Psychoanalysis, the discipline my work represents, does not have a theory about the nature and function of belief in the formation of psychic reality. I hope to provide in this lecture a first approach to a psychoanalytic theory of belief as a natural function of the mind.

Freud did not attend to belief as a psychic function in itself. His only reference is in the discarded Project for a Scientific Psychology; included as part of his correspondence with Wilhelm Fliss. Freud (1887-1901) writes: "Belief (doubt) is a phenomenon that belongs wholly to the system of the ego (the Cs.) [the unconscious] and has no counterpart in the Ucs. [the unconscious]" (p. 251). Freud never returned to the subject. He explained, however, the dynamic process of the creation of religious beliefs as transformations of the relationship to parents. Religious beliefs are "sublimations" of the affective attachment to the paternal figure, transformed by the child into God. Religious beliefs, therefore, function as psychic substitutes for parental protection. Freud's reflection about religious beliefs did not make belief a subject in itself as indicated by the fact that the Standard Edition does not include it in the index.

Freud, however, presents some ideas in his last theoretical paper Constructions in Analysis (1937) which offer the possibility of creating a psychoanalytic theory of belief as a psychic function. Two paragraphs from that work suggest that psychoanalysis itself is a process that begins with the finding of the patient's personal beliefs and ends with convincing constructions about how the patient was affected by his external and internal circumstances.

Freud's paper is a broad summary of the essence of the analytic process and its therapeutic effect. The task of analysis is to undo pathological repressions that inhibit normal functioning and psychic freedom. To achieve this aim, Freud suggests that the analyst must obtain "a picture of the patient's forgotten years that shall be alike trustworthy and in all essential respects complete" (p. 258). During the progressive emergence of the childhood psychic history the analyst builds within his/her own mind a tentative construction of what might have happened:

The analyst finishes a piece of construction of the childhood picture and communicates it to the subject of the analysis so that it may work upon him (p. 209).

Freud considers "constructions" as something broader than a single interpretation. The construction attends to the complexity of the subject's mode of understanding his/her life at a given moment. Freud gives examples of how the analysts conveys his/her construction to the patient:

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Belief

The work of analysis moves, through the mediation of the constructions, from the recognition of infantile and later beliefs to therapeutically effective convictions about what life experiences contributed to their formation. The pathology originated in a belief, based on the child’s interpretation of his/her life circumstances. The cure is achieved by the conviction about the “truth of construction” that the analyst and the patient had built together. Freud is talking here about belief and conviction not as contents but especially as dynamic processes capable of causing neurotic symptoms as well as effecting therapeutic gains.

What is the nature of this belief so indispensable in the analytic treatment? Freud, pondering about how conviction achieves its therapeutic results, concludes that “all this is matter for later inquiry” (p. 260), as inquiry he never carried out.

A theory about the psychic function of belief may help to understand how psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, religion, and psychic life itself depend on the ubiquitous function of belief to achieve their aims.

Believing as psychical action and process is foundational for the formation of the psyche. There is no psychic life without believing. I am intentionally using the verb “to believe” to differentiate the activity of the psyche from the results of its actions, the believing in something and the believing that something is one way or another. Contrary to what Freud says in the Project, believing has complex unconscious components and the resulting belief content may remain completely unconscious for the believer. Believing, as a psychical action is present at the beginning of life and evolves in its modalities and complexities alongside with the transformations brought about by the entire organism’s developmental processes. Believing is a primary activity of the mind not derived from any other. I propose the following tentative definition of believing as psychical action: believing is the psychical activity that interprets the condition of one’s being in its human and physical context at a given moment. This activity can be carried out unconsciously, preconsciously, and consciously. The child who saw himself as the sole...
possessor of his mother had interpreted himself as being the most important person for his mother.

What do I mean by psychical action and activity? Freud uses the expression only once in his entire work in his paper On Narcissism: An Introduction (1914). He is attempting to locate the emergence of narcissism in the context of his libido theory. He wants to know what the relationship is between narcissism and autoeroticism. He answers:

We are bound to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start, the ego has to develop. The autoerotic instincts, however, are there from the very first, so there must be something added to autoeroticism—a new psychic action (eine neue psychische Aktion) — in order to bring about narcissism (p. 77).

According to Freud, the narcissistic achievement brought about by that psychic action is the capacity to direct the libido to one's ego, to love oneself. The action requires that in a very broad sense the subject believes something about itself, such as "I am lovable." This very early belief about oneself precedes words and is experienced in somatic modalities of well being and sensory communication and attunement with parental objects (Rizzuto, 1998, 1999). The first beliefs precede the formation of the ego but are registered as somatic memorial processes. The psychic action is a private act of mentation in the nature of attribution and of interpretation of a multitude of experiences in relation to some aspect of the self. The somatic relational experiences, obscure at first, become at a later time translated into metaphorical interpretations. "I am the sole possessor of my mother."

The human infant's helplessness at the beginning of life makes it totally dependent on the actions of others. The needs of the infant are urgent and must be satisfied without delay to avoid catastrophic anxiety. The manner in which the needs are satisfied elicits states of being that may be pleasurable or unpleasant. Freud, Melanie Klein, and present day psychoanalysts recognize that the child links pleasure with goodness and displeasure with badness. These two links are the foundation of the earliest beliefs about the self. Satisfaction of need facilitates belief in one's goodness while frustration convinces the child that s/he is bad or that the object is inevalent. The capacity to carry out the psychic action that provides obscure beliefs about goodness or badness, based on somatic and sensory experiences with care givers, exist from the earliest stages of development. The assessment of goodness or badness is an affective one. Thus, from the beginning of life, belief is inextricably linked to affect, in particular, self-feelings.

In the course of development, the progressive rearrangement of self-assessment memories, retranscribes (Freud, 1887-1901, December 5, 1895 letter) the somatic experiences into verbalized phrases such as "I am bad because I am not satisfied." "I am good because I feel good." This is a greatly anthropomorphized version of obscure and primary acts of belief, which are nonetheless foundational for character formation. These earliest of beliefs are linked to visceral, proprioceptive, and sensory experiences that progressively became organized into what Reissch (1988) calls type B primitive beliefs, with zero consensus from others.

These beliefs are psychologically incontrovertible and have to do with the subject's existence and self-identity (pp. 8-9). To take their specific shape they require the constructive interpretation of the act of believing that transforms a sensory or interpersonal experience into a conviction about what the subject is about. Reissch gives the example of the child that believes "that he lives in a totally hostile world, or that he is unlovable." (p. 9).

