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III PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

Religion affords dramatic, insistent phenomena centrally entrenched in the intimate structures and functions of personality. These phenomena are likely to intrigue a psychologist for one of two contrasting reasons: either for their challenging uniqueness or for their vivid illustration of factors of more fundamental and general interest in psychology.

Sometimes, such phenomena as sudden conversion, mysticism, glossolalia, ritual, and intense religious commitment may seem incomprehensible in terms of readily available psychological theories and therefore may spark the development of new ones. Alternatively, they may appear to be particularly vivid instances of processes of central importance to psychology. In this case, these phenomena become a challenge in that they demand an account from those who aspire to a comprehensive theory of personality and its development and change, motivation, emotion, cognition, perception, group behavior, attitudes, values, socialization, guilt, or virtually any other theme of common psychological interest. In particular, religion poses urgent questions about the relation between affective and cognitive processes and between the individual and his social environment.

Religion appears to share with abnormal phenomena this characteristic of presenting seemingly dramatic and unique manifestations which at the same time illustrate processes of central concern to any personality psychologist.

This distinction—between the seeming uniqueness of religion and its instancing of general problems in psychology—suggests alternative strategies in the study of the psychology of religion. One strategy begins with careful attention to the phenomena and to the development of useful descriptive categories to handle them. The other strategy turns to religious phenomena only after a theory has been developed in another segment of personality and behavior. Of the pioneer systematists at the beginning of this century who turned their attention to religion, James (1902) represents the former strategy, Freud (1913; 1927; 1934-1938) the latter. (1)

The phenomena-based strategy generally, although of course not exclusively or necessarily, has been employed by those who were personally more "sympathetic" to religion, who therefore tended to claim a greater richness or validity for their "participant" observations. (2)

The psychology of religion has been marked by a schism between these two strategies. Descriptive, explanatory

1 phenomena-based approaches of various kinds have made little progress toward developing genotypical categories useful for theoretical analysis. On the other hand, the "theoreticians" starting "outside" religion have made little use of the distinctions or other descriptive gains made by those interested in the phenomena.

2 While empirical research by either group has been limited—because practical, design, and measurement problems are formidable—the split, with regard to empirical work, is particularly wide. The theorists have apparently felt that any empirical obligation was already satisfied by demonstration—often clinical—of their theory before they applied it to religion or else by anecdotal application to instances derived from "armchair" observations or library resources. Empirical research by the phenomena-based group has tended to be limited to the most superficial data, such as church attendance or questionnaire self-report of "belief." Questions of greatest interest and importance have not been asked.

1 Background and context. Beyond the general psychological fascination which religion may have, impetus for work in the psychology of religion has come from at least three sources. The first, and perhaps the major, impetus has come from practical and theoretical concerns within institutionalized religion, especially Protestantism.

A For example, the field of religious education has provided prominent focus, suggesting both problems and theories. Especially among Protestants in the early decades of this century, as sudden adolescent conversion became less normative, those concerned with religious education required that more attention be paid to the processes of religious development. This was encouraged by an optimistic, "liberal" theology which anticipated (in harmony with other progressive ideologies of the time) the possibility of developing ideal Christians, with the aid of scientifically discoverable principles. More recent "existential" concerns, emphasizing the role of "experience" in Christian nurture, as distinguished from intellectual instruction, has again brought new urgency to psychological questions.

A During the middle decades of the twentieth century there has also been concern, especially among Protestant and Jewish clergymen, with finding sound psychological bases for dealing, as pastors, with personal and family crises. The acceptance of "depth psychology" has coincided with the development of a less optimistic "neo-orthodox" theology which emphasizes the darker side of human existence rather than its progressive improvement.

Furthermore, the general loosening of traditional

religious institutions and roles has sometimes left clergymen searching for a clearer pragmatic basis for defining, and perhaps even justifying, their role. This concern has coincided with greater institutional concern with recruiting, screening, training, and evaluating clergymen. The resulting research on the role, personality characteristics, and motivation of clergymen (Menges & Dittes 1965) has represented a new focus for the psychology of religion. [See PSYCHIATRY, article on THE RELIGIO-PSYCHIATRIC MOVEMENT.]

