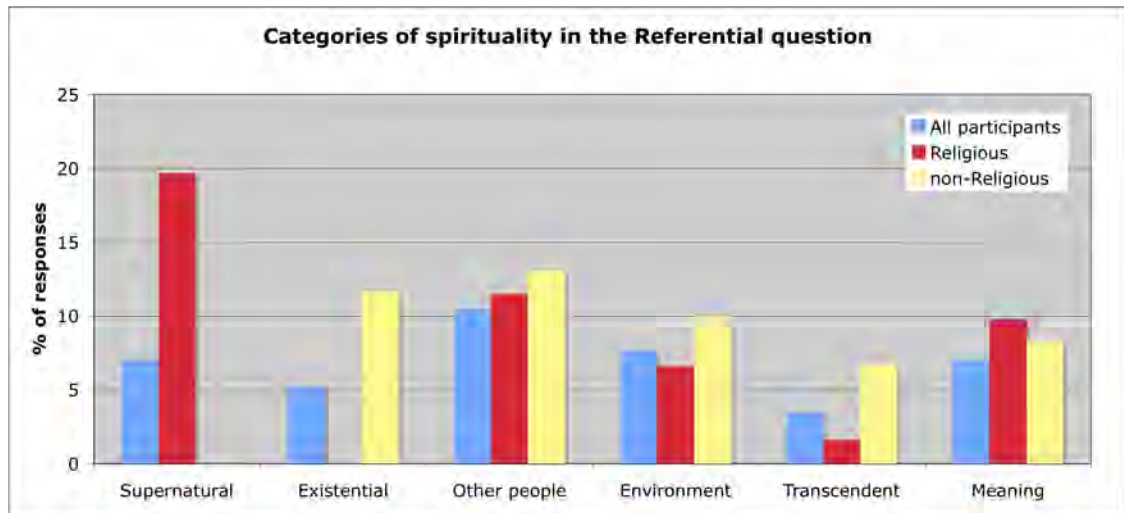


Figure 10.1 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the referential question, as a percentage of total responses, for all participants and according to religious group

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

Compared to Study I, there were not many comments relating to this category. All 12 comments came from people in the religious group. (Chi squared tests indicated that this difference between religious groups was significant:  $\chi^2(1, n = 124) = 11.62, p = .012$ .) A typical comment was: “the majesty of God. The awesome world he has created and the best gift in the world - his son” (P 113). The dominance of the religious group on this category corresponded to similar findings in the previous sections. Yet it was noted that there were not even any references to the supernatural in a wider sense from other participants, as there were in the spirituality question. This showed that the supernatural was not a dominant part of what the music referred to, especially for non-religious people.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one’s own being*

While this category was strongly present in responses to the spirituality question, it was only marginally present in these responses. Only one in 20 people made such a reference. One example was: “Feeling free. Floating free. Being more than a body.

Being unique. Love” (P 67). Seven of the nine mentions came from non-religious participants (as against 0 for the religious group). Chi squared tests indicated that this difference was initially significant but once either the Bonferroni or Holms’ tests of significance were applied it was not significant ( $\chi^2(1, n = 124) = 7.23, p = .013$ ). In Study I there appeared to be more existential comments in the religious context than the non-religious, but, again, this was not significant. While these two findings appear to be contradictory, there was insufficient data to be sure.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

Eighteen participants commented on this connection, making it the most frequently reported category. This was in contrast to the spirituality question, in which this category received the least number of comments, suggesting it was the most marginal. Terms such as ‘coexistence’, unity’, ‘bonds’ and ‘being one’ were typical, as well as comments like participant 58 who mentioned his deceased wife and how “I use(?) Russian music to reconnect with her” [sic]. Sometimes the connection was with people who shared the same powerful experience, but other times it related to great tragedy or to deep experiences, such as death: “the work is indelibly linked with grief, pain and loss of my mother's death” (P 118). Evident also is what Davies (1978) described in the idea ‘darling they’re playing our song’: “we both enjoyed listening to these songs and made it ours” (P 18).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

This category received the second highest number of comments (13). Though not a large group (8%), the number was similar to the spirituality question. An example was: “I was surrounded by the sound - I was a part of it, and creating it, and hearing it, all at the same time” (P 88). Comments sometimes related to the musical environment (such as the one just quoted), and sometimes to the physical environment, in which the



experience took place. Participant 60, for example, described a concert in a Roman amphitheatre in Caesarea under a full moon: “the beauty of that night and its historic resonances moved us all to ecstatic heights”. Another comment referred to an environment different from the one in which the experience actually took place: “Hearing the tabla made me feel closer to my homeland – India” (P 128).

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

Only six participants mentioned this. For example “escapism, free-ness, being able to express without boundaries” (P 78). Sometimes it was in terms of freedom, sometimes in terms of timelessness, and sometimes generally as ‘transcendence’. Contrary to the spirituality question, yet in line with Study I, this was the least represented category of spirituality here. This suggested that transcendence did not typically lie among the external associations that became attached to music.

The reason for this may have been because transcendence was hindered by the need to rationally process something. One comment indicated that it was familiarity that facilitated transcendence: “it was a familiar story therefore I could lose myself in the music, performances etc” (P 143). Thus, when one is unhindered by the need to consciously process something, free to go beyond the corporeality of the music, then transcendence is possible.

Chi squared tests indicated that no significant difference between religious groups was evident here, partly due to some very small sample sizes.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Twelve participants mentioned this category of spirituality. Comments were included here only if they expressed an explicit sense of meaning coming from the experience, rather than a general sense of the experience being meaningful. For example: “it

conveyed a sense of purpose” (P 153) and “this hymn came to have so much meaning for me” (P 98). Often, this meaning arose from the lyrical content, as opposed to the music itself. For example: “the lyrics and idea of the song are definitely a contributing factor to why the song has such an impact on me” (P 96). This was not the same as a sense of meaning arising solely from the music itself, and yet, as I discussed in the introduction to Study II, the lyrics formed an inextricable part of the musical experience and could not be dismissed so easily. On that basis, and so long as the meaning did not come solely from the lyrics, these comments were included.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups for this category.

### **Other**

There were several references to a general category of spirituality, including terms like ‘spiritual’ and ‘life’. There were also references to an overall sense of connection.

While I have focused on four instantiations of connection,<sup>1</sup> comments revealed the overall sense as well: “the music, text, biographical associations, performance aspects all fuse in a way that made this a supreme moment” (P 56). This related to the concept of fusion; the sense of merging with the object of connection.

There was some reference here to the category *Transformed / Improved / Aided* that I included in Study I, but dropped in this study. For example: “I was being appreciated for something I had created” (P 11). One participant also mentioned the ‘after life’, which is, in one sense, an aspect of transcendence, but was not included as such because it is taken as a future state rather than a current experience of transportation. The notion of searching for or desiring something through the experience was evident: “the concept of being lost and searching for something or someone” (P 157). The sense that the search had been successful was also evident: “the feeling that I had discovered something very special” (P 172).

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<sup>1</sup> The four instantiations are i) supernatural connection, ii) existential connection, iii) connection to other people, and iv) connection with the environment.

### *Emotion and spirituality*

This section shows that emotion was a prominent aspects of the referential experience, but not more prominent than spirituality. One fifth (21%) of participants referred to emotion. This was more than the number relating to any single category of spirituality (the largest being 11%). Comments ranged from simple emotions such as ‘fear’, ‘calm’ and ‘sadness’, to more complex ones like ‘loss’, ‘excitement’ and ‘hope’. There were also several mentions of emotion as a general category, including ‘emotion’, ‘mood’ and ‘feeling’.

Referential emotion was distinguished from absolute emotion in that the former concerned emotion pertaining to something associated with the music, whereas the latter concerned an emotion arising from the musical forms themselves. The following quote exemplified this by containing both: “A mixture of the mood of the music (calm, lyric, sweet) [absolute emotion] ... and my own emotional state of a recent relationship break-up [referential emotion]” (P 28, comments added). Therefore, emotion comments were included here only when they concerned the referential associations. For example: “the work is indelibly linked with grief, pain and loss of my mother's death” (P 118) or “I felt emotions of joy and self belief that I can perform technically difficult solos in front of large audiences” (P 165).

Figure 10.2 shows the comparison between mentions of emotion and spirituality. Spirituality was mentioned by more participants than was emotion: ( $\chi^2(1, n = 172) = 11.11, p < .001$ ). When religious groups were compared it was found that differences were significant for the non-religious group ( $\chi^2(1, n = 61) = 18.78, p < .001$ ), but once the Bonferroni correction was applied to the religious group it was not significant. This supported the notion that spirituality was at least as important as emotion in referential experiences. For the non-religious group, and the total sample, it was more frequently mentioned. In many comments it was not possible to distinguish between feelings of emotion and spirituality: “the strong feelings the different instrumentation and pitches create” (P 163). In others, the idea of a feeling of spirituality was evident: “feelings of

searching” (P 15), “The feeling that I had discovered something very special” (P 172 – suggesting the sacred), and “The feeling of the unity in the crowd” (P 159).<sup>2</sup>

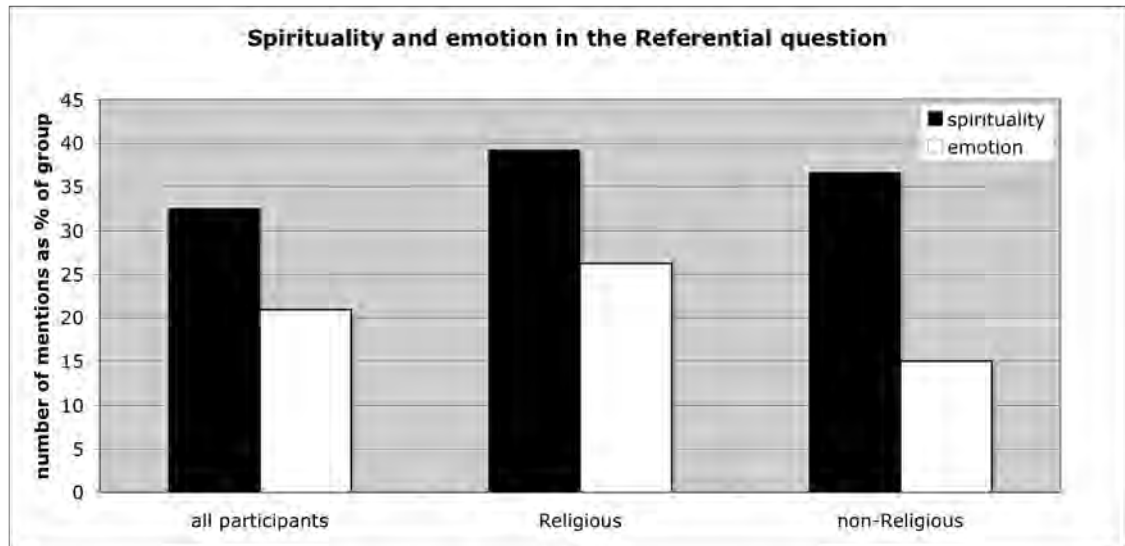


Figure 10.2 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion for all participants and between religious and non-religious participants for the Referential question

There appeared to be more mentions of emotion by religious participants than non-religious (16 versus 9), but this was not statistically significant. This suggested that religious people were as likely as non-religious people to mention emotion and spirituality in describing music’s external referents. The same was evident for spirituality.

## Discussion

These data showed that spirituality was, to some degree, a referential experience. Every category of spirituality was mentioned, and the number of people who mentioned spirituality was greater than the number who mentioned emotion, or at least as great (as

<sup>2</sup> Another comment expressed the ineffability of those feelings: “music is a way to express feelings that words and other forms of communication struggle to express and specifically in relation to an experience of God” (P 171).

in the religious group). We know that emotion can be a referential experience. Spirituality was also, in some respects, a referential experience.

However the extent to which that was the case was not great. The number of comments for each category ranged from 6 (*transcendence*) to just 18 (*other people*). That meant the most highly represented category was mentioned by only 11% of participants. This was much lower than in the spirituality question (section 9.1) in which the most highly represented category was mentioned by 25% of participants. Furthermore, the most prominent categories for the spirituality question were the weakest for the referential question (particularly *existential* and *transcendent*).<sup>3</sup> In return, *other people* and *environment* were the most frequently mentioned here, yet they were the least frequently mentioned in the spirituality question. This indicated that spirituality was only referential to a certain extent. Or, to put it another way, spirituality was only partially described as an extrinsic experience. When it was, it was concerned with a connection with other people and with the environment, rather than a sense of transcendence.

This disjunction between transcendence and referential meaning was demonstrated in the *transcendence* category, where some comments indicated that transcendence was predicated on being able to be detached from the corporeality of the music; to get beyond the need to consciously process some aspect of the experience; to be free to flow. This was in line with the 19<sup>th</sup> Century idea of *musikgeist* discussed in Chapter 2, in which the spirit of the music resides subterraneously; between the lines of the music. Accordingly, the experience of transcendence, coming from the spirit of the music, was a different thing to the cognitive processes involved in referential meaning. This suggested that this aspect of spirituality was unlikely to be referential.

Religion had almost no effect on these findings. There were indications in previous sections that referential associations were more important for religious people. This was

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<sup>3</sup> Both the referential and the general descriptions questions received significantly fewer comments than the spiritual question on these three categories. The smallest differences are reported here. *Supernatural*: ( $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 11.26, p = .014$  with Bonferroni correction); *Existential* ( $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 12.79, p = .006$  with Bonferroni correction) and *Transcendence* ( $\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 12.36, p = .008$  with Bonferroni correction).

only evident for the *supernatural* category, which was mentioned more frequently by religious people. Non-religious people appeared to refer more often to the existential dimension, but that difference could not be confirmed statistically. This showed that religion affected the referential component to the *supernatural* category, but had no bearing on the other categories. That would explain the theistic interpretations given by religious people<sup>4</sup> in contrast to the more humanistic interpretations of non-religious people (as discussed by Stoll, 1989, and Elkins et al., 1988). It also confirmed that there was more to spirituality than referential meaning, and religion had no effect on those other parts. This was consistent with findings from the previous sections of this study. It was further confirmed by the finding that there was no significant difference between the total number of spiritual comments by religious and non-religious people. I concluded that the effect of religion on referential spirituality, overall, was very limited, and thus the third hypothesis was supported.

Spirituality was seen to be at least as frequently mentioned as emotion for referential experiences. Emotion was mentioned more often than any single category of spirituality, but the number of participants who mentioned any category of spirituality was equivalent to the number who mentioned emotion for the religious group, and greater for the other groupings. Evidence of similarity and yet distinction within the various comments supported the idea that spirituality and emotion are interconnected planes of experience, and therefore spirituality deserves scholarly attention.

Lyrics were often the carrier of referential meaning, as was evinced in the responses to this question. Particularly in the category *meaning*, lyrics helped define the spiritual nature of the experience. However, because of the association effect, discussed in Chapter 7 , such comments were included. It will be the task of the quantitative results chapter (Chapter 11 ) to tease out more information about the role of lyrics in these experiences.

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<sup>4</sup> At least people from a theistic religion.

## Summary of findings

The findings from the referential question can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Spirituality was identified as a referential experience in significant experiences of music, but only to a limited extent.
  - All categories were mentioned, but the most frequent was mentioned by only 11% of participants.
  - The most frequently reported categories in the spiritual question (especially *transcendence* and *existential*) were the least frequently reported in this question, whereas the most frequently reported categories here (*other people* and *environment*) were less often reported in the spirituality question.
- 2) Spirituality was at least as frequently mentioned as emotion in the referential question.
  - For the non-religious group and the sample as a whole there were more comments about spirituality than about emotion.
  - This lends support to the second hypothesis about the importance of spirituality.
- 3) Religion had minimal impact on spirituality, affecting only the *supernatural* category, which accounted for the theistic interpretations of spirituality.
  - Most of the categories of spirituality, and the number of people who mentioned spirituality, were unaffected by religion.
  - This supported the third hypothesis – that spirituality is not a product of religion.
- 4) Lyrics were seen to play a role, but that role was in association with the music itself.

## 10.2 Analysis of the Absolute Question

Having discussed the external associations to the music, participants were then asked about the degree to which the experience was significant because of aspects of the music itself (absolute meaning). Prompts including *melody*, *harmony*, *rhythm*, *instruments* were given as suggestions as to what might be involved. Participants were asked what it was about the music that was so significant (question 13 – Appendix H). The responses to this question were content analysed for occurrences of each of the categories of spirituality. Results are presented in Table 10.2 and Figure 10.3.

Table 10.2 Number of participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality, and emotion, for the *absolute* question

	All participants n (%)	Religious n (%)	Non-Religious n (%)
	n=172	n=63	n=61
Supernatural	1 (0.6)	1 (1.7)	0 (0)
Existential	4 (2.3)	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)
Other people	11 (6.4)	2 (3.3)	5 (8.2)
Environment	13 (7.6)	4 (6.7)	5 (8.2)
Transcendence	2 (1.2)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)
Meaning	5 (2.9)	1 (1.7)	4 (6.6)
Emotion	41 (23.8)	19 (31.1)	11 (18.3)
Any spiritual category	31 (18)	10 (16.7)	13 (21.3)
Lyrics	18 (10.5)	19 (31.7)	11 (18.0)



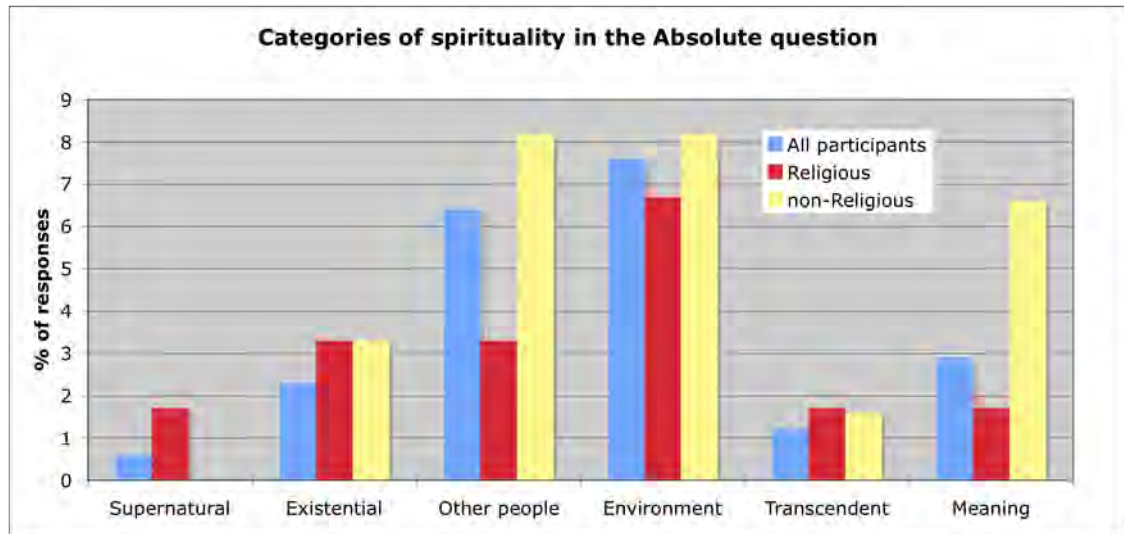


Figure 10.3 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the absolutist question, as a percentage of total responses, for all participants and according to religious group

**Supernatural** - *A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world, typically God*

Only one participant referred to any form of higher being, and their comment was specifically religious: “I’d attribute most of the spiritual impact to the presence of God turning up” (P 156).<sup>5</sup> Such a low number of comments suggested that the music itself had very little to do with a connection with the supernatural. Partly due to the small number of responses, chi squared tests indicated that no significant effect of religion was found.

**Existential** - *a profound awareness of, or connection with one’s own being*

Comments relating to this category were also minimal. Only four participants made this type of reference. These made reference to the effect of the music, such as “touching your soul” (P 39), or “I was able to express myself” (P 148). Chi squared tests indicated that religion had no effect here, with two comments each coming from the non-religious

<sup>5</sup> While the expression “the presence of God” may appear to be referential and not absolute, I take it as being absolute because of the assumption that it arises from the music itself and not some external reference. In the same way, emotions are not external phenomena but arise from the expression of the internal musical forms (melody, rhythm, etc.). For this particular comment I am assuming that the basis for this experience of “the presence of God” is the music itself and not some external reference, because that is what the question asked. Some responses to the absolutist question were more referential in nature, but these were not included in this discussion.

and the religious groups. The number of responses here was lower than for the referential question (four as opposed to nine), which indicated that an awareness of one's own existence was not often something that arose from the music itself.

**Other people** - *a sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience*

Comments in this category tended to focus on the idea of a synergy between people. For example: "playing and performing as one being" (P 90). This aspect of spirituality received the second highest number of comments for this question. While the number of comments was not high in real terms (6% of the total sample), it does suggest that this aspect of spirituality had more to do with the music itself than some of the others.

Judging whether a comment in this category was profound enough to be considered spiritual was difficult. Some may consider a comment such as "complete band unity" (P 26) not to be profound. Yet I maintain it was, because 'unity' refers to *fusion*, which was identified in Chapter 1 as an important feature of spirituality, and if that was 'complete' then it was not an insignificant experience.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Environment** - *a sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music*

This category received the most comments for this question (13), possibly because it was the category most closely related to the music itself. A typical comment was: "awesome pianissimo - heart-rending phrases, and unisons, as if all creation were joining in" (P 118). This notion of *fusion* with the cosmos, discussed at length in Chapter 1, was also present in terms such as 'totally engaging'. For others, the effect of such connection with the environment was described as 'enchanted' or 'deepening'.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups here.

**Transcendence** - *a sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of moving beyond the temporal or known*

This category was second only to *supernatural* in its lack of support (just two mentions). Nevertheless, the comments were good examples of this category: “I get lost in the whole experience” (P 111), and “The melodies and rhythm work together and take you into a trance” (P 53). Chi squared tests indicated that religion had no significant effect here, as one comment came from each of the religious and non-religious groups.

**Meaning** - *explicit reference to a sense of meaning, value or purpose gained from the experience*

Five comments fitted this category. For example “I think it is essentially the melodic lines that are so ... inspiring” (P 118). Of the other comments, one related to the poetry. This was not technically coming from the music but was counted anyway because of the association between music and lyrics (discussed in Chapter 7 ). Two comments identified the characteristic of rightness discussed in Chapter 1: “The incredible beauty and rightness of the harmony and string orchestration” (P 109) and “Everything sounds perfect ... it's almost like every single little wobble of vibrato is placed just right to capture the feel of what he's trying to say without words” (P 96). The lack of further support for this category may be due to participants' focus on the features of the music, rather than the function of the experience, such as meaning.

Chi squared tests indicated that there was no significant difference between religious groups, possibly because of a lack of statistical power.

### **Other**

One of the most frequently mentioned terms relating to spirituality was *beauty*. 16 mentions (9.3%) were made, which is more than any single category of spirituality. However, I am not treating this as a category of spirituality so much as a quality of the music that leads to the experience of spirituality. I take up the importance of this quality in the Discussion and Conclusions chapter.

Reference was made to the inexpressibility or inexplicability, or even the mysterious nature of the experience. Here we see the idea of ineffability that is so important to music. Participant 161 underscored the meaningfulness of ineffability in stating that their experience was “uplifting, eery and mysterious at the same time”.

The simplicity of the music or experience was commented on. Not in the sense of being simplistic, but of being simply profound, or ‘earthy’ as one participant put it. In a different direction, the idea of energy or “the power of improvisation” (P 68) was referred to. Along with this, a small number of participants mentioned some physical response to the music, such as “could not stop my hands and feet accompanying the rhythm” (P 73). One comment alluded to knowledge of the music that was somehow innate: “Let go in a song that ... I feel I knew before I heard it” (P 10). This sense, almost of déjà vu related somewhat to connection with the musical environment, yet not sufficiently to include it in that category. Finally, some general terms were used which relate to spirituality. These included ‘hypnotic’, ‘transfixing’, ‘vitality’, ‘yearning’, ‘breath’, ‘numinous’, ‘trance’ and of course ‘spiritual’.

### ***Emotion and spirituality***

This section shows that spirituality was just as prevalent an aspect of absolute experiences as emotion. Almost one quarter of the participants (24%) made some reference to emotion here. For example: “favourite melodies that just make you feel happy and improve your mood” (P 141). As in the referential question, some comments related to simple emotions such as ‘sad’ or ‘angry’, some to more complex emotions, but most responses referred to a general category such as ‘emotion’. Some comments referred to a network of emotions: “powerful piece of music that elicited a sense of fear/apprehension and excitement at the same time” (P 134). There was some reference to the music’s capacity to alter emotions: “could make my life happier, when I am sad” (P 136). As with the spirituality question, some comments indicated that it was not just any old emotion, but ‘deep’ or ‘gut wrenching’ emotions that were ‘overwhelming’ or ‘dramatic’. Other participants mentioned ‘feeling tension’ or the ‘passion’ in the performance.

Spirituality was just as frequently mentioned as emotion in these descriptions. There was no significant difference between the number of people who mentioned each in the total group ( $\chi^2(1, n = 172) = 2.44, p = .12$ ). There appeared to be a difference for the religious group, with more mentions of emotion, but with the Bonferroni correction, that difference was not significant. Furthermore, the number of mentions of emotion was not significantly different between religious groups (19 and 11 respectively). These findings did not support a difference in the effect of religion on this distinction between spirituality and emotion.

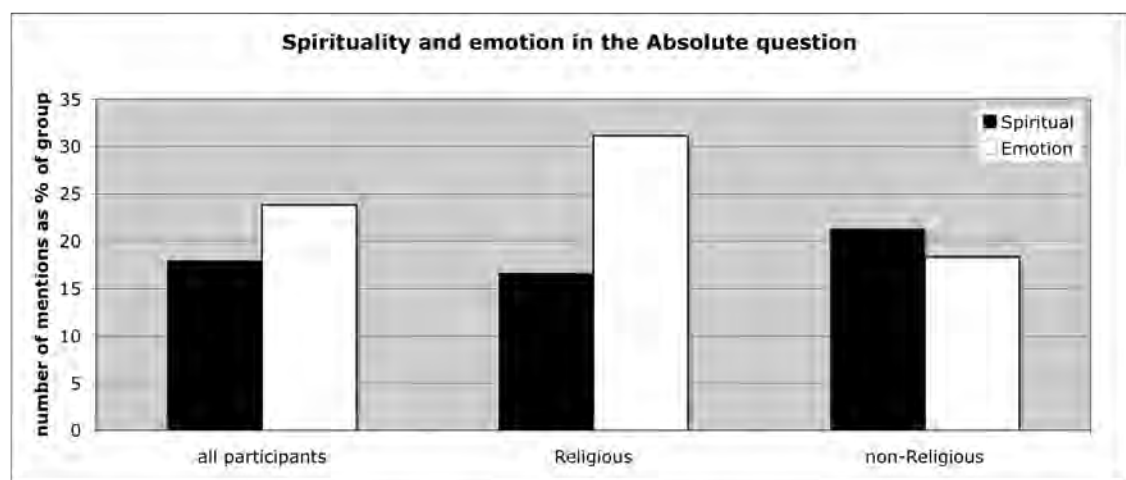


Figure 10.4 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of Spirituality and Emotion for all participants and between religious and non-religious participants for the Absolute question

### *Lyrics*

The issue about the role of lyrics in music was raised again in these data. As in Study I, a number of participants mentioned lyrics in their discussion of the music itself. The number of comments was not as high as in Study I, probably because Study I simply asked about the music itself, whereas in Study II a comment was added that sought to differentiate the music itself from the music's associations.<sup>6</sup> In Study II, one in ten

<sup>6</sup> The note said: "It is possible to think of a musical experience as being significant either because of the *music itself* or because of the *ideas associated* with the music. Think of the 'music itself' as meaning the technical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, etc. Think of the 'ideas associated' with the music as meaning the ideas that become associated with the music, the thoughts in the lyrics or program notes, or the memories or emotions that can become attached to it."

participants made such a reference. Not all of these were comments that demonstrated aspects of spirituality; some were simply general references to the lyrics. Of those that related to spirituality, some merely referred to the lyrics: “I knew all the words to all the songs” (P 112), while others expressed the idea that the music supported or reinforced the text: “The music is sympathetic to the words” (P 99). Also evident was the idea of some synergy between the two: “The lyrics and the music accompanied each other well and often the texture of the instrumentation resembled the voice and vice versa” (P 146). This was especially the case with rap music where people were “vibing off each others’ words” (P 74). All this was evidence for the association effect: “the music can change the ways in which the lyrics are received. You cannot separate the two and get the same reaction” (P 13). In this sense lyrics were part of the experience of music and thus the experience of spirituality. The extent to which they defined the experience is taken up in the discussion section below.

### ***Formalism and Absolute Expressionism***

Participants were categorised into *formalist* and *absolute expressionist* categories, using the same approach as that adopted in Study I (Section 5.2), to compare the presence of spirituality for these two groups of people. Formalists were categorised as those responses that rated absolute meaning high ( $\geq 8$ ), referential meaning low ( $\leq 5$ ) and emotion low ( $\leq 5$ )<sup>7</sup>. Under these conditions Formalists made no mention of spirituality. The cut off point for emotion was extended to  $\leq 7$  to be as conservative as possible, on the basis that formalism does not reject the existence of emotion *per se*, so much as the prime importance of emotion. This change made little difference. Formalists still demonstrated very little affiliation with spirituality. Of the 10 formalist cases, the mean rating for spirituality was 3.6/10, and the highest rating was 7/10. Furthermore, none of these participants mentioned any of the categories of spirituality.

The absolute expressionist group fared differently. More cases were involved here than in Study I (36 or 20.9% compared to 10 or 8.5%). The mean rating for spirituality was 6.3 (in Study I it was 7.6) and there were five participants who rated spirituality 10/10.

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<sup>7</sup> As it was in Study I, this ratings data is analysed further in the next chapter – the Quantitative analysis.

Seven of those 36 participants mentioned at least one category of spirituality, with *environment* being the most frequent (four mentions). These findings indicated that spirituality fit better with absolute expressionist meaning than with formalist meaning.

In Study I, I stated that it was difficult to isolate those experiences that were primarily a result of absolute and not referential meaning, in order to see whether that had any effect. Study II included a question designed to redress that difficulty.<sup>8</sup> That question identified that 9 of the 36 absolute expressionist responses indicated that referential meaning was also involved. However, only two of those nine mentioned any category of spirituality, and the mean rating of spirituality was just 5.2. In light of Meyer's (1956) claim that referential and absolute meaning are not mutually exclusive, these data indicated that absolute expressionist experiences related to spirituality better than formalist experiences, regardless of whether or not referential meaning was also involved.

### 10.3 Comparison across the qualitative questions

Having examined all four qualitative questions individually, it is possible to make some comparisons between them to see how spirituality was presented in the question about spirituality, in the general descriptions of the experience, and in the referential and absolute aspects of the experience. This is done with reference to Figure 10.5 below.

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<sup>8</sup> This was question 14, which read "To what extent is the significance of this experience due to a combination of the 'ideas' and the 'music itself' (rather than one or the other)?" (See Appendix G)

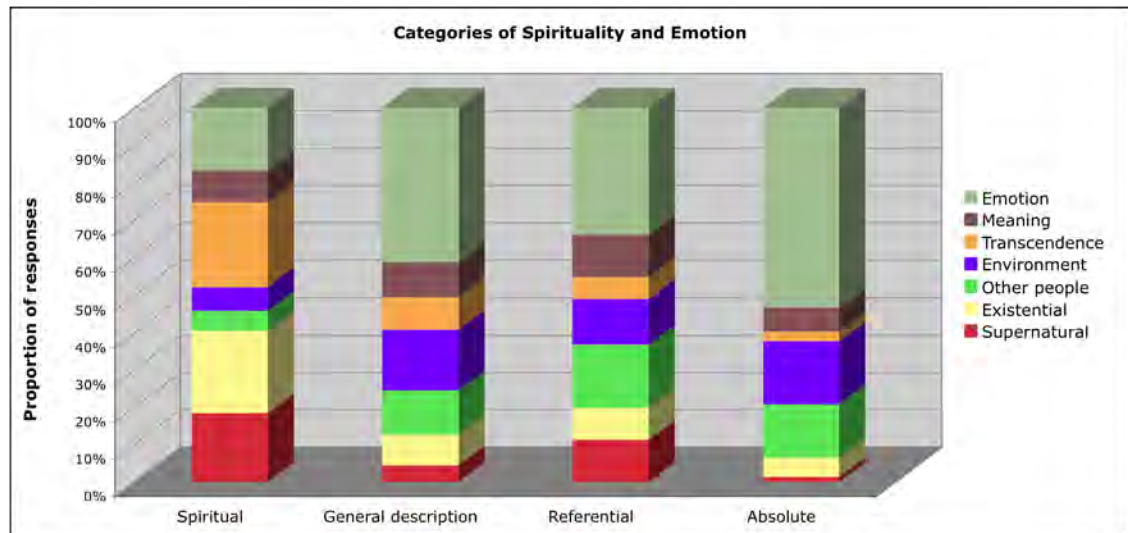


Figure 10.5 Percentage of all participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality for the four qualitative questions, shown as a proportion of all responses

Three of the categories, *supernatural*, *existential* and *transcendence* received significantly more comments in the spirituality question than in the others, according to chi squared tests (see Table 10.3). The indication that they comprised a larger proportion of all comments than the other categories, suggests that these are the three categories that people especially identified as being spiritual. This is in line with the literature on spirituality<sup>9</sup>, which tends to focus more on transcendence and the supernatural than on these other instantiations of connection. It would be logical to conclude that *Supernatural* and *Transcendence* were mentioned less in the Absolute question than the spirituality question (though chi squared tests could not be used as cell sizes were <5). This is also seen in Figure 10.6, The remaining categories were mentioned less frequently in the spirituality question, and so there were no differences overall across the four questions.

<sup>9</sup> This literature was discussed in Chapter 1, but includes sources such as Gabrielsson & Wik (2003); Harvey (1999); Maslow (1954) and Peterson & Seligman (2004).



