

# Psychiatry and Religion

Controversies and Consensus:  
A Matter of Attitude



Peter J. Verhagen

INTERNATIONAL SERIES IN MENTAL HEALTH AND RELIGION

# **Psychiatry and Religion**

## **Controversies and Consensus: A Matter of Attitude**

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan Tilburg University  
op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. E.H.L. Aarts,  
in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een  
door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie in  
de aula van de universiteit op woensdag 17 april 2019 om 13.30 uur  
door

**Petrus Johannes Verhagen**

geboren te Gouda

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**Psychiatry and Religion**  
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*So liegt es tief begründet, daß der Arzt seinen Beruf nicht nur als  
Forscher oder Wissenschaftler versteht, aber auch nicht als ein bloßer  
Techniker, der die Wissenschaft und ihre Erkenntnisse für das "Gesundma-  
chen" zur Anwendung bringt. Es ist ein Moment der Nähe zur Kunst darin,  
das nicht zu dem gehört, was man durch theoretische Belehrung vermitteln  
kann und das dem Namen Heilkunst entspricht.*

*Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993, p. 201)*

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**4**

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Düren – Germany, 2019

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek. The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet at: <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

PARANIMFEN

Drs. A.Th. Hegger  
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Cover image: "Ave Maria" (2015), gouache by Ineke Verhagen-Olbertijn  
Cover design: Mark Verhagen  
Book design: Olaf van Amelsvoort, Goirle

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Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-8440-6550-3

Shaker Verlag GmbH  
Am Langen Graben 15a  
52353 Düren – Germany

Tel.: 0049 2421 / 99 0 11 0  
Fax: 0049 2421 / 99 0 11 9  
[info@shaker.de](mailto:info@shaker.de) | [www.shaker.de](http://www.shaker.de)

# **International Series in Mental Health and Religion**

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## Contents further specified

Most of the texts, with the exception of Chapter 1 and Chapter 9, have been published previously.

### *Chapter 1. General introduction*

Peter J. Verhagen.

### *Chapter 2. Religion, spirituality and psychiatry. A field wide open for discussion and research*

Based on three previous publications:

- a) Herman M. van Praag & Peter J. Verhagen, Religion, spirituality and psychiatry: A field wide open for discussion and research. In G.N. Christodoulou (Ed.), *Advances in Psychiatry: Second volume* (pp. 251-258). Athens: World Psychiatric Association, 2005.
- b) Peter J. Verhagen & Herman M. van Praag, Religie, Spiritualiteit en psychiatrie: Een breed terrein voor discussie en onderzoek [Religion, spirituality and psychiatry: A Field Wide Open for Discussion and Research]. In T.I. Oei & M.S. Groenhuijsen (Eds.), *Capita selecta van de forensische psychiatrie anno 2006* [Capita selecta of forensic psychiatry anno 2006] (pp. 57-76). Deventer: Kluwer, 2006.
- c) John L. Cox & Peter J. Verhagen, Spirituality, religion and psychopathology: Towards an integrative psychiatry [Special issue]. *International Journal of Person Centered Medicine*, 2011, 1(1), 146-148.

### *Chapter 3. The case for more effective relationships between psychiatry, religion and spirituality*

Peter J. Verhagen, *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 2010, 23(6), 550-555.

### *Chapter 4. Psychiatry and religion: Values, research data and professionalism*

Peter J. Verhagen, *Minerva Psichiastica*, 2013, 54(2), 149-164.

*Chapter 5. Religion and mental health. A critical reflection in consequence of four reviews (1969-2013)*

Peter J. Verhagen, *International Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 2017, 1(2), 11-23, open access.

*Chapter 6. Towards a position statement*

*Section 6.1. Psychiatry and religion: World Psychiatric Association beyond boundaries*

Peter J. Verhagen, *Actas Españolas De Psiquiatría*, 2012, 40 [Suppl. 2] [Special issue], 60-65.

*Section 6.2. Controversy or consensus? Recommendations for psychiatrists on psychiatry, religion and spirituality*

Peter J. Verhagen, *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2012, 5(4), 355-357.

*Section 6.3. A “complex” subject matter asks for a clear lead!*

Peter J. Verhagen, *World Psychiatry*, 2013, 12(1), 43.

*Section 6.4. WPA Position Statement on Spirituality and Religion in Psychiatry*

Alexander Moreira-Almeida, Avdesh Sharma, Bernard Janse van Rensburg, Peter J. Verhagen, & Christopher C.H. Cook, *World Psychiatry*, 2016, 15(1), 87-88.

*Chapter 7. Psychiatry and religion: Consensus reached!*

Peter J. Verhagen, *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 2017, 20(6), 516-527.

*Chapter 8. Spiritual life and relational functioning. A model and a dialogue*

Peter J. Verhagen & Agneta Schreurs, *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 2018, 40(2-3), 326-346.

*Chapter 9. General discussion*

Peter J. Verhagen.

## **Contents and authorship further specified**

I would like to express my gratitude to the co-authors with whom I have worked over the years.

### *Chapter 2*

In this chapter I used materials originally prepared and published by Van Praag, Cox and myself in order to raise awareness of the agenda and activities of the World Psychiatric Association Section on Religion, Spirituality and Psychiatry.

The order of authors reflects their role in the writing process. This means that I wrote the second article (b) (Van Praag commented on and corrected the various drafts), and that I commented on, completed and reformulated drafts of the first article (a). Cox invited me to contribute to and comment on the third article (c). I drafted the figure (Figure 1). During the preparation of this chapter, moreover, I revised, amended, and updated the previously published texts.

### *Chapter 6, Section 6.4*

Regarding Section 6.4 the following should be noted. The WPA Position Statement is a policy document of an international organization. This implies that the order in the list of authors is determined by their respective roles in the organization (the WPA Section on Religion, Spirituality and Psychiatry) and not by the amount of work each of them devoted to the writing itself. The first three authors were, at the time of publication, the current chair, co-chair and secretary of the Section. As fourth author, I was the initiator of the project on behalf of the Section. The fifth author (Cook) actually wrote the text. The amount of effort each author has given to the project itself (not only the writing), is also not reflected in the order of appearance of the authors in the list of authors. Cook and Verhagen started working on the project in 2006, Cook participated on behalf of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in London, Verhagen participated as member of the board of the Section. A first version of

the statement was ready in 2008 and published in 2010. This text has been included as appendix to Section 6.1 (pp. 133-134). The other authors (the first three) became involved at a later stage during the process of developing the Position Statement.

### *Chapter 8*

I am the first and main author of the complete article. Schreurs read, reviewed, and commented on the first draft. In this article, I used a model developed by Vincent Brümmer, emeritus professor of the philosophy of religion. Schreurs applied the model to spirituality and psychotherapy. My first aim was to make Brümmer's model on spiritual and interpersonal relationships better known in the scientific literature, especially in the field of psychology of religion. The second aim was to connect this model with the turn to relational spirituality in psychology of religion. I also wanted to start a dialogue, based on the model, about a new approach to personality disorders in the most recent classification of psychiatric disorders DSM-5™. I made thus three contributions to the model: heightening the awareness about Brümmer's model and its possible relevance, opening up a relatively unexplored research domain, and establishing a connection with a new development in psychiatry.