B A second impetus, beyond the bounds of institutionalized religion, is a single frequently replicated empirical finding in social psychology: the positive correlation between indices of religion and of prejudice, authoritarianism, or other conservative attitudes. This finding has occasioned a continuing sequence of empirical and theoretical work for two decades. This has perhaps been provoked in part by the conflict in values aroused by the finding: religion is commonly regarded as a desirable value, and prejudice is not, and the official doctrines of organized religions generally repudiate prejudice.

C The third impetus arises from the intrinsic connections between religion and psychology, especially clinical psychology. In many ways, religious and psychological enterprises have parallel, if not overlapping, concerns. Both call attention to, and offer conceptualizations about, human aspirations and apprehensions, about the relation of an individual to his total environment, about the processes of coping with stress, and about ameliorating the human condition. It is not surprising, then, that each should be intrigued by the prospective insights of the other.

Contemporary theologians (e.g., Roberts 1950; Tillich 1952) have systematically attempted to make theology take account of psychological formulations. Relatively little "adaption" in the other direction—exploitation of theological formulations for psychological research—has been attempted, although it would seem profitable (Hiltner & Rogers 1962). Theological formulations frequently include implicit or explicit psychological theories, including propositions about both the antecedents and the consequences of particular beliefs or other religious behavior.

Philosophical and logical distinctions. Some methodological attention must be paid to the important distinctions between religion and psychology. Psychological analysis of religion operates within certain clear and logically necessary, but not always understood, restrictions which distinguish it from other intellectual disciplines related to religion. There is sometimes a special problem

in relating, or distinguishing between, the psychology of religion and both philosophy and theology.

Logically, the distinction seems clear and has been made in similar terms by writers in the psychology of religion; James devoted an eloquent chapter to the point (1902). Psychology, philosophy, and theology may all be concerned with the same phenomenon, such as a particular belief or a particular ritual, but they ask different questions about the phenomenon. Psychological analysis is concerned with the psychological development and the functions of the belief or ritual. Philosophy is concerned with the correspondence between the belief or ritual and some criterion of truth, logic, or goodness, and theology, with its correspondence with such criteria as the will of God or other given norms of faith. The answers to the psychological questions do not necessarily imply or presuppose answers to the philosophical or theological questions. Even a thorough assessment of the psychological history and functions of a particular belief carries no ordinary implications for the "truth" or "faithfulness" of the belief; these must still be ascertained by the criteria appropriate to philosophy and theology. Both "true" and "false" beliefs may develop out of a particular pattern of social influences or personal motivation. The "genetic fallacy"—the evaluation of belief or behavior in terms of an analysis of its origins—has been soundly discounted by every major writer in the psychology of religion, including Freud (1927), who carefully used the term "illusion," when applied to religion, to refer to certain wish-fulfilling functions, not to religion's objective validity. Freud even acknowledged that science, a preference for which he argued on other grounds, was an "illusion" in this same sense.

Yet, despite the logical distinction—well accepted in principle—between psychology, on the one hand, and philosophy and theology, on the other, there remain at least two psychologically understandable grounds for the continuing confusion and blurring—perhaps more among the audience of the psychologist than by the psychologist himself.

One of these grounds for confusion is an unfamiliarity with, or a mistrust of, discrete disciplines of thought which claim correspondence, not with the "whole truth," but only with an abstracted and limited segment. Most socializing and reality-orienting processes accustom persons to regard reality as unitary and therefore to expect statements about reality to be similarly unified. Discrete disciplines or systems of thought are expected to be integrated. Differing statements—for example,

psychological and philosophical statements about the same belief—are perceived as mutually implicative. If mutual implications cannot be recognized, the statements are perceived as necessarily inconsistent.

The attempt to integrate different statements into a single statement or system often leads to an unwarranted syncretistic identification of terms (for example, "neurosis" and "sin" or "psychological anxiety" and "ontological anxiety") drawn from discrete psychological and theological systems (e.g., Roberts 1950; Tillich 1952). When such integration is not easily accomplished, then the psychological and philosophical (or theological) systems are seen as antagonistic, competing for the status of the one valid approach. With respect to Copernican astronomy, geology, and biological evolution, the result of long battles is the general acknowledgment that statements about history and function and statements about meaning and truth may both be true without having to be consistently integrated. But this acceptance is not yet universally accorded to psychological analysis. The view commonly persists that a belief must be either psychologically motivated or true (e.g., Havens 1961; Outler 1954).

