C

Cailleach

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Mythological Background

This mythic old woman appears under various names, most derived from Cailleach (Carlene, Cally, Cally Berry, Gy-Carling), a word generally translated as "hag" but which can also be rendered as the more contemporary "crone." She is also known by personal names that refer to geographical regions (Garravogue, Echthge, Duineach, Corca Dhuibhne, Bronach, Nicnevin, Boí). Among many Irish geographical sites named for the Cailleach is the Ceann na Cailleach ("Head of the Cailleach"), also known as the Cliffs of Moher. Local legend holds that Cailleach was pursuing a young man with sexual intent, when her speed carried her over the edge of the cliffs and into the sea. Supposedly, her face can be seen on the most southerly of the cliffs. The deadly cliffs suggest something about the psychology of Cailleach's ancient goddess legends here, paradoxically combining erotic excitement with end-of-life anguish. Many ancient goddesses included life and death in their scope (Fig. 1).

The Cailleach probably descends from a pre-Celtic divinity; she is not found among the continental Celts, but her lore is widespread in place names and legends in Ireland and Scotland. Her antiquity is suggested by the names born by the largest mountains in those lands (Slieve na Cailleach, Knockycallanan) and by legends that she created the landscape by dropping rocks from her apron or throwing them angrily at an enemy. Creation legends often are attached to the oldest divinities of a land, and settlement in Ireland preceded the Celts by some 4000 years. The Cailleach was said to have formed the islands off the southwest coast by towing land around with a straw rope; it broke and left the islands of Scariff and Deenish behind. Another tale tells how she struck an escaping bull with a rod as it swam away from her, turning it into an island of rock. The Cailleach was especially associated with high mountains, which often bear her name, most significantly the site of the important megalithic sanctuary, Slieve na Cailleach.

Although descriptions emphasize her age and ugliness (blue face, red teeth, and matted hair), the Cailleach was also renowned for her vigor and sexuality. In Ireland, she owned a farm and hired workers with the stipulation that none would be paid who could not outwork her. Many died of overwork trying to keep the pace she set. She appears in an important Irish myth in which Niall of the Nine Hostages boldly kissed a loathsome hag, at which she transformed herself into a beautiful young woman who controlled the land's

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Cailleach, Fig. 1 Ceann na Cailleach ("Head of the Cailleach"), also known as the Cliffs of Moher (Public Domain. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lightmatter_cliffs_of_moher_in_County_Clare_Ireland.jpg)

sovereignty – a motif that has been interpreted as a poetic image of the land blossoming under the rule of a just king. A similar figure, the Loathly Lady, appears in Arthurian legend.

The Cailleach is associated with harvest rituals, her name given to the last sheaf cut, which was dressed in women's clothing and kept as a charm for prosperity. The hag was also said to appear as a hare or other small creature; a shout went up from the harvesters as they approached the end of a field to "drive the Cailleach" into the next field. Such legends connect the Cailleach with agriculture, but some traditions suggest an earlier origin. In Scotland, a giant Cailleach lived on the milk of a deer. She guarded the wilderness and its animal life, punishing hunters who killed pregnant animals by choking them with their own hair. This figure, who resembles Greek Artemis, may derive from a separate aged goddess conflated to the Cailleach. This figure, called the Hag of the Hair or the Hag of the Long Teeth, was often accompanied by monstrous cats. In a story told in Scotland, the Cailleach befriended a hunter, permitting him to see which deer she struck in her herd, thus marking it as prey.

Psychology

Jungian theory describes "the feminine" and "the masculine," arguably essentialist visions of primal forces within both men and women that are reflected in world mythology and in art. Articulation of "the feminine" relies primarily on the work of Toni Wolff, Jung's student and lover whose work was unfortunately subsumed under his name after her early death (Wolff 1956). In the United States, Anne Ulanov has been the primary popularizer of Wolff's theory that there are four aspects to "the feminine," which she describes as Mother, Amazon, Hetaira (courtesan), and Medial Woman (medium) (Ulanov 1971). In Wolff's schema, the Mother and Amazon occupy opposite poles, while the Hetaira opposes the Medial Woman. Within this framework, the powerful sensuality of the Cailleach has no place, a lack that tends to be reflected in contemporary Jungian writers like Helen Luke; Jean Shinola Bolen is an exception to this trend (Bolen 2002).

Jung and Wolff based their work on available narratives and images from world mythology, which in fact does not offer many images of vital, creative, and sexual aging. The reason for such lack is unclear, as there is ample sociological and anthropological evidence that such women have existed throughout history and culture. If our gods reflect our lives, there should be many more enticing and creative crone goddesses. Selective recording of myths may have resulted in Cailleach-like divinities being excluded from the record or goddesses being interpreted

according to limited or negative stereotypes of women's aging.

Typically, kindly "crone" goddesses are described as sexless, even beyond gender; thus we find Hestia, ageless Roman goddess of community life, and Hebrew Sophia, similarly beyond age and gender but embodying wisdom. Many other aged goddesses are frightening, such as the Russian cannibal Baba Yaga and the child-stealing Bella Coola (Native Canadian) goddess Snēnē'ik; it is possible that the original figures were more complex and that this limited vision represents later more patriarchal cultural values. A few figures offer more complex iconography or mythology, such as Hindu Kali who, despite wearing a necklace of severed heads, is honored as the consort of the creator god Shiva. The Cailleach offers a similarly multivalent image of the aging woman: undeniably aged, she remains physically strong, with huge appetites for sex and food, and bursting with creative power.

The American women's spirituality movement has developed a ceremony honoring the postmenopausal period of a woman's life. Called a "croning," the event typically celebrates the promise of a woman's aging years as full of passion and power. Although such ceremonies are frequently tied to the cessation of menses at menopause, many women wait until retirement or completion of family duties to decide that they will accept the term "crone." The ceremonies are individually created, with no specific template other than the needs of the woman in question. Commonly, an altar is erected, often decorated with photographs of inspiring aged women; the event itself can include meditation, drumming or other music, and a symbolic passing over by the new crone from one state of being to the next. The Cailleach is an increasingly popular image invoked at croning events.

See Also

- ▶ Celtic Religions
- ▶ Creation
- ▶ Female God Images
- ▶ Goddess Spirituality
- ▶ Sacred Mountains
- ▶ Sexuality and Wicca

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Cain and Abel

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Cain, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, is the first human being born on the earth, the first child of Adam and Eve who were created out of the dust of the earth by God. Qur'an tells a similar, although not identical, story of Cain and Abel. The name Cain in Hebrew means "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Cain was a tiller of the land

as was his father, Adam, following Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In the course of time, a younger brother, Abel, was born. The once only child now became an oldest child. Unlike his father and his older brother, Abel became a shepherd of sheep.

The day comes when Cain and Abel each bring offerings to God. God finds Abel's offering acceptable, but God finds Cain's gift unacceptable. Many have speculated as to why one offering was acceptable and the other not. Perhaps this reflects a culture that valued pasturing animals over that of land-based farming. Perhaps it is because Abel brings the first of his animals while it is not specified if Cain's offering was the first fruits. Maybe it shows God valuing younger, less powerful people at the expense of the older or more influential. This theme is not uncommon in Hebrew scripture. Jacob is the younger of two sons but becomes the inheritor of their father's estate as well as the father of Israel. Likewise, King David was chosen to be king of Israel over and against his older brothers.

The fact is that we cannot know for certain the reason for the rejection of Cain's offering. But, from my point of view, the more interesting question is how Cain reacted to this rejection.