(Continued on page 4)

1. Edelman (1988) describes the neurological foundations of the formation of the self. He writes: 'the notion of self should not be confused with personhood. As used here, the term refers to autonomic activities that sustain the survival of an individual. Self is fundamentally determined by the signaling activity of areas mediating homeostatic — autonomic, hedonic, neuroendocrine — brain functions. These areas are distinct from those registering oneself, external signals (p. 98).
Believing is, from the beginning of human life to its end, linked to the satisfaction of needs. The epigenetic evolution of psychic needs determines the optimal type of belief for the individual and his/her state of self at each stage of development.

Freud (1923) classified needs as part of two basic instincts: the self-preservative instinct and the sexual instinct, representative of libidinal urgencies (p. 40). Survival needs prevail over libidinal needs and in so doing create the basic conflicts of psychic life because human beings are incapable of renouncing the satisfaction of libidinal needs. The libidinal needs demand a loving and lovable object from attachment and satisfaction of the sexual strivings. The developing child seeks physical and emotional contact, communication, and, at times, communion with the loved object. The need for the libidinal object and for survival are deeply intertwined in psychic life as they change form in the epigenetic process. Descriptively, they appear linked in compelling wishes that demand satisfaction in everyday experience.

From the beginning of life to its end, the most basic human need and wish is to have another person there, not to be alone in the world. This need evolves in its modalities from the infant's want for the physical and emotional presence of the mother at one end of the spectrum, to the elderly person who finds sustenance in the memories of past loved presences or the non-visible presence of God at the other. The actual physical presence of a caring person cannot exercise its psychic function without an act of belief. The child and the adult need to believe that the other wants to be there with them. An example from a pathological situation is the patient who said: "My mother was there with me but she didn't want to be there with me. She did it because she wanted to feel like a good mother, but she did not care for me."

The next basic need directly related to the previously presented need is the existence of a person who is able to see us externally and internally (to a point) and is capable of reflecting back to us what we see. Without that feedback we have no access to our psychic selves or even a full knowledge of our bodily selves. Spitz's (1945) observations about hospitalism demonstrate that psychological care without human recognition leads to pathology and even death. The feeling of being seen internally emerges as the result of the fine attunement of minds and bodies between two people expressed in the form of their sharing complementary gestures with similar affects (Rizzuto, 1993). An illustration is that of a caressing hand meeting an accepting face in shared feelings of tenderness. Even when those two conditions are satisfied, the experience of being known cannot obtain without an act of belief. If mechanisms of defense stemming from preexisting experiences interfere, either because the object is perceived as malevolent, or the subject feels underserving, the belief may become paradoxical: "He tries to respond to me but I know that what he wants is to be rid of me."

For physical survival we must for a long time in infancy be fed, made bodily comfortable, and have a dwelling space in which to be who we are. Beyond the physical need, we want relational meaning in our food and comfort. These needs obtain throughout life and can never be fulfilled by ourselves without the help of others. Once more, belief mediates the meaning of the action even when the action itself is adequate. The best example to illustrate the distance between the act of feeding and its meaning is that of a patient of mine who said, in describing being fed by her mother: "She fed her daughter, not me. It was a mechanical act: she had to feed me. Her food was poison for me. As soon as I could I threw it up."

The need to be loved, that is, to feel loved, appears as a wish when the conscious sense of self begins to emerge in the second year of life, and especially during the Oedipal period beginning in the third year of life. Such need reveals the great complexity of any act of love as Freud has so eloquently demonstrated. From the point of view of this lecture, belief is also indispensable as a part of any implicit or explicit act of love. The explicit verbalization of love in the sentence "I love you" depends to achieve its psychic effect on two acts of belief. The first is that I have to believe that an internal act of love for me lies in the heart of my lover. The lover has to believe that he loves me. He cannot prove to himself that he loves me and I cannot prove it either.
The fact is that love does belong to the category of believing as defined earlier; it is an activity that interprets my state of being loved in the particular context of someone who claims to love me. When I believe that you love me, I interpret my entire existential condition in relation to you and interpret that it is true that you love me. If I wanted more than belief in your love, I could not obtain it because there are no final proofs for love.

At each stage of development the individual needs to express him/herself in actions or and in words. This expression may include hostile and destructive tendencies as well as the aggression indispensable to complete the actions intended. Internally motivated actions demand completion. The aggression (Rizzuto et al., 1993; Bute et al., 1983) at the service of completing the actions motivated by desires and needs, requires, to be able to bring the action to completion, acts of belief that are infrequently made visible. The subject needs to believe in his or her ability to carry out the action. If the action finds an obstacle and the person needs to resort to aggressive reinforcement of his/her will, a belief may in turn interfere, suggesting that only dreadful consequences may follow if one is determined to obtain what one wants.

I am talking here about the complex intertwining of belief, fantasy, defense, and interpretation as the internal processes that contribute to the formation of deeply held unconscious and conscious convictions about ourselves.

When developmental processes transform the modalities of object relational, libidinal, and expressive needs, new dimensions are added to the sexual and preservation needs of the individual. Desires for intimacy, mutuality, sexual union, and intellectual respect call for the individual to carry out new acts of belief to accept what is offered or to interpret what is denied.

Finally, when intellectual development at the end of latency, permits the questioning of reality as whole, the individual is faced with the need to make sense of a tremendously complex universe and to find a meaningful place for him/herself in the world. For the first time the developing person has to consciously face the moral and religious questions that have confronted human beings since the beginning of time. There are no rational answers to these questions. At the intrapsychic level, the history of the individual provides, in the rehashing of many acts of belief carried out from the inception of life, the building blocks for the construction and reconstruction of beliefs and convictions about the nature of reality, the significance of society and its moral imperatives, and the existence or nonexistence of God. In this sense, religious beliefs are never purely "religious." Their convincing components find, as in any other act of belief, their supporting elements in the beliefs and convictions formed in the personal history of satisfaction of needs and the beliefs organized around them.

Finally, the awareness of death confronts the growing individual with the unavoidable.

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Belief

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able finality of life. For some individuals death is a reality early in life. Others avoid acknowledging the ubiquitous presence of death to the very end. In either case, consciously or unconsciously, the individual knows about the limited span of human life and the absolute uncertainty about how long we each have to live. In facing this final threat, all persons create their own beliefs from belief in life after death to the belief that life ends in death. In either case, to believe is all a person can do in contemplating death because there is no rational evidence to confirm one point of view or the other.

In the end, human beings’ satisfaction of their most compelling needs, from self-preservation to making sense of death, passing through the vicissitudes of love and life, depends on the manner in which they manage to interpret themselves in their life circumstances, that is, what they believe themselves to be.