A second psychological basis for confusion is a persistent notion in our culture, apparently related to Greek philosophy and perhaps to America's Puritan roots, that psychological history and motives are "unworthy" vehicles for truth. Epistemologically and theologically, it may be argued, in principle, that truth may readily arise through such psychologically discernible processes as social or motivational influences, as well as through pure reasoning; such a view would seem especially consistent with Christian notions of incarnation or Jewish emphasis on the importance of the community. But psychologically, the distinction between rational and emotional aspects of man doggedly persists in our culture and, hence, in psychologies of religion (e.g., Allport 1950; Clark 1958), with higher status accorded the rational aspects. Thus, a discipline, such as philosophy, that is concerned with intellectual processes and criteria may be accorded a superior role, to which the contributions of psychology must be accommodated [e.g., Outler 1954; see also KNOWLEDGE, SOCIOLOGY OF].

Phenomena-based approaches. The search within the phenomena of religion for useful descriptive and analytical categories has, ironically, been impeded by the dramatic strikingness of the phenomena. It has been found expedient to conceptualize religion largely in terms of particular phenomena: for example, conversion experience, church at-

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tendance, personal prayer, assent to a particular dogma. These phenomena are so insistent and attention to them becomes so entrenched that it becomes difficult to break away from phenomena-based *ad hoc* categories, into the isolation of more genotypical and psychologically relevant variables.

For example, it is possible that some conversion, some church attendance, some prayer, and some belief—but not all of such instances—may share guilt-coping obsessional characteristics. Scientific progress may be gained by the development of such a category, cutting across groups of behaviors. But such progress has been slow because of the seeming dramatic insistence of the phenomena to be studied in their own terms—just as the descriptive, diagnostic categories of abnormal psychology have only slowly yielded to more “dynamic” variables, cutting across the phenomenological descriptions.

“Religion” as a single variable. The attempt to regard all religion as an integral phenomenon or as a single variable is the most significant and awkward illustration of the persistence of culturally convenient, but scientifically dubious, categories. A society finds it convenient and possible to group a great variety of behavior and institutions within the single category of “religion.” To its own frustration, psychological inquiry has commonly followed this practice.

Argyle (1958), for example, explicitly regards religion as a single quantifiable variable, with institutional membership or attendance, devotional practice, and orthodoxy of belief used as interchangeable indices. Other measures frequently used uncritically as a single index of “religion” are the religious-interest scale of the Allport-Vernon Scale of Values, scales such as Thurstone’s for assessing attitudes toward church, God, and Sunday observances, various tests of religious information, and self-ratings of religiosity.

Most attempts to define religion as a single variable also emphasize the uniqueness of religion as compared to other psychological and cultural phenomena. Such definitions tend to identify religion with mystical characteristics and also serve to exclude, by implication, the application to religion of psychological analyses applied to other types of behavior (Allport 1950; Clark 1958; James 1902).

But the usefulness or validity of such a global, single-variable definition of religion is not easily defended against a sophisticated theoretical viewpoint. As Johnson has dramatically argued:

In the name of religion what deed has not been done? For the sake of religion men have earnestly affirmed and contradicted almost every idea and form of con-

duct. In the long history of religion appear chastity and sacred prostitution, feasting and fasting, intoxication and prohibition, dancing and sobriety, human sacrifice and the saving of life in orphanages and hospitals, superstition and education, poverty and wealthy endowments, prayer wheels and silent worship, gods and demons, one God and many gods, attempts to escape and to reform the world. How can such diametrical oppositions all be religious? ([1944] 1959, pp. 47–48)

Several recent factor-analytic and correlational studies have suggested a single prominent factor, but it is a factor defined almost exclusively by attitudes toward religious institutions, the visible factor by which Western culture generally identifies religion. The few studies which have used more subtle indices than attitudes toward the church, and more sophisticated samples of persons more familiar with elements of religion other than institutional affiliation, have suggested that religion be considered as reflecting a multiplicity of factors (Dittes 1967).