One can glimpse the family system approach of Bowen in Cain's reaction. Reminiscent of his father, Cain seeks to externalize his difficulties. Adam, when confronted by God for his eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, seeks to blame Eve and, by extension, God himself for his failing. Likewise Cain sees the fault in Abel and somehow seems to believe that the death of his brother will make his offering acceptable. Instead, he gains further isolation, and his brother's blood even poisons the earth. True to Bowen, the toxins of a sick family trickle down and contaminate the family in subsequent generations as well as affect the superfamily system.

One may also gain a foreshadowing of Alfred Adler's examination of birth order in this story. In Adlerian thought, the oldest child is an achiever who considers subsequent children as a threat to his place in the world. In this particular account, the older brother is indeed supplanted in worth by the little brother. This ancient story is a tale of sibling rivalry within the context of a fallen family contaminated by parental sins. Cain is ultimately trying unsuccessfully to please a creator father while staving off the rivalry of a brother and suffering from the contamination of his human father.

Cain's reaction to this rejection is murder and the subsequent estrangement from the only community that he loved. Here we see a personality disorder as described by Rotter. Had Cain developed a mature personality with a strong internal control mechanism, he might have avoided becoming a murderer.

Cain, with a stronger personality, with the strength to reject his family pattern might have received the answer that we find unanswerable, "God what can I do to make my sacrifice acceptable?" He might have altered his history and not become the world's first murderer.

See Also

- ▶ Adler, Alfred
- ▶ Creation
- ▶ Genesis

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Call, The

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The call to adventure is the first stage in the monomyth, when the hero is summoned to undertake a quest. The monomyth is a pattern of hero quest narrative developed by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* from a host of fairy tales, myths, and other sacred tales that span millennia and cultures. Campbell points out that not all hero quest narratives contain all the features of the monomyth, but the call to adventure is omnipresent in these narratives. Sometimes the hero only recognizes the summons in hindsight, and if the tale has a trickster element, it may be well hidden. A helpful and wise guide sometimes explains the call to the prospective quester, but it may also appear, as in some Biblical examples, to be an incomprehensible demand outraging common sense. The call may summon the hero towards a specific task, such as killing a dragon; it may take the form of an epiphany, profoundly transforming the individual's perceptions and understanding of self and the world; some calls to adventure are aversive, when the hero's dissatisfaction with the status quo propels him or her into a quest for change. The call always announces the prospect of change, whether for a kingdom or an individual soul.

The monomyth hero quest can also be understood as guidelines for the psychological hero quest that, in Jungian thinking, every psyche should undertake. The call for adventure would then be a summons alerting the psyche to unconscious contents that are ready for the work of integration that Jung terms individuation. In this sense, the call to adventure may come in such forms as a generalized dissatisfaction with ordinary everyday life or disturbing dreams, an illness, or retrenchment from a job. Jung's *Red Book* begins with his personal account of one such hero quest, beginning with a call to adventure in the form of a recurrent, disturbing waking dream or vision. While the mythic monomyth very often involves a youthful hero, the Jungian hero quest can be undertaken at any age. The hero in the mythic monomyth is an extraordinary individual, but for Jung, the hero quest is a path available for all human beings, since all have a shadow in need of integration. As Campbell's pattern shows, while individual hero quest stories may deal with only one quest and have a "happy ever after" ending, the hero quest as a pattern should be regarded as cyclic. When one quest is ended, the next call to adventure may well occur. For the individual psyche, the call to adventure, to recognize and integrate shadow contents, is not a call to achieve complete integration then and there; for Jung, there is always more shadow to emerge and be integrated.

See Also

- ▶ Campbell, Joseph
- ▶ Hero
- ▶ Monomyth
- ▶ Myth

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Calvinism

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Calvinism refers to a particular understanding of the Christian faith and an approach to the Christian life first articulated by the French Protestant

theologian, John Calvin (1509–1564). Subsequently, it has been upheld in Protestant Christianity's reformed tradition by persons such as John Knox (Scotland), John Bunyan (Britain), and Jonathan Edwards (America) (McGrath 2007).

Calvinism has five basic beliefs: (1) Humanity is totally deprived due to original sin, (2) God unconditionally elected those who will be saved to receive eternal life, (3) Jesus Christ has died for those who were elected by God, (4) the Holy Spirit pours irresistible grace over those saved, and (5) believers will persevere and are eternally saved in Jesus Christ. For Calvinists, the sovereignty of God reigns over all aspects of a person's life: personal, spiritual, intellectual, political, and economical. Education informed by Calvinist dogma is important as is distinguishing the sacred from the secular (Spencer 2002).

Calvin believed that knowledge of self – realizing one's depravity and need for salvation – and knowledge of God lead to wisdom (McMinn and Campbell 2007). Following their founder, Calvinists generally judge psychologies harshly in light of God's sovereignty and humanity's deprivation. They often question the philosophical foundations and models of personhood, health, and abnormality of most psychologies (Browning and Loder 1987).

See Also

- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Evangelical
- ▶ Fundamentalism
- ▶ God
- ▶ Holy Grail
- ▶ Jesus
- ▶ Protestantism

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Camino de Santiago

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The Camino de Santiago (*The Way of Saint James*) is a 1,000 km route used by pilgrims for over 1,100 years to reach the Christian holy site of Santiago de Compostela. One of three major Christian pilgrimage routes popular in medieval times, the Camino leads from the Pyrenees on the border of France and Spain through northern Spain to the legendary site of the remains of Saint James, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, beneath the altar of the Cathedral of Santiago. A 100 km portion of the Camino extends west from Santiago de Compostela to Finisterre on the Galician coast of western Spain. Finisterre was known to the Romans as "Finis Terrae" for it was the end of the known world in their time.

Santiago de Compostela was founded in the ninth century as a sacred site associated with the Apostle James. A shower of falling stars had led a hermit to a buried marble tomb containing bones identified by a local bishop as the remains of St. James, seizing upon the discovery as an opportunity to increase the devotion of local peasants. Alfonso II, king of the region of Asturia, made pilgrimage to the site and in 814 CE built a small wooden chapel as a resting place for the relics.

At first, the chapel at Santiago de Compostela was only a place of local pilgrimage for those within less than a day's travel. Increased attention to Compostela came as a result of a victory over Muslim invaders in 844 CE. Christian troops had called on St. James for aid in battle and

subsequently routed the invaders. St. James was given credit for the victory, became known as "The Moorslayer", and was celebrated as a heroic protector and patron saint of Spain. Loyal Spaniards now had motivation to travel great distances on pilgrimage to honor St. James at Compostela. Soon, the small wooden chapel was enlarged to become a Basilica and the center of a new Archbishopric.

From its founding in the tenth century through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Camino pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela grew in popularity along with other pilgrimage routes. From the first days after Jesus Christ's death, travel to Jerusalem and to sites connected with his life and death was undertaken as a way of paying homage and seeking spiritual renewal. After Constantine's fourth-century edict making Christianity a state religion, pilgrimages to Rome and other sites were considered equally as efficacious as those to Jerusalem. When travel to Jerusalem became more complicated with the rise of Islam and eventually the Crusades, pilgrimages continued to increase, but the focus shifted to less dangerous sites. By the twelfth century, the number of pilgrims on the Camino rivaled those who traveled to Rome or Jerusalem.

Pilgrimage on the Camino was not an easy journey. Through its early history, the Camino was rural, lacked roads or amenities, and involved a journey of a year or more. In the ninth and tenth centuries, pilgrims risked death at the hands of robber bands, could be attacked by Muslim Moors who had conquered southern and central Spain, often contracted and died from plague and other infectious diseases, and perished from exposure and starvation. Pilgrims set out on such journeys with priestly blessings and tears from their loved ones who were quite convinced that they might never meet again.