Table 10.3 Chi squared test results comparing the four qualitative questions

	Qualitative questions				Chi squared test	
	Spiritual	General Descriptions	Referential	Absolute	<i>overall</i> $\chi^2$	p value
<i>Supernatural</i>	35	8	12	1	33.43	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<i>Existential</i>	42	15	9	4	40.91	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<i>Other people</i>	10	22	18	11	5.30	1.06
<i>Environment</i>	12	30	13	13	11.82	.06
<i>Transcendence</i>	43	16	6	2	48.26	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<i>Meaning</i>	16	17	12	5	5.92	.81
<i>Emotion</i>	32	76	36	41	25.75	<b>&lt;.001</b>

3 degrees of freedom

n=172

Note: 1. p values include Bonferroni correction  
2. Cell sizes <5 were not included in these chi squared tests

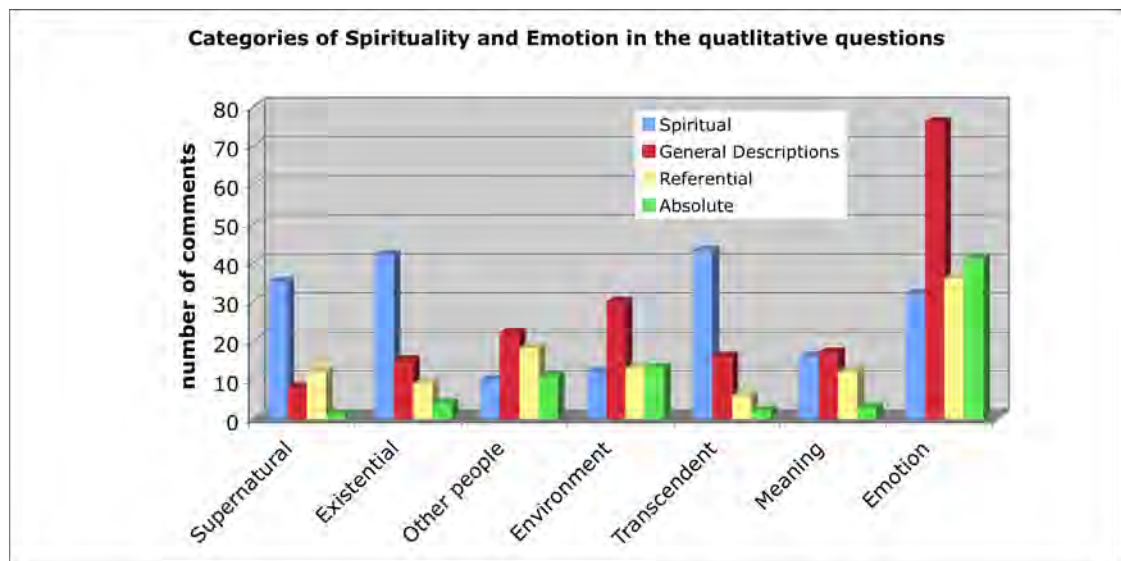


Figure 10.6 Comparison of responses to each of the categories of spirituality for the four qualitative questions, according to category, for all participants

The small number of mentions of categories of spirituality across the board for the referential and absolute questions might suggest that spirituality was not referential or absolute. However, that would only be substantiated if there were more mentions in the general descriptions question than either the referential or absolute questions. That was not the case. It might be the case for *Transcendence*, but the cell size is too small to be

sure. All other comparisons, including for *Meaning*, which looked like it may include a difference, were not significant. This conclusion should be treated cautiously, as cell sizes were quite small, but it does seem to suggest that spirituality was accounted for by referential and absolute meaning, but only to a certain extent. The reason these categories were not mentioned more frequently was probably not that these aspects were not present, but that participants did not think to mention them in their descriptions of musical experiences.

Emotion was mentioned more times in the general descriptions than in any of the other questions. Since we know from the literature (Meyer 1956) that emotion is involved in both referential and absolute meaning, these data are not indicating that emotion is unrelated, but rather that participants did not think to mention this as often in these more specific questions. The general descriptions question was more open-ended than the others, thus giving more space for phenomena such as emotion.

The next step was to compare differences between the religious and non-religious groups on the four qualitative questions (see Figure 10.7 ). Overall, there did not appear to be much difference between the groups. *Supernatural* was mentioned less frequently across the questions by the non-religious group ( $\chi^2(1, n = 124) = 33.52, p < .001$ ), but there were no differences for any of the other categories. These findings supported earlier findings that there were only minor differences between religious and non-religious people in the experience of spirituality.

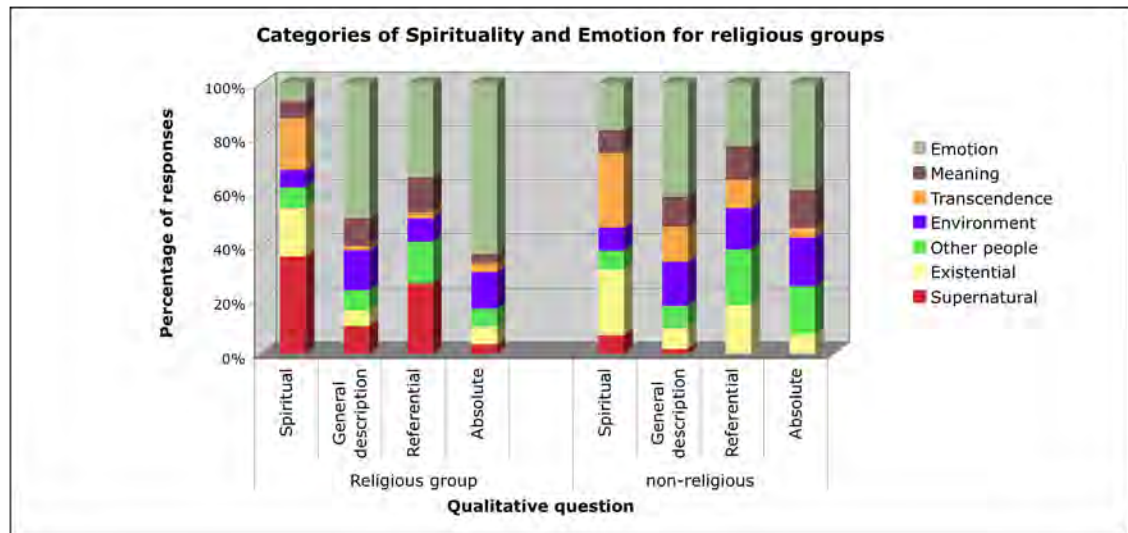


Figure 10.7 Percentage of participants who mentioned each of the categories of spirituality for the four qualitative questions, shown as a proportion of all responses

The difference between spirituality and emotion was also compared across the four qualitative questions. Figure 10.8<sup>10</sup> shows that emotion only comprised more than 50% of all responses in three of the eight questions.<sup>11</sup> For the remainder there were more mentions of spirituality than emotion. Spirituality comprised a greater proportion of responses in the referential question for both groups. It also comprised almost the same proportion of responses as emotion in the general descriptions. This supported the idea that spirituality is as important as emotion in significant experiences of music (the second hypothesis).

<sup>10</sup> The reader is reminded that figures for 'any spiritual comment' were not simply an aggregate of all six categories of spirituality (ie. not including emotion). Participants were able to mention more than one, or even all six categories. But in calculating 'any spiritual comment' each participant was only rated once for mentions of a spiritual category, regardless of whether they mentioned one, two or even six categories. This was done to provide a fairer comparison; one category of emotion versus one category of spirituality.

<sup>11</sup> These three questions were the general description and absolute questions for the religious group, and the general descriptions question for the non-religious group.

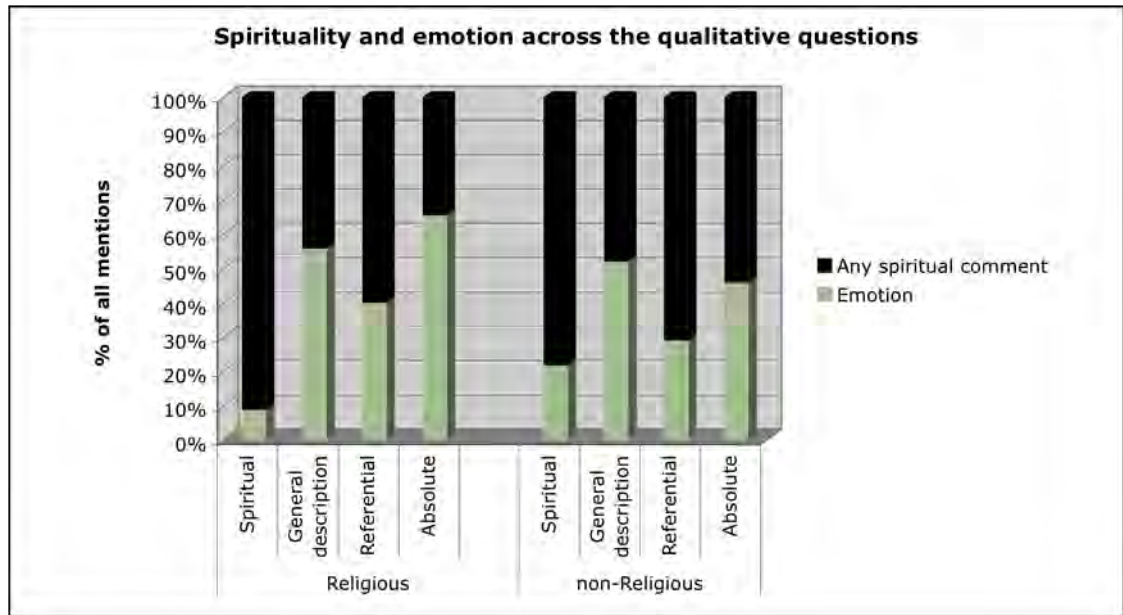


Figure 10.8 Percentage of participants who mentioned spirituality and emotion for the four qualitative questions, shown as a proportion of all responses

## Discussion

These results showed that spirituality was accounted for, to some degree, as an absolute (intrinsic) experience of music. Each category of spirituality was reported, and there was no significant difference between the number of comments about spirituality and the number of comments about emotion. Thus, spirituality was just as much a part of the absolute experience as emotions were. (This supports the second hypothesis.)

However, the number of comments about spirituality was generally quite limited. For several of the categories of spirituality, there were fewer comments here than for either the referential or general descriptions questions. *Other people* and *environment* were the most frequently reported categories, yet even they were mentioned by less than 8% of participants. I suggest that the reason that spiritual-related comments were so limited is, as in Study I, because of the focus of the question. The question directed participants to the specifically musical features, such as melody or rhythm, which meant that participants might not have thought to comment on the *experience* of those features,

where spirituality might lie. Consequently, this sort of response was common: “The particular instrumentation (wide range; loud and increasing dynamic; resolving dissonances; tremolo; open G string on violins)” (P 88).

Drawing a distinction with referential meaning (by focussing away from external associations), as the question did, was not intended to discount the experience of the musical features. In other words, focusing participants on the melody or rhythm rather than ideas associated, was not intended to inhibit reporting of how that melody or rhythm was experienced. Yet that may have been the unintended consequence. As a result, responses were often more formalist in nature, focusing on the musical forms rather than the experience of those forms. This might have accounted for the lower response rates seen here. Furthermore, the lower number of comments for spiritual categories here compared to Study I may have been due to the question in Study II being more specific about distinguishing absolute from referential meaning, thus exacerbating the problem. If this were the case then it would suggest that formalism does not account for spirituality well at all.

This conclusion was supported by the lack of evidence for spirituality in the formalist cases that were identified. By contrast, absolute expressionist experiences did demonstrate some evidence for spirituality. Ratings of spirituality were higher and some categories were mentioned. These qualitative data did not provide any more evidence for absolute expressionism than that, but they do intimate that spirituality is better categorised as absolute expressionist than formalist.

This situation may also have been exacerbated by the placement of this absolute question after the referential and general descriptions questions, meaning participants may have felt that they had already said what needed to be said by the time they answered this question, and so chose not to repeat themselves.

The lack of evidence for *transcendence* was odd considering the centrality of this phenomenon in extant literature on spirituality (see for example Burkhardt, 1994; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; J. Samson, 2010; Tacey, 2003). The low number of comments not only in the absolute and referential but also in the general descriptions

questions indicated that this category of spirituality was simply not something people tended to report when describing their experiences. This may be because people are conditioned to think of musical experience in terms such as emotion, rather than transcendence. A similar pattern appeared to be the case for *supernatural* (though not so much for religious people) and *existential* as well. The significant difference between the number of mentions of transcendence in the absolute and the general descriptions questions suggested that transcendence was not typically part of the absolute experience, and that makes sense if that was taken in a formalist way.

These findings suggested that absolute meaning, when taken in a formalist sense, did not account for spirituality well at all. However, when taken in an absolute expressionist sense, it accounted for spirituality much better. This allowed some support for the first hypothesis – that spirituality is best described as an absolute experience, and, more specifically, an absolute expressionist experience. Study I also found that formalist meaning did not account for spirituality. The problem here was accessing people's experience of the music itself, rather than an account of that music.

Religion had no effect at all on the absolute experience. Even for *emotion* and *lyrics*, in which there were a larger number of comments by religious people, the differences were not significant. This supported the third hypothesis (which predicted that spirituality would not be a product of religion) for the absolute experience.

Lyrics played an important role in these spiritual experiences. The association effect claims that you cannot remove either the music or the lyrics without affecting the experience because they form a unified whole. Accordingly, the lyrics were seen to be important for the experience of spirituality. That did not mean that lyrics therefore defined the experience, but that the association of the music and lyrics defined the experience. To draw on another concept introduced in Chapter 1, there was a fusion (or synergy) between them. The lyrics may have contributed a rational signification to the ineffable or pre-rational musical sense, but that did not mean they defined the music as being spiritual, leaving the music simply to play a subservient role. Rather, spirituality was sensed in the experience as a whole: a deep connection that music, including its lyrics, afforded. These findings supported hypothesis 4, which stated that lyrics would

have a negligible impact. This was evident in the sense that lyrics alone did not define the experience.

One comment indicated that there was a difference between the experience of the musical elements in the performance and the memory of them later; “the significance of these elements became much less when I had the emotional experience later that night” (P 11). This runs counter to recent research on the difference between ‘post-performance’ response (Sloboda & Lehmann, 2001) and continuous response self-reports (Schubert, 2010). Evidence suggests that music is perceived as being more intense after it is heard than during the actual experience (Duke & Colprit, 2001). Perhaps this is because what is remembered (post-performance) is the peak moment of intensity, the end value (recency effect), and any moment where the momentary intensity is much greater than the preceding moment (Rozin, Rozin, & Goldberg, 2004). However, the participant in my study was comparing the impact of the music itself to the ideas associated with it, and by comparison the associations took on an added weight with time. While this was only one case, it suggested there may be a differential in enduring significance for referential or absolute meaning.

### **Summary of findings**

The findings from the absolute question can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Spirituality was only marginally evident in the absolute experience, which did not strongly support the first hypothesis.
  - All categories were mentioned but the most frequent was mentioned by only 8% of participants.
  - There were less mentions of spiritual categories here than in the referential question and for Study I.
  - The most frequently reported categories in the spiritual question (*Transcendence, Existential and Supernatural*) were the least frequently

reported in this question. Conversely the most frequently mentioned categories here (*other people* and *environment*) were mentioned less frequently in the spirituality question. This seemed to be due to the focus of the question – people did not think to report these experiences.

- Spirituality was not at all accounted for as a formalist experience, but there was evidence of spirituality as an absolute expressionist experience.
  - There may be a differential in enduring significance for referential and absolute meaning.
- 2) Spirituality was as frequently mentioned as emotion in the absolute question, which supported the second hypothesis.
    - There was no significant difference between the overall number of comments for each.
  - 3) Religion had no significant impact on any aspect of spirituality in the absolute experience, which supported the third hypothesis.
  - 4) Lyrics often formed a legitimate part of the experience of the music, due to the association effect.



## Chapter 11 Quantitative Analysis

This chapter examines the quantitative data obtained in Study II.<sup>1</sup> It provides a statistical analysis to address the main research questions, with a view to augmenting the qualitative findings. I begin this chapter by examining the link between spirituality and types of musical meaning, before examining the influence of religion and the role of lyrics in the musical experience. Evidence for the relationship between emotion and spirituality is discussed throughout.

### 11.1 Spirituality and types of musical meaning

#### *Ratings of Spirituality*

Figure 11.1 graphs ratings of how spiritual the experience was.<sup>2</sup> A wide range of scores was evident, with almost 20% of participants rating spirituality at its highest and 4% giving the lowest rating (Mean=6.30, SD=3.23).

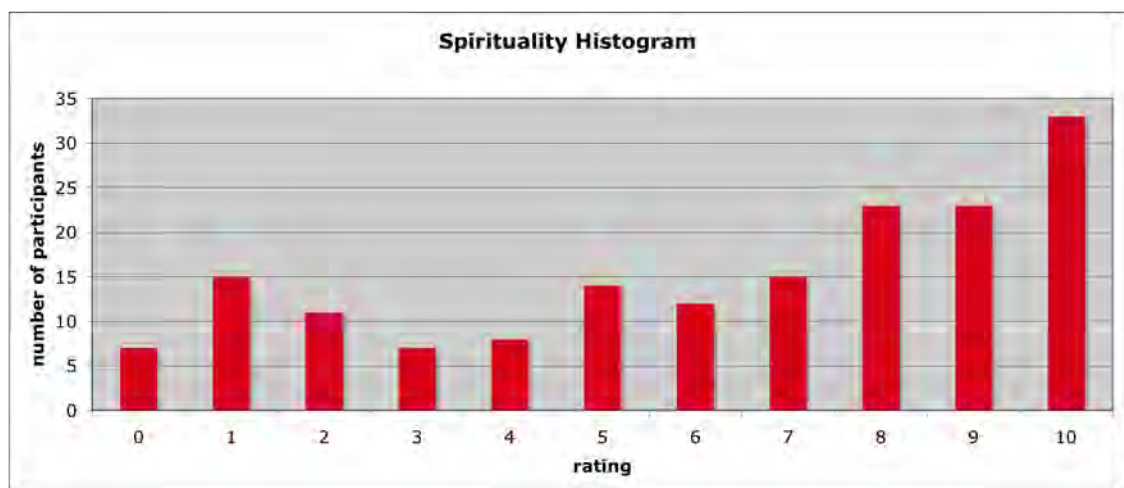


Figure 11.1 Ratings of how spiritual the experience was considered to be.

<sup>1</sup> The quantitative data came from questions 9, 10, 12, 14-19 and all of the supplementary section; questions 21-32 of Appendix H.

<sup>2</sup> Question 19 in Appendix H.

### Factor analysis for types of musical meaning

Study II included a range of questions relating to spirituality and referential and absolute meaning. I used these to examine the degree to which spirituality might be a product of either type of meaning. Table 11.1 details the questions. The first eight questions (core questions) are replications from Study I. These form the six central elements for the investigation. The next eight questions (supplementary questions) are additions for Study II, seeking to bring greater clarity to the results.

Table 11.1 Elements from the Questionnaire

<i>Question number</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Central Questionnaire Element</i>	<i>Question</i>
<b>C o r e   Q u e s t i o n s</b>			
9	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Strength</i>	How strong was this experience?
10	<i>Referential</i>	<i>Referentialism</i>	To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘ideas associated’ with the music (and not the ‘music itself’)?
12	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Absolutism</i>	To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘music itself’ (and not the music’s ‘associations’)? <i>For example was it significant because of the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?</i>
15	<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Emotion</i>	To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions?
16	<i>Over-taken</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>	To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself?
17	<i>Lose Track</i>		To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual?
18	<i>Transformed</i>		To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience?
19	<i>Spiritual</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>	To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual?

<b>S u p p l e m e n t a r y   Q u e s t i o n s</b>			
14	<i>Both meanings</i>	<i>Supple- mentary Questions</i>	To what extent is the significance of this experience due to a combination of the ‘ideas’ and the ‘music itself’? (Rather than one or the other)
23	<i>Only Absolute*</i>		The significance of this experience related to something in the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation. It was not connected with anything more than this ‘music itself’.
26	<i>Only Referent-ial^</i>		This music made me think of things and it was these thoughts that made the experience significant.
27	<i>Spiritual Absolute*</i>		Whatever level of spirituality I experienced was related more to the ‘music itself’ than the meaning of the words or some other ‘association’.
28	<i>Ideas powerful^</i>		It was the ‘ideas associated’ with the music, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that made this experience powerful.
30	<i>Absolute significant*</i>		It was the quality of the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation that made this experience significant.
31	<i>Spiritual Referential^</i>		It was the ‘ideas’ the music referred to, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that I found to be spiritual.
32	<i>Memory powerful^</i>		This music brings back memories and it is these that make it powerful.

\*These questions relate to absolute meaning

^These questions relate to referential meaning

A principal component factor analysis was conducted on all responses to the rating scale questions, and factor loadings are shown in Table 11.2. Varimax rotation was used to obtain better interpretability of factors. The first four factors are shown, as these were the only factors with an eigenvalue of >1. The eigenvalue for the fifth factor was 0.886. Strong loadings of >0.4 are highlighted in bold.

Table 11.2 Factor analysis for the key elements of the questionnaire

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>			
	1 Referential	2 Musical affect	3 Spirituality	4 Absolute
Strength	.106	<b>.811</b>	.180	.040
Referential	<b>.685</b>	.318	-.016	-.262
Absolute	-.235	<b>.573</b>	.049	<b>.443</b>
Emotion	.097	<b>.813</b>	.258	-.035
Overtaken	-.021	.311	<b>.785</b>	.049
Lose Track	-.116	.038	<b>.763</b>	.097
Transformed	.220	<b>.559</b>	<b>.462</b>	.087
Spiritual	.194	.234	<b>.677</b>	-.094
Both meanings	<b>.665</b>	.299	-.076	-.223
Only Absolute	-.113	.021	-.142	<b>.754</b>
Spiritual Absolute	-.111	-.102	.286	<b>.692</b>
Absolute significant	-.172	.214	.009	<b>.773</b>
Only Referential	<b>.681</b>	.049	.175	-.189
Ideas powerful	<b>.813</b>	-.173	.095	-.052
Spiritual referential	<b>.703</b>	-.051	.063	-.160
Memory powerful	<b>.692</b>	.063	-.136	.098
Eigenvalue	3.932	3.269	1.457	1.188
% Variance explained	24.574	20.429	9.106	7.424

n=172

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.*

*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.*

Note: The order of questions does not exactly follow Table 11.1. The order in this table was created to group together the absolute and referential supplementary questions.

An alternate factor analysis was conducted without including the supplementary questions (see Table L-1). This analysis rendered three factors with eigenvalues >1, one of which was a combination of factors two and four above. The larger analysis (above) was preferred because it provides more information and, in particular, a separation of factors two and four. A correlation of these two factors was calculated, using constructed factor scores, which verified that they are independent ( $r=-.053$ ,  $p=.53$ ,  $n=139$ ). Another reason for preferring this four-factor solution was the lack of a strong negative loading of absolute on the referential factor. The four-factor solution was thus clearer, and so will be used for this discussion.

The first factor accounted for a quarter of the variance (24.6%). It took in the main referential question and all the supplementary questions relating to referential meaning. Hence, it was referred to as the ‘Referential Factor’. This indicated that the major dimension to the experience of music in this analysis was the external associations linked to it. Nothing else correlated strongly to this factor. The weak negative relationship with *absolute*, which was much stronger in the three factor solution (found in Table L-1), hinted at an inverse relationship between external associations and the music itself. However, subsequent analysis showed no relationship between referential and absolute questions, not even a negative one ( $r=-0.079$ ,  $p=.310$ ,  $n=166$ ).

The second factor, accounting for a fifth of the variance (20.4%), related primarily to the strength and emotion of the experience, as if pertaining to the effect of the experience itself. Also loading strongly was the main question about absolute meaning. This demonstrated a clear relationship between the music itself and the effect of the experience and so this second factor was referred to as the ‘Musical affect’ factor. It was the factor most closely associated with Meyer’s category *absolute expressionism*, as it focused on the effect or expression arising from the music. The loading of *absolute* and *emotion* together on this factor, was in line with Meyer’s theory, where absolute expressionism accounts for the experience of emotion.

In light of this it was noted that *emotion* did not load onto the referential factor. There was a significant, though not a strong correlation between *emotion* and *referential* ( $r=0.238$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $n=167$ ), which supported Meyer’s assertion that emotion can also be an aspect of the referential experience. Taken together, this indicated that emotion had more to do with the absolute experience than the referential experience.

*Transformed* also loaded strongly onto the second factor, along with *absolute*, indicating that there was something of a relationship between spirituality and absolute meaning. This loading, along with emotion, may be a key to understanding the marginal link between spirituality and emotion discovered in Study I. If this factor concerned the intrinsic, perhaps ineffable, musical affect, it related most closely to absolute

expressionism. The loading of one of the spiritual elements here indicated that spirituality was, in some respects, an absolute expressionist experience.

However, the other three elements of spirituality demonstrated no relationship with absolute expressionism. This suggested that there was a large degree to which spirituality was distinct from absolute meaning. The reason the other spiritual-related elements did not load strongly here could be explained in light of *transformed* being a *function* of the experience of spirituality, whereas the other elements (*overtaken* and *lose track*) concern its substance.<sup>3</sup> (So one might be transformed *as* a function of being overtaken or losing track of corporeality.) Spirituality would be an absolute expressionist experience then, only in relation to the function of being transformed.

All four elements of spirituality loaded strongly onto the third factor. Therefore, it was labelled the ‘Spirituality factor’. This positioned spirituality as a unique and important dimension of the musical experience. It was noted that the two supplementary questions pertaining to spirituality (*spiritual absolute* and *spiritual referential*) did not load strongly here. This can be explained by suggesting that in these questions participants focused more on the referential or absolute dimension than on the spiritual dimension. However, it did indicate some distance between spirituality and either of those two types of meaning.

None of the absolute or referential elements loaded onto this third factor. This suggested that spirituality was not clearly a feature of the music itself, nor of the external associations attached to that music. This can be explained by thinking of the experience of spirituality as an awareness of something sacred (as per Chapter 1) that is not an external awareness that is *linked* to the music (referential), nor is it a direct product of the music (absolute), but is something experienced in relationship with the music. This idea is developed more in the discussion section below.

The fourth factor contained strong loadings of every question (core and supplementary) directly related to absolute meaning. Hence, it was labelled the ‘Absolute factor’.

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<sup>3</sup> This is a parallel distinction to the one I made in chapter 1 between the aspects of meaning as a *function* of spirituality, and transcendence and connection as pertaining to its *substance*.

Although the *absolute* question loaded more strongly onto factor two, the supplementary questions relating to absolute meaning (Q 23, 27 and 40) only loaded onto factor four. The insignificant correlation between these two factors showed that they are identifying different facets of the experience. Therefore, I suggest that factor two tended toward absolute expressionist meaning (concerning the effect of the experience) while factor four tended toward formalist meaning (concerning the music itself). Factor four tended toward formalist meaning because the experiential elements of the study (*emotion* and *strength*) did not load strongly here. This supported the qualitative findings (section 10.2); that responses to the absolute question tended to be more formalist in nature because the question directed people to think about the aspects of the music itself. The supplementary questions here also focused on the ‘melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation’. Yet this factor was not entirely formalist because *spiritual absolute* loaded strongly here, and there was very little support for spirituality as a formalist experience in the qualitative data.

### ***Factor scores***

A correlation was calculated between referential and absolute meaning and the factor scores.<sup>4</sup> *Referential* correlated strongly with the referential factor ( $r=.686$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=139$ ) and *absolute* correlated with factor four, the absolute factor ( $r=.433$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=139$ ), but more strongly with factor two, the ‘musical affect’ factor ( $r=.527$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=139$ ). The strong loadings for both factor two and four are understood to have represented two aspects of absolutism; the ineffable effect of the music (factor two), and notions concerning musical features themselves (factor four). No significant correlations were found between any of the other factors and the spiritual factor. On the basis of these results the data from the *referential* and *absolute* questions can be confidently used as indicative of the referential and absolute aspects of the experience.

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<sup>4</sup> Factor scores are new variables created for each participant in each factor in the final solution. They were generated from the factor analysis using regression in the SPSS statistics program.

### *Correlations*

Although the spiritual elements<sup>5</sup> formed a separate factor in the overall factor analysis, some of them also loaded onto the other factors. In addition, correlations between individual questionnaire elements showed that spirituality was not completely divorced from absolute and referential meaning. Table 11.3 shows there were some significant correlations, even if none were very strong. The pattern was different for the two types of meaning. This indicated that *spiritual* had some level of referential component to it, whereas *overtaken* and *lose track* related more to the music itself. *Transformed* correlated significantly with both, which was notable in that it loaded with the musical affect but not with the referential factors in the factor analysis.

Table 11.3 Correlations between spiritual elements and the referential and absolute questions

	Referential (n)	Absolute (n)
Referential	1 (168)	-0.079 (166)
Absolute	-0.079 (166)	1 (167)
Overtaken	0.047 (168)	<b>0.235**</b> (167)
Lose track	-0.015 (167)	<b>0.159*</b> (166)
Transformed	<b>0.290**</b> (167)	<b>0.258**</b> (165)
Spiritual	<b>0.223**</b> (167)	0.110 (166)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

### *Direct links between spirituality and meaning types*

Two supplementary questions examined the link between spirituality and the types of meaning. *Spiritual absolute*, which measured the degree to which spirituality was a result of the music itself, received a mean rating of 6.15 (SD=2.802 on a scale of 0 -

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<sup>5</sup> I am using this term 'spiritual elements' to denote the elements *overtaken*, *lose track*, *transformed* and *spiritual*.



10). *Spiritual referential*, which measured the degree to which spirituality was a result of external associations, received a mean rating of 4.38 (SD=2.821). According to the conducted t-test, these means were significantly different ( $t(154)=-4.697, p<0.01$ , Cohen's  $d = .63$ ) and the scores were negatively correlated ( $r = -.221, p<0.01, n=155$ ). Neither of these means was very high, so there was no clear conclusion that participants thought spirituality related to either type of meaning. Nevertheless, it did suggest a stronger link between spirituality and absolute meaning than with referential meaning. This may have been a result of the *transformed* element. This issue will be examined later with reference to the religious and non-religious groups.

### ***Combination of meanings***

The supplementary question *both meanings* was designed to investigate whether the experience might have been the result of both referential and absolute meaning, as opposed to just one or the other. The average rating was 7.43, which was quite high, and suggesting many people experienced both types of meaning in their encounter with music. A comparison was made between those who rated this question high and those who rated it low, on ratings of spirituality. This distinction made no difference ( $\chi^2(1, n = 113) = 0.042, p = .84$ )<sup>6</sup>. This was confirmed by a lack of significant correlations between *both meanings* and all but one of the four spiritual elements. *Transformed* did correlate significantly ( $r=0.21, p=.006, n=167$ ). This supported what the factor analysis showed; that apart from a minor relationship with *transformed*, experiences in which both referential and absolute meaning were present were no more spiritual than when just one type of meaning was present.

This question was then correlated with the *referential* and *absolute* questions, finding that *both meanings* correlated significantly with *referential* ( $r=0.70, p<0.01, n=168$ ) but not *absolute*. (The correlation between *referential* and *absolute* was not significant:  $r = -.08, p=.31, n=166$ .) This suggested that participants who indicated that the experience

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<sup>6</sup> This was calculated by comparing those who rated the *both meanings* question 10/10 ( $n=59$ ) with a similarly sized group, who rated this question in the range of 0-6/10 ( $n=54$ ). A second comparison was made using all participants. Here, those who rated *both meanings* 9-10/10 ( $n=79$ ) were compared with those who rated it in the range of 0-8/10 ( $n=88$ ). Again, there was no difference ( $\chi^2(1, N = 168) = 0.22, p = .64$ ).

was largely due to extra-musical associations also indicated that the experience was due to a combination of the two types of meaning.<sup>7</sup> This was in line with the factor analysis, in which *both meanings* loaded strongly onto the referential factor but not the absolute factors. I concluded from this that, when external associations were important, it was likely that the music itself was important as well, but when the music itself was important, extra-musical associations were not necessarily important as well.

### Spirituality and Transcendence

As in Study I, transcendence was used as a parallel measure to spirituality.<sup>8</sup> Instead of using the term ‘transcendence’, a transcendence index (TI) was created by averaging participants’ ratings of the three elements of transcendence utilised in this study.<sup>9</sup> The validity of each of these elements, in comprising the TI, was initially supported by the main factor analysis (Table 11.2), in which all three loaded strongly onto factor three, with 0.462 (*transformed*) being the weakest loading. An additional factor analysis was

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<sup>7</sup> It is possible that this relationship was influenced by a lack of clear understanding of the two types of meaning. These concepts are somewhat abstruse, so it is possible that some participants were unsure about the concepts as they were described in the questionnaire (despite the methodological considerations discussed in Chapter 3). There was some evidence for this. Some participants rated one type of meaning high and the other low, but then rated *both meanings* high. A number of examples exist for low referential scores and high absolute scores, such as participant 46 who rated *referential* 3/10, *absolute* 9/10 and yet rated the combination of the two 10/10. Other participants (such as participant 154) rated the opposite way, with *referential* 7/10, *absolute* 2/10 and the combination 8/10. No participants rated *referential* and *absolute* low while the combination high, or vice versa.

However a low rating for one type of meaning did not necessarily mean it was absent. It might just have meant it was comparatively unimportant. In that case, it was conceivable that the experience was due to a combination of meanings, even if one played a larger role than the other. Furthermore, the main factor analysis (Table 11.2) indicated that all of the referential and absolute questions loaded together, which strongly suggests that there was no wide-spread confusion over the use of these constructs. These results were also found in the correlations between individual elements. Table L-4 shows that each question correlated significantly with the others in its group. The weakest correlations, which were still significant, were with the questions relating spirituality to the type of meaning, and this may well have more to do with conceptions of spirituality than with understanding types of meaning. Furthermore, correlations between the absolute and referential questions are either non-significant or negatively correlated. This would not be so consistent if there had been confusion over the terms.

Therefore, the findings from *both meanings* can be used with confidence.

<sup>8</sup> The reader is referred back to my discussion of this in the section ‘Defining spirituality’ in Chapter 3.

<sup>9</sup> Those elements were 1. A sense of being part of or overtaken by something more powerful than oneself [*overtaken*]; 2. A sense of the loss of time or space or even one’s self [*lose track*]; and 3. A sense of being transformed or strengthened by the experience [*transformed*].

conducted, using just the spiritual elements. This resulted in only one factor with an eigenvalue of  $>1$ , with all elements loading strongly onto this factor (see Table 11.4). The eigenvalue for the second factor was 0.743.

Table 11.4 Factor Analysis of spiritual-related elements

	Component
	1
Overtaken	.834
Lose track	.697
Transformed	.738
Spiritual	.729
% of variance explained	56.46
Eigenvalue	2.259

Support for the close relationship between these elements was also seen in a strong coefficient on a Chronbach's alpha test of reliability ( $\alpha=.70$ ), and then in the strong correlations between the elements (Table 11.5). Every spiritual element correlated significantly with the others. These correlations were not as strong as in Study I (in which the weakest was  $r=.66$ ), but almost all of them were strong or moderate, and so they did support the inclusion of the three elements in the TI. Correlations between the TI and its elements were all high, as it was a correlation of an index with its members. In the discussions above there was evidence that *transformed* was of a slightly different nature than the other elements of transcendence. The weaker correlations between *transformed* and the other TI elements supported that, even though it was still a valid element of transcendence. Some of the correlations with *spiritual* were weaker still but this difference may have been influenced by religion, or even different conceptualisations of spirituality. (This will be further investigated in section 11.2, below.)