This brief review of believing as an indispensable psychic action leads to two basis conclusions. The first is that believing represents the internal assertion to an act of human relatedness in which what counts the most is not the act itself but the attribution to other persons that they want to do what they are doing with the subject. This means, that in psychic life all satisfaction of need from hunger to love must include, to be psychologically and emotionally effective, a believable human encounter. Human beings do not live on bread alone. The psychic action of believing does not refer to the act itself—feeding, which only psychotic denial could overlook—but to the intention of the one who satisfies the need. The perceived and attributed of the care giver is what satisfies the psyche’s needs and provides the stimulation for emotional growth.

The needs I have mentioned are compelling and cannot be renounced. The common denominator to the satisfaction of concrete needs is the experienced relational meaning attributed to oneself in relation to the person and circumstances that offer satisfaction. Paradoxically, as I mentioned above, this meaning cannot offer satisfaction without the mediating act of believing in the fact the other person wants to offer satisfaction to the concrete individual that needs it. The inner voice says: “I believe you want to do it for me.” This belief is indispensable for psychic life. What we want is the wanting of the other.

The beliefs and convictions I have described are the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious constructions that provide the essential elements for all psychic life. They have their earliest foundations in somatic experiences of being taken care of. Most beliefs continue to be reshaped under the influence of the vicissitudes of relational life. Others are repressed and remain unchanged while yet others are enacted in varied forms.

Most psychoanalytic work consists in the exposure and transformation of old and newly created beliefs and convictions. The work itself offers as its result the construction of new beliefs from past, present, and transference sources. Freud affirms that they became a conviction for the patient. The affect in the transference and in the resolution of the transference gives these newly formed constructions their power of conviction.

There are other primitive beliefs. Rokeach type A beliefs, that are “learned by direct encounter with the object of belief” and “reinforced by unanimous social consensus” (Rokeach, 1968). They are “psychologically incontrovertible” and represent “the innermost core of the belief system.” They represent “basic truths about physical reality, social reality, and the nature of the self” and “they are so much taken for granted that they do not come up as a subject of discussion or controversy.” A good example is: “This is a table.” Rokeach considers the psychoanalytic notions of object constancy, person-constancy, and self-constancy as terms that belong to type A belief (p. 5). They are significant in analytic work only to the extent that if there has been pathology in their formation, they may require analysis but, more frequently than not, they are unobtrusive givens shared by patient and analyst. Even during acute psychotic episodes most people keep these beliefs intact.

Religious beliefs find their specific place in between the socially shared beliefs and the Type B beliefs about oneself. I am talking here about personal religion, in which the most private and primitive
beliefs, as well as more conscious ones, find in the religio offered by parents and society a common ground for acceptance, rejection, or idiosyncratic transformation of religious beliefs. In Rokeach's classification, they belong to type C and D beliefs. In my opinion, their power of conviction does not rest in their truth value. It originates in the affect of previous experiences of satisfaction with others which religious beliefs reawaken as well as in deep emotions of self-recognition elicited by the religious experience. Thus, when I say "I believe God exists," I am not only joining the consensus of a believing community, but I am also feeling that I know that God is present there for me in the manner I experience other presences in my life. Religious faith is not possible without a pre-existing belief in a human person that occurred sometime, somewhere in the psychic life of the believer. Personal religion finds its source of conviction in the type A incontrovertible beliefs found in the believer's history of relational satisfaction of needs.

I hope my reflections stimulate my colleagues to continue the exploration of the significance of conscious and unconscious beliefs and convictions for psychic life.

References


ANNOUNCEMENTS

Graduate Student Research — Division 36 will provide support for graduate student research in the psychology of religion. Amounts of up to $250.00 per award will be granted. Funds may be used for any purpose related to a clearly defined research project, including support for masters theses and doctoral dissertations.

Interested persons should submit three (3) copies of their research proposal. The proposal should be no more than five (5) pages. It should include a clear statement of the research project, the methods to be used, techniques of analysis, and a statement of the contributions of the project to the psychology of religion. Include a brief itemized budget for funds not to exceed $250.00. Proposals may be submitted at any time; however, to be considered for the following academic year, proposals must be submitted by January 15, in which case decisions of the committee will be made by March 1. Submit four copies of the proposal to:

Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Awards Chair
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403-2598

Task Force —
An interdivisional (Div. 36 & 48)
Task Force in "Peace and Spirituality" is being developed. Anyone interested in being involved with the Task Force is invited to contact:

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Book Review


An inspection of the history of American Psychology reveals that persistent and numerous attempts have been made to bring into dialogue the domains of religion and psychology. A literature exists documenting, in Vanda Kemp’s words, “the rich historical tradition of integration” (1996, p. 32). Within this body of scholarship, discussion has included (but is not limited to) applications of psychology as a science to an understanding of religious experience, theoretical works that intersect theology and psychology to provide commentaries on human existence, and pragmatic texts that address psychological conditions drawing upon religious and secular sources. Counseling and Psychotherapy of Religious Clients is best located in the latter category. It may be viewed as part of a developing genre in which structural models of personality development and spiritual/religious development are coupled to suggest a complementary relationship of spiritual life viewed as inevitably linked to and delimited by personality organization. Genia applies this perspective in her analysis of the religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and affiliations of her clients. Her aim seems to be to provide a model for understanding clinical phenomena, through an appreciation of the intertwined trajectory of personality organization and faith development. Further, it is her intent to assist clinicians in formulating clinical interventions that take into account both spirituality and psychology.

The text consists of fourteen chapters, preface, and epilogue in a volume of 129 pages. Central to her discussion are levels of personality organization in which religiosity and spirituality are anchored and from which they appear to be fixed. The structure of her discussion for each developmental stage includes a description of a particular

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DIVISION 36 ELECTION

Biographical Statements

Members of Division 36 will soon be receiving ballots for election of officers. Below are statements from the individuals running for the offices of President, Member-at-Large of the Division Executive Committee, and Secretary.

President

Lee J. Richmond, Ph.D. is a professor at Loyola College in Maryland, where she teaches counseling courses in both the school and pastoral counseling programs. She received her Ph.D. in Human Development from the University of Maryland. Her current research interest combines the fields of spirituality and career development, and she has co-edited a book entitled Connections Between Spirituality and Work in Career Development to be published in August 1997 by Davies Black Publishers. Dr. Richmond is a Past-President of the American Counseling Association, and a Past-President of the National Career Association. She was also chair of the 1996 Convention Program for Division 36, and has served on the Division’s Board. Dr. Richmond is also a consultant and a licensed psychologist in private practice, holding membership in Division 13 and 17, as well as 36.

I have enjoyed membership in Division 36, and have enjoyed serving on its Board as well as its convention program chair. Today, religion, spirituality and culture are important not only to our division, but to the entire profession of psychology. If elected president of Division 36, my goals would include developing a strategic plan which would contain means of reaching out to the entire profession, increasing the membership of our division, and enhancing its programs.