So why risk so much to journey to a burial site? Then as now, pilgrimages to sacred sites were a part of the practice of one's spirituality: a means of personal and spiritual transformation, a ritual of penance, a rite of passage, and a way to demonstrate one's religious devotion. The Roman Church encouraged pilgrimage as an obligation of the faithful to journey to a designated sacred site at least once in one's lifetime. Pilgrimage was also a way for the Church to benefit financially through the purchase of pilgrim indulgences that would forgive a specific sin or that gave lifetime forgiveness for pilgrimages made during Holy Years when a saint's day fell on a Sunday.

Pilgrimages, with all their risks and dangers, could give a sense of the lessening of one's burden of guilt and an opportunity for a new start to pilgrims, especially poor peasants, whose lives offered little hope of redemption and ease. In an era without any idea of the therapeutic value of confession, penance, or making amends, pilgrimage allowed for a lessening of the sense of isolation that a burden of guilt creates. Pilgrimage offered a first taste of freedom for many on the Way. Stepping outside their local environs for the first time, pilgrims walked beside persons from a variety of locales, differing social strata, strange languages, and foreign cultures (Stopford 1994). On the Camino, as on any pilgrimage trek, social hierarchies were sacrificed to the greater need to help and be helped on the path. Because a pilgrimage required months on the road and was accomplished under great hardship and uncertainty, it nurtured an experience of community and equality of station that was a foreign concept to everyday medieval life.

Pilgrimage on the Camino also brought physical and social transformation along the path and when pilgrims returned home. The Camino de Santiago had originally followed ancient Roman roads, but as the tenth century passed into the eleventh century, the old path became crowded with pilgrims making their way to honor St. James. Recognizing that the needs of such large numbers of pilgrims was overwhelming the farmers and villagers who lived along the largely unpopulated rural path, the Church (with the aid of some secular rulers) began to establish religious houses along the way that could house and feed pilgrims. Medieval hospitals (which served a function like today's hostels) likewise offered food and shelter. Monastic orders, secular rulers, and ordinary townspeople collaborated in building bridges and creating passable roads. To provide security from thieves and criminals, medieval orders of knights arose (Stopford 1994).

Numbers of pilgrims on the Camino peaked in the twelfth century, and by the time of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, pilgrimages had fallen out of favor. Serious blows were dealt to the practice of granting indulgences for completed pilgrimages by reformers including Martin Luther. Political instability and an aborted attack in 1589 by Sir Francis Drake on the Galician capital La Coruña, just 40 miles north of Compostela, also caused the numbers of pilgrims to slow to a trickle. News of the attack so panicked the Dean of the Cathedral of Santiago that he hid the relics of St. James so invaders would not find them. Unfortunately, when the danger was over, no one else could find the remains. The reason for making a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela had disappeared, and the Camino itself was soon reclaimed by farm fields and the towns and villages to which it had given birth.

When the bones of St. James were rediscovered 1879 during repairs to the Cathedral, pilgrimage was no longer a spiritual priority. A reawakening of interest in the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage did not come until the mid-twentieth century in part a response to publication of a three-volume history of the Camino (de Parga et al. 1948). Still, only a trickle of pilgrims walked the Camino until the Holy Year 1965. In that year, *Friends of Estella/ Amigos de Estella* was formed by scholars interested in historical research and reclaiming the Camino for travel by contemporary pilgrims. The Camino, which had been inhospitable to modern pilgrims, was opened up to pilgrimage again as the Amigos and a Galician priest, D. Elias, published the first contemporary guidebooks and maps, began to mark the Way with yellow arrows, and persuaded towns and monasteries along the way that preserving ancient structures, setting aside the path, and providing hospitality to pilgrims would be to their economic advantage. In 1993, the Camino de Santiago was recognized as a World Heritage Site. By 2010, a Holy Compostelan year when the July 25 Saint's day occurred on Sunday, over 250 million pilgrims walked the Way.

Why is the Camino experiencing such a crush of pilgrims in an era when established religion is decreasing in attendance and practice? The increase may reflect a deep spiritual hunger in a world where materialistic ambitions no longer satisfy spiritual longings. Pilgrimage offers a spiritual and psychological experience of transformation that is available to any person willing to set out on the journey. As one steps outside of familiar surroundings and the demands of work and relationships, a time of self-reflection and listening for inner truth sets in. The pilgrimage path becomes a form of walking meditation, allowing one to experience the present moment and to be aware of the numinous quality of existence.

Similar to labyrinth, walking the Camino offers metaphorical insights into one's life journey. Whether one sets out to experience the solitude of the trail, seeks healing of soul or body, longs for forgiveness, looks for spiritual or emotional renewal, pursues an experience of the Holy, or hopes to experience a sacred site, the Camino offers life lessons on the pilgrimage.

One learns, first, that the path changes from moment to moment: uphill, downhill, smooth, rocky, uneven, noisy beside trafficked roads and in the middle of town, and still in a green forest. One cannot know what the path will be in an hour, a day, or a week – as in our lives what is present will not last – and sometimes that is a good thing.

On the Camino, as in life, it is good to speak an encouraging word to others – and to hear it in return. *Buen camino* meaning "good pilgrimage" is the common greeting and is understood by all regardless of native language.

One soon learns to carry only necessities – water, a little food, sun protection, and a sweater – and be willing to give up anything if it becomes too heavy in one's backpack. What is truly essential is easier to learn on pilgrimage than in daily life.

Yellow markers or arrows or scallop shells point the Way on the Camino, but as in life one needs to be alert for them so they are not missed. Pilgrims too engaged in internal or external conversation who do not attend to the present moment often end up on the wrong road and spend precious time trying to find the Way.

Other pilgrims are never strangers and are often walking companions. If solitude is needed, walk alone. If companionship is needed, walk with others. As in life, ask for what you need.

Pilgrims do not get to choose daily traveling companions. Whoever is walking the path that day is one's companion for the day. As in life,

there is always something to learn from a companion if one has ears to hear.

Whether it is octopus (the local delicacy), Galician goat cheese pizza, or a breakfast of hardboiled egg and hard rolls, food on the Camino is always adequate, sometimes amazing, and often not what one expects. As in life, try it all, or you will miss something delectable.

On the Camino, as in life, what one needs often appears when you think you cannot go any further – like the coffee shop with a bathroom that appears on the path at just the right time.

To walk the Camino, one needs only a sturdy pair of broken-in hiking boots, a walking stick, water, and a pilgrim passport. For Americans, the pilgrim passport (*credential*) can be obtained through American Pilgrims on the Camino http://www.americanpilgrims.com/camino/credential_req.html. Citizens of other countries can obtain the credential through Confraternities of St. James in their own country. Pilgrim passports enable pilgrims to stay at low-cost shelters or *alburgues* (hostels) along the Camino. Each town and alburgue along the Camino has a unique stamp to add to the passport. In Santiago de Compostela, the Pilgrims Office issues a *Compostela* to each pilgrim who has walked at least 100 km and has a valid stamped credential. The Compostela attests to completion of the Camino pilgrimage and to this day is an official indulgence for those who have walked the Camino for religious reasons.