Furthermore, empirical studies of “religion” defined as a single variable—primarily church affiliation and participation—have not tended to produce consistent, meaningful relations with other variables (perhaps because other variables are also grossly defined, in terms of such easily accessible measures as personality variables, age, education, diagnosis of pathology). Studies using such data typically show that religious involvement is “greater” among women, among young adolescents and those past middle age, among the less educated and less intelligent (when class differences are held constant), among members of the middle class, and among those scoring higher on measures of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism.

Definitions and descriptions which attempt to embrace in a single statement the religions of diverse cultures invariably seem to lose the critical and significant characteristics of any one. The number of facets of religious phenomena increases so greatly as one crosses cultural lines that cross-cultural definition and generalization are exceedingly treacherous. One perhaps ought to be pessimistic about developing a psychology of religion in general and perhaps instead learn more from studying cultural group and individual differences.

Descriptive distinctions. Among those committed to description of phenomena, the use of typologies has represented one attempt to define somewhat less global variables. These types are characteristically taken from those established by practitioners themselves—for example, distinctions between mystic, prophet, priest (e.g., see Clark 1958, chapters 12 and 13).

James (1902) proposed the much-quoted distinction between the religion of the healthy-minded and of the sick soul—perhaps more a distinction between personality types than between religious orientations per se. The distinction appears related to the manic-depressive continuum, with one end representing the extroverted personality (“positive thinking” in Norman Vincent Peale’s terms) and the other a more depressed, introverted, openly conflicted person.

Pratt’s (1920) distinction between subjective and objective worship has persisted, perhaps more as a haunting methodological dilemma than as a genuine phenomenal distinction. Objective worship, typified by the Roman Catholic mass, refers to intention and reference beyond the worshiper; subjective worship refers to self-conscious awareness of the effects of worship on the worshiper, as typified by much Protestant worship.

These typologies have not lent themselves to easy operational definitions, nor have they found themselves as part of more elaborate theoretical statements. Users of typologies have been content with typologies per se, rather than curious about the relation of the type with other variables.

Differing beliefs suggest another variable of potential psychological significance. But when these are taken in the language and the dimensions of the practitioners, they tend to emerge along a single conservative-liberal dimension, highly correlated with general “nonreligious” conservatism-liberalism and its known determinants. Other categories suggested by research in attitudes and perception outside religion, such as suggestibility, conformity, or dogmatism, may be more useful.

Religion-religiosity. Many writers have suggested the important distinction between “authentic” intensive inner religious experience, on the one hand, and routine peripheral religious activity, on the other. The distinction has been labeled internal-extrinsic by Adorno and others (1950), interiorized-institutionalized by Allport (1954), intrinsic-extrinsic by Allport (1959; Allport & Ross 1967), primary-secondary by Clark (1958), committed-consensual by Allen (1965; Allen & Spilka 1967), and religion-religiosity by many. The distinction reflects a value judgment and is analogous to one commonly made by religious participants themselves—especially by those regarded as prophets and reformers—who frequently call attention to the inverse relation between the two types of activity.

In empirical studies most measures used are of explicit, objective religiosity, usually involving par-

ticipation in, or attitudes toward, the formal religious institution, its overt activities, and its official doctrines. On the other hand, most theoretical efforts, including attempts at establishing distinctions between, and categories of, phenomena, are concerned with the more intrinsic, subjective religion—the inner “spiritual” life, personal attitudes and orientations, values, loyalties, and commitments. Indeed, assuming the present distinction, a major methodological weakness of most empirical research in the psychology of religion is the use of instances of extrinsic religiosity as indices of an intrinsic religious orientation (e.g., Argyle 1958).

Factor-analytic studies (e.g., Cline & Richards 1965; Allen 1965; Allen & Spilka 1967) tend to support the distinction between the explicit institution-oriented religiosity and more personal intrinsic religion. Most attempts to provide scales or other indices for each of these two elements have foundered on the likelihood that each is not a discrete variable but, like “religion” itself, a general rubric covering many independent variables. Allen (1965) and Allport and Ross (1967) report scales of extrinsic and intrinsic religion that have some construct validity (extrinsic religion was correlated with prejudice, but intrinsic religion was not).