Secretary

Ralph L. Piedmont, Ph.D., in Personality Psychology from Boston University and is currently Assistant Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Loyola College in Maryland and the Director of the Institute for Religious and Psychological Research. Postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute on Aging (1989-1990) Member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, on the editorial boards for the Journal of Counseling and Development as well as Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development. Has published over 30 articles, book chapters, and books. Areas of
professional interest include the five-factor model of personality and its value for identifying and developing new religious-based constructs. I have been a member of Division 36 for two years and am currently on the membership committee.

My experience with religious research has shown me that spiritual and religious variables represent important individual difference constructs that have something important to contribute to our understanding of people and the directions their lives take. Given the real value of these constructs, I would like to see Division 36 take the lead in forging dialogues with the wider APA and other professional groups who share our interests in order to enhance a larger recognition of the scientific and professional value of religious factors.

Anita O. Solomon, Ph.D., ABPP received her Ph.D. in Special Education and Psychology from The American University. She is a fellow of the Maryland Psychological Association and a recipient of the Karl F. Heiser Award awarded by the American Psychological Association for voluntary legislative advocacy. She has held offices of Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President and President of the Association of Practicing Psychologists, her local psychology association and Mobile Medical Care, Inc., a voluntary medical and psychological service to those who do not have medical coverage or who are indigent. She has served on MPA and APP committees of legislation, insurance, hospital privileges, Chair of the Medicare/Medicaid Committee, and was a recipient of the Public Service Awards of the D.C. Psychological Association and the Maryland Psychological Association. She has received grant funding on the subjects of creativity and on developmental disabilities. She holds the Diplomate in Clinical Psychology and she is presently serving a four-year term as a member of the Maryland Board of Examiners in Psychology. She has presented and published papers on creativity, and child custody, the aging and the use of music in group therapies.

My vision for the Division of Psychology of Religion is to broaden the base of membership by emphasizing the association between religiousness, spirituality, and mental health. I believe in furthering the conceptual understanding and assessment of religion and psychology as they interface with the psychosocial issues of other divisions of APA, e.g., the promotion of an improved quality of life for our aging population and the use of music in providing a spiritual and creative atmosphere in group therapies.

Nancy Stiehler Thurston, Psy.D., in Clinical Psychology from Central Michigan University in 1991. Received B.A. in Religion from Hope College in 1979. Licensed Psychologist #PSY 13821 in California from 1994-present. Currently employed as the Assistant Professor of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Graduate School of Psychology since 1996. Prior service to Division 36 includes Hospitality Suite Program Chair in 1991, 1992 and 1997 as well as Executive Committee Member-at-Large in 1995-1996.

As Secretary of Division 36, I would strive to record Executive Committee minutes and manage related record-keeping in an organized and timely fashion. I look forward to this opportunity to be of further service to Division 36, whose mission so closely resembles my own: to promote the growing knowledge base of the interface between religion, spirituality, and psychology. I believe that my educational and employment background equips me well to serve Division 36. My publications include articles in the Journal of Psychology and Theology, the Journal of Psychology and Christianity, and articles in several books in press (all of which address the interface of psychology and religion). My three years of chairing the Hospitality Suite Committee...
The inclusion of case material best serves the purpose of illustration, rather than establishing the veracity of the author’s theory. Her case descriptions range from cursory treatment of clinical material to highly detailed chapter exposition of cases. Her work here demonstrates clinical sensitivity and stands as a resource for understanding the psychotherapeutic process.

This volume shares the intent of other texts to forward the dialogue among religion, spirituality, and professional psychology. It is most successful in depicting one clinician’s unique synthesis of theory originating from two domains. So far as it encourages possibilities for wedding personality theory and faith development to a more comprehensive understanding of the human condition, the book is useful. Should a reader be anticipating a scholarly treatise on integration stressing critical inquiry, the volume will likely disappoint. Its very brevity limits the scope and depth of the analysis. For example, Chapter 3, “Psychological Perspectives on Faith,” presents a discussion of psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, and existential-humani stic approaches to the spiritual dimension in four pages. Although the author provides a number of salient observations, many points or issues are introduced without sufficient elaboration. Taking into account the brevity of this work, Genia succeeds in presenting a text which illustrates the relevance of religious and spiritual issues to psychotherapy and sets the stage for further clinical investigation about the relationship of personality organization to spirituality.

— Edward P. Stoofrenee, Ph.D.

References


Vicky Genia, Psy-D, in Counseling Psychology from the University of Northern Colorado. Licensed Psychologist in the state of Maryland and the District of Columbia. Staff Psychologist at the American Psychological Center for Psychological and Learning Services in Washington, D.C. Author of Counseling and Psychotherapy of Religious Clients: A Developmental Approach (Praeger, 1995) and a number of journal articles. Has developed and continues to refine the Spiritual Experience Index, a measure of spiritual maturity.

I am committed to helping all APA members appreciate the significance of religion in the human life cycle. I would particularly like to encourage more APA student affiliates to become involved with Division 36. Members of Division 36 are in a unique position to serve as mentors and consultants for student affiliates with interests in the psychology of religion.

Crystal Park received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Delaware in 1993 and completed an NIMH Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Health Psychology at the University of California-San Francisco from 1993-1995. She has been an Assistant Professor at Miami University since 1995, where she has an active research program in religion, coping, and health; current studies focus on meaning-making, stress-related growth, and aging. She is also a practicing clinical psychologist with interests in stress-related disorders and issues of religion in psychotherapy. She is Program Chair for Division 36 for the 1997 APA Convention.

The recent proliferation of interest in issues of spirituality and religion from many corners of psychology provides an exceptional opportunity for Division 36 to more widely establish its role as a leader in these issues. While remaining open to innovations and expansions in our field, it is imperative that we continue to promote and encourage authentic scholarship in various areas of the psychology of religion, and to foster sophisticated application of these ideas in areas such as clinical practice and consultation. I would like to help facilitate the shaping of and capitalizing on this opportunity within APA.

Mary E. Reeder, Ph.D. in Experimental and Clinical Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, MA Brown University, RA College of St. Catherine. Professor Emerita and past Chair Psychology Department, Queens College of CUNY. Fellow APA Divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; Member Divisions 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 20, 24, 26, 52; Chair Member HRI, President (1987-1988). Council Representative (1979-1981, 1991-1997), Executive Committee, Elections Committee, Fellows Committee of Division 36. Also active in other divisions. Fellow, New York Academy of Science, member national Board of Directors of Sigma Xi (1972-1975, 1977).