See Also

- ▶ Communitas
- ▶ Confession
- ▶ Labyrinth
- ▶ Pilgrimage

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Campbell, Joseph

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Joseph Campbell (1904–1987) is one of the most widely recognized scholars of mythology. The public television series *The Power of Myth* (1985–1986), consisting of interviews with Bill Moyers, propelled him into the public spotlight. A follow-up book, published posthumously, (Campbell 1988) increased his popularity and catapulted his earlier work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), onto the *New York Times* best-seller list in 1988. George Lucas' public acknowledgment of Campbell's work as inspiration for the *Star Wars Trilogy* cemented Campbell's place in the popular canon. Although many of Campbell's ideas have been embraced by the public at large and his importance has been recognized beyond the walls of academia, Campbell is no less a scholar. That he spent most of his life as a teacher and academic, along with the rigor of his work and its subsequent use among scholars, affirms the pertinence of his ideas to the study of myth within the academy.

Life and Scholarship

The oldest of three children, Campbell was born in New York City in 1904 to Irish Catholic parents. In 1910 Campbell's father brought him to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, igniting a lifelong interest in Native America religions. He quickly exhausted the share of children's books on the subject and by age 11 was already reading Bureau of American Ethnology reports.

Early on, Campbell was an avid reader, excellent student, and gifted athlete. In 1921, he enrolled in Dartmouth College to study biology and mathematics, but, after discovering the humanities, he transferred to Columbia University as an English major in 1922, earning a Bachelor of Arts in 1925. A member of the Columbia track team, he set the school's half-mile record.

In the summer of 1924, while en route to Europe, Campbell met Jiddu Krishnamurti (with whom he sustained a lifelong friendship) who introduced him to Buddhism and Hinduism. This early encounter with Eastern religions had a lasting impact on Campbell's life and scholarship.

In 1926, Campbell returned to Columbia University to pursue a Master of Arts in Medieval Literature. His thesis, "A Study of the Dolorous Stroke," was supervised by the Arthurian scholar Roger Loomis. Hungry to continue his studies but already aware that his interests crossed disciplinary boundaries and were incompatible with the specialization a Ph.D. would require, he traveled on a Proudfit Fellowship to the University of Paris to study Romance philology and later to Munich where he learned Sanskrit. Campbell became enthralled with the European intellectual milieu that led him to the works of James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Leo Frobenius, Sigmund Freud, and C. G. Jung. All of these figures would later come to influence his theory of mythology and his writing and teaching.

Campbell began his teaching career at Sarah Lawrence College in 1934, beginning his career-long acclaim as an exceptionally skilled and popular teacher. His first major publication was *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944), coauthored with Henry Morton Robinson. Another highly influential figure in Campbell's life was the German Indologist, Heinrich Zimmer, whom Campbell met in 1941. A speaker (along with a plethora of other famous intellectuals from across the globe) at the prestigious Ascona, Switzerland-based Eranos Conferences, Zimmer introduced Campbell to Paul and Mary Mellon, founders of the Bollingen Foundation, which later published many of Campbell's works. The Mellons solicited Campbell to write the commentary to the first book of the Bollingen series, *Where the Two Came to Their Father: A Navaho War Ceremonial* (1943). After Zimmer's unexpected death in 1943, Campbell was put in charge of editing Zimmer's posthumous writings, a project that took 12 years and yielded four volumes. During this time, Campbell presented two important papers of his own at Eranos: *The Symbol Without Meaning* (1958) and *The Renewal Myths and Rites of the Primitive Hunters and Planters* (1960). He also edited a series of volumes consisting of papers presented at the Eranos conferences. In the summer of 1953, while in Switzerland, he met Jung for the first time.

Campbell retired from Sarah Lawrence in 1972 and moved to Honolulu where he continued his research and writing. A few of his works from this period include *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion* (1986) and *The Mythic Image* (1974). During this time he also completed *The Power of Myth* interviews. He died of cancer in 1987.

Notable Works

Campbell's studies in literature, the psychology of Freud and Jung, anthropology and Eastern religion informed his famous study of hero myths, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which employed Joyce's idea of the monomyth in its examination of hero myths across the globe.

One of Campbell's most significant works of comparative mythology is the four-volume *The Masks of God* (1959–1968), a study of "primitive," "oriental," "occidental," and modern literary, "creative" mythology. On the one hand, the volumes set out to "view the cultural history of mankind [sic] as a unit" and to "compose into a single picture the new perspectives that have been opened in the fields of comparative symbolism, religion, mythology, and philosophy" (1959, p. 3, 4) by tracing worldwide reoccurring mythological themes. On the other hand, the volumes carefully assert that "the myths of differing civilizations have sensibly varied throughout the centuries" (1959, p. 18) in such a way that the virtue of one culture's mythology is the vice of another, and one's heaven, another's hell. In other words, Campbell warns in his prologue, "mythology is no toy for children.... there is a real danger, therefore, in ... joining the world in a single community, while leaving the anthropological and psychological discoveries from which a commensurable moral system might have been developed in the learned publications where they first appeared" (1959, p. 12), making note of the fact

that his comparative study was cognizant of the importance of historical differentiation and the dangers of morphological parallelism and historical diffusion.

At the end of his life, Campbell undertook another comparative study, producing the richly illustrated two-volume *Atlas of World Mythology* (1983–1989), which further extended his studies of the historical origin and diffusion of myths.

Theory of Myth

For Campbell, myth functions symbolically, as "energy-releasing, life-motivating and – directing agents" (1959, p. 4; 1969, p. 178). Mythology reveals a psychological truth that shows itself in stories and images. Underlying the historical and cultural particularities of mythology is also the potentiality for shared meaning across time and culture that exists because of the psychological and metaphysical underpinnings at work in the stories and alive in the human spirit. Campbell believed that myths are of nature – that is, they are part of the very structure of human biology and the psyche – and although they manifest within and are influenced by culture, they are not exclusively of culture (as Claude Lévi-Strauss proposed). For Campbell, the gap between nature and culture is bridged by myth. Nature is not only out there in the world beyond the human, but it is also within. Myth unites the inner world with the outer. Toward the end of his life, Campbell summed up myth as the "experience of life" (1988, p. 5). This later statement echoes Campbell's insistence that the interpretation of mythology is anything but systematic. In fact, in *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he uses the shape-shifting god Proteus as a metaphor of mythology in order to suggest that mythology is psychological, historical, anthropological, and metaphysical and cannot be reduced to a single function.

Myths – including mythic discourse and thinking – can function in one of two ways: as a symbol "functioning for engagement" or as a symbol "functioning for disengagement, transport, and metamorphosis" (Campbell 1969, p. 169). Campbell carefully elaborates these two functions in his 1957 Eranos lecture "The Symbol Without Meaning" by drawing on the metaphor of a bow that serves either to engage or disengage meaning. When the symbol is given a meaning, "either corporeal or spiritual, it serves for the engagement of the energy itself" (Campbell 1969, p. 178). As an agent of engagement, myth works to confer meaning. In this way, it can be read as a "literature of the spirit" that provides one with "clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life" (Campbell 1988, p. 3, 5) that aligns the individual with society (in particular, the collective unit of family, religion, tribe, state, and nation) and the cosmos. Myth unites the inner with the outer and shows how each is mirrored in the other.

However, when the symbol functions to disengage, myth does not provide any assurance of meaning. When "all meaning is withdrawn, the symbol serves for disengagement, and the energy is dismissed – to its own end" (Campbell 1969, p. 178). Rather, myth evokes an experience of existence instead of positing a specific meaning that always runs the risk of being taken dogmatically. In fact, Campbell frequently warns against interpreting the symbolic literally and even argues that such literalizing is absurd (and potentially even dangerous) in a "de-mythologized" world (1969, pp. 124–126). Inasmuch as myth can reveal the previously unknown, making it known and bringing it to consciousness, it can also point to the unknown as unknowable.