Psychoanalytic description. Much psychoanalytic writing is essentially descriptive. It has been a common practice among psychoanalytical writers to identify themes thought to be of psychological significance in religious material. Religious symbols, activities, and legends have provided fertile ground in which both Freudian and Jungian adherents could discover disguised symbolic “meaning.” A recent example (La Barre 1962) argues at length for the phallic symbolism of the snake in contemporary and historical cults and legends, including the Garden of Eden story. This work is classified here as largely descriptive because it focuses on the identification of a single variable rather than on the advancement of a theoretical understanding of the relation between that variable and others.

Freud’s first writing on religion (1907) called attention to several descriptive similarities between religious ritual and obsessive-compulsive symptoms. The theoretical implications of common etiology and common functions have been extrapolated from this observation by others, for example, Ostow and Scharfstein (1954) and Jones ([1923] 1964, chapter 9).

Theory-based approaches. The two major psychological theories generally used in analyzing religious phenomena are both associated with Freud,

although neither was fully originated or developed by him. One theory emphasizes the psychological motive of dependence, the position of the mother, and the solicitous aspects of religion. The other theory emphasizes the psychological motive of hostility, the role of the father, and the demanding aspects of religion. Both theories reflect the fundamental hypothesis that the "religious life represents a dramatization on a cosmic plane of the emotions, fears, and longings which arose in the child's relation to his parents" (Jones [1923] 1964, p. 195).

The general distinction between the more solicitous and more demanding modes of religion has long been noted by many observers both within and without religion. Examples are the common adage of clergymen that their aim is to "comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable" or the distinction between the creative, redemptive, justifying attributes of God—or the "saving," healing functions of religion—and the wrathful attributes of God—or the demanding, law-abiding, sanctifying functions.

Fromm (1963) has sharply contrasted these two theoretical orientations and has attempted to invoke them sequentially, in relation to changing social conditions, to account for changing emphases in early Christian centuries. Erikson (1958) has both distinguished and blended the theories in an intensive "case study" of Martin Luther's developing religious convictions. Bakan (1966) has proposed that religion represents the projection and management of parents' conflicts between personal "agency" motivations—including hostility to children—and nurturant motives.

Theories based on dependence. Dependence-based theories associated with Freud's second book on religion (1927) emphasize religion as a source of comfort, solace, or assurance in the face of external stresses and frustrations. A protective and projective parent is associated with deferred or fantasied satisfactions, especially in relation to keenly experienced frustrations. The religious response is one of submission, in imitation of such a figure as Jesus, the dutiful son.

Supporting data, beyond general reflections, are not overwhelming. Especially missing are what would be the most convincing data—correlations between evidence of significant life frustrations and submissive reliance in the framework of this particular kind of religious formulation. Some general evidence has accumulated suggesting generally "greater" religious involvement among groups such as the less intelligent and the economically deprived, who, one might infer, experience depri-

vation, frustration, and a sense of inadequacy. Evidence along these lines has been surveyed by Cronbach (1933), by Argyle (1958, pp. 145-154), and by Dittes (1967).

Theories based on hostility. Freud applied to religion the full range of his Oedipal theory and apparently believed that this application was confirmed by anthropological and historical materials he cited (1913; 1934-1938). Emphasis is placed on relations with a paternal god-figure and on coping with largely "inner" stresses generated by this relation, particularly hostility and rebellion. Various elements of belief and of practice are analyzed as allowing for the expression of such hostility, for its control, and for the consummating receipt of punishment and forgiveness. A prototype is the identification with a Christ-figure who assumes the role of God, yet submits to the father, is crucified, and reconciled through resurrection and ascension.

The subtle and complex variables of motivation and of religion with which this theory is concerned have so far eluded controlled empirical study.

Projection and wish fulfillment. Projection to God of attitudes toward a father are assumed by both theories. This assumption has given rise to empirical tests of various designs to discover whether there is a similarity between attitudes toward God and attitudes toward the actual father. The degree of correspondence discovered has varied widely, perhaps because the research has not carefully taken into consideration the theories' proposal that such projection takes place under conditions of particular personal motivation.