Now that APA as a whole has finally become aware that religion is an important variable in human behavior, Division 36 and its place in psychology have gained increased significance. It is important that we maintain the image of a balanced focus on religion as both a research variable and as a critical dimension in psychological practice. It is also important to try to expand our membership to include more persons outside of Judaeo-Christian orientations.
As many of our members are aware, the organization now comprising Division 36 of APA has gone through a number of metamorphoses in its growth and development. Many know that we were formerly known as PIRI, or Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues. It was as PIRI that we became a Division of APA just 20 years ago. But long before that, we were founded as The American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA).

In today's milieu it is hard to imagine that the atmosphere in 1946 which ultimately led to the forming of the ACPA. Aside from one or two of the major universities, Catholic educational institutions often had very mixed views of psychology as a discipline. And they were not alone. Among Catholics in general there was much suspicion that psychology was antithetical to religion, was “atheistic” in emphasis and a subject of which to be somewhat wary. Many Church leaders shared antipathy toward the discipline. Even among those not sharing such attitudes, the field was often viewed as simply another branch of education and/or philosophy. One must recall that the dominant practitioners of the time were experimentalists who took great pride in differentiating their research and theory from its origins in philosophy departments. Clinical psychologists were few and far between. I can remember that in 1944, when I was preparing to leave for graduate school, one of the professional friends of my family asked, “Why does a nice Catholic girl like you want to go and study rats?”

In consequence, psychology courses in Catholic institutions were often taught by persons drafted either from the philosophy or education departments. Heads of institutions were not likely to finance APA membership for their faculty who belonged to religious orders. Catholic doctoral level psychologists were relatively few in number, especially outside a few major universities.

Thus, during the 1946 APA meeting in Philadelphia, a group of psychologists who were interested in improving this situation, met and discussed the possibility of forming an organization that would face some of these problems. By 1947, an invitation to many “possibly interested” persons resulted in an organizational meeting at Marywood College in Detroit. The 110 persons present voted overwhelmingly to create a formal organization and a committee was set up and charged with producing a draft of a constitution. During the 1948 APA meeting in Boston, a continuing group of potential members met at Boston College. Interestingly, two issues dominated the discussions at this meeting. First was a fear that such an organization might serve to constitute Catholics as a separatist group in the field of psychology, reinforcing an inferior, ghetto-type mentality. The second concerned membership requirements. I can recall a heated debate as to whether or not to make the Bishops “honorary members” and a rather definitive shout from someone behind me saying, “let the Bishops get a PhD first.”

The two problems were more or less resolved by deciding that membership in the American Catholic Psychology Association would require prior membership in APA. This set the tone for a scholarly association. It also had a secondary effect of providing a motivating force for religious superiors to have their psychology faculty belong to APA and to attend its meetings. The scheduling of the meetings of the ACPA to be concomitant with those of APA served to reinforce this factor. In the long run, it also proved to be a potent factor in shaping the development of the psychology departments in the many Catholic colleges around the country.

For twenty years, the ACPA grew, always holding meetings at the same time as APA but at off-site locations. Concomitant with this growth were the annual symposia which were organized by Rev. William Bier and published by Fordham University. The latter were critical in shaping the organization as a truly professional association rather than a mere interest group. However, by 1966, it became clear that one of the primary reasons for founding ACPA had practically disappeared. Most Catholic colleges had recognized psychology as a discipline in its own right and were staffing their departments with properly trained people. Many Catholic psychologists saw no need to join an organization just because it was “Catholic.” Membership began to decline.

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At the same time, it was recognized that there was no psychological organization with a primary focus on issues relating to religion and psychology. Persons of persuasion other than Catholic who were interested in such issues had begun inquiring about possibly joining the ACAJ, despite its name. It became apparent that a change in direction was in order. After much consideration of whether to simply disband, it was decided to change direction. The focus was shifted to interest in religious issues by and among psychologists. Thus the term Catholic was dropped in both the purpose of the organization and its title. ACAJ became PIRI, Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues, in 1970.

Like its predecessor, PIRI continued to hold its meetings in conjunction with APA and tied its membership requirements to APA membership. In this respect, PIRI was already beginning to be qualified for membership as an APA division. And in 1976 this came to pass. Division 36 became a reality. By then the membership was far more diversified. The common denominator had become interest in religious issues.

This interest has subsequently evolved along two directions. Our clinical and counseling focused members have been keenly concerned with religion as an important dimension in the lives of many of their clients or patients. Our research and academically oriented members are more involved with religion as one major critical variable in the study of human behavior. All are focused upon religion as an important psychological variable in need of study by psychologists.

As a result of these and other factors, concern once again began to be raised with respect to the name of the Division PIRI, while descriptive, was not a readily grasped acronym. Over and over, members found themselves explaining, “it’s the psychology of religion.” And so, in 1992, the membership voted to change Division 36 had become “Psychology of Religion.” Members have directed their attention to religion in all of its aspects, whether or not it is formally organized. They represent both Christian and non-Christian religions as well as those individuals who hold no particular personal religious beliefs.

Recently, a woman patient shared an “interesting experience” with me. The minister of her church asked her to give the sermon on Sunday. She showed me the copy of the sermon she delivered. It was her intention to intertwine religion with mental health. The autobiography in her paper represented a remarkable therapy assessment and outcome piece of research. This paper unwittingly coincides with the current drive to encourage therapy assessment and outcome research. The drive for outcome research, of course, is triggered by managed care concerns. However, the woman’s concern represents her desire to define what happened to her in psychotherapy.

The modality for outcome research generally is computer based and is characterized by short-answer selecting statements of attributes of the therapeutic process which then can be statistically evaluated. It sounds good and is in keeping with the current scenario of the managed care world and its attitudes of cost containment goals. Some therapists rationalize the methodology as making the patient feel included in the treatment planning. Furthermore, it provides a window into what is going on in therapy as it fosters normative comparisons to find out what constitutes “progress.”

(Schlosser). What seems to be lacking in this methodology is the “person” who is the patient. The unique individuality of the “person,” the lifestyle that reflects the individuality of the person, and finally the role of biological, psychological, and sociological forces that create the character of the personality that identifies the unique person is magnificently displayed in the methodology employed in the sermon the woman patient delivered. Her paper represents a complex task that cannot be demonstrated by normative comparisons or computer processes that have their roots in integrative operations and spiritual qualities that exist on the so-called “molecular levels” of personality, not the conscious cognitive levels of human experience.
The autobiographical paper that follows this forward reflects the uniqueness of the psychotherapeutic outcome for this person, as well as the uniqueness of individuality portrayed in the partnership between the patient and her therapist. Spirituality is generally given little acceptance or recognition in case evaluations and theoretical expositions by psychotherapists. In the patient's paper, spirituality is linked to religious beliefs as a component of the person's basic lifestyle. It is one way out of many alternatives in which spirituality can be expressed or manifested. It depends on the individuality of the person what other alternative ways spirituality manifests itself in the patient's life experience and lifestyle. Psychotherapy without a connection to the person's spirit loses its human qualities. It becomes a mechanical activity of the anatomical brain. There is no room for compassion, forgiveness, fellowship, or relationship. As the writer in the paper puts it, "You are not a person, just a commodity" subject to sale, entertainment or other usages like rape or an object to be abused.