Table 11.5 Correlations among elements in the Transcendence Index and Spirituality

	Overtaken (n)	Lose track (n)	Transformed (n)	TI (n)	Spiritual
Overtaken	1 (169)	<b>0.509**</b> (168)	<b>0.463**</b> (167)	<b>0.818**</b> (166)	<b>0.484**</b> (168)
Lose track	<b>0.509**</b> (168)	1 (168)	<b>0.332**</b> (166)	<b>0.801**</b> (166)	<b>0.285**</b> (167)
Transforme d	<b>0.463**</b> (167)	<b>0.332**</b> (166)	1 (167)	<b>0.746**</b> (166)	<b>0.427**</b> (166)
TI	<b>0.818**</b> (166)	<b>0.801**</b> (166)	<b>0.746**</b> (166)	1 (166)	<b>0.510**</b> (165)
Spiritual	<b>0.484**</b> (168)	<b>0.285**</b> (167)	<b>0.427**</b> (166)	<b>0.510**</b> (165)	1 (168)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The weaker correlations here than in Study I could have been due to the religious affiliation of the participants of Study I. To check whether religion had an effect here, the above correlations were re-calculated using just the religious group. This resulted in correlations that were lower, across the board, than those in Table 11.5. This suggested that the lower correlations of Study II were not a result of the addition of non-religious participants in Study II.

Of particular interest was the strong relationship between the transcendence elements and *spiritual*. The weakest correlation was between *spiritual* and *lose track*, yet this was still statistically significant. Hence, it could be supposed that *spiritual* was measuring something very similar to transcendence in these experiences of music, thus validating the use of transcendence as a parallel measure of this phenomenon.

## 11.2 Effect of religion

The main impetus for Study II was to determine whether the presence and location of spirituality evident in Study I, which examined religious people, was also apparent for non-religious people. Analysis of qualitative responses reported in the previous two chapters identified some differentiation for the category of *supernatural*, but little else.

This section investigates the degree to which participants' religiousness influenced their experience of spirituality, according to an analysis of their quantitative responses.<sup>10</sup>

### *Correlations*

General patterns were examined by looking at correlations between *religion*<sup>11</sup> and the eight core elements of the study (Table 11.6). Only three significant correlations were found. A moderate relationship existed with *spiritual* ( $r=0.323$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $n=167$ ) and less strongly with *overtaken* ( $r=0.197$ ,  $p=.010$ ,  $n=168$ ). The other spiritual elements, as well as emotion and strength, showed no significant relationship with *religion*. The third significant correlation was between *religion* and *referential* ( $r=.204$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=167$ ). In contrast, there was no significant relationship with *absolute* (discussed below).

Table 11.6 Correlations between religion and the core elements of the questionnaire

	Religion	n
Religion	1	170
Referential	<b>.204**</b>	167
Absolute	-.034	166
Strength	-.048	168
Emotion	.062	167
Overtaken	<b>.197*</b>	168
Lose track	.017	167
Transformed	.143	166
Spiritual	<b>.323**</b>	167

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

<sup>10</sup> The 'intermediate' religious group (those rating religion 2 or 3 out of 5) was not included in these analyses as the purpose was to examine the difference between religious and non-religious participants.

<sup>11</sup> Question 7a – see Appendix H

### *Comparison of religious groups*

The next comparison was made between the religious groups.<sup>12</sup> An ANOVA revealed a significant difference between groups for *spiritual* ( $F(2, 164)=8.438, p<.001, \eta_p^2=.093$ ), but not for any of the other spiritual elements (see Table L-3). Post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD test) indicated that there was a significant difference between the non-religious ( $M=5.03, SD=3.39$ ) and religious groups ( $M=7.31, SD=2.951, p<.001$ ). This difference had a lot to do with the spread of scores. Figure 11.2 shows that the religious group was skewed positively, while the non-religious group had an even distribution, apart from a spike at the bottom end. This appeared to represent a group of non-religious participants who emphasised the absence of this element in the experience. The significant difference between religious groups should, however, be treated cautiously, because the uneven distribution may have influenced the ANOVA results.<sup>13</sup>

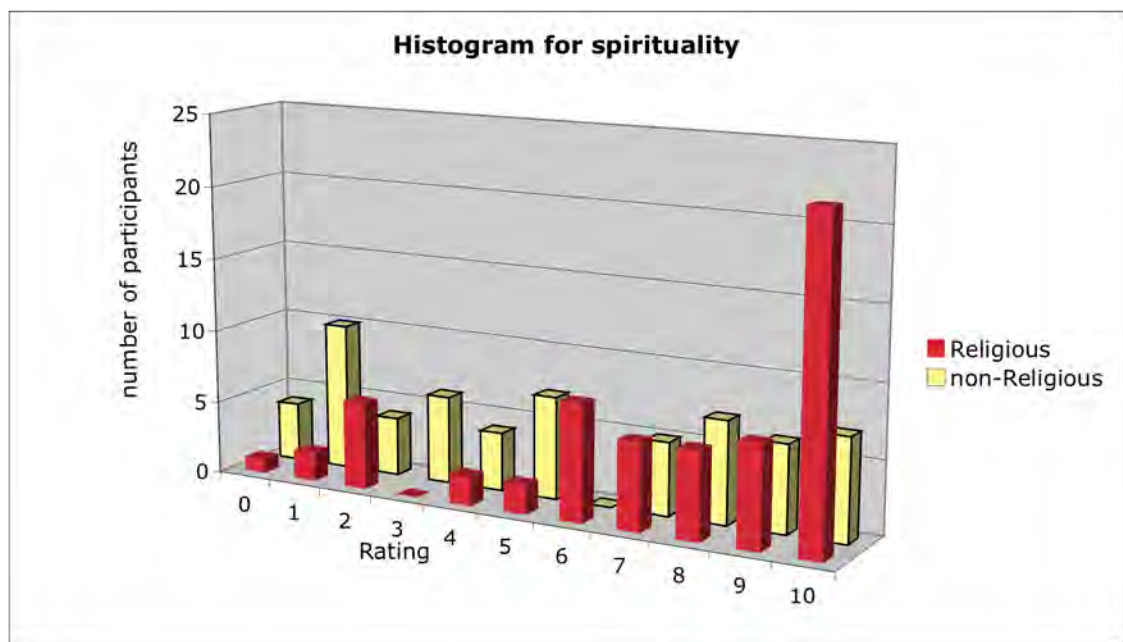


Figure 11.2 Comparison of spread of scores for spiritual according to religious groups.

<sup>12</sup> As stated in the methodology chapter, participants in the 'Religious' group rated religion  $\geq 4/5$ , while participants in the 'non-Religious' group rated religion  $1/5$ . The intermediate group is not discussed here even though it was included in the ANOVAs.

<sup>13</sup> In such cases a more sophisticated analysis could be used, such as the Friedman analysis of variance. However, this study was limited in that it was not intended to provide such sophisticated statistical analyses.

A significant difference was also found for *referential* ( $F(1, 119)=48.474, p=.023, \eta_p^2=.045$ ) but not for *absolute*. This confirmed the suggestions made in reference to the qualitative data, that religion had some effect on referential meaning. The lack of any significant effect on absolute meaning here, suggested that religion had an effect on the external representations of spirituality, but none on the experience itself.

Correlations between the spiritual elements were then calculated for the two religious groups (see Table 11.7). There were strong and significant correlations for most elements for both groups, which suggested that religion did not have a great effect on the strong relationship between spiritual elements. However, some differences were noted. *Lose track* had less of a relationship with the other elements (particularly *transformed* and *spiritual*) for the religious group, which suggested that this element operated somewhat differently to spirituality for religious people than for non-religious people. Conversely, the relationship between *transformed* and *spiritual* was stronger for religious people than non-religious. This seemed to indicate that for religious people spirituality had more to do with being transformed and less to do with losing track of one's reality, whereas for non-religious people the opposite was true. Meanwhile, feeling overtaken was common to all.

Table 11.7 Correlations between the Transcendence and Spirituality elements for the two religious groups

		<i>Overtaken</i> (n)	<i>Lose track</i> (n)	<i>Transformed</i> (n)	<i>Transc. Index</i> (n)	<i>Spiritual</i> (n)
<b>Religious Group</b>	<i>Overtaken</i>	1 62	<b>0.456**</b> 61	<b>0.569**</b> 62	<b>0.832**</b> 61	<b>0.410**</b> 62
	<i>Lose track</i>	<b>0.456**</b> 61	1 61	0.125 61	<b>0.736**</b> 61	.029 61
	<i>Transformed</i>	<b>0.569**</b> 62	0.125 61	1 62	<b>0.721**</b> 61	<b>0.652**</b> 62
	<i>Transc. Index</i>	<b>0.832**</b> 61	<b>0.736**</b> 61	<b>0.721**</b> 61	1 61	<b>0.452**</b> 61
	<i>Spiritual</i>	<b>0.410**</b> 62	0.029 61	<b>0.652**</b> 62	<b>0.452**</b> 61	1 62
<b>Non Religious Group</b>	<i>Overtaken</i>	1 60	<b>0.519**</b> 60	<b>0.419**</b> 59	<b>0.794**</b> 59	<b>0.388**</b> 60
	<i>Lose track</i>	<b>0.519**</b> 60	1 60	<b>0.535**</b> 59	<b>0.845**</b> 59	<b>0.297*</b> 60
	<i>Transformed</i>	<b>0.419**</b> 59	<b>0.535**</b> 59	1 59	<b>0.795**</b> 59	<b>0.270*</b> 59
	<i>Transc. Index</i>	<b>0.794**</b> 59	<b>0.845**</b> 59	<b>0.795**</b> 59	1 59	<b>0.423**</b> 59
	<i>Spiritual</i>	<b>0.388**</b> 60	<b>0.297*</b> 60	<b>0.270*</b> 59	<b>0.423**</b> 59	1 60

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

### ***Religion and types of meaning***

Given the evidence of some effect of religion on the spiritual experience, the impact of this on spirituality's alignment with referential and absolute meaning was considered. Ratings for religion were correlated against factor scores generated from the main four factors (Table 11.2). Three significant correlations appeared. Religion correlated significantly with the spirituality factor score ( $r=.263$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=138$ ). It also correlated with the referential factor ( $r=.201$ ,  $p=.018$ ,  $n=138$ ) and the absolute factor ( $r=.200$ ,  $p=.019$ ,  $n=138$ ). There was no significant correlation with the musical affect factor.

Correlations with the two supplementary questions *spiritual referential* and *spiritual absolute* showed a significant relationship only between *religion* and *spiritual*



*referential* ( $r=.172$ ,  $p=.031$ ,  $n=157$ ). This may have been related to the effect of religion on the *supernatural* category identified in the qualitative data. Taken together, these results showed that religion had some relationship, albeit limited (as correlations were not strong), with referential associations, spirituality and the experience of the music itself, but not with the effect of that same experience. This supported the qualitative findings.

Factor analyses were then conducted for religious and non-religious groups (Table 11.8).<sup>14</sup> The non-religious group initially elicited five factors (see Table L-4 in Appendix L). However, that included some ambiguous results, which were clarified when the analysis was limited to a three-factor solution. As these three factors accounted for over 50% of the variance it was considered most helpful to proceed with a discussion of this three-factor solution.

The first factor contained the strongest loadings from each of the spiritual elements. It also contained strong loadings from items relating to the effect of the experience; *strength* and *emotion*, as well as from *absolute*. There was a strong link between this spiritual experience and absolute meaning, along with *strength* and *emotion*. This strongly suggested an association between spirituality and absolute expressionist meaning for these non-religious people. Therefore, this factor was called the ‘Spiritual absolute expressionism factor’.

The second factor, accounting for one fifth of the variance, was labeled the ‘Referential factor’ because of the loadings of referential elements. As in the overall factor analysis (Table 11.2), all the questions relating to referential meaning, along with the *both meanings* question loaded strongly onto this factor. Clearly, referential meaning was an aspect quite separate from the others being discussed here.

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<sup>14</sup> The intermediate group was not included because the results for that group closely resembled the main analysis in Table 11.2.

Table 11.8 Factor Analysis comparing Religious groups

	Non-religious group			Religious group			
Factor	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Spiritual absolute expressionism</b>	<b>Referential</b>	<b>Formalist</b>	<b>Spiritual Referential</b>	<b>Referential</b>	<b>Absolute</b>	<b>Transcendence</b>
Strength	<b>.698</b>	.253	.126	<b>0.812</b>	-0.106	0.037	-0.149
Referential	.164	<b>.636</b>	<b>-.411</b>	<b>0.525</b>	<b>0.528</b>	-0.187	0.053
Absolute	<b>.468</b>	-.088	<b>.391</b>	0.296	-0.230	<b>0.623</b>	0.205
Emotion	<b>.659</b>	.096	-.007	<b>0.867</b>	0.118	0.036	0.121
Overtaken	<b>.733</b>	-.060	.150	<b>0.516</b>	-0.015	0.109	<b>0.640</b>
Lose track	<b>.737</b>	-.243	-.026	0.020	-0.073	0.162	<b>0.878</b>
Transformed	<b>.714</b>	.129	.044	<b>0.804</b>	0.137	0.073	0.19
Spiritual	<b>.517</b>	.008	.056	<b>0.760</b>	0.325	-0.139	0.124
Both meanings	.044	<b>.735</b>	-.291	<b>0.555</b>	<b>0.512</b>	-0.159	0.025
Only Absolute	-.130	-.062	<b>.804</b>	-0.23	0.004	<b>0.811</b>	0.131
Spiritual absolute	.280	.093	<b>.642</b>	-0.115	-0.07	<b>0.723</b>	0.137
Absolute significant	.232	-.169	<b>.737</b>	0.148	-0.245	<b>0.788</b>	-0.117
Only referential	.300	<b>.703</b>	.062	0.086	<b>0.746</b>	-0.265	-0.288
Ideas powerful	-.043	<b>.780</b>	.042	-0.046	<b>0.831</b>	-0.188	0.12
Spiritual referential	-.229	<b>.692</b>	.213	0.229	<b>0.668</b>	-0.277	0.047
Memory powerful	.003	<b>.686</b>	-.113	0.115	<b>0.761</b>	0.196	-0.12
Eigenvalue	3.547	3.351	1.735	4.806	3.262	1.595	1.169
% variance explained	22.169	20.946	10.843	30.039	20.390	9.971	7.308
N = 60			N = 63				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 Loadings above 0.39 are in highlighted in **bold**

The third factor for non-religious people captured elements relating to absolute meaning. The three supplementary questions loaded most strongly, and the strongest

loading was for the question that was most likely to be interpreted in a formalist sense – *only absolute*.<sup>15</sup> On this basis, including the negative loading for *referential*, this was labeled the ‘Formalist factor’.

These results suggested that, for non-religious people, spirituality related best to absolute expressionist meaning and not referential or formalist meaning. Yet this relationship was limited. Correlations calculated between the referential and absolute questions and the spiritual elements for this group revealed significant correlations only between *absolute* and *overtaken* ( $r=.308$ ,  $p=.018$ ,  $n=59$ ). Thus, the connection that existed between spirituality and absolute expressionism focused on being overtaken. The lack of other significant correlations suggested that the link between spirituality and absolutism was limited.

The religious group produced four factors with eigenvalues  $>1$ , which showed a relationship with referential meaning. The strongest factor (accounting for more than 30% of the variance) combined elements of spirituality, referential meaning and the effect of the experience. The strongest loadings were the effect elements of *emotion* and *strength*, then three of the spiritual-related elements, along with *referential* and *both meanings*. Therefore, the main dimension of the experience for religious people was spirituality, along with the effect of the experience and referential meaning. Hence, this factor was labeled ‘Spiritual Referential’. The relationship between the effect of the experience (strength and emotion) and spirituality, for both religious groups, confirmed the earlier finding that religion had no influence on this aspect of the experience. The difference lay in whether that effect and the experience of spirituality related to referential or absolute meaning.

The link between referential meaning and spirituality was further supported by a strong correlation between *referential* and both *spiritual* ( $r=0.531$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $n=62$ ) and *transformed* ( $r=0.398$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $n=62$ ). In this factor the absence of a loading of *lose track* was notable. It was the only spiritual element that did not load strongly. This was

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<sup>15</sup> This question asked participants to rate the idea: “The significance of this experience related to something in the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation. It was not connected with anything more than this ‘music itself’”.

in line with the weaker correlations with the other spiritual elements discussed above. This element appeared to be less important for religious people.

The second factor was more clearly the ‘Referential factor’, as it resembled the first factor from the overall analysis (Table 11.2). The third factor resembled the Absolute factor from the overall analysis, so was labeled the ‘Absolute factor’. While there was no strong loading of spiritual elements with this factor, suggesting no relationship, there were some significant correlations with absolutism. *Absolute* correlated significantly (though not strongly) with two spiritual elements; *transformed* ( $r=0.265$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $n=62$ ) and *Lose Track* ( $r=0.287$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $n=62$ ). Thus, it was not possible to entirely conclude that, for religious people, the music itself has nothing to do with spirituality.

The fourth factor received loadings from just two of the spiritual elements. As these were key elements of transcendence, this factor was referred to as the ‘Transcendence factor’. This highlights a distinction, with regard to spirituality, for religious people, between the more referential aspects, which encompass *spiritual*, *transformed* and *overtaken*, and the more experiential aspects, encompassing *overtaken* and *lose track*. The presence of *overtaken* in both was notable, and was possibly explained by it having both a referential and an absolute dimension.

Before concluding this section, it is worth noting that while religion did have some effect on spirituality overall, spirituality was not a product of religion. Only 7% of the non-religious group gave *spiritual* the lowest possible rating. If spirituality were a product of religion one could have expected virtually that entire group to give it the lowest rating. To the contrary, Figure 11.2 shows there was a range of scores, with 12% giving *spiritual* the highest possible rating (10/10).

### 11.3 Music and Lyrics

In Study I, several participants mentioned lyrics in their description of the music itself. In Study II, there was also a strong indication that lyrics were not easily abstracted from the music. The supplementary questions specifically relating to participants' understanding of the involvement of lyrics are detailed in Table 11.9. These form an addendum to Table 11.1.

Table 11.9 Questions relating to the discussion on involvement of lyrics

<i><b>Question no.</b></i>	<i><b>Label</b></i>	<i><b>Question</b></i>
21	Lyrics integral	The lyrics were an integral part of this experience; take them away [for example, replacing the words with humming] and it would not have been as significant.
22	Exp. deeper	There was something about this experience that was deeper than just the music or its words.
24	Lyrics	Did the music in this experience include lyrics?
25	Combination	This experience was significant because of the combination of the music and the lyrics (or words associated with that music) rather than just one or the other.
29	Lyrics no impact	The lyrics had nothing to do with the significance of this experience.

The supplementary question *lyrics* asked whether lyrics were involved in the experience. 97 participants (56%) reported that they were. These formed the lyrics group. A comparison was then made between the lyrics group and the no-lyrics group. Figure 11.3 graphs these results. (Appendix K includes more detail relating to these results.)

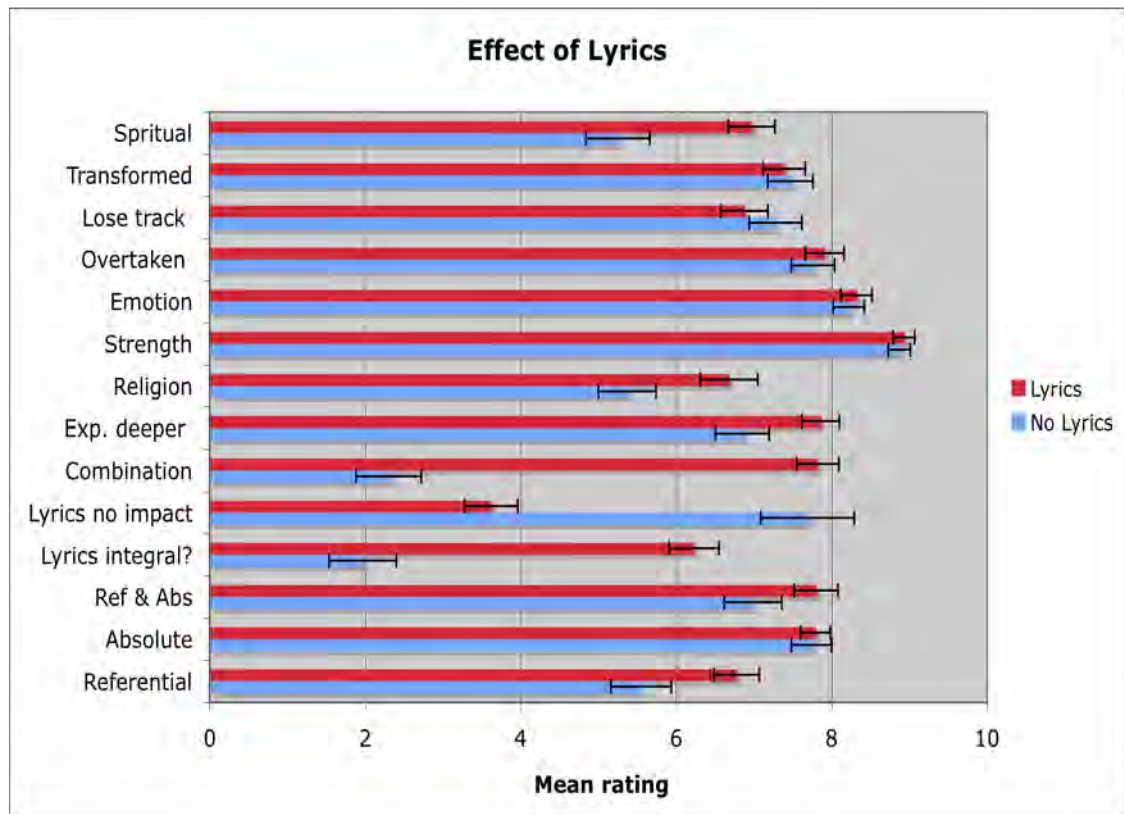


Figure 11.3 Comparison of means for experiences involving lyrics and those not involving lyrics.

Error bars show +/- 1 standard error

Note: Religion was rated on a 5 point scale, whereas all other elements were rated on an 11 point scale. Therefore ratings for religion were multiplied by 2.2 for the sake of consistency on this graph only.

An ANOVA was conducted on these comparisons, showing a significant difference overall ( $F(1, 156)=4.716, p=.031, \eta_p^2=.030$ ). Follow up ANOVAs showed a difference for *referential* ( $F(1,162)=6.801, p=.010, \eta_p^2=.040$ ). The lyrics group rated external associations as more important, presumably because the presence of lyrics readily afforded external associations. Nevertheless, the no-lyrics group still rated *referential* with a mean of 5.3/10, which was not insubstantial. This underscored the importance of external associations not being limited to the involvement of lyrics.

Some differences relating to the functioning of lyrics in general are discussed in Appendix L, as there is insufficient space to deal with them here.

The question *combination* examined whether the significance of the musical experience was due to a combination of music and lyrics.<sup>16</sup> This question correlated significantly with both *lyrics integral* ( $r=.371, n=83, p<0.01$ ) and negatively with *lyrics no impact* ( $r=-.577, n=59, p<0.01$ ). When the group was limited to Australian participants only, these correlations became even stronger ( $r=.581, n=62, p<0.01$  and  $r=-.730, n=43, p<0.01$  respectively). This suggested that when the lyrics played an important role in the experience so too did the music. It was not simply the lyrics on their own that were important. This supported the association effect discussed in Chapter 7<sup>17</sup>, and was evident in responses to the first questionnaire.

The final question that specifically asked about lyrics, *exp. deeper*, asked participants whether there was something ‘deeper’ about the experience than just the music or the lyrics.<sup>18</sup> The mean rating for both the lyrics group and the no-lyrics group were high ( $M=7.86, SD=2.34$  and  $M=6.85, SD=2.78$  respectively), suggesting that there was a general sentiment that there was something beyond the experience of the music itself or its words. When lyrics were present these ratings were significantly higher than when they were not ( $F(1,155)=6.079, p=.015, \eta_p^2=.038$ ). These findings indicated that there was a greater perception of there being something deeper about the experience when lyrics were present than when they were not. This may have been indicative of a greater sense of the inadequacy of lyrics to account for the significance of an experience, than music when it was on its own.

To test whether this difference between music with or without lyrics was affected by religion, an ANOVA was calculated. Results showed no effect for religion ( $F(2,155)=.373, p=.689, \eta_p^2=.005$ ), nor for an interaction ( $F(2,155)=.363, p=.696, \eta_p^2=.005$ ). These findings indicated that religious people were just as likely to consider

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<sup>16</sup> The statement read: “This experience was significant because of the combination of the music and the lyrics (or words associated with that music) rather than just one or the other.”

<sup>17</sup> In the section ‘Music and Lyrics’ I discussed the literature which argues that there is a flexible connection between lyrics and music as they are processed in the brain and in memory, in which they become associated, rather than integrated.

<sup>18</sup> The statement read: “There was something about this experience that was *deeper* than just the music or its words.”

the experience to be deeper than words or music, when lyrics were present, as non-religious people.

It was possible that this idea of a deeper experience related to spirituality. To test this, *exp. deeper* was entered into the main factor analysis (from Table 11.2). The factors came out unchanged, with very little difference to the other loadings (see Table 11.10). *Exp. deeper* loaded most strongly onto the Spiritual factor, which suggested it was related to spirituality.

Table 11.10 Factor analysis for the key elements of the questionnaire, including *exp. deeper*

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	Factor			
	1 Referential	2 Effect of the music	3 Spirituality	4 Absolute
Strength	.103	<b>.809</b>	.191	.036
Referential	<b>.677</b>	.321	-.013	-.272
Absolute	-.239	<b>.575</b>	.045	<b>.438</b>
Emotion	.102	<b>.803</b>	.284	-.031
Overtaken	-.037	.300	<b>.786</b>	.044
Lose track	-.141	.037	<b>.743</b>	.084
Transformed	.186	<b>.564</b>	<b>.430</b>	.060
Spiritual	.190	.215	<b>.698</b>	-.088
Both meanings	<b>.670</b>	.299	-.055	-.224
Only Absolute	-.102	.023	-.133	<b>.759</b>
Spiritual Absolute	-.115	-.104	.284	<b>.691</b>
Absolute significant	-.172	.215	.008	<b>.772</b>
Only Referential	<b>.673</b>	.040	.183	-.193
Ideas powerful	<b>.795</b>	-.169	.082	-.069
Spiritual Referential	<b>.701</b>	-.060	.076	-.161
Memory powerful	<b>.698</b>	.066	-.118	.097
<b>Exp. Deeper</b>	<b>.394</b>	<b>.278</b>	<b>.474</b>	<b>.075</b>
Eigenvalue	4.214	3.342	1.457	1.207
% Variance explaine	24.792	19.659	8.571	7.098

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

(*Exp. Deeper* is highlighted)



Correlations were then calculated between *exp. deeper* and the core elements (see Table 11.11). All of the spiritual elements correlated significantly with this question, as did *strength* and *emotion*. To test whether that finding was influenced by the presence of lyrics, the two lyrics groups were compared (see Table 11.12). For the Lyrics group the results were very similar; all elements of spirituality correlated significantly with *exp. deeper*. For the No-lyrics group *exp. deeper* correlated significantly with *spiritual* and *overtaken*, and with *emotion*, but not with the others.

Table 11.11 Correlations between *exp. deeper* and key elements of the experience, for all participants

	Exp. deeper (n)
Spiritual	.438** (156)
Overtaken	.379** (157)
Lose Track	.222** (156)
Transformed	.258** (156)
Strength	.339** (157)
Emotion	.414** (156)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 11.12 Correlations between *exp. deeper* and key elements of the experience, for the two groups

	Lyrics group	No-lyrics group
	Exp deeper (n)	Exp deeper (n)
Spiritual	.304** (92)	.527** (64)
Overtaken	.460** (92)	.287* (65)
Lose track	.236* (92)	.246 (64)
Transformed	.309** (92)	.214 (64)
Strength	.442** (92)	.206 (65)
Emotion	.508** (92)	.297* (64)

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These correlations showed that when lyrics were present, spirituality was related to something deeper than the music or the lyrics. For instrumental music, on the other hand, the idea of some meaning beyond the music only related to some of the aspects of spirituality.

In addition to the questions directly relating to lyrics, Figure 11.3 also illustrated comparisons between the lyrics groups on the core elements of the questionnaire; *strength*, *emotion* and the spiritual elements. These comparisons elicited only two significant differences. For *strength*, *emotion*, *overtaken*, *lose track* and *transformed* the experience was unaffected by the presence of lyrics. But for *religion* and *spiritual* there was a difference between lyrics groups ( $F(1,162)=5.984$ ,  $p=.016$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.036$ ), and ( $F(1,162)=12.112$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.070$ ) respectively. In both cases, the means were higher for the lyrics group, indicating that lyrics played an important role in the experience of religion and spirituality.

This was supported by the lack of difference for *religion* when the religious group ( $religion \geq 4/5$ ) were factored out of the ANOVA ( $F(1,100)=.329$ ,  $p=.568$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.003$ ).

This suggested that lyrics had an impact on the experience of music for religious people but not for non-religious people. Religion also had an effect on the difference between lyrics groups for *spiritual*. When the religious group was left out of the ANOVA, there was no significant difference for *spiritual* ( $F(1,99)=3.230, p=.075, \eta_p^2=.032$ ). This implied that lyrics played a significant role in the level of spirituality experienced by religious people, but had little impact for non-religious people.

### 11.4 Effect of Musical Background and Training

Study II also examined the effect of participants' musical background, and their training, on their musical experience.<sup>19</sup> It is conceivable that an individual's musical background and/or training may have influenced their experience of music and of spirituality. Figure 11.4 shows the difference between the five levels of musical background on each of the core elements of this questionnaire. This graph shows that, overall, the differences were minimal. Sometimes professional musicians rated elements higher, and less experienced music lovers rated them lower, which would suggest that the more experienced a person is, the more significant their experience is. Notably, that was only the case for the elements *absolute*, *emotion* and *overtaken*. This may be because experienced musicians had a greater number of experiences to choose a significant one from, or it may be because people who tended to have more significant experiences tended to pursue music more and thus be more experienced. These cause and effect questions cannot be determined from these data.

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<sup>19</sup> Question 3 and 4 respectively – see Appendix H.

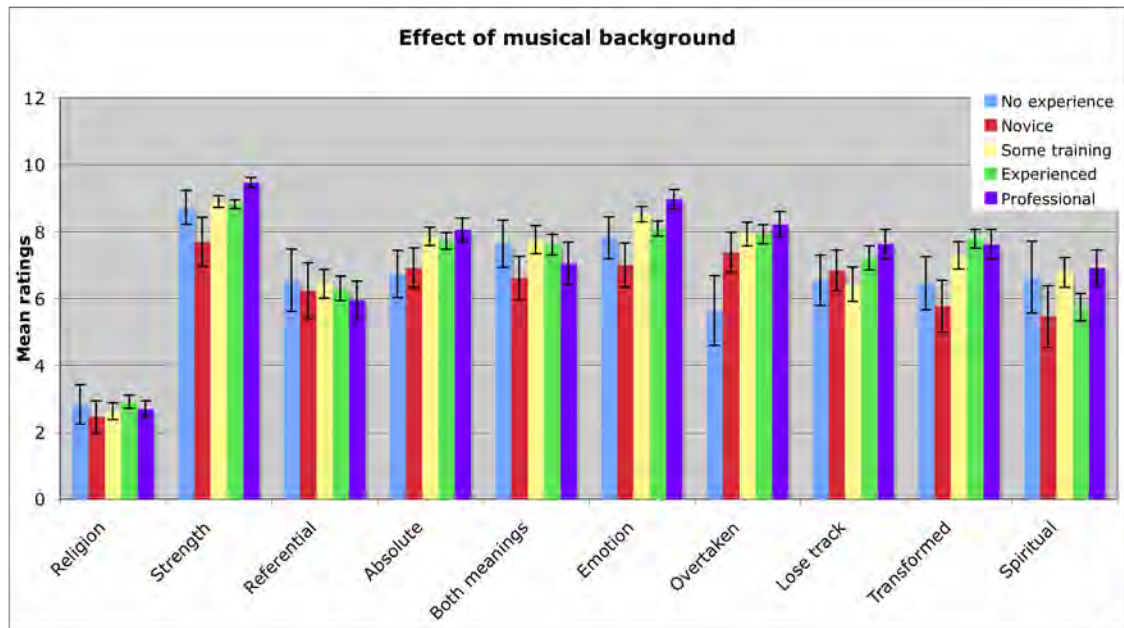


Figure 11.4 The effect of musical experience on the key elements of the questionnaire  
Error bars show +/- 1 standard error

For the other elements, the differences did not appear to be significant. Furthermore, even for *absolute*, *emotion* and *overtaken* the differences between the intermediate levels of experience showed no significant difference. This demonstrated that the level of musical experience had minimal impact on how the music was experienced.

I was also able to examine the effect of musical training, using the three groups discussed in the Data Analysis section of Chapter 8 . Figure 11.5 depicts the level of training according to musical background. This demonstrates that those with more experience were generally those with higher levels of training, as would be expected.