Wish fulfillment, or perhaps more accurately, "rationalization," is a general process postulated especially by the theories based on dependence. The degree and process by which conceptualization follows and is made consistent with motivation and practice has attracted varying formulations (e.g., Dunlap 1946). All tend to assume an independent "need to conceptualize" or a "need for consistency" among conceptualizations and between conceptualizations and behavior.

Religion and ethnocentrism. Perhaps the most effective fusion of empirical and theoretical work has developed from the repeated empirical finding of correlations between indices of religion and of conservative social attitudes—especially, because of the cultural importance given them in the mid-twentieth century, attitudes of anti-Semitism and racial prejudice. This correlation was brought into sharp focus and most of the subsequent developments were given direction by the work of Adorno and others (1950).

The finding has, among other things, stimulated attention to definitional problems, cited above, especially to the distinction between religiosity, which Adorno's measures reflected, and religion. Most theories, guided by an understanding of official religious doctrine, might expect religion to be directly related to liberal attitudes. [See ANTI-SEMITISM and PREJUDICE.]

Beginning with data in the Adorno volume, studies have regularly reported suggestions of a curvilinear relation between ethnocentrism and frequency of church attendance, with both non-attenders and the most faithful attenders showing more liberal attitudes than occasional attenders. If the most regular attendance can be interpreted as an index of more personal internalization of religious norms, beyond perfunctory institutional loyalty, then this may be some evidence of the theoretically expected relation between intrinsic religion and liberalism. Other evidence awaits the definition and measurement of such elements of intrinsic religion as faith, hope, love, trust, freedom, etc.

Personality variables. The relationship between religion and ethnocentrism has led to theory and research aimed at designating the personality characteristics that underlie both variables and mediate the relation. Research findings suggest that a person for whom both conservative ideology and conventional, institution-based religion are functional is a person with a "weak ego" or "severe superego," who is threatened by external circumstances or internal impulse and therefore likely to be responsive to the unambiguous external controls, structures, and supports provided either by a religious institution and its ideology, rituals, and moralisms or by the strict categorizing and self-enhancement provided by ethnocentric doctrines.

Such an interpretation of the function of religion is supported by a wide range of empirical reports of the correlation between religion (especially as measured by institutional loyalty and adherence to conservative doctrines) and lower intelligence, disrupted emotional life, suggestibility, constricted personality, and awareness of personal inadequacy (Dittes 1967). These findings, suggesting that religion may attract the relatively inadequate and helpless, may be less shocking than first supposed to the exponents of religious traditions whose highest religious celebrations commemorate a captivity or a crucifixion and who generally preach man's fallen state and fundamental helplessness.

An extension of this general view also seems to account for a range of dramatic phenomena, such as glossolalia, sudden emotional conversion, faith

healing, and trance states. Reports, though meager, of personality characteristics and of environmental characteristics associated with such participation suggest the existence of a general trancelike, regressive "ego constriction" that produces greater expression of impulses and greater responsiveness to suggestion and social influence. [See HYPNOSIS; HYSTERIA; PERSUASION; SUGGESTION.]

Finally, the relation between religion and ethnocentrism has stimulated further attention to defining cognitive variables and especially to making the distinction (e.g., Rokeach 1960) between the content characteristics of a belief or attitude and the content-free or structural characteristics of the style, such as the openness or the dogmatism with which it is held. This has led to the hypothesis that religion is related more to elements such as the need for closure than to the conservative elements of ethnocentrism. [See PERSONALITY, POLITICAL, article on CONSERVATISM AND RADICALISM; SYSTEMS ANALYSIS, article on PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEMS.]

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[Directly related are the entries ATTITUDES; IDEOLOGY; MYTH AND SYMBOL; RITUAL. Other relevant material may be found in ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY; DEFENSE MECHANISMS; FANTASY; OBSSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDERS; PSYCHOANALYSIS; PSYCHOLOGY, article on EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY; and in the biographies of FREUD; JAMES; JUNG.]

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