The outcome of psychotherapy for this writer was not a collection of attributes, but a growth experience. It came from an integrated development of multi processes, both cognitive as well as "molecular," reflecting a different personality with specific properties and characteristics. Another kind of person was and is in the making, in accordance with her inner potentialities and her unique capabilities. Therapy was a growth experience for both the patient and the therapist. The patient became "psychologically well," no longer someone whom others perceive as "mentally ill or disordered," nor someone with a problem attested by symptoms as described in DSM. She has become a rational person who now copes with life stimuli skilfully. She functions differently than she did in the past. She is a satisfied and fulfilled person with a new outlook. She has found peace of mind emotionally, intellectually, psychologically, and sociologically. Living in a totally different kind of way as a result of making long term changes, layer by layer, in her personality without the magic of drugs or ritualistic devices, least of all by "brainwashing" maneuvers. Her language is the language of poetry, symbolic in its meaning. Poetic symbolism describes the intangibles of life, the powers of nature, and the natural forces that fill "commodity oriented" thinking. It is the intangibles that constitute the difference between life and death. Poetically and spiritually, these intangibles are referred to as the "Great Beyond", the unknown, by many respected great writers and thinkers.

The patient-writer in her "new life" creatively elevated herself from the doom of victimization, over-personalization, and irrational intellectualizations; burdens she carried when she entered therapy. By combining the elemental qualities of spirituality and religion with poetic symbolizations, plus the psychological principles of reformation and rehabilitation (change), she achieved an understanding of human relationships in its basic three forms: 1) "me with myself," 2) the person in a dyad, 3) the person with a group. Each form of human relatedness is express and elaborated in terms of self-identity and life experiences.

Self-identity is expanded and extended in each of the interactional relatedness forms. Self-identity consists of two major subunits, a reality self-image and a fantasy self-image. The reality self-image is a complex process that emanates from many sources: the perceptions of the Self, the learned stereotype of the culture, and the demands of social control from cultural value systems. The fantasy self-image is an unconscious complex process that is formed in the early development period of human life. It emanates from the perception of self that are congruent with the negative experiences that tend to traumatize the self.

The maturity, wholesomeness, quality and intactness of the structure of self-identity is associated with and determined by the balance of weight and size between the reality self-image and the fantasy self-components of the structure of self-identity. When the reality self-image outweighs in large proportions the fantasy self-imagery's operations, the reality output and realistic life actions are dominant in the self's talents, intelligence, creativity, and innovative energies. When the opposite is true, the dominance in the self's lifestyle...
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is dysfunctional, aberrant, pathological and destructive.

In the case of the patient writer, maturity in the relationships of the person with herself manifested itself in a self-identity that affirmed her faith in herself and clarified for herself "who she was". In her dyadic relationships, intimacy was manifested not only in the feature of exclusivity but in a quality of respect for the other as well as herself. In the relationship format of the self to the group (i.e., the community), the individual makes a place for herself that corroborates her self-identity and links her rights and oneness as a member of the group as she interacts with the other members of the group without conflict or loss of creativity. That makes her a whole person in the basic life relationships of human beings.

References


(second part continues)

The Three Most Important Relationships in Your Life

by Rachael Amyas (a pseudonym)

We live in a time when "relationships" are discussed on TV talk shows as if they were commodities, and we forget how precious, even sacred, a relationship is, in particular, three of the most important relationships in your life, (i) You with Yourself, (ii) You in a Dyad, such as with a spouse, a parent or a child—one intimate other—and (iii) You in a Community are sacred because they are to some extent reflections of how we "relate" to God.

The Relationship of You with Yourself

The relationship of "Me with Myself" begins with the insight that if I have only one job on this planet, it is to be myself. One of the great saints of the church wrote, "When I find God, then I will find myself. When I find my true self, then I will find God. And the only one who can teach me to find God is God Himself." If this is true, then I might begin my listening to what God is saying in the stories and images of the Bible.

The tenth chapter of John's Gospel (John 10:11-16:22-30) gives us the beautiful picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In this story I hear the Lord saying, "RACHAEL, I LOVE YOU. YOU ARE MY BELOVED. YOU ARE MY WOOLLY LAMB, SOFT AND ADORABLE." In this parable, we, as God's people, are the "Lambs of God" cherished by the One to whom we belong. Why then is it such a struggle? Why is it so hard for me to listen to these words, "RACHAEL, YOU ARE MY BELOVED?" The answer is because I am wrestling with a False Self, a self I concocted, a self God knows nothing about.

The False Self

When I wandered, very broken, into the church about seventeen years ago, I was acting the role of defeat and victimization I had experienced in my early life. One of my earliest childhood memories was...
that my mother was beating me, and I wished I were dead. She'd be sorry then. If I died, that would be my revenge. And so part of me died in my spiteful motive to prove to the world how much my mother damaged me. When I grew too big for physical beating, the abuse became verbal, and the sick relationship between my mother and myself grew into something cruel, a loveless scenario that involved the abuse of alcohol. I had no compassion for my mother, herself a victim of abuse. I had only my own pain that I so carefully shaped into an identity for myself. This false self has a name; her name is "The Wounded Bird."

When I came into the church and began learning about God first, and then the person of Jesus, it was a time of "terrible" facing of truth; my identity came into scrutiny. Who was I? Was I "The Wounded Bird," or was I "Rachel, You are My Beloved" which I was hearing myself called? In the turmoil I began the extremely painful process of shedding the False Self, allowing the True Self to emerge. Gradually, "The Wounded Bird's" voice which had been so soft it was barely audible grew stronger, the rounded shoulders began straightening themselves out, and the head, previously bowed over with hair in the face, was held higher. Little by little. It was a process. There was no magic in this healing. For me it was still a struggle.

The Relationship of You in a Dyad, with an Intimate Other

When it comes to the relationship of you with an intimate other, the first question has to be, "Who is relating to that intimate other?" (in my case, Mother): is it "The Wounded Bird" or is it "Rachel, You are My Beloved?" This question is important because if I am acting out the False Self, it will profoundly affect the dynamics of the relationship. In psychotherapy I have learned to recognize the voice, mannerisms, and thought processes that accompany each of these conflicting identities.