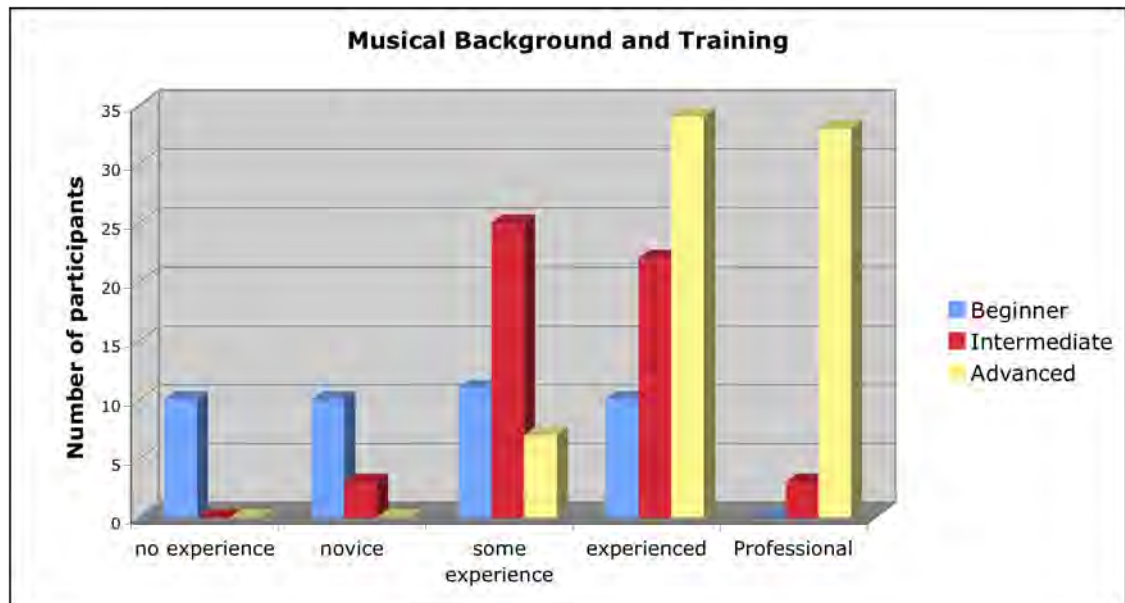


Figure 11.5 Comparison of musical training against musical experience

Means were then plotted for each of the main questionnaire elements, and these are graphed in Figure 11.6. The only two elements on which there appeared to be differences<sup>20</sup> were between the beginner and advanced groups on *transformed*, and between the intermediate and advanced groups on *spiritual*. For all other elements, musical training seemed to have had no effect. This showed that significant experiences of music had little to do with musical training, being as readily accessed by musical novices as by people who have studied extensively.

<sup>20</sup> Statistical tests were not conducted, but a comparison of error bars indicated that there seemed to be differences for those two elements.

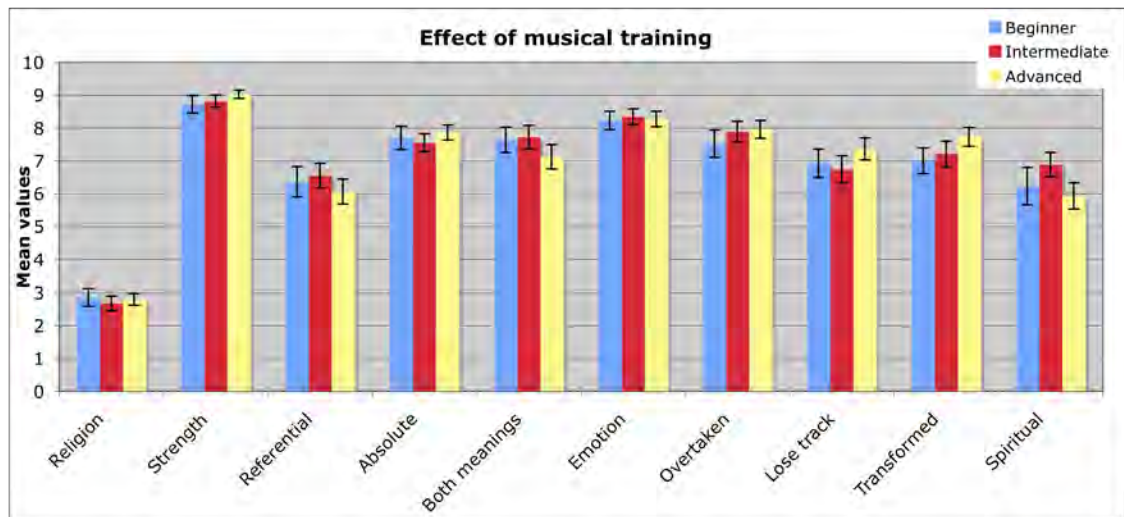


Figure 11.6 The effect of musical experience on the key elements of the questionnaire

Note: Religion scores were rated out of 5, whereas all others were rated out of 10.

Error bars show +/- 1 standard error

It was noted that advanced musicians seemed to rate *spiritual* lower than intermediate musicians. It is possible that those who had extensive musical knowledge, coming from much training, were less likely to interpret an experience as being spiritual because they had other ways of describing it. The higher means from advanced musicians for each of the transcendence elements indicated that the experience of advanced musicians was not less spiritual, according to my circumscription. Rather, it seemed that they simply chose to describe the experience in other terms. However, these conclusions are drawn cautiously because the size of these effects was small.

This demonstrates that one does not need to be trained or experienced to have a significant experience of music, or an experience of spirituality. This finding is in line with Hedden (1981), who showed that experience in analytical listening to music has no bearing on whether people perceive intrinsic or extrinsic elements in their aural experience. So while those with a high level of knowledge about music may be more able to comprehend what is transpiring, that does not mean their experience is any more powerful than those who merely experience something inexplicable. This is consistent with spirituality not being a product of the music itself. Since it is not exactly an absolute experience, but rather an awareness of the sacred, experienced in light of the musical forms, it is equally accessible to all people, regardless of their training or experience.

## Discussion

### *Spirituality and musical meaning*

Taken as a whole, these quantitative results indicated that spirituality was not completely accounted for by either referential or absolute meaning. Spiritual, referential and absolute meaning loaded as three independent factors on the factor analysis. The difference between spirituality and referential meaning was seen in the referential and spiritual elements loading onto separate factors in the overall factor analysis, and in the lack of a significant correlation between the factor scores. The supplementary question, asking whether spirituality was a result of referential meaning, had only a moderate mean (4.38 on a scale of 0-10). Correlations between referential and spiritual elements elicited moderate coefficients with only *transformed* and *spiritual*. These findings indicated that spirituality was a referential experience to only a limited degree. Where it was referential was in the functional aspect of being transformed rather than the substantive aspects of spirituality.

There was a little more connection between spirituality and absolute meaning. *Absolute* loaded onto the same factor as one of the spiritual elements (*transformed*) on the overall factor analysis, as well as correlating significantly with the three transcendence elements. The mean for the supplementary question (asking about a link between spirituality and absolute meaning) received a slightly higher, though only moderate, rating of 6.15 (on a scale of 0-10). There were no significant correlations between *spiritual* and the other factor scores relating to absolute meaning. Finally, when the absolute experience was taken in a formalist sense, there was no connection with spirituality.

When religious groups were compared with non-religious groups, the results became clearer. For religious people, spirituality was more evidently a referential experience. They rated the *referential* element significantly higher than did non-religious people, and there were correlations between *religion* and the referential factor, the *referential*

element, and the referential supplementary question. The most remarkable effect was the different factors in the factor analysis for the religious and non-religious groups. There was no relationship between spirituality and referential meaning for non-religious people, but for religious people there was.

This does not mean that spirituality was entirely a referential experience for religious people. Two of the transcendence elements loaded separately, and the mean for the supplementary question specifically targeting this link was only moderate (4.38 on a scale of 0-10). This suggested that, while external referents were involved in spirituality for these people, there was also an experiential aspect, which appeared to relate more to transcendence. (A similar relationship was evident in Study I between religious and non-religious experiences.)

For non-religious people, there was evidence of a connection between absolute meaning and spirituality. This was most clearly seen in the factor analysis for this group (Table 11.8) where spiritual elements and *absolute* loaded onto the same factor, along with *strength* and *emotion*. This suggested a connection, not simply with absolute meaning, but with absolute expressionist meaning. In addition, there was a significant correlation between *religion* and the absolute factor score, and between *absolute* and *overtaken*, but no other spiritual elements. Yet there was no difference between religious groups on the *absolute* element, nor was there a correlation between *religion* and *spiritual absolute*. Taken together, these findings suggested that there was only limited evidence that spirituality was absolutist for non-religious people. On the other hand, there was almost no evidence of spirituality being referential for this group.

These findings supported the third hypothesis for Study II, that spirituality would not be a product of religion. Twelve percent of non-religious people rated spirituality at its highest rating (10/10) and only 7% gave it the lowest possible rating. Three of the four spiritual elements did not correlate with *religion*. While there was a referential component for religious people, not all of the spiritual elements were involved in that. While non-religious participants focused more on the expression of the music itself, there was no correlation between religion and the absolute expressionist factor. There



was a small absolute component for religious people, based around transcendence. By contrast spiritual experiences were not at all referential for non-religious people.

These findings confirmed the literature that claims a distinction between religion and spirituality (Jose & Taylor, 1986; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). While religion did demonstrate a link with the *spiritual* element, there was only limited relationship with the other transcendence elements. *Lose track*, in particular, was of less importance for religious people. I conclude that where religion and spirituality overlapped was around the conceptual aspect of spirituality, whereas when it came to the experience of spirituality, relating more to the transcendence elements, they differed. This was further demonstrated in that *strength* and *emotion* both loaded onto the same factor as the spiritual elements for both religious and non-religious groups in Study II. Thus, both groups found the spiritual experience to be strong and emotional regardless of whether it related to referential or absolute meaning. Furthermore, lyrics appeared to play a more significant role for religious people. Such a distinction, of the conceptual from the experiential dimensions of spirituality, helps clarify why some people stated that the experience was not spiritual when it exhibited some of the characteristics of spiritual experiences; for them the conceptual component was missing.

The possibility that experiences were more significant and more spiritual when both referential and absolute meanings were involved was not supported by these findings. There was no difference in ratings of *spiritual* between those who rated *both meanings* high and low, nor was there any effect on three of the spiritual elements. There was a significant, though small, correlation with *transformed*. This element behaved somewhat differently to the other spiritual elements in other comparisons as well. This can be understood in terms of *transformed* acting more as a function of the experience than either *overtaken* or *lose track*, which related more to its substance.<sup>21</sup> On that basis, I concluded that the presence of both types of meaning did not make the experience of the substance of spirituality any more significant. Parenthetically, it was noted that referential experiences tended to involve absolute meaning as well, but the reverse did not occur.

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<sup>21</sup> It was Zinnbauer & Pargament (2005) who made that distinction between the substance and the function of spirituality.

The quantitative data therefore supported the first hypothesis; that spirituality would be better accounted for as an absolute experience<sup>22</sup>, only for non-religious people. For this group it particularly concerned the absolute expressionist experience. However, spirituality could not be entirely accounted for as either a referential or an absolute experience. It involved both, but was not limited to them. For religious people spirituality had an evident referential component and for non-religious people it had an absolute expressionist component. Yet the spiritual experience appeared to be distinct from either type of meaning, to some extent. This could be explained by considering that the experience of spirituality was a form of pre-conceptual *awareness* that arose in relationship with the music, rather than being entirely a *product* of the music (absolute meaning), or an external association *linked with* the music (referential meaning). Like sapiential knowledge (Crawford, 2005), it was something experienced in relation to the music.

### ***Spirituality and emotion***

There was evidence here of a similarity between spirituality and emotion. One of the spiritual elements (*transformed*) loaded with *emotion* in the overall factor analysis. In the factor analyses comparing religious groups (Table 11.8) *emotion* loaded onto the same factor as all of the spiritual elements for non-religious people, and with most of those elements for religious people. Furthermore, the effect of musical background on *emotion* was similar to that on *spiritual*, with professionals appearing to rate both elements higher than other groups with less experience (bearing in mind that the effect sizes here were small).

However, there were also some notable differences. Emotion was unaffected by musical training, whereas spirituality was marginally affected. The same was true for performers and listeners.<sup>23</sup> Religion had an effect on *spiritual*, but not on the other spiritual elements, whereas it had no effect on emotion. Again, the same pattern was true for the

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<sup>22</sup> This was the first hypothesis for both Study I and II.

<sup>23</sup> This issue of the difference between performers and listeners is taken up in Appendix J.

effect of lyrics. Furthermore, there was a closer relationship between emotion and transcendence than between emotion and spirituality.

Taken together, these findings reinforced the idea that emotion and spirituality are interconnected, yet distinct, planes of experience.

### ***Transcendence***

In Chapter 3 I claimed that transcendence could be thought of as a parallel measure to spirituality. This was supported by strong correlations between the two (though not as strong as in Study I), along with similar patterns of ratings for spirituality and transcendence. This suggested that it was not entirely because of a problem with the label ‘spiritual’ that these significant experiences of music were sometimes given low ratings of *spiritual*. Transcendence was also often rated low.

Spirituality and transcendence were not identical phenomena. There were points of distinction. Correlations between the two were strong, but not as strong as those within transcendence elements. *Transformed* sometimes loaded differently to the other two transcendence elements, often relating more to *spiritual* than to *overtaken* or *lose track*. Relating this to my earlier comment; that *transformed* was a function rather than a substance of spirituality, it appeared that transcendence related more to the substance of spirituality, and yet it was a multidimensional phenomenon.

### ***Lyrics***

Lyrics were an important part of many of these significant experiences of music. Particularly for religious people, lyrics were often involved. Findings supported the association effect: a flexible connection between lyrics and music in the brain and memory (Crowder, et al., 1990; Ginsborg & Sloboda, 2007; Peretz, Gagnon, et al., 2004; Peretz, Radeau, et al., 2004). Whenever lyrics were reported as being important, so too was the music. Yet even when lyrics were regarded as integral they were not always responsible for the impact of the experience.

Spirituality was, in part, affected by the presence of lyrics. When lyrics were present ratings for *spiritual* were higher (particularly for religious people), but lyrics had no effect on any of the transcendence elements. This related to my earlier comments about the conceptual component to spirituality for religious participants in particular. It suggests that lyrics provided the conceptual component to the experience, helping to ‘define it’ rationally, and this was especially important for religious people.<sup>24</sup> This did not mean that music with lyrics was more spiritual, but rather that music without lyrics was more open to interpretation; less ‘specified’ as being spiritual. It was not the lyrics alone that made the experience spiritual, but the association of the lyrics with the music; the lyrics clarified what the music was already saying (see also Curtis, 1996).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, this did not mean that music with lyrics was necessarily more referential. External associations were more common when lyrics were involved, but they were also present when lyrics were not involved. There is a strong tradition of referential meaning in instrumental music (Cook, 1998b; Cooke, 1959; Meyer, 1956).

The important function of lyrics, in specifying the conceptual content of experiences of spirituality, only highlighted the idea that there was ‘something deeper’ about the experience than either the music or lyrics, for this sense was heightened when lyrics were present. Participants indicated that, on the whole, neither the music itself nor the lyrics were able to account for the significance of the experience, and yet, when rational lyrics were present, participants were more inclined to indicate that there was something deeper about the experience than either the lyrics or music; that they were inadequate to describe the ineffability of the experience.

This notion of ‘something deeper’ related closely to spirituality. It loaded strongly onto the spiritual factor in the overall factor analysis, and there were significant correlations with all of the spiritual elements. This connection was not quite as strong for music with

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<sup>24</sup> This was evident in the use of music within the religious context, which typically revolved around song. These findings are in line with literature, which demonstrates the importance of lyrics in religious music. Argyle (1990) observed that religious music often involves community singing. Wik’s (unpublished) study involved at least some experiences with lyrics (she does not provide enough information to determine what proportion). According to Price (1999), Christian music is the only genre defined by lyrical content instead of musical style.

<sup>25</sup> This assumes that the lyrics and music are ‘saying’ the same thing. Sometimes in music there is an incongruity, intended or otherwise, between the music and lyrics, such as when lyrics with a sad tone are set to music that has a ‘happy’ feel. It is assumed that such incongruity is not relevant to this discussion.

no lyrics, but there was still considerable evidence to suggest that this sense of 'something deeper' closely related to spirituality. It was not primarily a form of conceptual knowledge, though conceptual knowledge could become involved. It was a pre-conceptual experience, which was ineffable, lying beyond the rational contributions of lyrics. This was linked to the finding that neither absolute nor referential meaning fully accounted for spirituality. Not that the absolute/referential distinction paralleled the music/lyrics distinction, but that neither that which the music itself communicated, nor the external associations attached to the music, nor the rational concepts used to interpret all of that, could fully capture or describe the experience of spirituality.

### **Summary of findings**

The findings from the quantitative data on significant experiences of music can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Spirituality was better accounted for as an absolute experience, thus supporting the first hypothesis.
  - However, spirituality was not entirely accounted for by either referential or absolute meaning - there was no strong indication overall of spirituality being referential (apart from religious differences mentioned below), and only minimal indication of it being absolute.
  - The above finding can be interpreted as spirituality being, not an external association linked with the music (referential), nor a product of the music (absolute), but a form of pre-conceptual awareness of something that can be apprehended in relationship with the music.
  - When both types of meaning were present, the experience of the substance of spirituality was no more significant.
  - Transcendence was seen to be a parallel phenomenon to spirituality. Where they diverged was where spirituality concerned concepts and external referents, while transcendence concerned the substance of the experience.

- 2) Spirituality and emotion were seen to be interconnected, yet distinct, planes of experience.
  - They loaded together on some of the factor analyses.
  - They were affected differently by factors such as musical training, performers v listeners, religion and lyrics.
- 3) Spirituality was not a product of religion.
  - Spirituality had a limited referential component for religious participants, and an absolute expressionist component for non-religious participants.
  - Spirituality had more to do with being transformed and less to do with losing track of reality for religious people than for non-religious people.
  - I concluded therefore that religion did not determine the core experience of spirituality.
- 4) Additional conclusions:
  - Lyrics had an effect on the conceptual aspect of spirituality, but not the experience of transcendence, particularly for religious participants.
  - There was a sense of there being 'something deeper' than the music or lyrics, particularly when lyrics were present, and this 'something deeper' was seen to be similar to spirituality.

## Chapter 12 Discussion & Conclusions

### 12.1 Overview of the Project

The aim of this research was to investigate whether the spiritual experience with music was better accounted for as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience. This was based on Meyer's theoretical distinction between referential meaning (extrinsic associations attached to the music) and absolute meaning (intrinsic meaning contained within the music itself).

I began by circumscribing the idea of spirituality; drawing boundary lines around the space within which it might be located, because of the lack of agreed definition. I proposed that spirituality be identified with respect to three aspects – transcendence (the experience of being transported beyond the temporal or known, or one's self or one's usual experience), connection (the sense of deep relationship, unity or attachment with another entity) and meaning (the sense of profound meaningfulness, value or purpose gained from the experience). While these aspects do not equate to a full definition, they are sufficient to identify spirituality. I claimed that spirituality is an inherently ineffable phenomenon and as such cannot be limited to a concept, but can only really be experienced as an awareness; an awareness of the sacred, which is an aspect of life that contains a sense of ultimate reality.

I therefore delineated the following provisional definition; *Spirituality is the capacity for an awareness of a sacred connection that transcends corporeality and provides a sense of profound meaning.*

Since music shares similar characteristics, it has a potent ability to express the quiddity of the spiritual; its essential nature, its spirit. As Sloboda (2005b) put it, music affords the spiritual experience as a chair affords sitting on. This link has been explored in a range of key research projects over the years. James' (1902/1985) work on religious

experiences showed that music alone has the best tools with which to express or comprehend mystical experiences because they lie beyond the confines of rationalism. Maslow's (1954) work on peak experience and Laski's (1968) study on transcendent ecstasy showed that music is a key trigger of spiritual-type experiences. Panzarella (1980) found aspects of what I have called spirituality in intense, joyous experiences of listening to music. Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) described seven key characteristics of Strong Experiences of Music, one of which is closely related to spirituality. Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) work on *Flow* described something very similar to transcendence. Harvey (1999) discussed the connection in terms of integration, Cobussen described music and spirituality as thresholds, and Penman and Becker (2009) found that spiritual and musical experiences were very similar.

So how does this phenomenon of spirituality fit within the types of musical meaning? If spirituality is of a different kind to music, so that the music simply designates the spiritual, then it will be a referential (extrinsic) experience. If it is of the same kind as music, so that the music embodies the spiritual, then it will be an absolute (intrinsic) experience. To take Meyer's theory further, if spirituality is entirely a feature of the tonal forms, then it will be a formalist experience, whereas, if it pertains to the expression that arises as a result of those same tonal forms, then it will be absolute expressionist. It was the purpose of this thesis to examine where spirituality fit.

Spirituality is a similar phenomenon to emotion, and that similarity assisted in the design of this research. There is evidence from the literature that spirituality and emotion are interconnected planes of experience, and yet, while they share many similarities, emotion is essentially a response to something, whereas spirituality is an awareness of something, through one's interaction with music. While the exact distinction between spirituality and emotion is open to refinement, the distinction presented here is adequate to enable a comparison of spirituality against emotion in responses about musical experience.

The relationship between spirituality and music is affected by a number of factors. It is clear from the literature that culture plays a significant role in shaping music's meaning. I examined this in the first study, in terms of the habitus of listening of Pentecostalism



found within the Christian church. In the second, I did not factor in the influence of culture, stating that I was interested in locating spiritual meaning, however it was mediated.

Although spirituality is now understood to be distinct from religion, religion continues to be a primary domain for the spiritual experience. In Study I, the effect of religion was examined using a comparison of religion and non-religious contexts. In Study II, the comparison was between religious and non-religious participants. These distinctions were left to the participant to make, yet guidelines were provided to enable them to do that accurately. The main impetus for Study II was to see whether non-religious people also had similar spiritual experiences.

The role of lyrics was examined in Study II. Technically speaking, absolute music does not involve anything outside of the music itself. Nevertheless, in Study I lyrics were often mentioned in relation to the music itself. Such a connection has been discussed in terms of an association effect, where it is the music and lyrics in collaboration that define the experience. I suggested that it may be that the lyrics contribute a rational element to the ineffable or pre-rational musical sense, so that spirituality is sensed in the experience as an integrated whole.

Two questionnaires were designed to examine these issues. 117 people aged between 18 and 77 years completed Study I. Participants were drawn from Christian churches as this was one aesthetic and spiritual tradition who were unlikely to reject the term 'spirituality' as being either vacuous or something to which they could not subscribe. 172 people aged between 18 and 92 years, including both religious and non-religious people, completed Study II.

## 12.2 Summary of Findings

In this section I draw together the main findings from Study I and Study II. Findings are presented in accordance with the main hypotheses, though I begin with a general look at spirituality. Sections are presented as follows:

- 1) Evidence of spirituality
- 2) Spirituality as a referential or absolute experience
- 3) Spirituality and emotion
- 4) The effect of religion
- 5) The effect of culture
- 6) The effect of lyrics

### **Evidence of spirituality**

This study demonstrated a great deal of evidence for the experience of spirituality, as it was circumscribed here, in relation to music for participants who have strong experiences of music. Self reported ratings of spirituality were high, even in the non-religious context, and from some non-religious participants. In the factor analyses, spirituality was the strongest factor for religious people (accounting for half the variance), and still an important factor for non-religious people. Spirituality was mentioned just as frequently as emotion in every qualitative question in this study. It is possible that the frequency of spirituality comments was slightly inflated due to the examiner's personal beliefs. Yet the involvement of an independent evaluator, as well as the quantitative findings, which are not open to interpretation, suggests that this was negligible.

One could argue that spirituality was frequently mentioned because it was mentioned in the wording of the general descriptions question. The question made some suggestions as to what might have been involved in the experience, and this included emotion and

spirituality.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) in their SEM study did not specify any such phenomena.<sup>2</sup> This might have had the effect of priming participants to mention spirituality more frequently, and that is why spirituality was more prevalent in this research than in the SEM study. But if spirituality was primed, so too was emotion. Both were suggested in the question wording. That is why spirituality was compared with emotion in these data, because there is a great deal of extant research on the presence of emotion in musical experience (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010). So, if spirituality was over-represented because it was primed, so too was emotion. I take up the comparison between spirituality and emotion below.

Some participants explicitly stated that their experience was not spiritual, including some religious and some non-religious people. This group was not large, and many who did reject the idea were not rejecting spirituality *per se*, so much as indicating that this experience did not relate to spirituality as they conceived it. It was often more of a rejection of the concept of spirituality; such as something referring to God or some other religious idea, than the experience of spirituality.

In Chapter 1, I argued for the importance of dealing with spirituality (and music) as a form of experiential knowledge (like sapiential knowledge) as opposed to conceptual or rational knowledge (taking Rahner's distinction, 1982). This was important, because sometimes a participant would state that the experience was not spiritual, even when there was evidence of categories of spirituality in their experience. This suggests that the interpretation of the experience plays an important role.

I would argue that those who rejected spirituality as a concept or rational signification they could not endorse, were, by and large, rejecting the conceptual shell of spirituality. With a different interpretation, they may have stated that the experience was indeed spiritual. This highlights the need to deal with spirituality primarily as an experience rather than a concept. This is to move beyond the logocentrism of Western

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix H, question 8 for question wording.

<sup>2</sup> Their participants were asked to describe in their own words "the strongest, most intense experience of music that you have ever had. Please, describe your experience and reactions in as much detail as you can" (p.163).

epistemology, to deal with a new form of knowledge, such as what Crawford (2005) called ‘spiritually-engaged knowledge’. That is why I have used the language of ‘awareness’ in dealing with spirituality, for it is not something that can be definitively grasped. It is an awareness or sense of something sacred.

Nevertheless, for some participants, their significant experience of music simply was not spiritual. Many experiences with low self-reported ratings of spirituality also received low ratings of transcendence (the two were highly correlated). This is important to note: not all significant experiences of music are spiritual.

Not only has this study demonstrated evidence for the presence of spirituality, but it has also made an important contribution toward a clearer understanding of what spirituality means. I proposed in Chapter 1 that spirituality can be understood in relation to three key aspects; transcendence, connection and meaning. Each of those was present in this study. The following sections outline the evidence for each.

### ***Transcendence***

Transcendence is a fundamental aspect of spirituality, but it is also understood independently, making it useful as a parallel phenomenon with which to compare spirituality. There was evidence of this in the data. Transcendence was reported strongly in both the qualitative question about spirituality and the quantitative questions that directly asked about transcendence. The three aspects of transcendence drawn from extant research; i) being overtaken by something powerful, ii) losing track of time and space or even one’s self, and iii) being transformed and strengthened, all loaded together with the *spiritual* element in the factor analyses, and there were strong correlations between these elements and *spiritual*.

However, there was evidence that spirituality and transcendence were not synonymous. The link between them was not as strong in Study II as in Study I. There was a stronger link between transcendence and elements such as *strength*, *emotion* or *lose track* than there was with spirituality. These differences seemed to suggest that there was a conceptual element to spirituality that was not apparent in transcendence. This was

particularly true for religious people. This relates to my comment above about the role of conceptual interpretations on the experience of spirituality. Hence, transcendence may be considered as a subset of spirituality, in that spirituality involves more than transcendence; for instance, rational significations such as the search for the sacred (George, et al., 2000).

The element *transformed* appeared to be somewhat different from the other two transcendence elements. It demonstrated slightly different relationships and so I suggested that it operated more as a functional aspect to spirituality than a substantive one. This was based on a distinction made by Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005). It may also have a more cognitive element to it than the other two, which brings it in line with Maslow's conclusion that "peak experiences transform the person only when they contain a cognitive element" (Panzarella 1980 p.70). Furthermore, *transformed* was the only spiritual element to load with *absolute* on the musical affect factor in the overall analysis of Study II. This suggests that if spirituality is an expression arising from the music itself then that connection will centre on being transformed by the experience.

It was curious that transcendence was not mentioned more frequently in the general descriptions and referential and absolute qualitative questions. Particularly in the absolute question, one might have expected transcendence to dominate. One explanation could be that the experience of transcendence was dealt with in terms of the signification of the supernatural (a transcendent signifier), and that is why transcendence itself was not often mentioned specifically. This could have happened because a sense of the divine is also really a sense of transcendence if one considers transcendence to be a "profound inner sense of divine presence" (Kennedy & Kanthamani 1995, p.334), or a belief in, or experience of, something beyond one's self (Martsolf & Mickley, 1998). This was often the case for the religious participants of Study I, in particular.

On the other hand, it could be argued that transcendence is the aspect of spirituality that lies beyond both the external associations of the music and the musical features themselves. Meyer (1956) described his taxonomy primarily to deal with emotion, so when it is required to deal with a form of awareness, which is a pre-conceptual

phenomenon, then it is found to be inadequate. In that sense, transcendence may be the element that captures this ineffable experiential knowledge. That may be why it was seldom mentioned in reference to the musical experience, despite its strong presence when specifically queried.

These results confirmed that spirituality relates closely to transcendence in the two aspects that I have sought to distinguish - the sense of moving beyond the ordinary (discussed in Howden 1992; Martsolf and Mickley, 1998) as well as the other realm or presence to which one is transported (see Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995; Young-Eisendrath & Miller 2000). I sought to distinguish these (for the purposes of discussion only) by suggesting that the former idea of moving beyond the corporeal relates to *withdrawal ecstasy*, whereas the latter idea of being transported to something other relates to the notion of *fusion*, which is a form of connection. Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) mentioned both aspects in their descriptions. These results confirm this distinction. Furthermore, they show that, for religious people, the experience has less to do with withdrawal ecstasy than with fusion with an other.

### ***Connection***

There was strong evidence for a sense of profound connection as an aspect of spirituality.<sup>3</sup> The four instantiations of connection were evident to varying degrees in responses to each of the qualitative questions. They were also seen to be part of a more holistic sense of connectedness. The *supernatural* element was frequently reported, and especially by religious people. Yet, it was often reported by religious people in the non-religious context (Study I) and by non-religious people (Study II) as well. Therefore, it was not simply a feature of the context. The supernatural entity that was mentioned was almost exclusively God. This is not surprising, as this is the transcendent signifier for Christian religious people, who were most heavily represented in this project.

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<sup>3</sup> Connection had to be profound. It was difficult to determine whether some comments were profound enough to be counted. For example, the comment "*The notion of listening to a historical composer's music in a historical cathedral, in 2007*" (P 30) could have qualified for the category of environment if we could be sure it was a profound or sacred connection, which, according to Sawatzky et al. (2005) relates to the transcendent, as opposed to the ordinary. Such comments were not counted.

Connection with one's existential self was well represented in the questions about spirituality, but not so well in the remaining qualitative questions. This may have been a result of some of the same factors that left transcendence with few mentions. I conclude that, while it is an important element of spirituality, it is not one that is mentioned in relation to the musical experience.

The other two instantiations, 'connection with other people' and 'connection with the environment', were more frequently mentioned in relation to the musical experience than to spirituality itself. This was especially so for *other people* in Study II. In both studies this element was infrequently mentioned as an aspect of spirituality itself, and yet, particularly in Study II, it arose as one of the more prominent elements in the musical experience, especially in relation to the referential question. This suggests that these two elements are not part of the common conception of spirituality, whereas perhaps they ought to be.

Many comments implied a sense of *fusion*; the idea of merging with the other; a unity, oneness or synergy, taken from Panzarella (1980). People wrote of being part of, or at one with, or in tune with, some cosmic or larger whole. They wrote about a sense of the complete integration of everything. This is in line with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) 'flow', where there is a sense of total absorption and a loss of self-consciousness. It also picks up Harvey's (1996) use of the term 'integration', where he stated that music integrates the listener and the music, the individual and the cosmos, and the self and the supernatural or the other person. Integration was evident here between the 'parts' of the musical experience: the music, text, biographical associations, performance aspects and so on. It was also evident in a holistic human response, such as an alignment of thinking and feeling. It was an integration of otherwise segmented parts.

Fusion is an important facet of spirituality, as it does away with the 'subjective/objective' duality that Crawford (2005) claimed is prevalent in Western forms of knowledge. Spirituality is thus non-dualistic. Yet in this the self is not completely subsumed. The sense is, rather, of a heightening of the self; hence the presence of the existential category. Something is happening on a personal level as well. There is personal benefit and meaning; the experience is uplifting or transformative,

providing a sense of well-being, personal growth, transformation and strength. This is similar to the way that music was involved in the experience. It was not simply a vehicle that took one to such an experience, such that it could then be discarded. There was a deep connection with the music, a sense from some that they were possessed by it.

This was where connection intersected with transcendence. If transcendence means being transported beyond one's self (Martsolf & Mickley, 1998) then that to which one is transported is (at least part of) the object of connection. Of course these two terms are describing one phenomenon, just two aspects of it; they are distinguished only for the purposes of discourse. That is why authors like Maslow (1971) implied connection in descriptions of transcendence, and authors like Goldberg (1998) included transcendence in discussion of connection.

However, I would argue that both are necessary for a full understanding of spirituality. Cobussen (2008) wrote about spirituality in terms of a 'productive void' in which there is no signifier, but just an empty space. If that means that there is transcendence but no connection then I suggest that is an incomplete understanding of spirituality. I made the point in my review of his book (Atkins, 2009b), "Coltrane's 'abysmal' search for a new expression in music leads only to frustration, which is a long way removed from the meaningful significance of Laski's (1968) 'transcendent ecstasy' or Gabrielsson's (2010) 'strong experiences with music'" (p.497). Spirituality must involve both transcendence and connection, even if only implied, and even if the connection is ineffable and indefinable. Surely that is what Steiner (1989) meant by a 'real presence'.

### ***Meaning***

Spirituality was also seen to involve a sense of profound meaning. Comments relating to spiritual meaning, as opposed to general or emotional meaning, were made in each of the qualitative questions, apart from the non-religious experience of the non-Pentecostal group in Study I. There was a sense of 'rightness' about these experiences at times. In the discussion to Chapter 11, I said that it is as if, in music, for a moment the struggle of



life and its inherent inadequacy was left behind, and perfection was reached. There was a sense of honesty about this, and a sense of being ‘at home’ or content.

It is noteworthy that there were not more comments about meaning. This was, in part, because scoring was limited to specific mentions of gaining benefit or meaning, rather than implicit ones. Most of the responses contained some sort of implied reference to these ideas, but typically this was a reference to what the meaning was, rather than a specific mention of meaning, and so was not counted. The difficulty with this aspect of meaning is that spiritual meaning is not necessarily explicit. As I argued in Chapter 1, it is not necessarily conceptual, it can only really be known experientially. That is why there were a number of comments indicating that the experience was ineffable, inexpressible or mysterious; that it was profound, but couldn’t be explained. That is also, perhaps, why there were comments about ‘longing for a better world’, ‘yearning’, searching for or desiring something, and even discovering something special.

Spirituality is about a search for the sacred (George, et al., 2000) or a sense there is ‘something there’ (Hay, 2007b). It is an awareness that cannot always be described, a meaningfulness that is gained, even if it is not rationally accessible. This is another important reason why there were not more mentions of meaningfulness in these experiences. In light of this, I conclude that spirituality does include a strong sense of meaning, even if that was not explicitly stated.

The presence of this ineffable meaningfulness was evidence that spirituality was not limited to Cobussen’s (2008) idea of a wandering uncertainty where certainty can never be attained. Certainty in the sense of a conceptual definition may never be attained, but certainty within the bounds of experiential or sapiential knowledge is important for spirituality. Spirituality is not just about the search for meaning, it also concerns its apprehension. As I established above, transcendence without connection is an incomplete idea of spirituality.

