



Lecture 1 Conceptualising Religion and Culture

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Learning Objectives – Lecture 1

By the end of the lesson the learner should be able to:

- define the two constructs of the title of this course – with their nuances: religion/spirituality and culture;
- discuss cursorily the relationship between religion and psychology.

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Religion & Spirituality

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Definitions of Religion

- “The essence of religion consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence. Religion is the consciousness that the whole of our spontaneous activity comes from a source outside of us” (F. Schleiermacher 1768-1834).
- “[T]he feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (William James).

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Five dimensions of Religion


- (1) *ritual* activities (including, but not only, "church" attendance);
- (2) *ideology* or adherence to the principal beliefs of the religion;
- (3) *experience* or the "feeling" aspect of religion;
- (4) the *intellectual* side of religion, which involved religious "knowledge" and was frequently measured by such activities as reading religious publications (including, but not only, sacred texts);
- (5) the *consequential* dimension, which attempted to measure the "effect" of an individual's religion in its other dimensions upon his or her "life."

C. Y. Glock and R. Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965)

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Religion versus spirituality

- **Religion:** Creed, Code, Cult, Community
- **Spirituality:** “a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, and for the highest of human potential” (Emmons, 1999/2003, p. 5).



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Spiritual-but-not-religious

- 40% of American respondents and 20% of German respondents identify themselves this way (Csorf, Hood, & Keller, 2009).

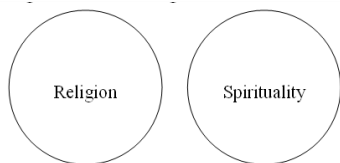


Figure 1: Either/Or model

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7

Both/And Model



Figure 2: Both/and model 1.

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Figure 3: Both/and model 2.

8

Interactive Model

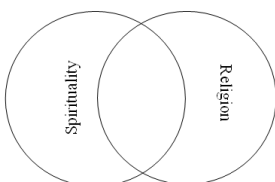


Figure 4: Interactive Model

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9

Religiosity & Spirituality

High Spirituality	1 Spiritual-but-not-religious <i>Quest</i> Sacred or Secular Search for significance	2 Religious Spirituality <i>Intrinsic Religion</i> Sacred & Secular Search for significance
	3 Neither religious nor spiritual Secular Searching OR no search for significance	4 'Empty' Religion <i>Extrinsic Religion</i> Sacred No search for significance
Low Spirituality	Low Religiosity	High Religiosity

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Religious Spirituality as Intrinsic Religion

- Differentiation:** The individual expresses an internal order of religious sentiments which are maintained in a multiplicity.
- Dynamism:** The mature religious sentiment exhibits a willingness to break out of the comfort zone of magical thinking and self-justification.
- Consistent morality:** Intense religious sentiment is able to transform character.
- Comprehensive:** Since mature faith just knows 'God is' but does not narrowly insist 'God is precisely this', it is tolerant and inclusive.
- Integral:** Mature religious sentiment expresses harmony that brings about freedom.
- Fundamentally heuristic:** "A heuristic belief is one that is held tentatively until it can be confirmed or until it helps us discover a more valid belief."

Allport, *The individual and his religion.*

Religious Spirituality as Mature Faith (Fowler)

James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

Mature faith could emerge in the last two stages of development as Conjunctive Faith and Universalising Faith:

- Conjunctive Faith = recognition of the paradoxes of one's faith going beyond reason; although one may not uncritically accept contradictions, "God" is seen to include mystery and paradox; an attempt to integrate religious symbols and the truths that the symbols signify.
- Universalizing Faith = that seeks inclusiveness while still maintaining firm and clear commitments to values of universal justice and love. They are able to live their lives to the full in the service of others.

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12



Taylor's definition of culture (1871)

“That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society.”

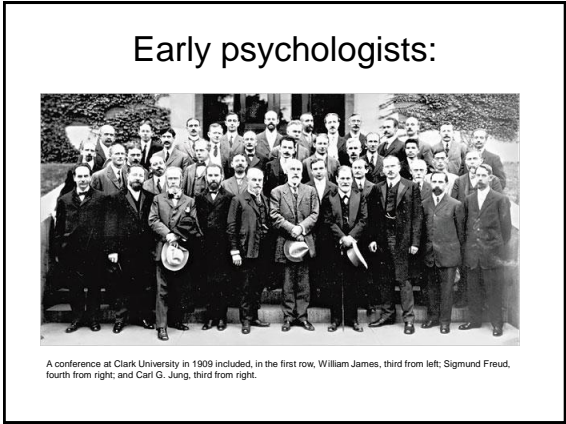
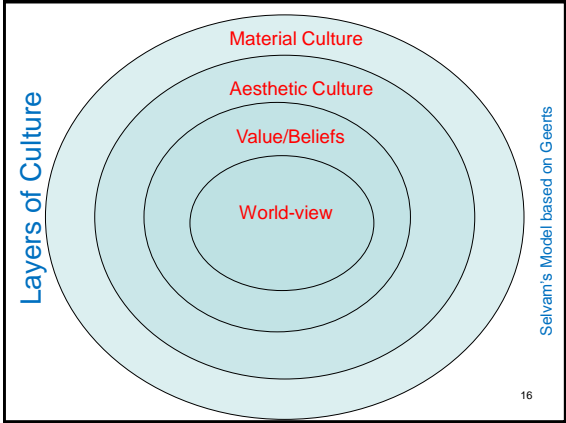
14

Paul Geertz' definition of Culture

"a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books, p. 89

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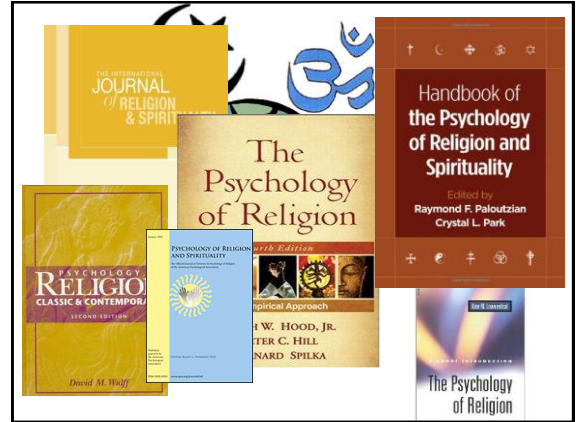
Yet, religion was not mentioned in later psychology text books ..

WHY this dormancy (particularly between the World Wars)?

- Freud's negative remarks about religion..
- Rise of Behaviourism: religion cannot be measured...; cannot be studied scientifically!
- Increasing separation of the sacred from the secular – religion & society;
- The cautionary reaction against parapsychology: psychic... etc.

Revival of the formal study of Psychology of Religion

- Allport: *The individual and his religion* (1950);
- Contributions from humanistic psychologists;
- Psychology of Religion as Division 36 in APA since 1976. (This had its origins in 1946 with the founding of the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA)).
- Increase in Academic courses; journals; textbooks.



Some Important Academic Journals in the field...

1. Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
2. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
3. The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion
4. Archive for the Psychology of Religion
5. Pastoral Psychology
6. Psychology and Theology
7. Psychology and Christianity
8. Religion, Culture and Mental Health