Story About Dynamics

I have a story about myself to illustrate the principle of what I mean by the "dynamics" of a relationship. I was born in Boston Brahminland and when I was around eleven years old, I moved with my parents and my brothers to the West Indies. There I attended school taught by Belgian missionary nuns where I was the only white child in my class. My parents ordered food by the case from S.S. Pierce in Boston, white asparagus tips and so forth. Meanwhile my younger brother and I ate beans and rice, fish and daubed with our classmates in the school lunchroom.

At fourteen I was sent away to a girl's boarding school in the northeastern United States. I remember attending a dance with the nearby Groton School, dancing with Teddy Roosevelt, the fourth — "TR 4" we called him. Anyway, I was dancing and this calypso number came on. Without even thinking about it. I began dancing in the West Indian style, the meringue, a perfectly normal thing to do in the islands. My classmate, Bitty, a true Yankee Puritan, leaned over and said in a loud voice, "That's disgusting." I remember feeling angry and hurt and confused. It was the beginning of my awareness that I was living with a foot in each of two worlds, and I had better keep them straight because to one culture the other looked "disgusting." Somehow I knew that it wasn't that I had to be "different" in one culture than I was in the other, only that I had to be sensitive to where the people in that culture were "at."

I began to see that I could apply this understanding to the dynamics of my relationship with my mother. Perhaps, I realized, I had been "dancing the meringue" to her. For example, I knew she was, in her lack of having any real self, very jealous of me, and there were things I could do to heighten the jealousy. I began to realize I could take responsibility for my part in "a bad dynamic." I couldn't change her, but I could change my behavior around her; namely, I could stop being "The Wounded Bird." Also, maybe I didn't need to "dance the meringue."

Forgiveness

Another principle in relationships is the one God tells us about so often in the scriptures, both Old Testament and New—the principle of forgiveness. There is a wonderful scene in the Book of Acts...
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(Acts 13:15, 16:26–39) where the apostle Paul, himself a Jew, has just volunteered to speak to the congregation assembled in the synagogue, which we are told includes Gentiles as well as Jews. You can see the audience, probably a cynical bunch. Paul is enthusiastically telling them about the person of Jesus, trying to show them how Jesus' life might make a difference in their lives. The picture I see in my mind is of Jesus holding a huge umbrella. Jesus, who was crucified on the cross, who has forgiven those who crucified him, who has taken on the sin of all mankind and offered forgiveness, now beckons me to stand under this umbrella of forgiveness where I am forgiven, where I am "The Beloved." From this safe place I can dare to reach out in love.

I realized I could hold onto this picture of myself under the great umbrella held by the Lord Jesus, allowing myself to be loved and forgiven. I could love and forgive with a power I didn't have on my own, if I dared. I began to understand as I moved away from "The Wounded Bird" and into "Rachel, You Are My Beloved" that I could respond differently to my mother.

Story About Forgiveness

We have lived in our house for twenty-three years. For many years my parents used to drive by on I-95 through my town on their way to New Hampshire to visit my grandmother there. For many years my parents would never stop in to say hello, or even telephone. I would find out about their trip afterwards, and it used to hurt me tremendously. I would think, "What kind of daughter must I be if my mother won't even visit me? I must be an awful daughter."

Last fall in September my parents flew to Boston to see my brother and his children. They rented a car and drove to Maine to visit friends, then drove to the Cape to visit my uncle and his family. Never so much as a phone call to my nearby state, I found out about their trip later, as I always do. But this time something had shifted in me. I began to see that this behavior was a rejection on "her" rather than on the daughter I was. I began to believe my new identity, "Rachel, You are My Beloved." I was not the daughter my mother said I was, nor was I "The Wounded Bird." I began to realize that although my mother could not show me love in the way I wanted her to, she did love me. It was only that she was imprisoned in her own False Self and in her own pain.

In October, after their September trip to Boston, I flew by myself to visit my parents. The following morning I was up early walking through the house looking at all the photographs of everybody in the family, my brothers and my nieces and nephews, even my two sons, and I noticed that there was not one single picture of me there. In the past, this sort of think had been devastating to me. "The Wounded Bird" was always so quick to personalize hurt, like a giant magnet for hurtful experiences. But this time the shift in me to "Rachel, You Are My Beloved" allowed me to see that "she" was so imprisoned in her False Self, she was unable to cherish even a photograph of her own daughter. This time I felt compassion instead of hurt.

The day wore on, and we passed a very pleasant time together. In the evening when my mother went into the kitchen to prepare dinner, I followed her. "I know now what Dad wants for Christmas," I said to her, "but I don't know what you want." My mother was silent for a time. Then she said, "I would like a photograph of you." I began to see that since I had shifted, the dynamic was shifting. I was no longer responding to stimuli that previously had sent "The Wounded Bird" into orbit. Somehow now I was standing under that umbrella and I was "Rachel, You Are My Beloved." Instead of being a "reactor" now I was an "actor."

The Relationship of You in Community

In the scriptures we learn that God values the good of the community far ahead of any one person, because in the long run what is good for the whole will be good for each individual who is part of the whole. If I can understand this important spiritual principle, it will help me find myself in community.
Story about Fellowship

When I first came into a group of women who meet weekly to share our lives and to pray together, it was often an uncomfortable experience, largely because I was so uncomfortable with myself. I was not aware that I was projecting my own bad feelings about myself “out there” onto the others. Gradually as I was beginning to forgive my mother, I began to like myself better. We can’t like ourselves as long as we hold onto resentments. “What kind of daughter hates her mother?” I didn’t realize it, but this question was always lurking in my unconscious. Also, in this group I was faced with another dilemma. My gifts and talents had always made me feel so “other.” I somehow felt I didn’t “belong.” Then, as I began expressing my True Self in the group using my gifts, which were well received, I began to “belong” to myself, and so to these women. Now I liked myself, and so I liked “them.”

Conclusion

When I am my True Self, I become authentic both in the dyad and in community, just as in my True Self I am authentic in relation to God and so to myself.

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Paloutzian’s second edition of his psychology of religion text is much the same as the first. It is “an invitation to the psychology of religion, not an encyclopedia of it” (first edition preface) with the undergraduate “student and teacher in mind” (second edition preface). It is empirical in orientation, although not narrowly so.

It is a relatively brief paperback volume (as was the first), but it has been significantly revised and expanded. He begins with a three chapter discussion of conceptual alternatives in religion, a brief history of the psychology of religion, and the contributions of alternative research methods. He then looks specifically at religious development across the lifespan, the internal experiential and external behavioral aspects of religion, and the relations between religion and health. The last chapter is an evaluation and summary of the field.

The book succeeds well in its intent. It does present the somewhat gelatinous general topic clearly and does so in a way that should read well with undergraduate students. The two chapters on religious experience and religious behavior are not as clearly separate conceptually as one might expect from the titles material on intrinsic and extrinsic orientations is presented in the chapters on religious behavior. This may well be an unavoidable problem.