Criticism

The bulk of negative criticism of Campbell's work comes from academics in the fields of religion and folklore and stems from one basic complaint about his hermeneutic of comparativism. Many detractors have simplistically likened him to Mircea Eliade and Jung on the issue of archetypes and universals, equating the psychological with the universal and ahistorical in order to argue that Campbell's comparativism is unscholarly (dismissed by Wendy Doniger as "Muzak mythology" (Doniger 1992, p. 78)) since it overlooks historical and cultural particulars in favor of generalizations.

In his 2004 Presidential Plenary Address to the American Folklore Society, Alan Dundes takes aim at Campbell's "universalizing," arguing that some mythological motifs do not exist in all cultures. To support his assertion, Dundes cites the lack of a deluge myth in sub-Saharan Africa as one example. Earlier in his speech, however, Dundes does emphasize the point that interpretation "would not have been possible without recourse to grand theory" (2005, p. 4), of which "universalizing" is a key part. In the same speech, Dundes also credits Campbell "for getting people interested in our discipline" (2005, p. 10).

David L. Miller forcefully argues that these claims against Campbell do not bear closer analysis because Campbell was neither a Jungian nor unaware of the importance of historical differentiation. Invoking Plotinus' *Enneads*, Miller avers that Campbell's method is that of comparing the likeness of unlike things (i.e., of finding similarity within inherent difference), as opposed to the likeness of like things (1995, pp. 168–177). Miller points out several pivotal and often neglected parts of Campbell's scholarship that affirm this, adding that Campbell's choice of language in the titles of his books (a 1000 faces as opposed to one face, masks of God) subtly points to the complexity of Campbell's approach.

Robert Segal has also made the case that Campbell is not a Jungian and that, in fact, his theory of myth differs significantly from Jung's (1990, pp. ix–xi; 1987, pp. 244–262; 1999, pp. 463–465). Furthermore, Segal calls into question the flippant dismissal of comparativism, asserting that "any theorist – of myth, religion, or anything else – is a universalist" in some way (1999, p. 463) and lists James Frazer, Northrop Frye, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Claude Lévi-Strauss as some offenders who are not always subjected to the same scrutiny as Campbell.

See Also

- ▶ Hero
- ▶ Monomyth
- ▶ Myth

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Capps, Donald

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Biographical Information

(1939–) Formerly William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Psychology at Princeton Theological Seminary, Donald E. Capps is a prolific American (USA) psychologist of religion and pastoral psychologist. Capps, raised largely in Oregon and Nebraska, received his secondary education at Lewis & Clark College (B.A., 1960), Yale Divinity School (B.D., 1963; S.T.M. 1965), and the University of Chicago (Ph.D., 1970). Capps' Ph.D. dissertation was a psychological biography of John Henry Newman, focusing on Newman's adolescence and his vocational struggles that culminated in his conversion to Roman Catholicism. In spite of Capps' prolific writing and publishing tendencies, this dissertation was never published, though Capps has authored numerous articles on Newman, some of which were built off of his dissertation research.

Capps' academic career started as Instructor at the Department of Religious Studies at Oregon State University during the summer of 1969. He then became Instructor and Assistant Professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago between 1969 and 1974. Later, he was appointed Associate Professor at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, where he lectured between 1974 and 1976. Between 1976 and 1981 he was Associate Professor and then Professor at the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University.

An ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America since 1972, Capps joined the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1981, where he was appointed the William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Psychology. In May 2009 he retired with the status of Professor Emeritus but remains at Princeton Theological Seminary lecturing as adjunct. Capps has a long list of honors and awards he has accumulated over the course of his career. In 1989 Uppsala University in Sweden awarded him a degree of Doctor honoris causa in Theology for his contributions to the field of Psychology of Religion. Other honors include the William F. Bier Award for contribution to Psychology of Religion, granted in 1995 by the Division 36 of the American Psychological Association; the Helen Flanders Dunbar Centennial Award, granted in 2002 by the Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital in New York; and the Joseph A. Sittler Award for Theological Leadership, granted in 2003 by Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

Capps has also done a considerable amount of work for various academic professional associations over the course of his career. Capps was the book review editor for the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion between 1980 and 1983 and editor for the same journal between 1983 and 1988. Additionally, between 1990 and 1992 he was the President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Capps' Thought: Four Salient Trends

First Trend: Erikson's Influence and Psychohistorical Method

Capps' most clear and obvious theoretical influence in his early years of writing is Erik H. Erikson. Erikson's psychohistorical method provided the methodological basis for Capps' Ph.D. dissertation, and Erikson's life cycle theory was directly relevant to Capps' own intellectual and professional development, where he vacillated in his graduate study between the professional commitments of becoming a minister or pursuing further study for the teaching profession. While he would later become both an ordained minister and a professor, this questioning of professional fit at that time in his life made Erikson a theorist of great interest to Capps. Prior to returning to Yale for the STM, Capps spent 1 year in Berkeley, CA, at the UC Berkeley Ph. D. program in philosophy before deciding that he wanted to return to Yale for further study with James Dittes. The year with Dittes studying

Erikson and developmental psychology proved extremely influential, as Capps then accelerated through the doctoral program at University of Chicago, graduating and defending his dissertation within the psychology and religion concentration in 4 years. In Capps' own experience of vocational confusion, Erikson's writings on vocational and identity confusion came to be of critical importance.

Capps' interests in Erikson's psychohistorical method, life cycle theory, and religious studies, as well as pastoral theology, led to his penning of several foundational texts in the field of pastoral psychology, among them *Pastoral Care: A Thematic Approach* (Capps 1979) and *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care* (Capps 1983). Texts such as these begin to appropriate Erikson's work on religion, history, biography, and the life cycle for the theological community. Capps has never ceased to be influenced by and reflect on Erikson, particularly Erikson's life cycle theory as well as his psychohistorical methodology. This is clear from some of his major later career publications such as *Jesus: A Psychological Biography* (Capps 2000) and *The Decades of Life: A Guide to Human Development* (Capps 2008). Both of these texts rely considerably on either Erikson's thought or his methodology.

Second Trend: A Desire for Personally Meaningful and Relevant Study

Close readers of Capps' work develop not only a sense for his scholarly approach but also for how the answers Capps arrives at are forged through a process of critical self-reflection that he openly shares with his readership. This is one of the central, unique ways in which Capps manages to convince readership of his arguments and their significance. Two examples will suffice. In Capps' (2000) work, he dedicates the book to himself – or, rather, the boy within himself:

> My favorite Bible verse in boyhood was John 14:6. … In the course of writing this book, I was mindful of the desire to keep faith with this boy and have done so, I believe, by striving to write a study of Jesus that was not afraid to ask questions in search of a more reliable truth. This book is dedicated to him (Capps 2000, p. xiii).

Throughout the course of this text, we learn of Capps' developing understanding of Jesus from child to adulthood and how this, in conjunction with historical analysis, informs Capps' verbal portrait of Jesus. A second example comes from Capps' (1995) *The Child's Song: The Religious Abuse of Children*. In this (1995) passage, Capps writes of his desire to be another man's son and how he realized that this desire was the dawning of his own religious consciousness:

> I also found myself reliving the blame I had placed on my mother for her role in activating this desire to be another man's son, as she frequently belittled her husband in the presence of her children. … Yet I believe this desire in me to be another man's son was the beginning of my own religious consciousness (Capps 1995, p. 113).