It is here that the three aspects of spirituality overlap. With the music, one can have a sense of transcending beyond the ordinary experience or temporal reality, to a deep connection with the other, be that the supernatural, other people, the environment, one’s existential self, or some holistic, universal sense. This can bring a deep sense of sacred

meaning, perhaps with a feeling that things are as they ought to be. Such an experience is profoundly meaningful, even if that meaning cannot be conceptualised, or even verbalised. Although I have circumscribed spirituality in terms of three distinct ideas – transcendence, connection and meaning – it is, in reality, a unitive experience, with the three aspects closely interrelated. This is the essential nature of spirituality. It is any of those things and all of them, depending on the focus of the individual and the way they express themselves.

This aspect of meaning related closely to the category of *Improved / aided / transformed*. This category was reported in a similar way to the *meaning* category, except that it was also not mentioned in the religious context in the absolute question of Study I. In light of this similarity, *Improved / aided / transformed* was dropped for Study II. Despite this, the importance of being transformed was still picked up in the quantitative element *transformed*, which was strongly present. I have already referred to Zinnbauer and Pargament's (2005) distinction between functional and substantive ideas of spirituality in saying that the *transformed* element related to the function of spirituality. In the same way, the aspect of meaning relates more to the function of spirituality, whereas the aspects of transcendence and connection relate more to its substance.

### ***Other ideas***

A variety of ideas were presented in the qualitative data, which related to spirituality, but were not contained by the three aspects I focused on. This is not so much an indication that the three aspects used were inadequate to accurately identify spirituality, as it is evidence that spirituality is a complex phenomenon that contains a variety of facets, and that the facets one focuses on will determine what one mentions in describing it. McGrath (1999) made this point in noting that spirituality can be, and is, thought of in a variety of senses, by various scholars. No doubt the conception of spirituality utilised in this study is influenced by the personal beliefs and experience of the researcher, but there is sufficient support from the literature to be sure that this conception is entirely valid, even if it is not definitive.

A variety of synonyms for spirituality were used. These included: ‘sublime’, ‘mythical’, ‘magical’, ‘numinous’, ‘mystical’, ‘worship’, ‘hypnotic’, ‘transfixing’, ‘breath’ and ‘trance’ in addition to ‘spiritual’ or ‘spirit’. The term ‘spiritual’ was mentioned by 18% of participants in Study II, while describing the experience in general, making it the most popular aspect of spirituality.

In Chapter 1, I claimed that the noun ‘spirituality’ refers to the *capacity* to experience the spiritual (M. J. Thompson, 2005), whereas the adjective ‘spiritual’ refers to the *spirit*. Several authors have drawn a connection between ‘spirit’ and ‘breath’ or ‘life force’ (Goldberg, 1998; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Tillich, 1967) and this was present in this study in terms used such as: ‘energy’, ‘animated’, ‘stirred’, ‘stimulated’, ‘ecstatic’, ‘alert’, ‘vigour’, ‘power or overpowered or overcome’ and ‘vitality’. There was also ideas of ‘alive’, ‘well-being’, ‘freedom’, ‘fresh’ and ‘humbled’.

Laski (1968) described two sorts of experiences; *intensity*, which invokes the idea of tumescence (where something wound up is then released); or *withdrawal*, where a force of energy has dissipated. The former was evident in the comments above, and the latter was evident in other terms used, including: ‘Stillness’, ‘space’ or ‘silence’. This is also in line with the current musical genre of the ‘New-Spiritual Music’ movement (such as Arvo Part), in which these qualities are central. In the religious context this was associated with reverence.

One popular idea was a sense of beauty. This was mentioned many times by participants, but I take this up in the later section ‘Implications for Future Research’ because of its potential importance. The idea of ‘simplicity’ was mentioned, with the sense of being simply profound, rather than simplistic. Experiences were also described as being ‘deep’.

None of the reported experiences were negative or fearful. They were all deeply beneficial. This was the case even though many of the experiences involved ‘sad’ music or related to negative events. This raises the question of why people are attracted to sad music, and not repelled by it, as they are by other negative experiences (S. Davies, 2001), as well as the functioning of catharsis – areas beyond the scope of this research.

Further ideas included the experience being unique, extraordinary, or at least unusual. This supports Panzarella's (1980) hypothesis that "peak experiences represent an unusual mode of functioning ... rather than an intensification of the person's usual mode of functioning" (p. 84-85).

Physical responses have been shown to be an important part of significant experiences of music (Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik 2003; Sloboda 1991). This aspect was intentionally avoided in this project because it is such a large aspect, and yet there were a number of comments that mentioned physical responses. These included tears, shivers, goose bumps, chills, 'breath-taking', and even 'orgasmic'. Some comments expressed a desire to dance. In all of this, the sense of a physical, bodily connection was evident.

I conclude from these data that, because of the strong evidence for transcendence, connection and meaning as key aspects of spirituality, my provisional definition of spirituality, proposed on p.7, is suitable to be used, explored and developed in future research:

*Spirituality concerns the capacity for an awareness of a sacred connection that transcends corporeality and provides a sense of profound meaning.*

### **Spirituality as a referential or absolute experience**

The main question I have sought to answer in this thesis is: 'is the spiritual experience best described as a referential (extrinsic) or absolute (intrinsic) experience?' I hypothesised that spirituality would be better accounted for by absolute meaning. I allowed for some referential meaning, but predicted that spirituality would be better

accounted for as an experience arising from the music itself, more in the sense of absolute expressionism than formalism. That hypothesis was upheld.

### ***Referential***

Spirituality was, in some respects, a referential experience. In response to the qualitative questions about referential aspects, all of the categories of spirituality were mentioned, especially *existential*, but most frequently *supernatural*. *Meaning* was mentioned frequently in the general descriptions of Study I. The number of comments relating to spirituality was at least as high, if not higher, than the number of comments relating to emotion, which demonstrated that spirituality was as important as emotion. There was also a moderate correlation between *referential* and the *spiritual* element in Study II.

There was much more evidence to suggest that spirituality was not a referential experience. There were not many comments overall, and none for *transcendence*, *supernatural*, *improved* and *meaning* by non-Pentecostals in the non-religious context for Study I. Several categories of spirituality were mentioned less frequently in the referential question than in the spirituality question (such as *transcendent* and *environment* in Study I and *existential* and *transcendent* in Study II) or the general descriptions question. *Transcendence* in particular was not mentioned as part of the referential experience, being predicated on the need to be free from conscious processes such as are involved in referential meaning.

The quantitative data also showed a very limited relationship between spirituality and referential meaning. Spirituality and referential elements loaded onto separate factors in all the factor analyses, apart from the religious group in Study II. Correlations of *referential* with *spiritual* and *transcendence*, respectively, were low and non-significant in Study I. The *referential* element correlated with just one of the spiritual elements in Study II; *transformed*. I have suggested that this element concerns the function rather than the substance of spirituality, and so this indicates that the referential aspect to spirituality has more to do with the function of the experience than its substance. Furthermore, the supplementary question that asked specifically whether spirituality was a result of external references received only moderate ratings (5.21/10 for Study I

and 4.38 for study II). If spirituality were a referential phenomenon one would expect that rating to be much higher.

Religion was a factor here, with religious experiences tending to have a stronger referential component. There were more comments, particularly relating to the *supernatural* (in particular God) in the religious context of Study I and, to a lesser degree, by religious participants in Study II. In the quantitative data for Study II, most of the spiritual elements loaded with referential elements for religious participants, and there were higher ratings for the *referential* element. There were also positive correlations between *religion* and the referential factor, the *referential* element, and the referential supplementary question. However, the experience of spirituality was not entirely referential for the religious group, as *lose track* did not load with the referential elements.

All of this shows that referential meaning did not fully account for spirituality. In some respects, music was lent an intentionality it did not, of itself, possess (Raffman, 1993), and this mainly concerned a connection with the supernatural, and, to a lesser extent, a sense of being transformed by the experience. These aspects were of a different kind to the music, such that the music designated them; particularly for religious people. Other aspects of spirituality, as well as other ways of experiencing *supernatural* and *transformed*, must be accounted for in another way.

### ***Absolute***

There was considerable evidence that absolute meaning could account for spirituality. All categories of spirituality were mentioned in the various qualitative questions, except for *improved* in the non-religious context in Study I. Some of those comments made explicit reference to spirituality arising from the musical components. *Supernatural* was included among these, even though it was strongly involved in referential meaning. There was as much evidence for spirituality as for emotion, and even more so in the religious context in Study I. This suggested that spirituality was an absolute experience to the same degree that emotion was.

In the general descriptions of Study I, comments indicated that absolute meaning was important for *transcendence* and *environment*. This made sense, as *environment* is all about the musical environment, and *transcendence* has often been the focus of profound musical experience, particularly in the Romantic period. It is interesting, in that respect, that these two categories were not more frequently mentioned, particularly in the absolute question. I suggest this is because the experience of transcendence and the environment is not something people tend to focus on in their experiences of music today. The number of such comments was low, not only in the absolute question, but also in the referential and the general descriptions questions. It was high in the spirituality question because people recognised that it was a part of spirituality, but when it came to thinking about what the musical experience actually entailed, transcendence did not factor large. It may have been present but it did not rate a mention.

The quantitative data provided further evidence for spirituality as an absolute experience. The mean rating for the supplementary question, asking whether spirituality was a result of the music itself, was moderate (6.15), but was higher than the equivalent question about spirituality as a referential experience. There were significant correlations between *absolute* and the transcendence elements in Study II. This highlights the difference between the transcendence aspect of spirituality, which has more in common with the experience of the music itself, and the more cognitive aspect, which has more in common with external references. One of these, *transformed*, loaded onto the same factor as *absolute* in Study II, even though in Study I *absolute* bore no relationship with any spiritual element. The main difference between Study I and II was the inclusion of non-religious participants, and this seems to have clarified things in that the strongest evidence for spirituality as an absolute experience came from non-religious participants, for whom all the spiritual elements loaded strongly with *absolute*.

While these findings suggest that spirituality was, to some degree, an absolute experience, there were other indications that it was not. There were no other indications, beyond those mentioned above, of a link between spirituality and absolute meaning for the non-religious group, for example: no correlation between *religion* and *spiritual absolute*. The number of qualitative comments linking spirituality with absolute

meaning was low, and lower than for the referential question. Perhaps the most significant finding was the loading of spiritual elements and *absolute* onto separate factors in each the factor analyses except for the non-religious group in Study II.

It would be problematic to conclude from this that spirituality is not an absolute experience, considering Davies' (1994) claim that while music can have external references as it operates as a code, the power of music does not seem to depend on those codes, or Harvey's statement that "music by its very nature is spiritual" (1999, p.82). I suggest that these findings can be explained by claiming that participants' focus or approach to the questions steered them away from describing the experience of the music itself, and toward mentioning the features that led to that experience. Just as I argued above that *transcendence* was infrequently mentioned because people didn't often think to mention that in regards to their musical experience, so participants were focused on components of the music itself rather than the experience arising from those components.

The wording of the questions may have contributed to that, as they asked about the elements of the music, and what it was about them that was significant. In Study II, this was reinforced with an explanation box defining the 'music itself' as "meaning the technical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, etc." (See Appendix H.) This distinction, while not incorrect, may have exacerbated the problem. It may also account for the fewer mentions of spirituality in Study II than in Study I. Additionally, the placement of the absolute question after the general description and referential questions may have meant that participants felt they had already dealt with the nature of the experience of the music and were now required to describe the musical features that led to that experience. The reason to conclude this is that emotion also received relatively few mentions (just 19 from 172 participants in Study II). Therefore spirituality is no less an absolute experience than emotion.

What this showed is that spirituality was not an absolute experience in a formalist sense. Formalism concerns the intellectual appreciation of the musical forms or tone structure, denying the significance of any meaning outside those structures (Hanslick, 1957/1854). Therefore, to the extent that participants were focused on the musical structures rather



than the experience of those structures, they were dealing with formalism, with the corporeality of music, as Rothfarb (2005) construed it – the surface of the music, the dynamic melodic, rhythmic and thematic content. Spirituality was not accounted for by formalist meaning.

This was seen in the qualitative data in the lack of any comments relating to spirituality, as I have characterised it, from those participants identified as being formalist. It was seen even more clearly in the factor analyses of Study II, in which absolute meaning loaded strongly onto two factors, one concerning the tonal forms and one concerning the experience of those forms. Spiritual elements loaded with the latter factor and not at all with the former. Furthermore, *emotion* loaded with the spiritual and transcendence elements in Study I, but not the absolute elements. In Study II, there was a lack of strong loadings of any spiritual element onto what I called the formalist and the absolute factors for the non-religious and religious groups respectively.

Instead, these results show that spirituality concerned more than the corporeality of music. There were more mentions of spiritual categories, and mean ratings of spirituality were significantly higher, in experiences identified as absolute expressionist than those identified as formalist. Furthermore, spiritual elements loaded onto the musical affect (absolute expressionist) factor in Study II rather than the one relating to formalist meaning. This indicated that absolute expressionist meaning is more able to account for spirituality. As Rothfarb (2005) wrote, it resides subterraneously, between the lines of the music. Spirituality is still absolute in the sense of the Latin *ab-solutus* meaning to ‘separate off’, because it is intrinsic to the musical forms. Yet it concerns the expression arising from, rather than an intellectual appreciation of, those forms.

It was in the separation of religious groups in Study II that the clearest indication of spirituality as an absolute expressionist experience appeared. The factor analysis for the non-religious group showed a clear and strong relationship between the spiritual elements and the absolute expressionist factor, but not with the formalist factor. By contrast, the religious group demonstrated no relationship between spirituality and absolute meaning at all in the factor analysis, suggesting they regarded absolute meaning in a formalist sense and considered it unrelated to spirituality. This was in line

with Study I, in which the music itself was less important in the religious experience than the non-religious experience.

I conclude, therefore, that spirituality is an absolute experience only in an absolute expressionist sense, not in a formalist sense. The musical, tonal forms (melody, rhythm, harmony, etc.) are necessary, but not sufficient, for spirituality. That's why Steiner (1989) argued that good art begins in immanence, but it does not stop there.<sup>4</sup> Spirituality is experienced in relation to the tonal forms, and is enabled or embodied by them, but cannot be contained by them. It is in this sense that spirituality is an expression of those tonal forms; they express the awareness of the sacred, the threshold that is fundamental to spirituality. They give "the impression of having been shown or revealed something particular about how life is, or goes, or might be, something previously undisclosed" (Levinson, 1992, p.60).

### ***Both meanings***

One question remains: is spirituality accounted for better when both types of meaning are present; when there are both extrinsic and intrinsic meanings present? This has credence intuitively. Roseman (2008), a medical-ethnomusicologist, described the two as "complementary in an overlaid continuum" (p.32) and probably both at work. There was certainly evidence in these data of spirituality having both referential and absolute meaning, such as in the relationship that the element *transformed* demonstrated with both referential and absolute meaning in Study I, and in the number of participants who stated that both meanings were present. However, there was no difference in the spiritual experience between those who claimed both meanings were strongly present and those who did not. Instead, there appeared to be almost a ranking between the two, with absolute meaning being more fundamental. When referential meaning was important then absolute meaning usually was too, but when absolute meaning was rated as important then referential meaning did not necessarily follow suit. This seems to support Davies' (1994) comment about the power of music not depending on external references even if they are involved; as if referential associations are secondary.

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<sup>4</sup> That's also why non-human primates can recognize musical structures, but do not find in them the same meaning (McDermott, 2004; McDermott & Hauser, 2007).

## *Conclusion*

I conclude that there was some support for the first hypothesis, particularly in non-religious circumstances; spirituality was better accounted for as an absolute experience, in strong experiences with music<sup>5</sup>. Extra-musical associations were indeed involved, and more so for religious people. They had a role to play particularly in the rational interpretation of the experience, but they only accounted for certain aspects of the phenomenon. The intrinsic meaning of the music itself is better able to account for spirituality, because it presents the dynamic characteristic in appearance (S. Davies, 1994) of the awareness that is the spiritual experience; modeling it through its pitch, rhythm and dynamics, for it is a simulacrum of spirituality (White, 1992), affording the spiritual experience (Sloboda, 2005b).

Yet that support must be qualified. The qualification is that, as much as spirituality is not fundamentally extrinsic to the music, neither is it exactly intrinsic. There is something more to the experience than either referential or absolute meaning. That is why participant 73 stated that the significance of the experience “*was the result of a tangible connection with an experience of relationship, not merely the enjoyment of an emotional piece of music*”. Spirituality is a pre-conceptual, ineffable awareness of a transcendent connection that arises from within the indescribable mystery of the material experience of tonal forms that is music. Music is not a doorway (Warren 2006) or a window (Wolterstorff, 1980) through which the spiritual can be experienced and the music done away with. Neither is spirituality exactly intrinsic to the music, in the sense that it is a product of the music. The same musical experience can be, for one person, a spiritual experience, and another, something quite different. Spirituality is not limited to the tonal forms; it is experienced in light of them. It is experienced in the very nature of music’s working, it is “an inner coming-to-life of something” (Harvey, 1999, p.32). That is why both spirituality and music are ‘thresholds’; (Cobussen, 2008); a space between the category of a musical explanation and the reality of its experience

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<sup>5</sup> It is noted that these conclusions are only generalisable to strong or significant experiences of music. Experiences that were not strong were not included in this research, as it may well be that such experiences are not spiritual.

(Finn, 1996). The experience of the music embodies the awareness of spirituality, the 'breath of life' (Goldberg, 1998; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

### **Spirituality and emotion**

The importance of emotion in significant experiences of music is well attested (Gabrielsson, 2003; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). This study sought to determine whether spirituality was as important as emotion. Throughout, I have assumed some level of similarity. My theoretical framework is based on Meyer's (1956) taxonomy of referential and absolute meaning, which was written to deal with emotion, assuming it would be equally able to classify spirituality. I have described emotion and spirituality as 'interconnected planes of experience', borrowing Zinnbauer and Pargament's (2005) phrase, and have sought to examine the relationship between these two phenomena. Other experiences of music could have been used, apart from emotion, but emotion was chosen because of its proximity to spirituality.

Data showed that emotion was evidently important in these experiences. It was commonly reported in the qualitative data, with no mention of the experience being 'not emotional' (as there was for spirituality). A wide variety of emotions were mentioned,<sup>6</sup> as well as general references to 'emotion'. Comments included simple, and more complex emotions,<sup>7</sup> negative emotions and unexpected emotions. Typically, references were to 'deep' or 'gut wrenching' emotions.

Ratings of emotion were unaffected by factors like lyrics or musical background. Emotion was identified as a response to both referential meaning (eg. a relationship break-up) and absolute meaning (eg. mood of the music). In all, the strong presence of emotion confirms extant research such as that by Maslow (1954), who identified the

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<sup>6</sup> These included 'peace', 'joy', 'empathy', 'euphoria', 'passion', 'ecstatic, happy and free', 'relaxing', 'awe' and 'delight'.

<sup>7</sup> Simple emotions included 'fear', 'calm', 'sadness' and 'anger'. Complex emotions included 'loneliness', 'shock', 'longing', 'awe', 'excitement' and 'hope'.

importance of emotion in peak experiences, and it provides a good standard against which to measure spirituality.

Results showed that spirituality was as frequently mentioned as emotion in these experiences. Qualitative comments relating to spirituality were at least as prevalent as those relating to emotion in most of the questions in both Study I and Study II. This was expected when participants were writing about spirituality, but when they were writing about the experience in general they still mentioned spiritual categories just as frequently as they did emotions. This suggests that spirituality was also important. Even in Study II, where mentions of emotion were slightly more numerous than mentions of spirituality in the general descriptions, the difference was marginal. This is remarkable for participants who were unlikely to have been aware that this was a study on spirituality. Furthermore, in many of the qualitative questions, spirituality was mentioned more frequently than emotion, especially by religious people or in the religious context. One might argue that this was because there were at least six spiritual categories and only one emotion category. Yet that emotion category was very broad, drawing in comments relating to a number of categories of emotions (for example, positive, negative, simple, complex, etc.), whereas the spiritual categories were more specific.

Many of the qualitative comments identified spirituality and emotion as being equivalent. Some mentioned them together in the same comment. Some identified spirituality as a type of overwhelming emotion. Some actually used the term ‘spiritual emotion’, and many inferred that emotion and spirituality were both aspects of the same experience. In the quantitative data, emotion loaded strongly onto the same factor as spirituality in most of the factor analyses. In the one factor analysis in which emotion did not load with spirituality (the main analysis in Study II), it still loaded with one of the spiritual elements: *transformed*. Then, when religious and non-religious groups were separated, emotion again loaded with spirituality. In addition, emotion correlated significantly with both the spiritual and transcendence elements in Study I. Finally, religious experiences received higher ratings of emotion than did non-religious experiences, and the same was true for the spiritual element.

I conclude from these findings that the second hypothesis was supported – spirituality is as important as emotion in significant experiences of music, in terms of quality and quantity. There were usually at least as many mentions of spirituality, and they were of an equivalent quality. This is not necessarily the case for regular experiences of music, but they are beyond the scope of this study. When the experience was significant, it involved a sense of spirituality, in most cases, as frequently as it did a sense of emotion, and this sense of spirituality was as important to the experience as was emotion. This confirms the literature that links these two phenomena (Arnold, 1960; Edwards, 1946/1959; Jose & Taylor, 1986; Maslow, 1954; Sylvan, 2002, 2005).

Yet I contend that spirituality is not synonymous with emotion. Spirituality is not simply a strong emotion, as there is a fundamental distinction. This was evident in a number of ways. In the qualitative spirituality question, in both studies, there were many more comments about spirituality than emotion. Participants were focused on God and the cynosure of the experience, rather than the nature of the experience, such as emotion. In other qualitative questions, spirituality was mentioned at least as frequently as emotion, and sometimes more frequently, especially in the religious context or by religious people. Never was spirituality mentioned less frequently than emotion.

Individual comments alluded to a distinction between emotion and spirituality. Many comments depicted emotion as a response to the awareness of the spiritual, or the result of the spiritual encounter. This confirmed the distinction I made in Chapter 1, between reactions and perceptions. Drawing from Damasio's (2004) work, I identified emotion as a bioregulatory reaction – a reaction or response to a stimulus, such as peace or ecstasy. By contrast, spirituality is an *awareness*, or a sense of something sacred, and in that regard it is closer to what Damasio distinguished as a feeling; the *mental representation* of that reaction, the *perception* of the emotional state enacted in the body. Experiences were often described as a feeling, often with no reference to emotion. Therefore I confirm what I tentatively suggested in Chapter 1, that the point at which they overlap is on the level of feelings. If we borrow Wilber's (2000) distinction between spirituality as a wave or level, and emotion as a stream, then the point at which

the level and stream intersect is at the point of feelings. An emotion can be a feeling, and when it is it can be a spiritual experience. However, to the degree that emotion is simply a reaction, it is different to a spiritual experience.

The distinction between spirituality and emotion was also seen in some responses to the absolute question, which indicated that while musical characteristics could be emotive and important for the experience, something more was needed to explain the significance of the experience. In a similar vein, comments sometimes referred to the experience being deeper than, beyond, or not limited to emotions. (They certainly referred to deep emotions, which may be somewhat different to emotions in ordinary life.) Then, in the quantitative data, ratings for emotion were stronger than ratings for spirituality (Mean 7.42 emotion and 6.71 spirituality in Study I and 8.29 emotion, 6.30 spirituality in Study II). This difference was more marked for Study II, which may have been the result of the effect of religion on interpretations of spirituality. All of these findings confirm the literature that indicates a distinction between spirituality and emotion, such as in medical ethnomusicology, where spirituality sits alongside emotional, physical, social and psychological factors (Koen, et al., 2008).

On the basis that spirituality is as important as emotion in significant experiences of music, and on the basis that spirituality is not simply a particular type of emotion, this study strongly challenges the dominance of emotion as the key construct of significant experiences of music. Contemporary trends in music research have focused heavily on emotion in the past few decades. This has led to comments such as this: “Some sort of emotional experience is probably the main reason behind most people’s engagement with music” (Juslin and Sloboda, 2001, p.3). Emotion is perhaps more ubiquitous than spirituality in the experience of music, such that regular experiences that are not significant may not involve the sense of the spiritual like they do emotion. However, this study suggests that there is more to the experience of music than emotion. Spirituality is of equal importance. It is therefore arguably more accurate to say “some sort of *spiritual* experience is probably the main reason behind most people’s *significant* engagement with music”. Therefore, this study places a strong call on the research community to engage this phenomenon of spirituality, given that we now have more sophisticated means of researching such an enigma.

## Effect of Religion

Historically, religion has been the primary domain of spirituality. In recent decades there has been a move to distinguish the two, yet spirituality continues to be important in the religious context. This project sought to assess the influence of religion on the experience of spirituality, by comparing experiences in religious and non-religious contexts, as well as the experiences of religious and non-religious people. In Chapter 1, I suggested that religion would have some influence in shaping the understanding of the experience, but that an underlying, core experience would be evident, existing below the level of religious signification. That was found to be the case.

Religion did have an effect on spirituality. Its effect on spirituality in general terms was noted above, where in some qualitative questions spirituality was mentioned more than emotion in religious experiences. This was particularly valid for Study I and the spiritual question in Study II. In the referential question of Study II, the non-religious group mentioned spirituality more frequently than emotion. A general relationship between spirituality and religion was also seen in the significant correlations between *religion* and *spiritual* in both studies. In Study II, religion also correlated with *overtaken* and *referential*, as well as *spiritual referential*. For the other five elements, as well as *spiritual absolute*, correlations were not significant. Religion also linked with higher ratings of the *meaning* category, which was mentioned more frequently in the religious context for one question. Nevertheless, it was the *supernatural* category that was consistently mentioned more frequently in the religious context and by religious people. This was the case for all but the general experience question in Study II and both absolute questions. Although it was also the most frequently reported category in the non-religious context, it was consistently more apparent in association with religion.

I have also noted previously, in this chapter, that religious experiences were more concerned with *emotion* and *spiritual* than were non-religious experiences (evinced in higher quantitative ratings). I can add to that *strength* and *transcendence*, which were also more prevalent in the religious context. For other elements there was no difference.



The differences were particularly large for *transcendence* and *spiritual*, which suggests that religion had a larger effect on those elements. This was also evident in the presence of comments stating that the experience was *not spiritual* in the non-religious context, but not in the religious context.

In Study II, the religious group rated *spiritual* and *referential* higher than the non-religious group, but for the other elements there was no difference. The non-religious context also exhibited some higher ratings, such as for *absolute* and *performer*. This indication that musical and performance issues were less important in the religious context suggests that the religious experience involved something more. This was clearly demonstrated in the factor analyses of Study II, in which spirituality related to absolute expressionist type meaning for non-religious people, but to referential meaning for religious people.

This does not mean that spirituality was defined by religion. There were aspects of the experience that were not affected by religion. Results for Study I and II were quite similar, despite Study I involving only religious people whereas Study II also involved non-religious people. Most of the qualitative categories, as well as most of the aspects of transcendence, were rated the same in the religious and non-religious experiences. The total number of comments about spirituality for both groups was not significantly different. The factor analyses for religious and non-religious groups in Study I were virtually identical, and ratings in the non-religious context were still strong.

Furthermore, although spirituality was important for religious people, it was also important for non-religious people – demonstrated in the 12% of non-religious people who gave it the highest rating (10/10), and just 7% who gave it the lowest rating. This showed that spirituality was not a product of religion, thus supporting the third hypothesis.

Instead, religion interpreted the experience of spirituality. Park (2005) stated that “religion serves, for most people, as a lens through which reality is perceived and interpreted” (p.295). Thus, the experience of spirituality is a reality, but an ineffable reality – experiential meaning. Religious people are more likely to invoke religious

signification to interpret or conceptualise that experiential meaning.<sup>8</sup> That would largely explain why *supernatural* was so frequently reported in the religious experience. It was operating as a transcendent signifier (as Cobussen, 2008, used the term). However, that interpretation was not necessarily applied outside of the religious experience. Study II showed that non-religious experiences were focused on the existential or transcendent aspects, instead of the use of a transcendent signifier. In other words, religious people were drawn to an interpretation in terms of God or a higher power, whereas non-religious people interpreted it in terms of transcendence or existentialism; personal psychological factors.

There was other evidence for the importance of conceptual interpretations in the religious experience. Comments stating that the experience was ‘not spiritual’ in the non-religious context probably occurred because these (religious) participants only acknowledged spirituality with reference to religious signification, especially God. As this was not present, they considered the experience to be ‘not spiritual’. For religious people, spirituality had more to do with being transformed and less to do with losing track of time and space, than for non-religious people, and this seemed to be, at least partly, due to *transformed* having a more conceptual aspect. Furthermore, lyrics were more often a part of the experience for religious people than for non-religious people, hence increasing the conceptual meaning involved.

There was a qualitative difference between the religious and non-religious experiences. There was both qualitative and quantitative evidence, particularly in Study I, of religious experiences being more deeply personal, stronger, more emotional and more personally beneficial than non-religious ones. This was in line with Dibben & Hansen’s (2002) finding that the intensity of emotion felt, and the profundity of the emotional experience, was greater in the religious context. This did not mean that non-religious experiences were not profound in my research. Spirituality was still the major factor in the quantitative data, and the non-religious experience was still strong. Nevertheless, it

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<sup>8</sup> In this way religion operates somewhat like what Laski (1961) and Panzarella (1980) called an ‘overbelief’ or Spickard (1993) referred to as a distinction between the experience and the language used to express it.

did suggest that the religious experience, with its greater emphasis on extra-musical connotations, provided a more profound experience.

The importance of conceptual meaning in the religious experience had much to do with the importance of referential meaning in the religious context and for religious people.<sup>9</sup> I have already stated in this chapter that referential meaning was particularly important for religious people. There was a strong correlation between *religion* and *referential*, and a significant difference between religious and non-religious groups on the *referential* element. This corresponded to a lack of relationship between spirituality and referential meaning for non-religious people.<sup>10</sup> Conversely there was some evidence for a connection between spirituality and absolute meaning for the non-religious experience. I have already noted such a connection in this chapter, particularly with absolute expressionist meaning, for the non-religious group. The non-religious experience was more focused on the music itself, and especially the experience of transcendence and existentiality.

Yet this did not mean that referential meaning entirely accounted for spirituality in the religious experience. If it did then ratings of spirituality would have been very low when the referential associations were absent. They were not. Most of the spiritual elements loaded with *referential* on the factor analysis for religious people, but the more transcendent aspects of spirituality did not. In addition, ratings of the *referential* element were the same for the religious and non-religious contexts. This showed that, even though religion had an effect on some aspects of referential meaning, it had no effect on referential meaning as a whole.

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<sup>9</sup> I am not saying by this that referential meaning is synonymous with conceptual meaning. I have previously drawn the distinction in this thesis between referential and absolute meaning, and between conceptual and experiential knowledge. However, it is important to note that referential meaning is capable of dealing with both a concept and its experience. Music can refer to an experience of something, such as the numinous, which cannot be captured by concepts, just as much as it can refer to a concept such as God.

<sup>10</sup> There may have been more evidence of a difference between religious groups on referential meaning if there had been more subjects in this research. Some categories, like *environment* in the general descriptions question, appeared to have more of a referential component in the religious context but differences were not significant. This could be merely because there was insufficient statistical power to confirm that there was a difference. We cannot tell. This sort of question will need to be born out in future research.

This is probably related to the importance of the element *experience deeper*, which showed that there was something deeper about the experience than either the lyrics or music could account for. It was an indication that the experience of spirituality existed below the level of conceptual meaning. One could say it accessed the core experience, and that core experience was the same for religious and non-religious contexts and groups.

All of this highlights the importance of dealing with spirituality as an experience, not a concept. It confirms Maslow's (1964) suggestion that there is a core to these experiences, and if one could un-shell the experiences from the tradition that surrounds them one would find great similarity between them. Religion interprets the experience and, whether or not that interpretation is correct,<sup>11</sup> it is not the reality of the experience, but just its shell. It is in this vein that Wendy Beckett (1992) wrote that through art we sense the transcendent reality, whereas through religion we learn how to explain or interpret it. Otto's (1923) discussion of the numinous was an attempt to deal with the sacred (heilig) *before* its interpretations. In the same way, we must pursue an understanding of spirituality before its interpretations. That does not mean that the conceptual interpretations are not part of the whole phenomenon. In discussing this distinction between conceptual and experiential meaning, Rahner (1982) urged that the original experience and the concepts relating to it must be held together, as this is necessary for communication. The important thing is not to reduce the phenomenon of spirituality to its conceptual interpretation.

In conclusion, these data have shown that religion did have an impact on spirituality. It was an important impact, but it was limited to a few specific areas. In particular, religion affected the conceptual interpretations invoked, which related to a greater level of importance for referential meaning in the religious context and by religious people. Hence, spirituality was not a product of religion, since it was experienced by non-religious people and in non-religious contexts. Perhaps it was not experienced in the

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to state that I am not inferring here that religious significations are invalid. They may be the correct interpretation or they may not. It is not the purpose of this thesis to make that decision. I am merely stating that these religious significations are not the experience, they are the concept of the experience. To understand the experience we must get 'beneath' the conceptual.

same way, or even to the same extent, but these results indicated that spirituality was a core experience, which was available to all people in all contexts.

### **Effect of Culture**

The role of culture in mediating musical meaning, including spirituality, is an important study. As I discussed in Chapter 2, musical meaning is not a product of, but is created within, a cultural frame, or a habitus of listening – a shared disposition to engage with music in certain ways and with certain expectations (Becker, 2001; Sloboda, 1998a). This was evident in the qualitative data in an unexpected way, through the presence of many religious comments that described the musical experience as a worship experience (especially in Study I). I would argue that this was not a muddying of the discourse on music (by bringing in other factors that do not relate to music) but, rather, it was an expression of the context within which that music was experienced. It described a total engagement of the human with the transcendent, in which music played a fundamental role. If music pertains to the whole human experience then worship is just one expression of that human experience (Sloboda, 2005b). It was simply religion that provided that particular context or habitus. As Sloboda (2005a) wrote, “It is the whole process of being a biological human inhabiting a physical and social world that provides the fuel and the impetus for a dynamic understanding of music” (p. 167).

Ultimately, it is important to understand the effect of these habitūs on the experience of spirituality, but that was largely beyond the scope of this study. Instead, as I stated in Chapter 2 and Chapter 8, this study was focused on understanding the experience of spirituality *irrespective* of how that was mediated. Having said that, Study I did include one factor designed to account for the influence of culture (habitus), and that was the Pentecostal / non-Pentecostal distinction.