It is likely that others might have included or excluded some specific topics differently from Paloutzian. I personally would have added a brief paragraph or two on Boisen’s early thinking on the relation between schizophrenia and religion to his section of “Religious Material in Psychic Disturbances.” I also would have paid more attention to the contributions of transpersonal psychology to the psychology of religion. These, however, are more matters of personal taste than substantive error.

The book is well done and nicely fits a particular need in the area.

—John R. Tisdale

Book Review
Considerations of Maritain's Three Degrees of Abstraction as a Solution to Boundary and Philosophical Problems Within the Psychology of Religion: A Brief Summary

James M. Stedman, Ph.D.

At the 1990 APA convention David Wulff, author of the definitive text, "Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary" (1977), presented a provocative paper entitled, "Psychology of Religion: The Challenges of a Field in Crisis" (1990). After reviewing the impressive achievements of the 150 years of psychology's consideration of religion, Wulff then identified several sources of crisis. Specifically, he cited four areas of concern: 1) conflict between empirically oriented and the subjectively oriented "depth camps," who commonly view each other's work with a mixture of bewilderment and disdain; 2) a tendency for the pre-existing religious biases of researchers and theorists to "shape the direction and outcome of their work;" 3) a tendency for the psychology of religion to exceed its boundaries and "undermine theological or religious apologetics;" and finally 4) the existence within the field of "unspoken and usually unexamined presuppositions - philosophical, religious, and psychological - that undergird yet limit our work."

The article summarized here attempted to apply the philosophical schema of Jacques Maritain to the first, third, and fourth of Wulff's concerns.

In his philosophy of nature (1951), Maritain, building on the thought of Aristotle, Thomas, and the scholastic tradition, demonstrated how the conception of the three degrees of abstraction applies to reality as considered by science and philosophy. Though this form of ontological and epistemic realism evokes sneers from many quarters today, still one must acknowledge that the vast majority of psychologists continue to operate from a realist position and recently Greenwood (1992) has offered an analysis from the realist viewpoint which is relatively compatible with Maritain.

Maritain asserted that the real is ascertained by three degrees of abstraction. The first degree of abstraction considers reality as known by the senses; the second degree of abstraction considers the real as quantitative and mathematical; and the third degree of abstraction considers being as being, as independent of any particular existent being. For Maritain, all of science, with the exception of the physico-mathematized sciences (primarily physics) which builds its models from mathematical abstractions, operates within the first degree of abstraction. Science at the first degree of abstraction involves what Maritain refers to as an empirical analysis which resolves the sensible object into observable and measurable elements. Science moves from the observable to the observable, seeking lawful relationships between these observables.

Social science, including all of psychology, operates within the first degree of abstraction according to Maritain.

Maritain would manage Wulff's boundary problems in the psychology of religion by reference to the level of abstraction particular to the social sciences. Specifically, he would place the social sciences in the category of the empirico-schematic types dealing with mobile, sensible being within the first degree of abstraction.

Hence, the limits of what constitutes the psychology of religion can be discerned by determining whether or not a particular assertion, set of ideas, set of constructs, or scientific activities falls within the first degree of abstraction.

Maritain would deal with Wulff's fourth problem, that of the unspoken philosophical assumptions regarding man's nature, in a similar manner. That is, he would examine a particular psychologist's assertion about the psychology of religion to determine whether the statement falls within the empirico-schematic first degree category or outside of that category. If the assertion were found to be outside the empirico-schematic category, that finding would signal the need to search for underlying assumptions about reality clarifying for further philosophical analysis.

The application of Maritain's principles are crystal clear when applied to empirical studies of religious phenomena. For example, Bergen's (1991) finding about relationships between religious belief and mental and physical well-being. However, these principles also clarify "boundary crossing" issues, for example, Freud's (1961) assertion that the entire reality of the human concept of God is the projected infantile wish for a benevolent, omniscient, competent father. In asserting this, Freud goes beyond the empirico-schematic level of the first degree of abstraction. In fact, he is expounding
an ontological position, no doubt that of materialism. Freud should have gone on to declare something like this, "My metaphysical position is that the real consists of material being! Hence, since according to my views, no transcendent being is possible, I have explained the phenomenon of God according to my theories of the mind."

This paper concludes that Maritain's views regarding scientific analysis at the first degree of abstraction provides a conceptualization for establishing proper boundary lines for the psychology of religion. It should also be noted that this conceptualization solves Wulff's first problem, that of boundary conflict between the empirically oriented and subjectively oriented "depth camps." There is no conflict since both operate at the empirio-schematic level and are efforts to link phenomena that have at least some relationship to the sensible, observable world. We also conclude that Maritain's analysis points the way toward making one's ontological beliefs more explicit. Making one's ontology explicit appears to be essential for guiding one's theoretical speculation and for intellectual honesty.

Needless to say, this brief summary omits much detail regarding Maritain's conceptions and their application to the philosophy of religion. We invite the interested reader to pursue the full article (Stedman, Cannell, & Hancock, 1995) or to write the first author (James M. Stedman, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, 7703 Floyd Curl Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78224-7792) for a copy of the article.

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A Response to Mother Teresa's Concern for the Children of the World

Rev. Dr. Steven E. Handwerker

Mother Teresa is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and is the founder of the Missionaries of Charity who now have missions all over the world. On February 3, 1994, Mother Teresa gave an address to the National Prayer Association. This is an excerpt from that address:

We must bring the child back to the center of our care and concern. This is the only way that our world can survive because our children are the only hope for the future. As older people are called to god, only their children can take their place.

When we look deeply into the spirit, we see in the eyes of all our children the true heart of the world. In their hands is the future of what we value most. Therefore, is it not logical and reasonable to question what or who shall we protect? What is our most valuable resource? And by what means shall we teach the world to help themselves? Only values that transcend apparent differences of viewpoint, perception or belief can lead the way to see both the spirit, and into the eyes of our children.

When we consider the significance of our own well-being, when we consider the significance of our fundamental resources, both material and nonmaterial, we must consider a dimension that encompasses a deep respect and love for the children of the world.

I think this is a wonderful way to apply what Frank Farley addressed in his presidential speech: "... My dream is of a psychology of meaning in the broadest sense, uplifting, ennobling, placing the mystery of life in a context and most importantly showing the road to generosity and love. We should accept no less. We'll get there with your help." I believe it is in the spirit of this and Mother Teresa's concern that psychology can take a dimensional step forward.

There is a proposed working group in spirituality and peace which is presently reaching out to members of Divisions 36 and 48 for interested participants. For further information, please contact Steve Handwerker at 561-447-0709, or by e-mail: peacewk@laker.net, or you can write to 7300 W. Camino Real, Suite 229, Boca Raton, FL 33433.

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