As with the example from Capps' *Jesus*, readers not only are engaged in critical study of the subjects Capps undertakes but are also accompanying Capps himself in his own process of critical self-reflection on the experiences of his life.

Third Trend: Melancholia and Humor

Capps authored a number of works reflecting and building upon Freud's 1917 essay, *Mourning and* Melancholia (Freud 2001). Capps argues that melancholia is primarily a condition experienced by men, as they are forced to separate from their mothers. While he does not discount the experience of melancholia among women, he argues that the etiology of the condition is different and the focus of his studies is on men's experience of melancholia. Capps begins to build upon Freud's 1917 essay by arguing that religion serves as compensation for the emotional loss of mother in early childhood. As the loss of mother is reexperienced over the course of the man's lifetime in the experiences of trauma such as loss of spouse, loss of occupation, or separation from family of origin at the time of marriage, religion becomes the compensatory mechanism to manage these experiences where melancholic self-revilement becomes most intense. For Capps, all these traumatic experiences mentioned are grounded in the original experience of separation from mother, ensuing melancholia. The critical

question for Capps, then, is what form this religion, a compensatory mechanism, takes. He argues that, in general, it will take one of three forms (honor, hope, or humor) though one individual could practice one or more of these forms at different points in their lifetime. For Capps, the religion of humor is ultimately the only religious type able to successfully manage the self-revilement that accompanies melancholia.

With the experience of melancholia comes the threat of self-loss. Capps began to recognize this in the late 1980s when he began to write on the issue of narcissism and Heinz Kohut's self-psychology. Capps' (1992) work, *The Depleted Self: Sin in a Narcissistic Age*, applies Kohut's work on narcissism to the understanding of sin in the Christian churches. This book was given brief screen time in the popular American movie *Seven* (1995) with Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt as they chase down a serial killer obsessed with the seven deadly sins. This example from popular culture suffices to show the enduring admiration for Capps' work, both inside and outside the academy. Capps' interest in narcissism, religion, and culture would lead to a number of important publications that return to the questions surrounding religious leadership and the method of psychohistory that Capps had begun examining in graduate school. In the last decade, Capps has also continued to build on his writings on religion and humor. Capps' interests in humor have extended beyond its ability to manage the melancholia experience but also to help one reason with greater skill, to relieve somatic pain, and to experience overall well-being.

Fourth Trend: Mental Illness and Creativity

Capps' interests in religious leadership naturally lends itself to an interest in mental illness because psychohistorical methodology is focused on examining the psychological struggles of religious and cultural leaders as they fashion new social roles and participate in social reform. Capps (2000) makes this connection between social reform and mental illness explicit in his work, showing how fantasies of power such as symbolic religious constructions can be used to propel social reform movements, as in the days of Jesus. Fantasies of power – which do not reflect accurate assessments of one's self identity or abilities – are also used by mentally ill individuals to separate themselves from painful social situations and the construction of a social identity, examined astutely by Capps (2010) in his *Understanding Psychosis*. Capps' interests in mental illness and religion, thus, reveal the ubiquity of mental illness in culture, if only varying in degree. This point is perhaps most clearly shown in Capps' (2010) work where he compares his own mental processes to that of an individual suffering from a mental illness (Capps 2010, p. 26) in order to show how common and normal the experience of mental illness is. Capps' purpose is not to conflate religious practice with mental illness, so as to disparage religious practitioners, but rather he makes this comparison to show how dignified and normal it is to have a bout with mental illness or delusion.

Capps' collected writings on mental illness and religion provide insights into the mystery of mental illness for individuals, how individuals and social groups can manage mental illness, as well as the psychosocial consequences of mental illness on social and cultural populations. Capps' interests in mental illness lastly can be tied to his interest in poetry and the creative arts, as these are commonly identity-producing activities that engage the individual's religious sensibilities and vulnerably expose the details of their struggle. Capps' work on individuals and their lives rests itself upon a claim that individuals are perhaps better known through their personal writings and works of art, rather than in their lifetimes by their peers. In other words, Capps suggests that because of the unearthing of personal journals, we may come to know the dead better than we ever knew them as living beings. Capps shows that this is because individuals are far more revealing of themselves in their private journals and their public works than they might ever find comfortable with even the most intimate persons in their lives. As such, Capps' work may be collectively characterized by his interests in the secrets people tell but rarely expect to be heard. Given the merits his work has earned, he could aptly be described as a good listener and an astute observer.

See Also

- ▶ Kohut, Heinz
- ▶ Melancholia

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Caribbean Religions

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Introduction

The Caribbean region consists of those coastal areas of Central, North, and South America that border on the Caribbean Sea, along with all of the islands between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The area is culturally rich because of the combination of indigenous peoples, European colonialists, African Slaves, Hindi indentured servants, and other immigrants who have found their way over the years. The region consists of people speaking Spanish, English, French, Dutch, and a variety of Creoles. Because of this diversity, the Caribbean also has a great deal of religious diversity. Often this diversity has created hybrids of European and African faiths, such as Voudon and Santeria, as well as new religions, such as Rastafarianism. This article examines the dynamic history behind religion in the Caribbean and its legacy in the present day, the psychological functions of religion in this particular context, and the role of altered states of consciousness in some new Caribbean religions.

Native Caribbean Religions

The indigenous peoples of the Caribbean region were the Taino (sometimes referred to as Arawak), who occupied the islands of the Greater Antilles, and the Caribs, who occupied the Lesser Antilles. The Tainos were horticulturalists who were animistic, infusing nature with spirits (called *zemi*) that were spiritual beings often represented in objects that were carried around (fetishes). Taino shamans (called *bohito*) practiced healing and retribution against enemies. They also tapped into impersonal forces in the universe, animatism (*mana*), and they engaged in a number of religious rituals. The Carib, who moved into the Caribbean after the Taino, were also animistic and were often their adversaries (Bisnauth 1996).

Much of what we know about the religion of these early inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, we have extrapolated from studying similar groups in South America who survived the initial encounter with Christopher Columbus and the Europeans who followed him and from archeological studies. Although some Tainos survived the European arrivals, that was mostly in the northern islands, such as Puerto Rico. Those who inhabited the Bahamas (the Lucayans) were totally vanquished within a decade after the encounter.

After the arrival of the Spanish, many of the Caribbean natives were converted to Christianity. However, due to disease, enslavement, and murder, many of the indigenous peoples died and their religions along with them.

European Religions in the Caribbean

Catholicism was first brought to the Caribbean by the Spanish. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Franciscans (1502) and Dominicans (1510) had set up monasteries and were converting the Indian peoples to Christianity (Bisnauth, p. 15). Spain extended its religious dominance of the Caribbean by Papal consent.

Other Europeans brought their religions and their political disputes to the Caribbean with them. The Portuguese (Catholicism), the French (Huguenots, who were Calvinists, and Catholicism), the English (Anglican Church and Presbyterianism), and the Netherlands (Dutch Reform Church) were all contenders for the establishment of their Catholic and Protestant religions in the Caribbean. Judaism came to the Caribbean in the sixteenth century with Jewish immigrants from Spain and Portugal to where they, in turn, had come from North Africa. Many ended up in the Portuguese colony of Brazil, while many of the Sephardim who sought exile in the Netherlands, ended up in Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, such as Curacao, St. Croix, St. Kitts, Jamaica, and other colonies (Hylton, p. 223, 226).