Results did not support hypothesis 3a in Study I – that spirituality would be influenced by habitus. On the contrary, there was virtually no difference between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. These two groups were formed on the basis that Pentecostalism had a

particular emphasis on the use of music in practice, and a focus on subjective experience rather than the rationality of theology (Becker 2001; Dibben & Hansen 2002; Price & Snow 1998). Despite this, spirituality was experienced very similarly for both groups. There was no difference in the number of mentions of any of the qualitative categories, and there were no significant differences between the two habitūs for any of the quantitative elements, except age (which showed the non-Pentecostals were older on average). The qualitative comments by Pentecostals tended to include more specifically spiritual references, yet non-Pentecostals still rated *spiritual* strongly, though not as strongly as Pentecostals. When the data were separated by context, the difference on the rating of *spiritual* disappeared for both contexts. Furthermore, there was never a related difference for *transcendence*, which I have regarded as a parallel concept.

The one difference that was evident was that referential associations were more important, stronger and more emotional for non-Pentecostals. It seems this group focused more on the rational aspect of the experience. This was evident in the qualitative spiritual question of Study I, in which it was only non-Pentecostals who made more mention of *supernatural* in the religious context than the non-religious context. This may also be why there was no difference between the number of mentions of spirituality and emotion for the Pentecostal habitus in the religious context for the referential question in Study I, whereas there was a difference for the non-Pentecostal group. It was also evident in the referential factor being second for the non-Pentecostal habitus, whereas for the Pentecostals it was third. Furthermore, *strength* and *emotion* only loaded onto the spiritual factor for the Pentecostal habitus, whereas it loaded onto the referential factor as well for the non-Pentecostal habitus. These findings, that Pentecostals were less focused on referential meaning than non-Pentecostals, are in line with Price and Snow's (1998) finding that distinguished the Pentecostal focus as being on sentimentality rather than theology.

Other than that, these results did not support the idea that Pentecostals are more emotional than non-Pentecostals, or even that they find music to be more powerful. The only hint of that was that Pentecostals mentioned emotion just as frequently as

spirituality in the absolute question for the religious experience in Study I, whereas non-Pentecostals mentioned spirituality more frequently than emotion.

There are two possible explanations for all of this. Either the distinction based on Pentecostal belief was not a good measure of cultural influence, or spirituality lies beyond the level of cultural influence. I suggest both have some relevance. Concerning the first explanation, the conceptualisation of Pentecostalism presented in Chapter two was not made with respect to music specifically. Therefore, when it came to the use of music, there was, it seemed, insufficient difference between Pentecostals who highly valued music, and non-Pentecostals who also highly valued music. This was in line with Penman and Becker's (2009) study, which found great similarities between Pentecostal ecstasies and (not necessarily religious) deep listeners. That is why so few differences were found between these groups in these studies. No doubt there were differences in the type of music and even the way the music was used (factors which were beyond the scope of this study), but the experience of the music was sufficiently common to both groups to enable them to regard that experience as being strongly spiritual. (There was also the factor that both groups came from within the Christian church, and that would have come with some commonalities.)

Relating that back to the distinction between conceptual and experiential knowledge, there may well be differences on the level of conceptual knowledge (and it is those differences that the discussion in Chapter 2 addressed) but on the level of experience, there was no significant difference. These reasons are largely why the distinction was not pursued for Study II.

Concerning the second explanation, these results suggest that spirituality, at least at some core level, may not be a product of culture.<sup>12</sup> Musical perception involves a complex interplay between natural predispositions, or psychophysical cues as Thompson (2010) called them, and enculturation. Enculturation gradually redefines

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<sup>12</sup> I am not suggesting that referential and absolute meaning were not influenced by culture. There is considerable support for the influence of culture on both extrinsic referents and the intrinsic music itself (Becker, 2001; Cook, 1998a; Geertz, 1983; Meyer, 1956; Schubert & McPherson, 2006) and that was not questioned in the data presented here. Instead I am suggesting that perhaps spirituality, in as much as it is not accounted for by either referential or absolute meaning, is not a product of culture.

psychophysical cues, leading to cues that are culture-specific. Similarly, Hood (2005) claimed that humans are born with an innate ability to experience the numinous but that this is likely to decline without cultural support. Just as, in Chapter 2, I described the features of music that appear to be ‘universal’, this study leaves room for the possibility that there may be a common experience of spirituality at some fundamental level. This may explain why the experiences in Study II bore many similarities, even though participants came from a diverse range of religious backgrounds and nationalities.<sup>13</sup> It may be that the aspects of music that are unmediated by culture are key to affording spirituality.

### **Effect of lyrics**

Lyrics are not technically part of the components of the ‘music itself’, and yet they were mentioned quite often by participants reporting significance experiences of music in both studies, most particularly in descriptions of the absolute experience. In most cases lyrics were not a peripheral adjunct to the experience, but rather an integral part of it. Many comments alluded to a vital connection between the lyrics and music; that they were compatible, and that they interacted in a sort of symbiotic relationship where both advantaged the other. Lyrics without the music would not have been as significant. This was part of the aspect of connection I have identified as important for spirituality, where the parts are integrated into a unified whole that is fundamentally ‘right’.

This was evidence for the association effect (Ginsborg & Sloboda, 2007). This idea developed from the older ‘integration effect’ (Crowder, et al., 1990; Mary Louise Serafine, et al., 1984) to suggest that lyrics and music are associated such that they do not act independently, but in connection with one another, forming a composite

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<sup>13</sup> There is a sense in which the distinction between religious and non-religious participants in Study II was also a cultural distinction of habitus. Religious people often do have a different set of expectations with regard to music, and, in some senses, that can be contrasted with non-religious people. However, there was too much diversity within these two groups to allow a reliable distinction to have been made. A religious person may have described an experience from a religious setting, or from a habitus exactly the same as a non-religious person. This sort of control was beyond the scope of this study, and therefore I leave a more detailed examination to future research.



representation. This association effect was evident in the finding that experienced musicians mentioned lyrics more often than novices did. Clearly, it was not a lack of technical language to describe the music itself that led to the reporting of lyrics, but the sense that lyrics played an undiminishable role in the experience, which the more experienced participants felt more acutely.<sup>14</sup>

Lyrics specified the conceptual meaning to the experience of music. One could say they nuanced the un-nuanced experience; they brought rational clarity to the ineffable experience of the music. This was evident in the increased presence of quantitative elements and qualitative categories that relate to conceptual meaning, when lyrics were present. For example *spiritual* was rated higher when lyrics were present but transcendence elements were not. Mentions of the *supernatural* and to a lesser degree *meaning*, which both have a more conceptual component, were more frequent in association with lyrics. Furthermore, lyrics were more often involved for religious people, and I have already established the importance of conceptual meaning for religion. In a similar way, referential meaning was more evident, with external associations being involved more when lyrics were present.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes lyrics played no part in the significance of the experience; they were present, but unimportant. Yet, whenever lyrics were important, so too was the music.

This does not mean that spirituality is a product of the lyrics, with music playing a subservient role. The lyrics and music acted together, in association. As Bicknell (2007) stated, “the ‘meaning’ of a song is not reducible to the meaning of its text” (p. 21). That means that music with lyrics is not necessarily more spiritual, it is simply more defined as being spiritual. Ratings for the transcendence elements, as well as *emotion* and *strength* were just as high when there were no lyrics as when there were. That is why there was a strong perception that the experience was deeper than either the music or lyrics, and why that perception was stronger when lyrics were present. It was as if when

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<sup>14</sup> As an aside, this association between music and lyrics was particularly evident in rap music. This may be fertile ground for further studies on this connection.

<sup>15</sup> I reiterate the point that the referential-absolute meaning distinction is not synonymous with the conceptual-experiential knowledge distinction. Referential meaning can have both conceptual and experiential content. And one can have conceptual knowledge of music’s external references as well as its intra-musical meaning.

concepts were applied to the experience, in the form of lyrics, there was a greater desire to intimate that those concepts were insufficient to account for the depth of the experience, than when the experience was left as ineffable. This sense of ‘experience deeper’ was closely related to spirituality, suggesting that although the spiritual might be designated by the lyrics, it is deeper than either the lyrics or the music or their association can account for. All of this reinforces the findings discussed above, that spirituality is primarily an ineffable experience.

### **12.3 Implications for Future Research**

From the start this research project has been exploratory. Spirituality is a phenomenon that is only beginning to receive attention from the scientific community, and this project has sought to break new ground in terms of an understanding of spirituality in its relationship with music. Therefore, it has, in some respects, posed more questions than it has answered. These questions are the platform for further research, so I will discuss some of the key ones here. Many of them relate to the limitations of the thesis discussed in Chapter 3, and so they are ordered accordingly.

#### ***Alternative methodologies***

This research, being primarily descriptive, did not address questions of ‘why’. It was focused on describing what was happening rather than possible causes. Future research should take up the issue of causation, particularly as it relates to physiological correlates, discussed below.

However, the descriptions of what was happening were limited in that the research used only a self-report questionnaire methodology. It had the advantage of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative), which provided a great breadth of data. This was the best methodology for such exploratory research. Now there is a need to examine that information in more depth. The number of comments pertaining to various qualitative categories varied across the questions, arguably because of the focus of the question.

For example, *transcendence* and *existential* were strongly represented in the spirituality questions, but received little support in the other questions, and categories such as *other people* and *environment* were often mentioned infrequently. Is that because they are peripheral to spirituality, or because they are not what people usually consider when discussing this phenomenon? These phenomena are complex, comprising multiple facets. Therefore a different research design, such as an interview, in which such facets can be questioned specifically, would determine whether they are actually present or not. Just because an element was not reported does not mean it wasn't there. Ho & Ho (2007) discuss other limitations of self-report questionnaires, not least of which is the potential for demand characteristics. While efforts were made in this research to limit those, they may still have affected the results.

### ***Type of music***

One of the limitations of this thesis was that the type of music involved in the experience was not accounted for. It may be that certain types of music are more or less conducive to the spiritual experience. Much discourse on musical experiences has dealt with 'great music' or 'works of genius' (such as in the Romantic period). Maslow (1964) unquestioningly used Classical music for his examination of peak experiences. This insinuates that 'lesser music', such as popular music, commercial music or music involving lesser skill, cannot have the same effects. Panzarella (1980) found that to be true, in that the most common trigger was 'serious music', yet some peak experiences were also brought about by popular music. Bicknell (2007) seemed to support the presence of phenomena such as spirituality in more ordinary music in stating that music is much more than simply a 'work of art'. Similarly, much of the research has used Western music, whereas music from other cultures may operate differently. This issue of musical type was left open in this project because it was focused on how spirituality relates to musical meaning wherever that arises. However future research could examine these issues, including musical style, familiarity, and the prior significance of music to an individual.

Results were sometimes inconclusive because of a lack of participants and, hence, a lack of statistical power. The inclusion of more participants would redress this issue.

### ***Physiological considerations***

Results from this project showed that the experience of spirituality implicates the human physiology as well. This was one of the limitations of this study, as I stated in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3). Future research should take this up, to determine not only the effect of spirituality on the body, but also the role of physical processes in the experience of spirituality.

As I stated in Chapter 3, neurological correlates to spirituality and music is a growing field which is generating some important findings about the functioning of the brain during musical experience (Ashbrook & Albright, 1997; Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Koelsch, et al., 2004; Levitin & Menon, 2005; Livingstone, 2005; Schmahmann, 2006; Zatorre, 2005) and during spiritual activities (d'Aquili & Newberg, 1999; Joseph, 2001; A. Newberg, 2003; A. B. Newberg, 2006; Persinger, 1983). Chemical and hormonal correlates should also be studied, as there is growing evidence of changes in levels of chemicals and hormones during both music and spiritual activities (Bicknell, 2007; Borg, et al., 2003; Infante, et al., 2001; Tooley, et al., 2000), leading to debates about whether spiritual experiences can be induced or replicated using these entheogens (Hood, 2005). The question of whether these physical correlates are causative is another that needs to be addressed.

### ***The influence of culture***

The cultural distinction intended for this project elicited only minimal differences. I stated above that there was insufficient distinction between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal participants in terms of their experience of music. This is in itself a valuable finding, but it does not provide much conclusive information about the degree to which spirituality is a culturally mediated experience. I suggested above that spirituality did not seem to be a product of culture, and that assertion needs to be verified. Therefore, future research needs to examine a more diverse cultural distinction. Differences between Moslem Sufis and Christian Pentecostals on the experience of spirituality would be one interesting comparison.

The idea that spirituality is not a product of culture also needs to be explored. Future research could explore Maslow's (1964) idea that if one could un-shell the experiences from religious traditions one would find great similarity between them. As Dible II (2010) claimed, the differences between the spiritual expression of disparate religions is merely a surface feature. And as Koen (2008) wrote, the dynamic between music, prayer and meditation involves "culture-transcendent or universal principles and processes" (p.93). Brummel-Smith quoted Koen as saying the experience of the spiritual is "expressed in diverse terms across cultures, yet with universal underpinnings" (p.312). Perhaps this is why Hay (2007b) used the term 'primordial experience' to describe the spiritual (p.31). There was insufficient data in this research to explore that question properly, but on the basis of some of this literature, it may be worth considering.

A related factor, which was also not accounted for in this study, was how deeply acculturated an individual was in their particular habitus. A person who has just joined the church and is experiencing church music for the very first time may well have a very different perception of spirituality to one who is more thoroughly acculturated. Furthermore, spiritual history may have an impact on the effect of spirituality (George et al. 2000). Those who have a long history of experiences of spirituality may react differently to those with a shorter history. They may perceive a stronger connection between spirituality and music, or they may become more 'immune' to its effects.

### *A better understanding of spirituality*

There is a great need for a better understanding of spirituality. This project only ever claimed to circumscribe the phenomenon, providing a provisional definition that should be refined over time. I concluded that this provisional definition has merit, yet more research is needed to move the scientific community closer to a commonly agreed definition. Some of the issues that have been discussed amongst philosophers for some time need to be addressed through scientific process, providing empirical evidence for what is still an elusive phenomenon.

To achieve this, the study of spirituality needs to be brought in from the fringe of empirical science. Sloboda (2005b) made a comment about the psychology of religion and music being ‘fringe’ topics. Penman & Becker (2009) added trance to that list, and I would argue that spirituality is in the same position. I have argued in this thesis that spirituality deserves as much attention as emotion in the study of significant experiences of music. Emotion is no longer a fringe topic, and future research needs to achieve the same status for spirituality. Just because it is a difficult topic, what Janata (2009) calls a “formidable question” (p. 80), does not mean we avoid it. Precisely the opposite; we should seek to chip away at such a formidable edifice rather than seeking to uphold it as such. That has been the intention of this project, but there is much yet to be done.

The key aspects of transcendence and connection, in particular, need to be better understood. A variety of distinctives of transcendence are evident in the literature, and these need to be clarified. I have introduced a distinction between transcendence and connection, with transcendence referring to the transportation away from corporeality and connection being the union felt. This relationship needs to be developed further. It would also be worthwhile examining some elements of connection that relate to the music itself, such as harmony, synchronicity and ensemble. Why are they so vital to its enjoyment, and what relationship do they have to connection and thus spirituality?

I have referred to the distinction between functional and substantive aspects of spirituality made explicit by Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005). I suggested that the *transformed* element and the *meaning* aspect were both more concerned with functional aspects. However that assertion needs to be further examined.

### ***Spirituality and emotion***

In this research, I have positioned spirituality and emotion as interconnected planes of experience. I made some attempts to understand the relationship between the two, by suggesting that emotion is a response to something experienced, whereas spirituality is an awareness or perception of that same experience. Perhaps this can be understood as the difference between reflexiveness and reflectiveness. Emotion is reflexive in that it occurs spontaneously, whereas spirituality involves reflection, even if that cannot be

reduced to a conceptual understanding. Wilber's (2000) psychological model, which depicts spirituality as a level and emotion as a stream, may also be a helpful way of conceptualizing this contrast, but these theories need to be researched.

These matters are important because of the dominance of emotion in research on musical experiences. Comments like this: "research indicates that people value music primarily because of the emotions it evokes" (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008) p.559 may accurately represent the current viewpoint, but that may simply be because people are used to describing musical experience in terms of emotion rather than spirituality. A better understanding of the relationship between emotion and spirituality may allow us to more accurately describe some experiences, or some aspects of some experiences, as primarily spiritual rather than emotion. It may be that the value of music lies not in emotions evoked, but in the sense of the spiritual that is perceived, which leads to emotional responses. As Goldman stated, "the peculiar and most inclusive value of music lies precisely in its presenting to us an alternative world, in which we can be actively, but not practically, engaged" (1992, p.39).

### ***The problem with absolute meaning***

Focusing on the 'music itself' was problematic in that it is an ambiguous term. Responses often focused on the aspects of the music in a formalist sense rather than the experience brought by those aspects. It may be better to use the term 'sound patterns' (which was used by Meyer, 1956, p.3) instead of 'music itself'. However, there is still a need for a research design that better distinguishes between formalist and absolute expressionist experiences. This was not sufficiently clear in these results, therefore it should be investigated further.

The inclusion of lyrics in descriptions of the 'music itself' was intriguing, and indicates that more research is needed on the association effect (see Stevens, et al., 2000).

### ***Beauty***

There is a feature of these experiences that was frequently mentioned, but which has not been discussed to this point. ‘Beauty’ was mentioned by numerous participants in the various qualitative questions, including sixteen participants (9.3%) in the absolute question of Study II, making it more frequently reported than any single category of spirituality. This shows that beauty is a very important part of the significance of music. The importance of this feature strongly suggests that the modern hesitance to discuss beauty needs to be challenged. This is an important note for future research.

Participants referred to either the perception of something beautiful or the joy of expressing something beautiful. Yet beauty was not an aspect of the phenomenon itself, so much as a quality of the music that leads to the experience of spirituality. Cassidy (1997) wrote about beauty as being a pathway to the divine. The aesthetic experience evokes an awareness of the spiritual. Therefore, beauty is not an aspect of spirituality; spirituality is something sensed through the beauty of music. Participants that mentioned beauty also typically rated spirituality high, even though several comments that referred to beauty did not refer to any other aspect of spirituality. This reinforces the idea that spirituality is not prescribed by the music (in a pharmaceutical way), even beautiful music. Instead, beauty is a quality of the musical experience that is important for the experience of spirituality. That is why Brummel-Smith (p.327), a medical ethnomusicologist, wrote that, in the spiritual encounter, sometimes the feeling is sweet; to describe it in terms of synesthesia is reductive; it is the beauty that heals. Future research needs to account for this feature of beauty, seeking to understand its relationship to spirituality.

### ***Religion and Spirituality***

This research showed that, although it is useful to distinguish spirituality from religion, religion still has an important affect on spirituality, particularly in relation to conceptual interpretations. However, religion in this research was primarily Christian religion. Some other religions were involved in Study II, but no attempt was made to examine how different religions might affect the spiritual experience. Future research should redress this. For example: Buddhism largely rejects any form of supernatural deity.



How does the involvement of a transcendent signified, and thus the concept of spirituality work out in that context? Furthermore, nuances for ‘non-religious’ people need to be better understood. For example: do they believe in the supernatural?

### ***Personal factors***

Personal experience with, or beliefs about spirituality, personality types, personal opinions regarding emotion and music, and so on, all need to be examined in terms of their influence on the experience of spirituality. Some of these factors have been shown to be influential, as in Shuter-Dyson’s (2006) study on personality characteristics and church musicians, however Panzarella (1980) found that personality type had no effect. These issues need to be addressed.

## **12.4 Closing Comments**

In 1973, Scharfstein (1973) wrote that social scientists have likely grossly underestimated the frequency of mystical experience. If mystical experience is congruent with spiritual experience, then Hay (2007b; 1987) claimed the same thing 34 years later, finding that spiritual experience, though infrequently reported, was actually experienced by 76% of the population of Britain. This thesis supports such findings, confirming that spiritual experiences are not marginal phenomena. Furthermore, music is a key location, though by no means the only location, in which to find spiritual experiences. Music has a unique capacity to convey spirituality, in addition to emotion. Music is not engaged simply because it evokes emotions, as seems to be the dominant mind set in musicology today (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008), but because it also affords a sense of the spiritual. As Steiner (1989) wrote, “*The translation of music into meaning . . . carries with it what somatic and spiritual cognisance we can have of the core mystery [how else are we to define it] that we are*” (p. 196). Therefore, there is a great need now for the findings of this thesis to be developed, so that our discourse on musical experiences is not limited by a misconception about what is arguably such a fundamental aspect: spirituality.

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## Glossary of Terms

This glossary defines how terms are used in this thesis. Note the second part to the glossary, which defines how different parts of the phenomenon are referred to.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<b>Absolute</b>	A type of musical meaning that is intra-musical; concerned with the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art
<b>Absolute Expressionism</b>	A type of musical meaning that is intra-musical but is focused on the affective response arising from the musical forms
<b>Affordance</b>	The physical characteristics of music, in this case, are such that they invite the experience of spirituality, just as a chair affords sitting on
<b>Association effect</b>	The interaction between music and lyrics in the processing and recall of an experience of music
<b>Connection ♦</b>	A sense of deep relationship, unity or attachment with another entity
<b>Environment♦</b>	A sense of profound connection with the musical or physical environment in which the experience occurred, such as a feeling of oneness with the music
<b>Existential♦</b>	A profound awareness of, or connection with one's own being

<b>Formalism</b>	A type of musical meaning that is intra-musical but is focused on the intellectual meaning and significance of the musical process itself rather than the emotions or any other associated reference
<b>Fusion</b>	The sense of merging or becoming one with the object of 'connection'. This can involve a sense of abeyance of one's own will, yet it does not mean the complete dissolution of self
<b>Habitus</b>	<p>An implicit inclination or disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect certain experiences, to move in particular ways and to interpret what is being experienced in certain ways</p> <p>In this thesis it is used to mark a particular distinction between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal disposition</p>
<b>Improved / aided / transformed♦</b>	A sense of having been personally improved, aided or transformed by the experience
<b>Meaning ♦♦</b>	A sense of profound meaningfulness, value or purpose gained from the experience
<b>Non-religious context</b>	Outside of the church or religious institution
<b>Other people♦</b>	A sense of profound connection with other people associated with the experience
<b>Pentecostalism</b>	A philosophical or theological position within the Christian faith which comes with its own cultural values and norms that are characterized by a dynamic and experiential 'living in the spirit'



<b>Referential</b>	A type of musical meaning that is extra-musical; concerned with concepts, actions, emotional states and character
<b>Religious context</b>	Within the church or religious institution
<b>Sacred</b>	An aspect of life that takes on a divine character, thereby rendering it an ultimate reality or ultimate truth, as perceived by the individual
<b>Spirituality</b> (Longer provisional definition)	The human capacity for a profound awareness of a sacred connection with the supernatural, one's existence, other people and/or the environment, that incorporates and yet transcends ordinary physical reality to provide a sense of meaning, purpose or value
<b>Spirituality</b> (Shorter provisional definition)	The capacity for an awareness of a sacred connection that transcends corporeality and provides a sense of profound meaning
<b>Supernatural♦</b>	A sense of profound union with an entity beyond the bounds of the natural world
<b>Transcendence ♦♦</b>	A sense of something lying beyond, or the experience of being transported beyond the temporal or known, or one's self or one's usual experience
<b>Withdrawal ecstasy</b>	A sense of loss of contact with the physical and the social environment, leading to a distorted sense of reality. This is a result of transcendence
♦ Categories used in the qualitative results for both Studies	
♦ One of the three core aspects to Spirituality	

The following table explains different terms of comparison used for different parts of the discussion

<i><b>Term</b></i>	<i><b>Definition</b></i>
<i>Aspect</i>	The <b>three parts of spirituality</b> discussed in Chapter 1; transcendence, connection and meaning
<i>Category</i>	The seven <b>parts of the qualitative analysis</b> – transcendence, connection with the supernatural, connection with the existential, connection with other people, connection with the environment, improved and meaning
<i>Element</i>	The <b>parts of the questionnaire</b> used for the quantitative analysis
<i>Dimension</i>	The <b>referential or absolute parts</b> of the musical experience
<i>Component</i>	The <b>parts of the music</b> of concern in the absolute question – such as rhythm, harmony, melody, instrumentation, etc.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix A      Dealing with ineffability

At the end of Chapter 1 I take up the idea of spirituality and music being ineffable, suggesting that therefore they need to be understood as experiences rather than concepts. This Appendix discusses that issue in more detail.

If spirituality is fundamentally ineffable, if it is about a notion as nondescript as ‘something there’, then how do we discourse on it? One way is to handle spirituality, as well as music, as an ‘*experience*’ rather than a ‘*concept*’. Karl Rahner (1982) made that distinction in his discussion of theology and the Arts. According to Rahner, experience is the original level of the cognitive awareness of an event, while concept is one’s reflection upon that awareness. *Experiential knowledge* is that in which there is “the purely objective ‘thing in itself’ of a reality” (p.17), while *conceptual knowledge* is the ‘clear and distinct idea’ of that reality.

To take an example: one can develop a concept of what it is like to have a baby – assimilating and accommodating many facts and ideas. But the experience of having a baby is another thing altogether. Another example is one’s knowledge of the colour red. How could someone explain the colour red to a blind person who had never seen red? Concepts would be inadequate for that purpose. Redness is known experientially. It is learnt primarily through experience and cannot be communicated in conceptual terms alone. It is not that concepts are unrelated or even absent, they are simply inadequate. As Rahner put it, one cannot think that one can capture the experience and “transpose it completely into objectifying concepts” (p. 18).

There is a similarity here with Schopenhauer’s theory of ‘*Will*’ and ‘*Representation*’. He suggested that the world as we perceive it has two aspects; the Will and Representation. While the representation is merely the way something is presented to us, the Will is our internal understanding of things as they really are. It is the inner nature not just of us but also of every force in nature. He then identifies music as being of special import because it resembles the Will. Out of all the arts, music is least

representative of the world of appearances, therefore it expresses not the phenomenon, but only its inner nature, the Will itself. In this way it allows us to experience the innermost nature of the world from the inside (Budd, 1985; Hadreas, 1999).

I propose, therefore, that spirituality and music be thought of primarily as forms of experiential knowledge. Like having a baby, they are primarily known as experiences and cannot be communicated in conceptual terms alone. In the same way Crawford (2005) described spirituality as a form of '*sapiential knowledge*', where '*sapere*' is the Latin for 'to taste'. Some experiences, she claimed, cannot be adequately dealt with by a rationally-conceptually dominated episteme<sup>1</sup>, because they are only known by taste; experience. She called this a "submerged way of knowing" (p.7), something that exceeds the reach of rational, conceptual discourse.

This does not mean that concepts have no place in a study of spirituality.<sup>2</sup> Rahner called for the holding together of the original experience and the concepts relating to it, because this is necessary for communication. The point is that concepts are simply limited; reality can never be exhaustively mapped. As Steiner (1989) put it, "the truths, the necessities of ordered feeling in the musical experience are not irrational; but they are irreducible to reason or pragmatic reckoning" (p.19).<sup>3</sup>

It is these ideas that Cobussen (2008) sought to describe in his discussion of *thresholds*. He described a threshold as "the boundary between here and there" (p.3), the space between the perceived and the understood, between an experience and its sure interpretation. It is the sense I have of something, rather than the interpretation of what

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<sup>1</sup> This idea of the hegemony of the rational-conceptual is evident in such pejorative terms as *logocentrism*. Cobussen (2008) used this term to describe the Western focus on clear oppositions and binary ordering of logical thought, with its focus on *transcendent signifiers*. He argued it is inadequate to deal with this sort of knowledge because it has no machinery for understanding phenomena such as spirituality.

<sup>2</sup> To the contrary, Maslow made the point, in a conference discussion (Krippner, 1972), that peak experiences ideally involve rational content. Some peak experiences were empty of cognitive content, but the more mature version was an experience of the miracle of reality; the spiritual sense of the cognitive and physical reality. This relates back to my point near the beginning of this chapter about spirituality not being detached from real life and corporeality, but intimately involved with it.

<sup>3</sup> That is why Laski (1968) and James used the idea of *overbeliefs* to refer to what I am calling the conceptual, as against experiential, which they would term the mystical.

that something is. So rather than spirituality being about some specifiable endpoint, such as God - which he called a transcendent signifier - it is about the space or the mystery that is intimated by the experience. It is about the space between category and reality (Finn, 1996); between the reality of an experience and the category that attempts to define that experience. Spirituality is a space where the experience of *being* rather than *thinking* can take place. It is a “gaping hole, a staggering abyss, an empty space” (Cobussen, 2008, p.94), an *a-topos*, an undecided zone where encounters can be examined but never definitively grasped.

This idea of a threshold is helpful in as much as it rejects the assumption that spirituality (or music for that matter) can be conceptually or rationally grasped. But Cobussen seems to take it further, intimating spirituality is only about an emptiness, not about ‘something there’. In my review of his book (Atkins, 2009b) I took up the issue of how far the ‘emptiness’ of this space should be taken. Cobussen rejected a metaphysic, which he defined as “the intellectual vision of ideas anchored to the stability of reality’s essential structures” (p. 147), in favour of an endless uncertainty and wandering. He preferred an absence (as in Certeau, 1992) over any sense of presence (as in Steiner 1989), which I would argue is unnecessarily constraining spirituality. Spirituality can involve a definite sense of connection, such as a connection with God or other people, so long as it is not limited to the rational concept of that. Spirituality (like music) is fundamentally an experience, not a concept; a sense of something rather than its interpretation; a threshold where one might experience either a yearning search or a sense of ‘something there’. That is why we call it ineffable.

My point here is that the knowledge we have of both spirituality and music is fundamentally experiential knowledge, to which concepts can be applied. Concepts are applied, and that can be seen in the Christian aesthetic tradition.<sup>4</sup> This tradition is exemplified by Wendy Beckett (1992), a religious art writer, who suggested that it is through art that we sense the transcendent reality, whereas through religion we learn how to interpret it. However, spirituality is not fundamentally about those concepts. It is

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<sup>4</sup> I mention this here because this is the tradition from which subjects for the first part of this research were drawn.

about the ‘*apprehension*’ (as opposed to the ‘*comprehension*’<sup>5</sup>), or intuitive awareness (Hay, 2007a) of ‘something there’: a space characterised by an ineffable sense of profound transcendence, connection and meaning.

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<sup>5</sup> I am taking ‘*comprehend*’ to mean grasping the nature and meaning of something, whereas ‘*apprehending*’ something involves an intuitive grasp of its meaning; “perception on a direct and immediate level” (Stein & Urdang, 1967, p.73). Accordingly, spirituality, like music, is something that is grasped intuitively not comprehensively.

## **Appendix B      Study I Questionnaire questions and number**

### **Study I**

#### **Significant Experiences of Music**

#### **Questionnaire**

##### ***Section A – Personal Information***

1. Age?
2. Gender?
3. Which item best describes your level of musical experience?<sup>6</sup>
4. What is the name of your church? #<sup>7</sup>
5. In which Suburb, City and Country is your church located? #
6. To what extent, if at all, would you say that your church is Pentecostal?  
(Please note this research is not intended to be in any way biased toward or against Pentecostalism) \*<sup>8</sup>
7. To what extent, if at all, do you hold to ‘Pentecostal’ ideals? \*
8. What does ‘Pentecostal ideals’ mean for you? #

##### ***Section B – Strong Experience in Church***

9. Please describe in as much detail as you are able, an experience of church music that you found particularly powerful or stirring. This could include a time when you were either in the congregation or up the front leading. If no particular instance comes to mind then please describe what it is normally like for you when the music is powerful or stirring. What was the music like? What was the context? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? How did it make you feel? . . . #
10. How strong was this experience? \*
11. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. represented by the music? \*
12. What were those memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. that were significant for you? #
13. To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions? \*

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<sup>6</sup> Participants were able to choose from the following options: None; Novice; Some experience’ Experienced; Professional.

<sup>7</sup> Questions marked with a hash # indicate open-ended questions.

<sup>8</sup> Questions marked with an asterisk \* indicate that participants were able to respond using an 11 point Likert type rating scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very much / very strong).



14. To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself? \*
15. To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual? \*
16. To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience? \*
17. To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual? \*
18. What does 'spiritual' mean for you in this instance? #
19. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the music itself? (For example was it due to the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?) \*
20. If so, please describe what it was about the music that you found significant. #
21. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the performers or performance? \*

### ***Section C – Strong Secular Experience***

22. Now please think of an experience of secular music (non-religious music) that you have had which you found especially powerful or stirring. This might include a concert, a show, an intimate gathering or something different. Describe the experience in as much detail as possible. #
23. How strong was this experience? \*
24. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. represented by the music? \*
25. What were those memories, ideas, concepts, emotions etc. that were significant for you? #
26. To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions? \*
27. To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself? \*
28. To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual? \*
29. To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience? \*
30. To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual? \*
31. What does 'spiritual' mean for you in this instance? #
32. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the music itself? (For example was it due to the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?) \*
33. If so, please describe what it was about the music that you found significant. #
34. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the performers or performance? \*
35. Do you have any final comments? #

## Appendix C      Explanatory notes

### HOW TO FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This is an electronic questionnaire.

Please fill out your responses, save them and then email the form back to me as an attachment at [z3135517@student.unsw.edu.au](mailto:z3135517@student.unsw.edu.au)

There are two types of questions:

#### 1. Drop down options

These questions look like this:

*How much do you like chocolate?*  or *Do you like chocolate?*

Simply click on the highlighted number or option and select your choice.  
Remember 0 means ‘not at all’ and 10 means ‘completely’

#### 2. Short/Long answer

These questions look like this:

*Describe your first experience with chocolate*

Simply click on the highlighted area next to the question and start typing your answer.

Please remember there are no correct answers – don’t put what you think looks best but put what was real for you at the time. This will allow me to gather the most accurate results.

**Please Note:** *I have chosen to use the term ‘church music’ as a generic term in this study to incorporate a wide variety of styles. Within this I am incorporating worship music, praise music, traditional music, contemporary music, all musical styles, hymns, choruses, chants, solo items, congregational singing, and basically any form of music that is used in a church service.*

## **Appendix D      Ethics information**

### **Study I**

#### **THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

##### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a study investigating the nature of spirituality in church music. This study is designed to examine the concept of spirituality as it relates to music in general, and church music in particular. It is hoped that these findings will provide a little more light on what has been a long running quest to understand why music has the effect on us that it seems to have. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your interest and involvement in music in your church.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you to fill in the accompanying questionnaire and send it back to me as quickly as you are able.

This questionnaire should take you about 15 – 30 minutes to complete. Please take your time as I would appreciate the most accurate and detailed answers that you can provide. Please also note that I greatly value your honesty. I am not looking for any particular answer, but the truth about how you understand your experiences.

Your participation will be a significant contribution towards understanding more about church music, how it functions and how we can use it more effectively.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give me your permission, which will be assumed by your returning this questionnaire, I may publish the results in my thesis write up as well as possibly in a professional journal. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone 9385 4234, fax 9385 6648, email [ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with The University of New South Wales. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. If you have any additional questions later I will be happy to answer them. I can be contacted via the details below.

Once again thank you for your participation; it is a valuable step towards a worthwhile goal.