For many of the Europeans, religion became an excuse to exploit native Taino and Carib labor, to expropriate lands, and to exterminate any opposition. Columbus, for example, was responsible for the depopulation of those islands that were not valuable to him, for example, the Bahamas, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao (Hylton, p. 18), exporting their populations to Hispaniola, although many died of disease and outright murder. In fact, so abusive were the Spanish religious leaders to the natives that Bartolome de Las Casas, while working successfully to abolish the enslavement of native peoples, recommended the enslavement of Africans.

Religion often serves a number of psychological functions, but in the face of radical change, such as that native Caribbean and later African populations underwent, religion imparts coherence to disrupted life patterns, provides a sense of community, and serves as a refuge from the pain and suffering brought about by the invasion and usurpations that occurred.

Slavery, Religion, Hybridity, and Altered States of Consciousness in the Caribbean

With the massive importation of slaves from the continent of Africa, came the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of their African cultures. It was Bartolome de Las Casas who recommended in 1517 the importation of African slaves. The African slave trade had begun with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century and was quickly extended to the New World colonies by Europeans. Although religion was often used to justify slavery, the Europeans often ignored and denigrated the existing religious beliefs of the Africans they took to the New World. Inevitably, the religions imposed on the Africans melded with their own religions, resulting in syncretic religions, also referred to as creole or hybrid religions.

According to Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, "These creolized religious systems, developed in secrecy, were frequently outlawed by the colonizers because they posed a challenge to official Christian practices and were believed to be associated with magic and sorcery. They nonetheless allowed the most oppressed sectors of colonial Caribbean societies to manifest their spirituality, express cultural and political practices suppressed by colonial force, and protect the health of the community" (p. 3).

Two key examples are the rise of Haitian Vodou and Cuban Santeria.

Haitian Vodou

Haiti, the French colony of Saint Domingue on the island of Hispaniola, thrived as a sugar colony. It was also known for the high death rate of its slaves. A new slave had a life expectancy of about 7 years (Fick 1990). While Haitian slaves were imported from a variety of places and had Catholicism forced upon them, they managed to retain their own culture and religious beliefs, adapting

them to the new environment and creating the religion of Vodou (also known as Vodun and Voodoo). Meaning "spirit" or "sacred energy" (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 102), the new religion reflected the practices of the Dahomey and the Yoruba, as well as other African groups. This religion played an important part in creating a psychological cohesiveness among the disparate groups of African slaves.

Under the leadership of houngans, or Voudon priests, the religion became a rallying point that would eventually create the psychological foundations of the Haitian revolution. Vodou provided a refuge from the harsh treatment experienced on sugar plantations. After the revolution, Vodou would find its strength in the small villages made up of extended families, which also created great variation in practices of Vodou across Haiti after the revolution (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 103). Although Vodou did incorporate some aspects of Catholic practices due to the baptisms mandated before the revolution (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 104), it is clearly distinct from Catholicism in its structure and origins and in its array of loas, who are sometimes represented in the garb of Catholic saints.

Vodou is also distinct in the practice of spirit possession, an altered state of consciousness that constitutes a key part of religious ritual. But it also serves to allow its practitioners to assume different roles in order to achieve goals. "If we interpret the spirit identity as an alternate set of roles for the person, under appropriate ritual conditions, it is clear that such a set of roles makes it possible for the individual to modify the situation in which he or she must live, to introduce changes in the social framework of his own life," notes psychological anthropologist Erika Bourguignon (1973, p. 30). From a psychological perspective, then, religion helps to create ritually sanctioned conditions for change, thus binding the individual to the group.

The Catholic Church left Haiti in 1805 but returned in 1860. Throughout Haitian history, Vodou and its practitioners were subject to intermittent persecutions, including the imprisoned or killed and their places of worship destroyed (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 105). Today, both religions are practiced in Haiti, which was made possible by the recognition of freedom of religion in Haiti's 1987 Constitution (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 105).

Cuban Santeria

According to Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, the rise of Santeria in Cuba can be accounted for by the predominance of Africans from the Yoruba peoples of southwest Nigeria. The practice of the prescribed religion was also undermined by the lax attitudes of both priests and slave owners themselves. The Catholic churches themselves served as a foundation for the growth of hybridity among African slaves, who often gathered under its auspices with members with similar backgrounds. The very systems created by the state to control slaves became the source of syncretism.

"The cabildos were the site where Africans and their descendants transformed the institutional structures available to them to support their own African cultural and religious practices; they borrowed from Catholic discourse and reinterpreted it in terms of African religions under the guise of an alternative form of folk Catholicism" (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 29). Thus, Santeria (also known as Regla de Ocha) was born. *Santeros*, or followers of Santeria "venerate the Yoruba deities called *orishas* or santos, syncretized with Catholic saints" (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 30). "Slaves worshiped Ogun, the protector of blacksmiths in Africa, as a deity of war; Chango, the warrior orisha, became identified with exacting justice. In like fashion others would reflect qualities of self-identity and legitimacy valued by people living in oppression. . .for almost nearly every orisha there is a correlating Catholic saint based on associations made by slaves between the mythology of the orishas and attributes or qualities identified with Catholic saints, particularly as perceived in the iconographic representation of the latter in the statues. . ." (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, p. 34). Like Vodun, Santeria is

characterized by spirit possession. Its rituals also involve the sacrifice of animals often for purposes of divination.

The religions of Vodun and Santeria, with their roots in the African religious practices of the Yoruba and Dahomey, came into being to provide continuity between the traditional spiritual practices that were part of African culture and the new environments with the imposed Christianity of states and slave owners. But this hybridity was more than simple accommodation; it offered psychological relief from the oppression of slavery and later from the often repressive conditions of life in both Haiti and Cuba.

Rastafarianism

Rastafarianism was a new religion founded in Jamaica in the 1930s. The religion recognizes Emperor Hailie Selassie (originally known as Ras Tafari) as the messiah and Africa as the source of future hope and prosperity, while in turn rejecting the modernization going on in Jamaica and the disruption of the lives of the poor peasants (Chevannes 1994). In many ways, developing its own symbols in dreadlocks, the ritual use of ganja, and the return to an agricultural way of life in the community of Pinnacle, Rastafarianism was the product of a revitalization movement that arose in response to the changes wrought by the worldwide Great Depression, the extreme poverty of the peasants, and the loss of their way of life through industrialization (Lewis 1993).

The roots of Rastafarianism can ultimately be found in the maroon and revivalist traditions of Jamaica (Chevannes 1994). Although Leonard Howell is generally considered the first Rasta (Lee 2003), others contributing to the development of Rastafarianism were Joseph Hibbert, Archibald Dunkley, and Robert Hinds. Following the destruction of the community of Pinnacle, founded by Howell, the movement returned to Kingston, eventually achieving worldwide recognition. Its symbols – beards, dreadlocks, and the ritual use of ganja – signified their status of outcasts (Chevannes 1994). Rastafarianism provided a means of escaping the oppressive conditions of peasant life, as did the ritual use of ganja to shift the consciousness of its practitioners.

Spirit possession has been recognized as a form of dissociation that is taught and consciously induced in order to achieve spiritual goals that also provide temporary psychic escape from the conditions of life. Altered states of consciousness often serve to provide a broader view of existence and even hope. Henney reported "temporary periods of dissociation" in which members of a fundamentalist Protestant church, the Shakers of St. Vincent, take "spiritual journeys." She reports: "Shakerism has demonstrated its strength by its remarkable persistence throughout years of opposition and hostility – a strength that seems to stem, at least partially, from the refuge it offers its adherents from the reality of, and psychical injury from, socioeconomic deprivation" (p. 219).