Peter Atkins  
Ethics approval # 05 2 152

## Appendix E      The Mid-point Group

Chapter 6 contains a description of the formation of the two habitūs – Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups. That discussion mentions the presence of a third group – the Mid-point group. As the presence of this group was anomalous and yet significant, some explanation for its presence is important. That is the purpose of this excursus.

Qualitative responses to Pentecostalism<sup>9</sup> elicited some helpful clues as to the reason for the formation of such a distinct and unexpected group. The questionnaire asked for the participant's description of Pentecostalism rather than reasons for their rating, so in this sense reasons may not be forthcoming. Nevertheless, some indications can be gained from these comments as to why participants aligned themselves the way they did.

Much of the content of the responses dealt with theological ideas of Pentecostalism, as would be expected from the question. However two factors did emerge which shed some light on their reasoning for 'sitting on the fence' in this way. These were *Definitional uncertainty* and *Disassociation from the Practice*.

### i) Definitional Uncertainty

Of the 25 people in the mid-point group, two indicated that they simply did not understand what Pentecostalism was. Comments along the lines of 'unfamiliarity' and 'being unsure' suggest that these participants were not confident to use the term. This could explain why these individuals placed themselves 'on the fence'. Yet this is a small number.

### ii) Disassociation from the Practice

The second reason is perhaps the more poignant. Five people (25% of this group) indicated a distinction between the theology (etymology) and the practice of Pentecostalism. They indicated an understanding of what Pentecostalism involves from

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<sup>9</sup> The question read: "What does 'Pentecostal ideals' mean for you?"

a technical point of view, but an accompanying awareness that in some Pentecostal churches this receives an emphasis the participant does not wish to identify with. For example: “*I support the original Pentecostal ideals . . . I do not support the ideas of modern Pentecostals*” (P 48), or “*relates to both theology and worship style. Not all worship styles are accepted, theology is accepted*” (P 103). This disassociation resulted not in these participants rejecting Pentecostalism and thus being allocated to the non-Pentecostal group, but in their locating themselves ‘on the fence’, and thus helping to form the mid-point group.

The presence of this factor does indicate an awareness of and a considered approach to the participant’s involvement. It provides an interesting comment on existing literature concerning Pentecostal use of music. It suggests that the typology purported by Becker (2001) and Cox (1995) is not necessarily true for all those in Pentecostal churches. Instead there may exist a variety of levels or types of Pentecostalism.

In summary, *Definitional Uncertainty* and *Disassociation from the Practice* account for responses from only 28% of the group. However this is just the number who made a point of stating these things; there may well be more who thought the same way but did not make a comment. Therefore I suggest that for at least a sizeable portion of this group they ‘sat on the fence’ because they considered the term problematic. If this is the case, and the term ‘Pentecostal’ is problematic, then it may be part of the reason no difference was found between the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups. This would need to be pursued in future research. Other reasons for participants’ ‘sitting on the fence’ could not be discerned from the qualitative responses on the questionnaire, but there was probably another portion of the group who simply could not make up their mind where they sat. On the basis of these results this analysis proceeded using three groups; non-Pentecostals, including those who scored ‘5’ or less (n = 41); the mid-point group, being those who scored ‘6’ (n = 25); and Pentecostals, being those who scored ‘7’ or above (n = 51).

## Appendix F      Demographic Characteristics

[This table updates Table 8.1, including data for the third, intermediate, religious group]

Table F-1 Demographic characteristics of the participants involved in this research.

<b>Participants</b>				
<b>Age (years)</b>				
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious	Intermediate group
Youngest	<b>18</b>	18	19	19
Oldest	<b>92</b>	85	90	92
Average age	<b>35.8</b>	35	37.3	35
Median Age	<b>27</b>	20	27	29
<b>Category</b>				
<b>Gender %</b>				
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious	Intermediate group
Males	<b>73 (42.9)</b>	27 (42.9)	30 (49.2)	16 (33.3)
Females	<b>97 (57.1)</b>	36 (57.1)	31 (50.8)	30 (66.7)
<i>Total</i>	<b>170 (100)</b>	63 (100)	61 (100)	48 (100)
<b>Musical Experience %</b>				
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious	Intermediate group
None	<b>12 (7.06)</b>	5 (7.94)	5 (8.20)	2 (4.2)
Novice	<b>13 (7.65)</b>	5 (7.94)	7 (11.48)	1 (2.1)
Some experience	<b>43 (25.29)</b>	16 (25.40)	18 (29.51)	9 (18.8)
Experienced	<b>66 (38.82)</b>	27 (42.86)	20 (32.79)	19 (39.6)
Professional	<b>36 (21.18)</b>	10 (15.87)	11 (18.03)	15 (31.3)
<i>Total</i>	<b>170 (100)</b>	63 (100)	61 (100)	48 (100)
<b>Country of Involvement %</b>				
	<b>Entire sample</b>	Religious	Non-Religious	Intermediate group
Australia	<b>135 (79.41)</b>	54 (85.71)	44 (72.13)	36 (78.3)
International	<b>35 (20.59)</b>	9 (14.29)	17 (27.87)	10 (27.7)
<i>Total</i>	<b>170 (100)</b>	63 (100)	61 (100)	46 (100)

Note: the total of 170 participants includes two participants with missing data

## Appendix G      Additional Figures and Tables for the Qualitative results of Study I

The following four tables provide the data for Figure 4.2, Figure 4.4, Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.4 respectively.

Table G-1 Overall spiritual and emotional category frequencies for each of the four conditions in the spiritual question

Habitus	Context		Spiritual	Emotion	Residual
<b>All participants</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	113	13	100
		Not mentioned	4	104	-100
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	90	14	76
		Not mentioned	27	103	-76
<b>Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	51	3	48
		Not mentioned	0	48	-48
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	41	6	35
		Not mentioned	10	45	-35
<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	38	6	32
		Not mentioned	3	35	-32
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	28	6	22
		Not mentioned	13	35	-22

Note: Residual is the difference between the number of spirituality category mentions and the number of emotional category mentions  
n=117

Table G-2 Overall spiritual and emotional category frequencies for each of the four conditions in the general descriptions

Habitus	Context		Spiritual	Emotion	Residual
<b>All participants</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	97	50	47
		Not mentioned	20	67	-47
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	42	37	5
		Not mentioned	75	80	-5
<b>Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	43	21	18
		Not mentioned	8	30	-18
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	18	17	1
		Not mentioned	33	34	-1
<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	30	17	13
		Not mentioned	11	24	-13
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	16	12	4
		Not mentioned	25	29	-4

Note: Residual is the difference between the number of spirituality category mentions and the number of emotional category mentions  
n=117

Table G-3 Overall spiritual and emotional category frequencies for the four conditions in the referential question

Habitus	Context		Spiritual	Emotion	Residual
<b>All participants</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	91	39	52
		Not mentioned	20	72	-52
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	29	43	-14
		Not mentioned	84	70	14
<b>Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	43	16	27
		Not mentioned	7	34	-27
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	12	18	-6
		Not mentioned	38	32	6
<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	28	12	-16
		Not mentioned	12	28	16
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	6	13	-7
		Not mentioned	34	27	7

Note: Residual is the difference between the number of spirituality category mentions and the number of emotional category mentions  
n=117

Table G-4 Overall spiritual and emotional category frequencies for the four conditions in the absolute question

Habitus	Context		Spiritual	Emotion	Residual
<b>All participants</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	38	26	12
		Not mentioned	79	91	-12
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	20	25	-5
		Not mentioned	97	92	5
<b>Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	15	12	3
		Not mentioned	30	33	-3
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	10	9	1
		Not mentioned	37	38	-1
<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>	<i>Religious</i>	Mentioned	13	6	7
		Not mentioned	23	30	-7
	<i>Non-religious</i>	Mentioned	6	7	-1
		Not mentioned	32	31	1

Note: Residual is the difference between the number of spirituality category mentions and the number of emotional category mentions  
n=117



The following Figures are variants on Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6.

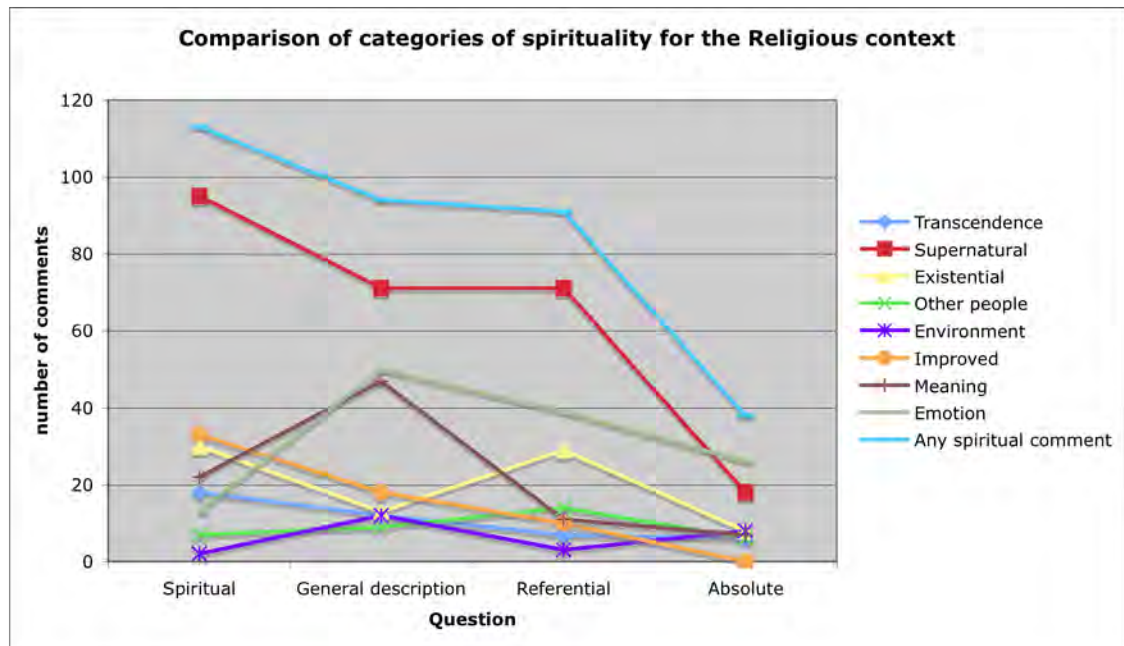


Figure G-1 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality in each of the four qualitative questions for the religious experience.

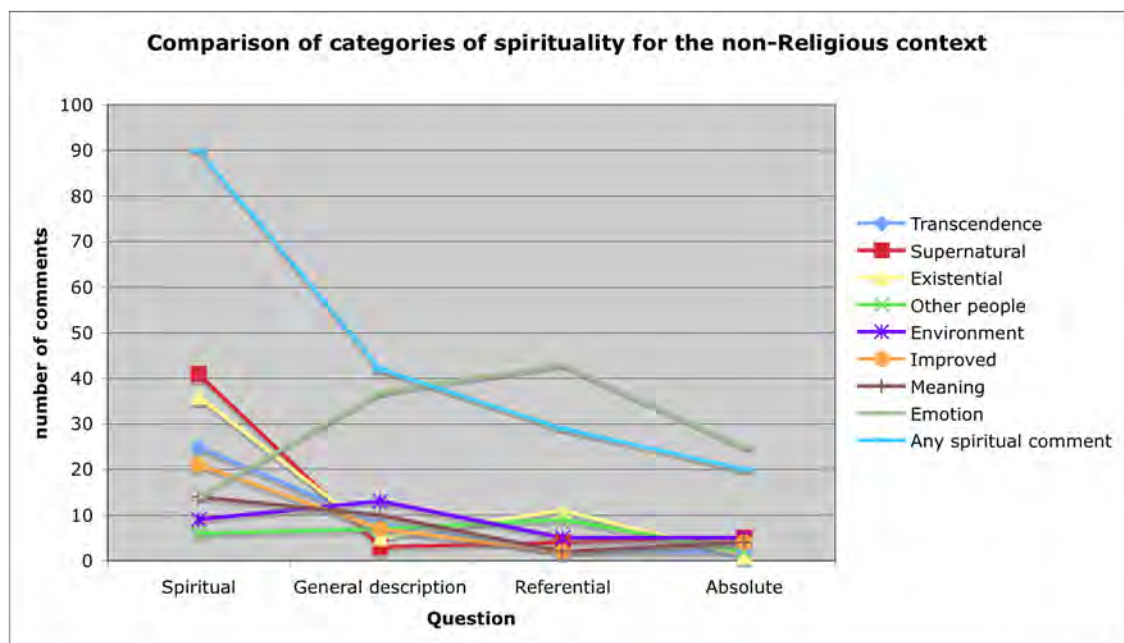


Figure G-2 Comparison of the number of mentions of each category of spirituality in each of the four qualitative questions for the non-religious experience.

**Table G-5** Chi squared results for comparisons with the Spiritual question in the religious experience

	General descriptions	Referential	Absolute
<i>Transcendence</i>	2.00	6.72	8.00
<i>Supernatural</i>	6.06	6.06	62.41
<i>Existential</i>	9.63	0.03	16.13
<i>Other people</i>	0.57	7.00	0.14
<i>Environment</i>	-	-	-
<i>Improved</i>	6.82	16.03	-
<i>Meaning</i>	28.41	5.50	10.23
<i>Emotion</i>	105.31	52.00	13.00

1 degree of freedom

n=117

Note: 1. p values include Bonferroni correction  
 2. Cell sizes <5 were not included in these chi squared tests

The following tables provide the numerical data relating to Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6

Table G-6 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of each category of spirituality in each of the four qualitative questions, according to habitus, for the Religious context.

	Pentecostal				non-Pentecostal			
	Spirituality	General Description	Referential	Absolute	Spirituality	General Description	Referential	Absolute
<i>Transcendence</i>	19.6	11.76	3.92	2.22	12.2	12.2	9.76	11.11
<i>Supernatural</i>	84.31	62.75	64.71	13.33	75.61	53.66	51.22	13.88
<i>Existential</i>	23.53	13.73	29.41	6.67	24.39	9.76	14.63	2.78
<i>Other people</i>	3.92	9.8	15.69	2.22	7.32	4.88	4.88	8.33
<i>Environment</i>	0	9.8	1.96	6.67	2.44	9.76	2.44	11.11
<i>Improved</i>	31.37	11.76	7.84	0	21.95	17.07	9.76	0
<i>Meaning</i>	23.53	41.18	5.88	11.11	9.76	39.02	4.88	2.78
<i>Emotion</i>	5.88	41.18	31.37	26.67	14.63	41.46	29.27	16.67
<i>Any spiritual comment</i>	100	84.31	84.31	33.33	92.68	73.17	68.29	36.11

Note: Percentage of mentions is the percentage of the participants in that group who made a comment relating to that category.

Pentecostal n=51; non-Pentecostal n=41

Table G-7 Comparison of the percentage of mentions of each category of spirituality in each of the four qualitative questions, according to habitus, for the non-Religious context.

	Pentecostal				non-Pentecostal			
	Spirituality	General Description	Referential	Absolute	Spirituality	General Description	Referential	Absolute
<i>Transcendence</i>	15.69	9.8	3.92	2.13	29.27	7.32	0	2.63
<i>Supernatural</i>	47.06	3.92	5.88	4.26	17.07	2.44	0	5.26
<i>Existential</i>	29.41	3.92	11.76	2.13	17.07	4.88	2.43	2.63
<i>Other people</i>	3.92	3.92	3.92	2.13	4.88	7.32	4.88	0
<i>Environment</i>	5.88	7.84	0	4.26	7.32	17.07	7.32	2.63
<i>Improved</i>	19.61	9.8	3.92	4.26	4.88	2.44	0	2.63
<i>Meaning</i>	13.72	5.88	3.92	4.26	7.32	2.44	0	2.63
<i>Emotion</i>	11.76	33.33	35.29	19.15	14.63	29.27	31.71	18.42
<i>Any spiritual comment</i>	80.39	35.29	23.53	21.28	68.29	39.02	14.63	15.79

Note: Percentage of mentions is the percentage of the participants in that group who made a comment relating to that category.

Pentecostal n=51; non-Pentecostal n=41

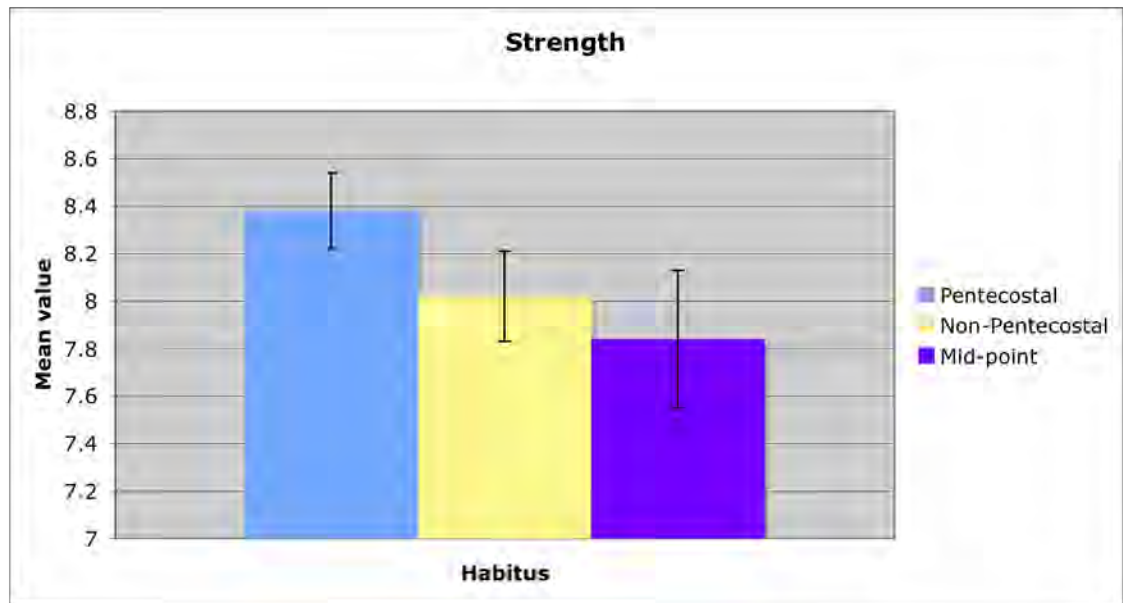


Figure G-3 Comparison of *strength of experience* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

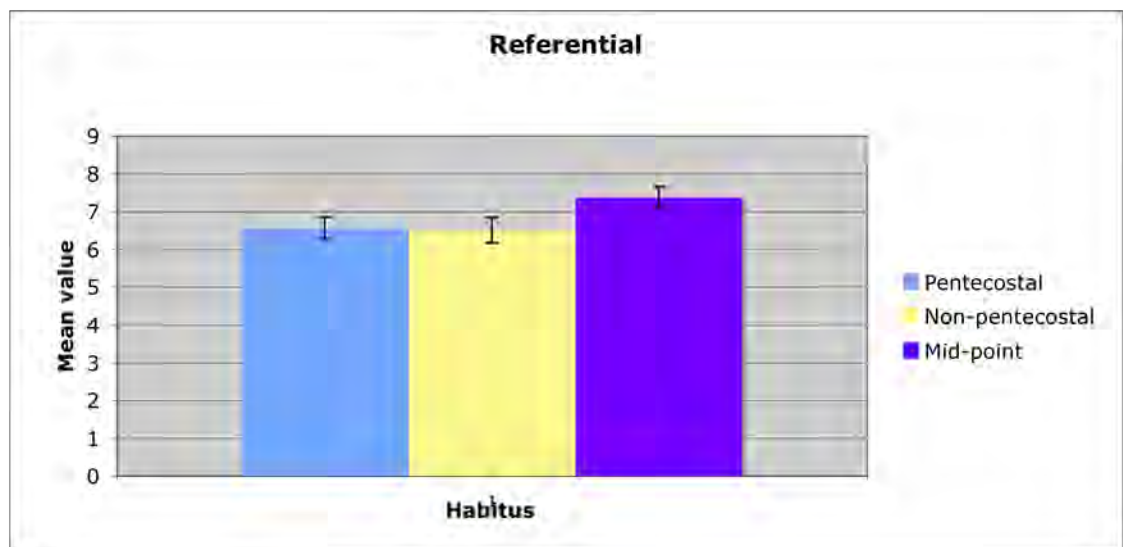


Figure G-4 Comparison of *Referentialism* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

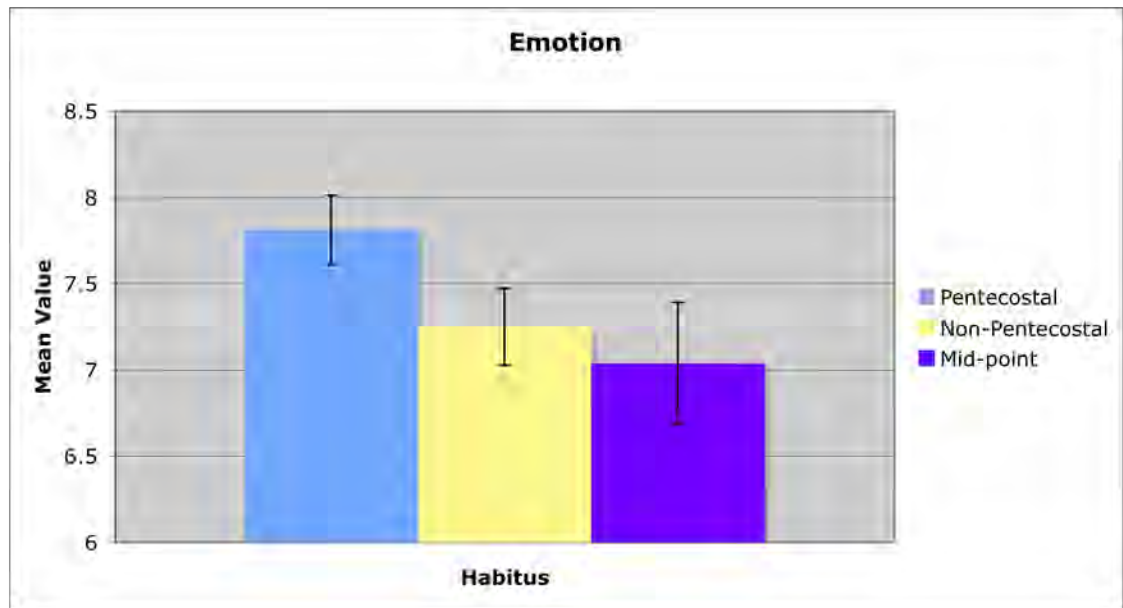


Figure G-5 Comparison of *Emotion* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

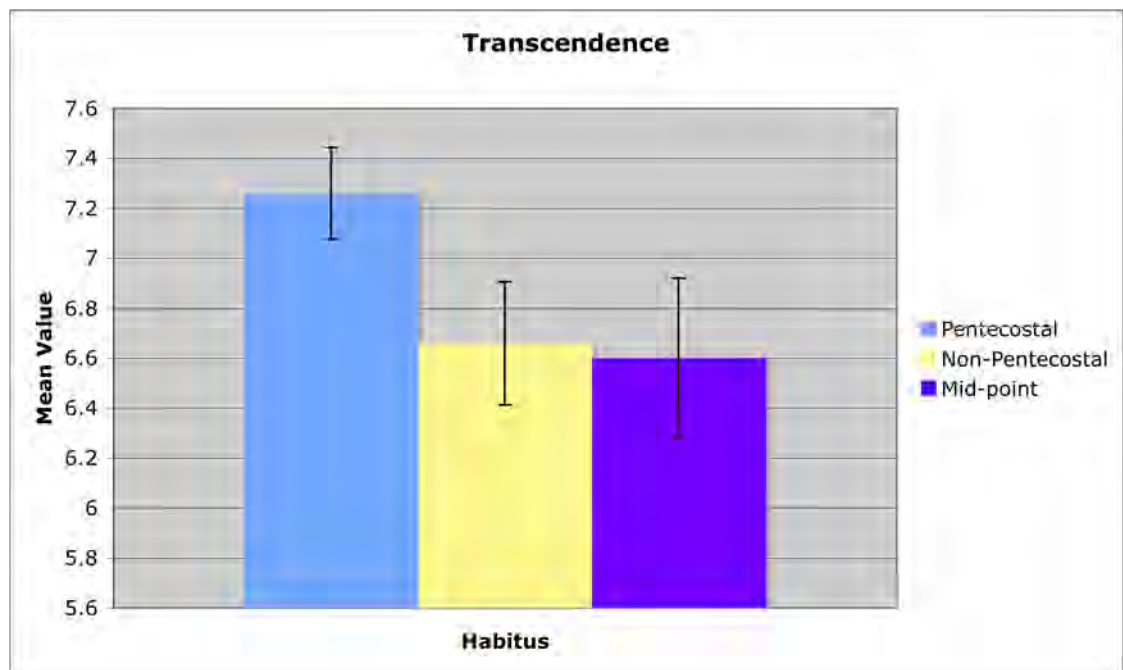


Figure G-6 Comparison of *Transcendence* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

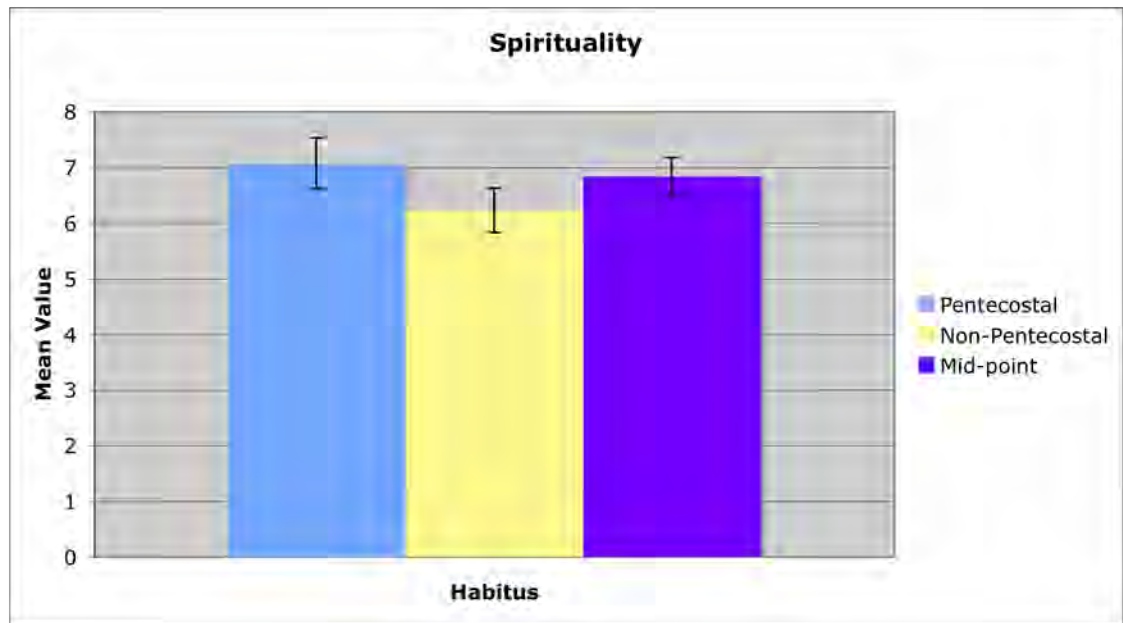


Figure G-7 Comparison of *Spirituality* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

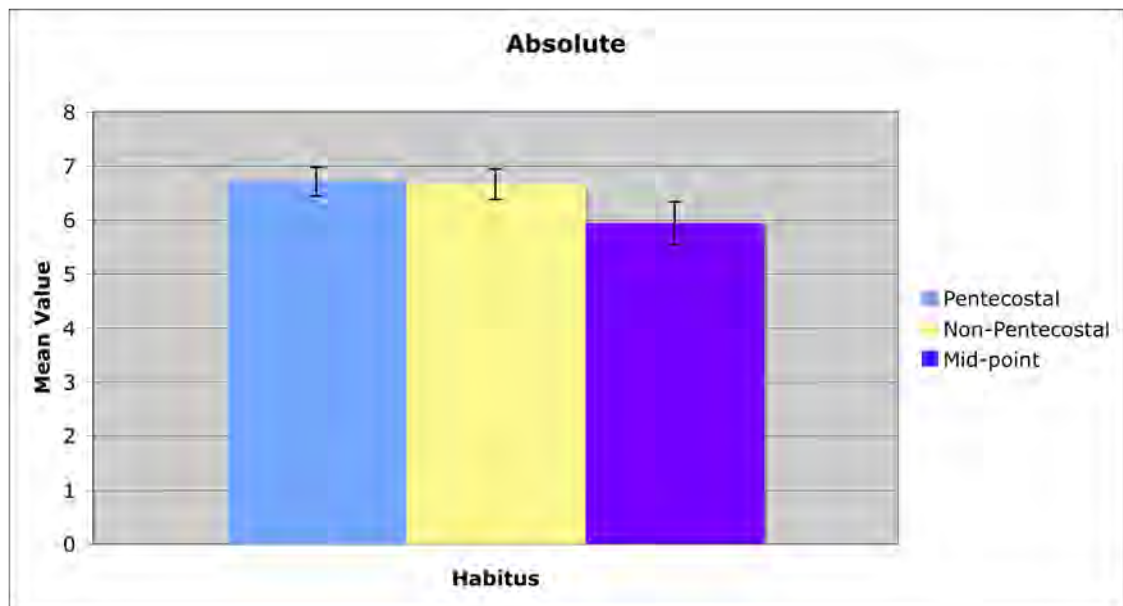


Figure G-8 Comparison of *Absolutism* across habitūs

n = 231

Error bars - +/- 1 standard error

Table G-8 Percentage of mentions of categories of spirituality in the General Descriptions question, for the three habitūs in each context

Context	Habitus	Transcendence	Supernatural	Existential	Other people	Environment	Improved	Meaning	Emotion	Spiritual
Religious	non-Pentecostal	12.2	53.7	9.8	4.9	9.8	17.1	39.0	41.46	73.2
	Mid-point	4.0	68.0	8.0	8.0	12.0	16.0	40.0	48.0	84.0
	Pentecostal	11.8	62.7	13.7	9.8	9.8	11.8	41.2	41.2	84.3
Non-religious	non-Pentecostal	7.3	2.4	4.9	7.3	17.1	2.4	2.4	29.3	39.0
	Mid-point	0	0	4.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	24.0	32.0	32.0
	Pentecostal	9.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	7.8	9.8	5.9	33.3	35.3

n: non-Pentecostal = 41; Mid-point = 25; Pentecostal = 51



## Appendix H      Questionnaire questions and number

### Study II

## Significant Experiences of Music

### Questionnaire

#### ***Section A – Personal Information***

- 1a. Age?
- 1b. Country
2. Gender?
3. Which item best describes your level of musical experience? <sup>10</sup>
4. What is the highest level of technical musical training you have received?  
(*eg. theory examinations, university music degree, etc.*) #<sup>11</sup>
- 5a. To what extent are you involved in community activities? <sup>12</sup>
- 5b. What community activities are you most often involved with? #
- 6a. To what extent do you enjoy spending time in nature? ^
- 6b. What is your favourite activity? #  
(*e.g. bushwalking, bird watching, sailing, . . .* )
- 7a. To what extent are you religious? ^
- 7b. What, if any, religion do you belong to / practice? #

#### **NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS:**

It is possible to think of a musical experience as being significant either because of the *music itself* or because of the *ideas associated* with the music. Think of the ‘music itself’ as meaning the technical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, etc. Think of the ‘ideas associated’ with the music as meaning the ideas that become associated with the music, the thoughts in the lyrics or program notes, or the memories or emotions that can become attached to it.

#### ***Section B – Your Musical Experience***

8. Please describe an experience of music you have had that was particularly significant.

This might include a performance you attended, one in which you performed, an instance of listening to a recording, an intimate gathering or something else. #

<sup>10</sup> Participants were able to choose from the following options: None; Novice; Some experience; Experienced; Professional.

<sup>11</sup> Questions marked with a hash # indicate open-ended questions.

<sup>12</sup> Questions marked with an arrow ^ indicate that participants were able to respond using a 5 point Likert type rating scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Please provide the *title(s), style, performance details, context in which you experienced this, your reaction, etc.* You might also consider: *Was it emotional, spiritual etc.? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? And so on.*

9. How strong was this experience? \*<sup>13</sup>
10. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘ideas associated’ with the music (and not the ‘music itself’)? \*
11. What were these ‘associations’ that were significant for you? #
12. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘music itself’ (and not the Music’s ‘associations’)? *For example was it significant because of the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?* \*
13. Please describe what it was about the music that you found significant. #
14. To what extent is the significance of this experience due to a *combination* of the ‘ideas’ *and* the ‘music itself’? (Rather than one or the other) \*
15. To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions? \*
16. To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself? \*
17. To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual? \*
18. To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience? \*
19. To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual? \*
20. What does ‘spiritual’ mean for you in this instance? #

### ***Section C – Supplementary Questions***

#### **How much do you agree with the following statements?**

21. The lyrics were an integral part of this experience; take them away [for example, replacing the words with humming] and it would not have been as significant.<sup>14</sup>
22. There was something about this experience that was *deeper* than just the music or its words.
23. The significance of this experience related to something in the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation. It was not connected with anything more than this ‘music itself’.

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<sup>13</sup> Questions marked with an asterisk \* indicate that participants were able to respond using an 11 point Likert type rating scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very much / very strong).

<sup>14</sup> All of the supplementary questions were responded to using an 11 point Likert type rating scale ranging from 0 – Strongly disagree, through to 10 – Strongly agree.

24. Did the music in this experience include lyrics?
25. This experience was significant because of the combination of the music and the lyrics (or words associated with that music) rather than just one or the other.
26. This music made me think of things and it was these thoughts that made the experience significant
27. Whatever level of spirituality I experienced was related more to the 'music itself' than the meaning of the words or some other 'association'.
28. It was the 'ideas associated' with the music, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that made this experience powerful.
29. The lyrics had nothing to do with the significance of this experience.
30. It was the *quality* of the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation that made this experience significant.
31. It was the 'ideas' the music referred to, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that I found to be spiritual.
32. This music brings back memories and it is these that make it powerful.
33. Do you have any further comments to add?

## Appendix I E-questionnaire

### SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES OF MUSIC

#### Questionnaire

*The following questionnaire is part of a research project aimed at understanding more about why we experience music so powerfully. Music can move us unlike anything else, but what is it about music that makes this possible? Please complete this questionnaire with as much detail as you can, being as honest as possible. It should take you about 15 minutes.*

*Thanks for your help.*

*Peter Atkins*



#### THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

##### Ethics Information

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a study investigating the experience of music. This study is designed to examine the concepts connected with strong musical experiences. It is hoped that these findings will make a valuable contribution to the intriguing question of why music has the effect on us that it seems to have. You are invited to participate in this research because of your interest and involvement in music. If you are willing to participate, please fill in the accompanying questionnaire and send it back to me as quickly as you are able. The end of the questionnaire provides an opportunity to be involved in a follow-up interview. Your willingness to participate in this interview will be assumed by your provision of contact information. If you do not wish to participate in this interview stage then please leave this section blank.

The questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes to complete. Please take your time as I would appreciate the most accurate and detailed answers that you can provide. Please also note that I greatly value your honesty. I am not looking for any particular answer, but an accurate representation of how you understand your experiences.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give me your permission, which will be assumed by your returning this questionnaire, I may publish the results in my thesis write up as well as possibly in a professional journal. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone 9385 4234, fax 9385 6648, email [ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with The University of New South Wales. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. If you have any additional questions later I will be happy to answer them. I can be contacted via the details below. Once again thank you for your participation.

***Peter Atkins***

Email: [p.atkins@student.unsw.edu.au](mailto:p.atkins@student.unsw.edu.au)

## Section A – Personal Information

1a. Age? <sup>15</sup> (Click on the shaded area and start typing)

1b. Country

2. Gender?

3. Which item best describes your level of musical experience? <sup>16</sup>

4. What is the highest level of technical musical training you have received?   
(e.g. theory examinations, university music degree, etc.)

5a. To what extent are you involved in community activities?  
<sup>17</sup>

5b. What community activities are you most often  
involved with?

Several questions are  
answered on a scale  
of 0 - 10. Indicate  
your preference by  
selecting the number  
that best suits you.

6a. To what extent do you enjoy spending time in nature?

6b. What is your favourite activity?   
(e.g. bushwalking, bird watching, sailing, . . . )

7a. To what extent are you religious?

7b. What, if any, religion do you belong to / practice?

## Section B – Your Musical Experience

8. Please describe an experience of music you have had that was particularly significant. This might include a performance you attended, one in which you performed, an instance of listening to a recording, an intimate gathering or something else.

Please provide the *title(s), style, performance details, context in which you experienced this, your reaction, etc.* You might also consider: *Was it emotional, spiritual etc.? What did it mean to you? What thoughts struck you? And so on.*

Your experience:

9. How strong was this experience?

<sup>15</sup> These spaces allowed participants to add text as appropriate.

<sup>16</sup> When participants clicked here they could select from the following options: No experience, Novice, Some training, Experienced, Professional.

<sup>17</sup> When participants clicked here they could select from the rating scale ranging from 1 - not at all, through to 5 - very much.

NOTE:

It is possible to think of a musical experience as being significant either because of the *music itself* or because of the *ideas associated* with the music. Think of the ‘music itself’ as meaning the technical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, etc. Think of the ‘ideas associated’ with the music as meaning the ideas that become associated with the music, the thoughts in the lyrics or program notes, or the memories or emotions that can become attached to it.

10. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘ideas associated’ with the music (and not the ‘music itself’)?

[Click for options](#)<sup>18</sup>

11. What were these ‘associations’ that were significant for you?

12. To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the ‘music itself’ (and not the music’s ‘associations’)? *For example was it significant because of the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, etc?*

[Click for options](#)

13. Please describe what it was about the music that you found significant.

14. To what extent is the significance of this experience due to a *combination* of the ‘ideas’ *and* the ‘music itself’? (Rather than one or the other)

[Click for options](#)

15. To what extent did you experience particularly intense emotions?

[Click for options](#)

16. To what extent did you have a sense of being part of, or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself?

[Click for options](#)

17. To what extent did you seem to lose track of time or space or even yourself as an individual?

[Click for options](#)

18. To what extent would you say that you were transformed or strengthened by this experience?

[Click for options](#)

19. To what extent would you describe this experience as spiritual?

[Click for options](#)

20. What does ‘spiritual’ mean for you in this instance?

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<sup>18</sup> When participants clicked here they could select from the rating scale: 0 – Not at all, through to 10 – very strong / very much.

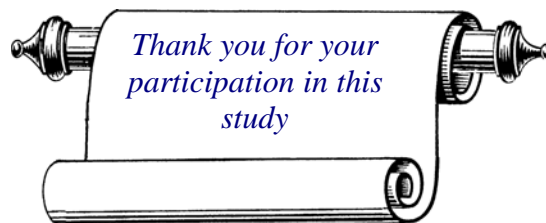
**And now . . . How much do you agree with the following statements?**

21. The lyrics were an integral part of this experience; take them away [for example, replacing the words with humming] and it would not have been as significant.  
[Click for options](#)<sup>19</sup>
22. There was something about this experience that was *deeper* than just the music or its words.  
[Click for options](#)
23. The significance of this experience related to something in the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation. It was not connected with anything more than this ‘music itself’.  
[Click for options](#)
24. Did the music in this experience include lyrics?  
[Click for options](#)
25. This experience was significant because of the combination of the music and the lyrics (or words associated with that music) rather than just one or the other.  
[Click for options](#)
26. This music made me think of things and it was these thoughts that made the experience significant.  
[Click for options](#)
27. Whatever level of spirituality I experienced was related more to the ‘music itself’ than the meaning of the words or some other ‘association’.  
[Click for options](#)
28. It was the ‘ideas associated’ with the music, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that made this experience powerful.  
[Click for options](#)
29. It was the *quality* of the melody, harmony rhythm or instrumentation that made this experience significant.  
[Click for options](#)
30. It was the ‘ideas’ the music referred to, rather than the melody/harmony/rhythm/etc. that I found to be spiritual.  
[Click for options](#)
31. This music brings back memories and it is these that make it powerful.  
[Click for options](#)

---

<sup>19</sup> When participants clicked here they could select from the rating scale: 0 – Strongly disagree, through to 10 – Strongly agree.

Do you have any further comments to add?




Follow-up Interview . . .

Would you be interested in being involved in a *follow-up interview*? If so, please provide some contact information and either your name or a code that I might identify you.

(Contact details are *optional* – participation in the interview is completely independent of the questionnaire. Your consent to participate in the interview will be assumed if you provide the following information.)

Phone:   
Email:   
Name / code:   
City, Country:



Now please save  your questionnaire and email it to @student.unsw.edu.au

If you're concerned about confidentiality, then print the questionnaire and post it to  
PO Box , NSW Australia 2110



## Appendix J      Effect of Performing v Listening

One other issue not discussed in this thesis was whether the musical experience was an experience of performing or listening to music.<sup>20</sup> There may be a difference between the two in terms of the type of experience elicited. Lowis (2002) found that the more involved people are in music, the more likely they are to experience peak experiences, and yet both playing an instrument and listening to music were almost equally related to peak experiences ( $r=.246$  and  $r=.288$  respectively in Lowis' results). Panzarella (1980) found that aspects of performing music can negatively affect ecstatic experiences. Yet according to Reimer (1995), music-making presents potent opportunities for the experience of *flow*.

In Study I, some comments related to performing and some to listening. This spontaneously reported information indicates that significant experiences are triggered at least some of the time by listening and sometimes by performing. The reasons for this are unknown. Individual differences may factor here, such as musical background, wherein performing may distract from the experience for someone who is less competent.

In Study II it was possible to discern more accurately from most descriptions, whether the individual was performing, or simply listening to the music.<sup>21</sup> 106 participants were listeners, while 59 were performers.<sup>22</sup> (61.6% and 34.3% of the total sample respectively.) Table J-1 and Figure J-1 detail the break down of the number of participants in each category. These indicate that there was minimal difference between the two groups. Chi squared analyses were calculated for each of the groups for musical background, and no significant differences were found. For the *no experience* and

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<sup>20</sup> The assumption here is that performers are also listening. 'Listeners' then are those who are only listening and not participating in the creation of the music.

<sup>21</sup> It is assumed that the performer is also listening to the music. These terms were chosen as the best and simplest terms to demarcate the distinction I am trying to make.

<sup>22</sup> For the remaining seven participants it was not possible to be certain.

*novice* groups there appeared to be more listeners than performers. The difference was not significant but that was probably due to a lack of statistical power. Therefore, it is not certain whether the difference is significant. The lack of performers in these two categories was expected, as people with no or minimal musical experience do not usually have significant experiences while performing. The two participants that did rate here described experiences in their local choirs.

What these data showed is that significant experiences of music arose just as frequently from listening and performing, regardless of one's musical background. Thus musical competence did not necessarily lead to a preference for experiences via playing; professionals were just as likely to find listening experiences significant. This did not, in itself, support Wik's (unpublished) finding that more people find their strongest experiences as listeners than performers. It suggested that the sentiment expressed by one participant: "*I preferably should be playing it to gain the most out of the experience*" (P 9), is not endorsed by all.

Table J-1 Comparison of listeners and performers according to musical background

	Listener n=105* (%)	Performer n=58* (%)	All participants N=170* (%)
No experience	10 (9.5)	1 (1.7)	12 (7.1)
Novice	12 (11.4)	1 (1.7)	13 (7.6)
Some training	25 (23.8)	17 (29.3)	43 (25.3)
Experienced	34 (32.4)	29 (50.0)	66 (38.8)
Professional	24 (22.9)	10 (17.2)	36 (21.2)

\* There was missing data, which meant the listener / performer distinction was not always possible.

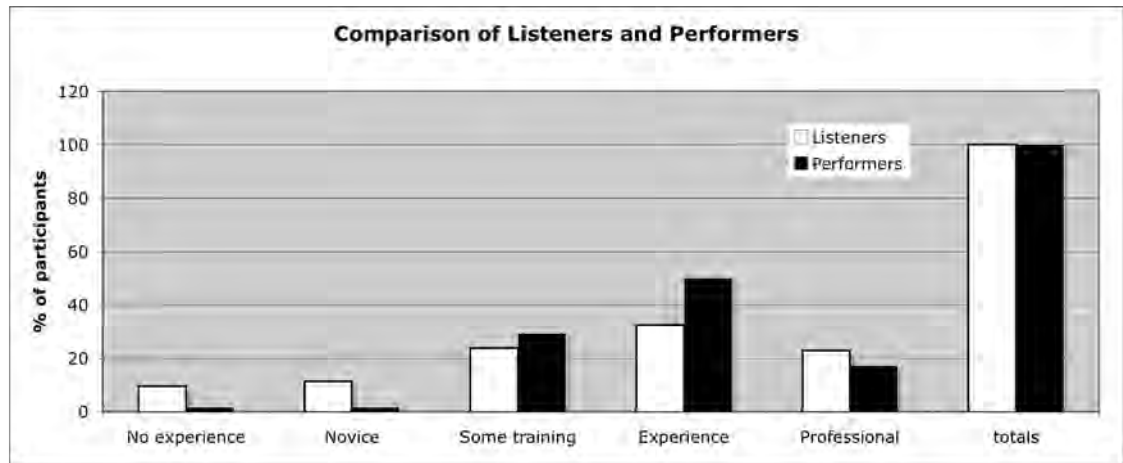


Figure J-1 Comparison of listeners and performers according to musical background

Next, performers and listeners were compared on the qualitative categories of spirituality, to see whether the mode of experience had any bearing on the perception of spirituality. Figures are shown in Table J-2 and Figure J-2.

Table J-2 Percentage of responses to each of the categories of spirituality, for the general description, for performers and listeners

	Listener N=105 n (%)	Performer N=58 n (%)
Supernatural	2 (1.9)	5 (8.6)
Existential	7 (6.7)	7 (12.1)
Other people	13 (12.4)	9 (15.5)
Environment	18 (17.1)	12 (20.7)
Transcendence	8 (7.6)	8 (13.8)
Meaning	12 (11.4)	4 (6.9)
Emotion	48 (45.7)	26(44.8)

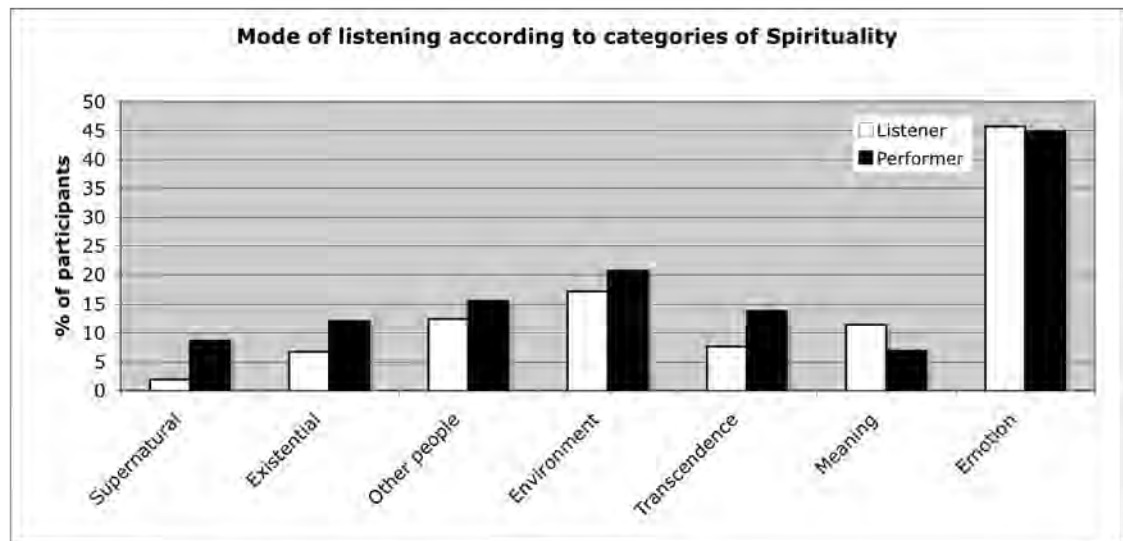


Figure J-2 Frequency of responses to each of the categories of spirituality in the general question, as a percentage of the group, comparing listeners and performers

There appeared to be more mentions of most of the categories of spirituality by performers, but the differences were small and none were significant.<sup>23</sup> Even for *meaning*, where there were relatively more mentions by listeners, the difference was not significant. This indicates that listening or performing can both bring a strong sense of spirituality.

Quantitative data was then examined. Figure K-3 graphs the mean ratings for each of the main elements in the quantitative data. There was a significant difference for only two of the elements; *transformed* and *spiritual* (the same two elements as in the effect of musical training, above<sup>24</sup>). This showed that listening experiences involved a greater sense of transformation and spirituality, but that, apart from this, they were no different to performance experiences. Again, effect sizes were small.

The difference between *transformed* and *spiritual* raised the question of whether there was a relationship between musical experience and mode of engagement. That was explored in Figure J-4, where it was apparent that there were more listeners than

<sup>23</sup> The reader is reminded that for results with significance levels  $>.05$  statistics were not reported.

<sup>24</sup> This raises the question of whether there was a relationship between musical experience and mode of engagement. That was explored in Figure J-4 of Appendix I, where it was apparent that there were more listeners than performers at every level of musical experience. Therefore, I concluded that there was little interaction between these factors.

performers at every level of musical experience. Therefore, I concluded that there was little interaction between these factors.

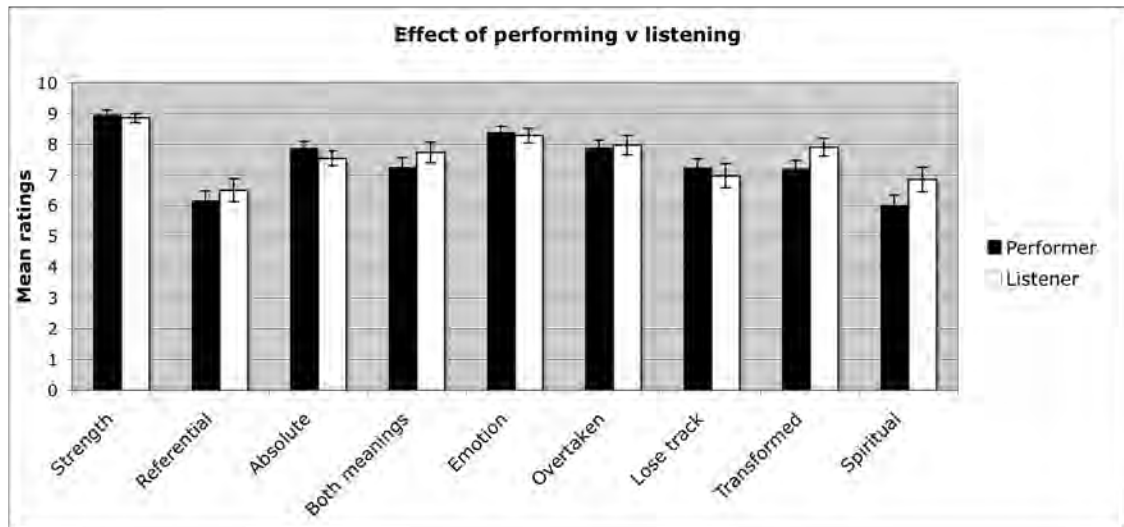


Figure J-3 The difference between performers and listeners on the key elements of the questionnaire

Error bars show +/- 1 standard error

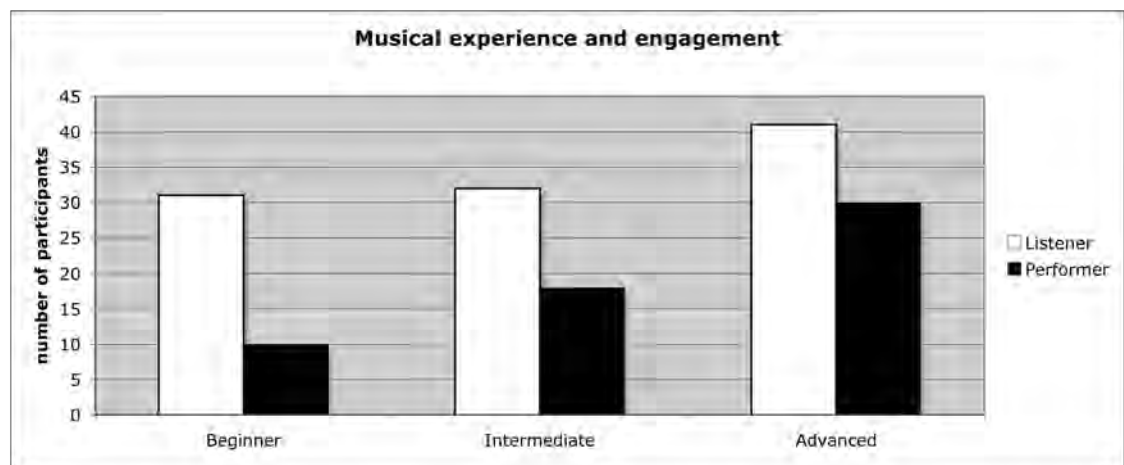


Figure J-4 Comparison of listening/performing with musical experience

Overall, there was no conclusive evidence that either performing or listening was more significant. Some qualitative comments alluded to gaining more from the experience while either listening or performing, so there were, at least, individual differences at play. There were also some indications that some aspects of spirituality, such as a connection with the supernatural, were more prevalent while performing than listening. Ratings for the *transformed* and *spiritual* elements were higher for listeners than

performers, so at least for those two elements, there seems to be a difference. Yet, for all other elements, including the transcendence elements and the other elements relating to the significance of the experience, there was no difference between performers and listeners. This is contrary to some of the literature (for example Reimer, 1995 or Wik, unpublished), but in line with Lowis' (2002) conclusion that both are equally related to peak experience. As this study did not specifically focus on that question, more research is needed.

It is possible that musical background would be a factor, in that less experienced musicians might find performing less significant because of the extra demand needed to perform. That was not clearly the case. This may have been because this research was not set up to investigate that question, and therefore insufficient information was available. However, from the information that is available, this difference does not appear to be a factor in experiences of spirituality. This is a confirmation of hypothesis 4b of Study II.

### **Implications for future research**

Why was no difference found between the two groups in this project, when other research did find differences (see the perspectives in Juslin & Sloboda, 2001)? Does that have something to do with the difference between spirituality and other phenomenon like emotion? To what degree is that a matter of personal preference, and to what degree is it a generalisable occurrence?

Furthermore, what exactly do we mean by 'listening'? The 'classical concert culture' would see listeners as sitting motionless and emotionless, listening silently and respectfully (Cook, 1998b; Frith, 1996; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). By contrast, the listeners in this project, particularly those in the religious context of Study I, were singing in the congregation, and often moving and responding emotionally. Concert-goers at a rock concert can also be quite participatory. Yet in Study I, the secular experiences were more like the classical listening experiences. This may be a factor in the differentiation between the two contexts. More specifically, it may be a factor in the

increased importance of the performer / performance element for the secular context, as well as the focus on thematic content in the sacred experience. Listening style may also have an influence on these findings, and should be considered.

## Appendix K      Effect of Lyrics

The following ideas further develop section 11.3, considering the effect of lyrics on the experience of music in general. Figure 11.3 is replicated here for reference purposes.

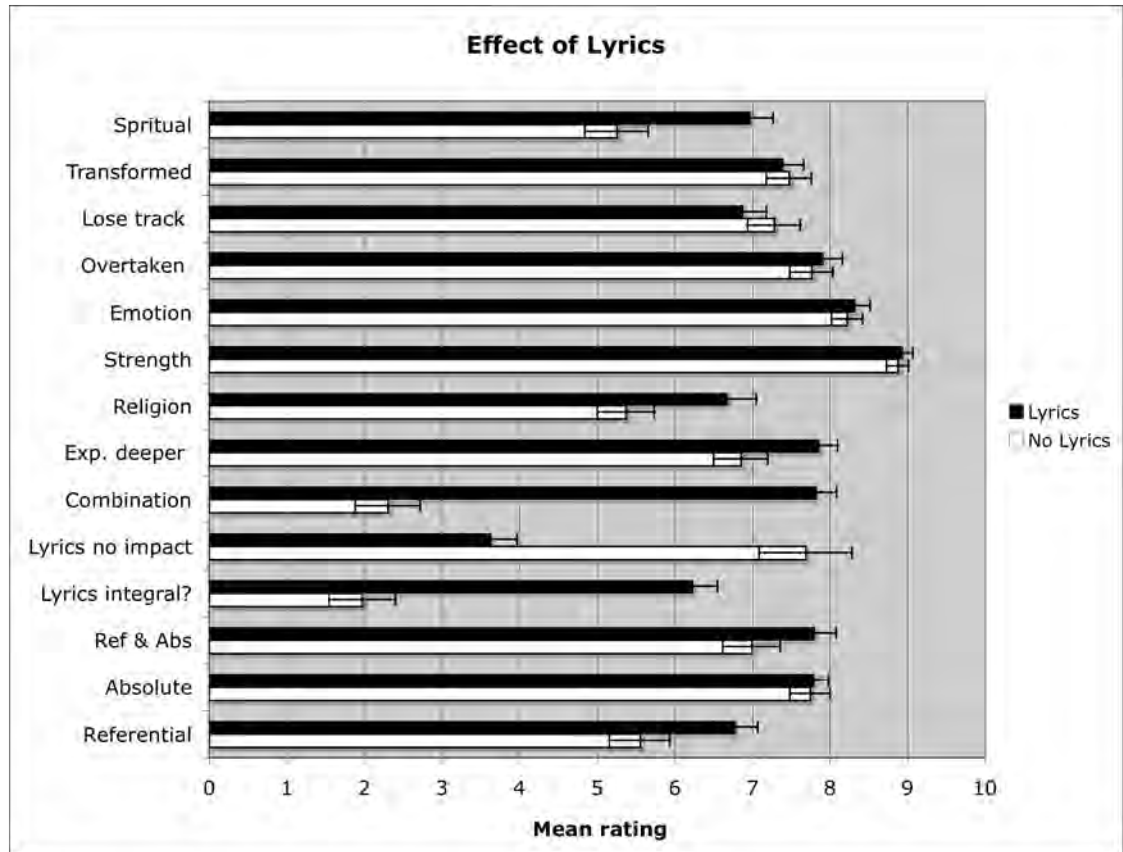


Figure 11.3 Comparison of means for experiences involving lyrics and those not involving lyrics.

Error bars show +/- 1 standard error

Note: Religion was rated on a 5 point scale, whereas all other elements were rated on an 11 point scale. Therefore ratings for religion were multiplied by 2.2 for the sake of consistency on this graph only.

There were differences for *lyrics integral*<sup>25</sup> ( $F(1,122)=55.808$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.314$ ), and *lyrics no impact*<sup>26</sup> ( $F(1,94)=40.565$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.301$ ), as would be expected. Yet it

<sup>25</sup> The groups for *Lyrics Integral* were not homogenous in terms of variance, however the difference between their means was so great that it would be significant even if an assumption of non-homogeneity was factored in.

<sup>26</sup> The *Lyrics Integral* statement read: “The lyrics were an integral part of this experience; take them away [for example, replacing the words with humming] and it would not have been as significant.” (Then participants rated their agreement or disagreement with that.)



was more complex than concluding that lyrics were important when present and not important when not present. The mean for *lyrics integral* for the lyrics group was only 6.23 (SD=3.0). This was not as high as might have been expected for this group, which implied that the impact of lyric music was not solely due to the lyrics. Furthermore, the mean rating on *lyrics no impact* for the lyrics group was 3.625 (SD = 2.693). While this showed a general rejection of the idea that lyrics have no impact, this rejection was not total, because for some experiences, to some degree, the impact of the lyrics was minimal. The six participants who stated that no lyrics were involved but rated *lyrics integral* 5/10 (or more) were an anomaly. For one participant, this was because they described a number of experiences, for one it may have been a language issue (as this person came from a non English speaking country, so presumably they were referring to non-English lyrics). For the remainder it was, perhaps, a mistake in either answering or understanding the question (see the discussion on ‘integral’ below).

One case study is participant 96 who was a 20 year old lady from the UK. She rated *lyrics integral* 3 out of 10, and *lyrics no impact* 6 out of 10. She wrote about a DVD performance that moved her to tears almost every time. She described one particularly poignant moment in great detail. She did mention the lyrical context, as to what the music was ‘about’, but then she described the register in which the female performer sang, the uniqueness and quality of the voice and performance, the response of the audience, the involvement of “*my favourite*” guitar solo, the impact of the gospel choir, and the virtuosity of the performers. She described how beautiful and emotional it all was and how “*it's like you're gona explode with tryin to comprehend how incredible something can be in life!*” [sic] This demonstrates that while lyrics did play a part, there was much more involved in making the experience powerful.

Although *lyrics integral* and *lyrics no impact* were both focused on the importance of lyrics in the music, they were not asking the same thing. The correlation between them was moderate ( $r = -.277$ ,  $n=74^{27}$ ,  $p=.017$ ), even though it was negative, as expected.

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The *lyrics no impact* statement read: “The lyrics had nothing to do with the significance of this experience.”

<sup>27</sup> This ‘n’ was much lower than the total (172) because the first round of questionnaires (approximately one third) did not include the question *lyrics no impact*.

Even when the lyrics group alone was examined, the correlation was not significant ( $r = -.183$ ,  $n = 56$ ,  $p = .176$ ). Several participants (for example Participant 72) rated both questions low when lyrics were not present, or (such as Participant 86) high when lyrics were present. Rather than seeing this as a misinterpretation of the questions, I proposed that this finding demonstrated that lyrics could be integral to an experience of music without being the cause of its significance. They may have been an irreplaceable part of the music and yet the music's significance may have lain elsewhere. This was not the case for all participants, but it was a possible scenario. This could also have been a product of the participant's interpretation of the word 'integral', as 'integral' can mean either a part that cannot be removed or a part that is central to the importance of something. This may have been the case for the non-English-speaking participants. Correlations were higher when only participants from Australia and the UK were included ( $r = -.421$ ,  $n = 47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and again when only participants from Australia were included ( $r = -.446$ ,  $n = 38$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

## Appendix L

## Additional tables and figures for Study II

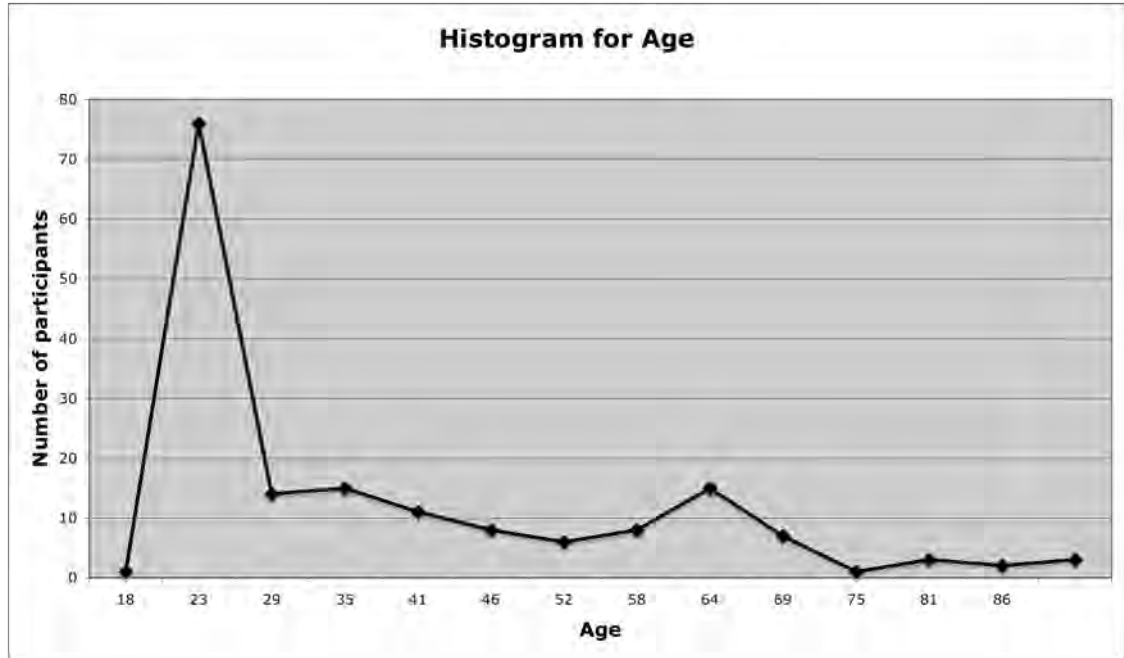


Figure L-1 Histogram of ages for all participants in Study II.

Table L-1 Original Factor Analysis relating to Table 11.2.

<i>Rotated Component Matrix</i>	<b>Factor</b>		
	<i>1</i> <i>Absolutist</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Spiritual</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Referential</i>
Strength	<b>.789</b>	.181	.244
Referential	.126	-.010	<b>.869</b>
Absolute	<b>.739</b>	.059	-.405
Emotion	<b>.788</b>	.237	.257
Overtaken	.310	<b>.794</b>	.000
Lose track	.033	<b>.817</b>	-.175
Transformed	<b>.500</b>	<b>.493</b>	.342
Spiritual	.158	<b>.651</b>	.367
% of variance explained	40.82	15.01	13.68
Eigenvalue	3.27	1.20	1.09

n=172

Note: This analysis does not include the supplementary Qs

Table L-2 Correlations between questions relating to Referential and Absolute types of meaning

	Absolute	Only Absolute	Spiritual Absolute	Absolute Significant	Referential	Only Referential	Referential power	Spiritual referential
Absolute	1 n=167							
Only Absolute	<b>.307**</b> n=156	1 n=156						
Spiritual Absolute	<b>.302**</b> n=157	<b>.256**</b> n=154	1 n=158					
Absolute significant	<b>.369**</b> n=159	<b>.470**</b> n=154	<b>.455**</b> n=155	1 n=160				
Referential	-0.079 n=166	<b>.257**</b> n=156	<b>.243**</b> n=158	<b>.229**</b> n=159	1 n=168			
Only Referential	<b>-.191*</b> n=160	<b>.262**</b> n=155	<b>-.176*</b> n=157	<b>-.191*</b> n=157	<b>.377**</b> n=161	1 n=161		
Referential power	<b>.268**</b> n=158	-0.142 n=154	-0.112 n=156	<b>.270**</b> n=156	<b>.520**</b> n=159	<b>.435**</b> n=158	1 n=159	
Spiritual Referential	<b>-.197*</b> n=157	-0.131 n=154	<b>.221**</b> n=155	<b>.252**</b> n=156	<b>.371**</b> n=158	<b>.470**</b> n=157	<b>.546**</b> n=157	1 n=158
Memory powerful	-0.128 n=158	-0.055 n=147	-0.126 n=150	-0.082 n=149	<b>.369**</b> n=153	<b>.427**</b> n=152	<b>.451**</b> n=151	<b>.284**</b> n=150

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table L-3 ANOVA results for comparison of religious groups on each of the main elements

Element	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Strength	2, 165	.960	.385	.011
Referential	2, 164	3.854	<b>.023*</b>	.045
Absolute	2, 163	.314	.731	.004
Emotion	2, 164	.599	.551	.007
Overtaken	2, 165	3.047	.050	.036
Lose Track	2, 164	.169	.845	.002
Transformed	2, 165	2.502	.085	.030
Spiritual	2, 164	8.438	<b>.000*</b>	.093

Significant at the 0.05 level

Table L-4 Five factor analysis for the non-religious group

Rotated Component Matrix	Non-religious group				
	1	2	3	4	5
Strength	0.263	0.531	0.014	<b>0.556</b>	0.101
Referential	<b>0.647</b>	0.061	0.023	-0.083	<b>-0.609</b>
Absolute	-0.106	0.074	<b>0.428</b>	<b>0.717</b>	-0.01
Emotion	0.097	0.349	-0.062	<b>0.749</b>	-0.057
Overtaken	-0.036	<b>0.746</b>	0.092	0.248	0.097
Lose track	-0.21	<b>0.803</b>	0.130	0.030	-0.176
Transformed	0.155	<b>0.715</b>	0.200	0.106	-0.152
Spiritual	0.031	<b>0.593</b>	0	0.081	0.086
Both meanings	<b>0.735</b>	-0.092	-0.051	0.057	-0.371
Only Absolute	-0.072	0.013	<b>0.432</b>	-0.076	<b>0.742</b>
Spiritual absolute	0.089	0.182	<b>0.870</b>	0.008	0.005
Absolute significant	-0.181	0.109	<b>0.757</b>	0.185	0.234
Only referential	<b>0.705</b>	0.187	0.025	0.274	0.044
Ideas powerful	<b>0.791</b>	0.125	0.069	-0.336	0.069
Spiritual referential	<b>0.682</b>	-0.16	-0.172	0.054	<b>0.519</b>
Memory powerful	<b>0.684</b>	-0.068	-0.081	0.078	-0.075
Eigenvalue	3.547	3.351	1.735	1.177	1.024
% variance explained	22.169	20.946	10.843	7.356	6.402

N = 60

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Strong loadings are highlighted **bold**

Note: This table provides the five factor version of Table 11.8