With decolonization of the Caribbean came the liberalization of religion. Although many of the customary religions remained in place, the rise of new religions and their eventual routinization continues to make the Caribbean an extremely religiously diverse part of the world. But even so, the psychological aspects of religion continue to be an underlying motivation for their perpetuation.

See Also

- ▶ African Diaspora Religions
- ▶ African Traditional Religion
- ▶ Dissociation
- ▶ Revitalization Movements
- ▶ Santería
- ▶ Syncretism
- ▶ Voudon
- ▶ Yoruban Religion in Cuba

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Castration

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Castration is defined as any action, surgical, chemical, or otherwise, by which a male loses the functions of the testes or a female loses the functions of the ovaries. Castration is also referred to as gelding, neutering, orchiectomy, orchidectomy, and oophorectomy. Traditional definitions of castration refer primarily to the physical removal of the testes.

Freudian castration refers to the Oedipal boy's fear that his father will cut off the boy's penis to punish him for incestuous wishes towards his mother. This fear is a central factor in assuring an incest taboo and in the creation of the superego, the psychical agent of morality and civilization in Freud's (1924) structural topology of the psyche. Psychoanalysts in Freud's lifetime, post-Freudians, and psychoanalytic feminists have elaborated, revised, and/or reviled his phallocentric position. Current views of castration anxiety may include all psychosexual erogenic zones and functions in men and women and to injuries to a person's self-esteem.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share prohibitions about mutilating God's creations. Psychology and religion share thoughts about castration and/or fear of castration serving to free the spirit from the forces of instinctual gratification. The two disciplines also share difficulties with ambiguous interpretations differentiating physical and symbolic castration.

Religion

Olympian Creation Myth

At his mother Gaia's urging, the Titan Cronus castrated his father Uranus. Uranus sought sexual gratification every night but hated the children conceived by his lust. The goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite, was formed from the foam of the severed testicles in the sea.

Paganism

The priests of Cybele castrated themselves as early as 415 BCE as a sacrifice to purify the soul and transcend the demands of passion, society, and family in order to reach the divine.

Judaism

In Deuteronomy 23:1, castrated men are expelled from the assembly of Israel.

Christianity

The Gospel According to St. Matthew (19:12) includes a quote of Jesus, in which he says that there are men who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. St. Augustine of Hippo argues against a literal reading of Matthew 19:12 indicting physical castration as a return to Cybellene cults, an assault on manhood, and a mutilation of God's creations. Bostock (2003) called Augustine "the anti-Origen," referring to the early Christian scholar who acted on a literal reading of Matthew and castrated himself. In Europe, women were not permitted to sing in

church choirs and boys were sometimes castrated to preserve their pure soprano voices. Such boys were called castrati. In the late nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church took a formal position that castrating singers is a mutilation of the body and therefore a sin.

Islam

A hadith, the oral transmission of the words and deeds of Muhammad, orders the physical alteration of the female genitalia in language unclear to both Arabic- and English-speaking people. Two of the ritual procedures rising from that hadith, clitoridectomy and excision, have been termed female castration in modern times (Badawi 1989). The Qur'an forbids alteration of Allah's creations and calls such practice the work of Satan.

Psychology

Psychiatry

Biological castrations have been performed on men and women to control deviant sexual behavior and masturbation primarily in the nineteenth century, although such practice was never widespread. Chemical castration to control deviant sexual behavior is a current treatment. Autocastration has been observed an onset indicator of schizophrenia, and one such patient incorporated Matthew 19:12 in his delusional system (Meyers and Nguyen 2001; Waugh 1986). The question of madness was raised in the Cult of the Gates of Heaven whose members castrated themselves prior to a mass suicide in preparation to return to God.

Psychoanalysis

Freud (1911/1955) analyzed the written work of Daniel Paul Schreber (1903/1955), whose delusions included castration so as to become God's wife. Freud viewed this work through the lens of his Oedipus complex. Castration anxiety and symbolic castration are primary forces to repress instinctual and/or and id impulses towards forbidden and gratifications, particularly the taboo of incest. A son gives up his sexual desire for his mother for fear of castration by the father. The superego, the internalized father conscience and guardian of civilization, evolves in response to castration anxiety and eliminates the need for the totem father. Freud thought of women as castrated beings, therefore with a weaker superego structure. The threat of castration has no authority to the already castrated. A child experiences shock and horror at seeing the castrated mother and fearing that such castration will happen to him. The Freudian fetish is an object which serves to disavow knowledge of the castrated mother. The mother, who in the infant's fantasy has a penis, is the preoedipal phallic mother. The experience of castration anxiety is necessary to resolve the Oedipal phase. Freud postulated that penis envy is the girl's counterpart of the boy's castration anxiety (1913/1955, 1923, 1924/1955, 1927/1955).

Eigen (1974) amplified Melanie Klein's (1975) concept of preoedipal castration anxiety and part objects. Klein amplified Freud's (1905/1955) ideas of psychosexual zones and the child's lack of differentiation of penis, feces, and baby (1926) and the experience of the lost of the breast (1917/1955). Any psychosexually significant body part or function which a child holds dear, which is filled or cathected with libido, is subject to loss by a castrating godlike mother. The breast, experienced by the child as a part of his/her own mouth; the anal sphincter and its feces; the urethral sphincter and its urine; and an imaginary internal penis for boys and girls are Kleinian part objects. Jacques Lacan (1973/1981) added voice and gaze to the Kleinian part object inventory.

Guervich (1999) amplified Lacan's rereading of Freud, which among many things, aimed to correct Freud's blurred inner and outer reality boundaries and defined castration in purely psychical terms. Lacanian castration is to be cut off from the *jouissance*, defined as both orgasm and excess, of identifying with and having the imaginary phallus of the preoedipal phallic mother and/or the phallus of the father who possesses the mother. Within this model, both boys and girls need to undergo this castration and accept that the mother desires the father's real anatomical penis. This castration is necessary to accept the reality of the external world and to form language.

Psychoanalytic feminists have found the revised phallus concept as a gateway to incorporating Freud in postmodern psychoanalysis.

Commentary

The earliest castration story, the son Cronus, urged by his mother to castrate his lustful, unloving father to create a pure allegorical woman representing truth and beauty, foretells millennia of struggle within psychology and religion to modulate the sometimes mutually exclusive demands of satisfying the flesh and satisfying the soul. Freud sought to solve this problem in his concept of sublimation and the fear of castration contributes to the sublimation process. Biological castration as a religious purification is the extreme enactment of soul-body dualism, devoid of symbolic resolution.

Freud posited circumcision as a symbolic substitute for castration (1909), and castration anxiety holds a central position in Freud's religious and cultural texts as well as the texts about the unconscious. Jonte-Pace (2001) used Freud's uncanny (1919), the psychical experience of something missing, to theorize a rival hypothesis to Freud's phallocentric thinking. In this formulation, the uncanny relates to both the circumcised/castrated Jewish male and the castrated preoedipal phallic mother. These castrated beings induce castration anxiety in Gentile men encountering the castrated Jew and in any man encountering the castrated woman. Castration anxiety is thus a causal factor in both anti-Semitism and misogyny. While Freud himself explored the relationship between castration anxiety and death anxiety, Freud's father-centered theory may have been an eroticized defense of his fear of death at the hands of the woman as mother, wife, and death figure.

Von Franz (2000) explored the archetypical role of the castrating mother in her explication of Jung's puer aeternus. The eternal youth is symbolically castrated by a symbiotic, infantilizing mother and sacrifices his manhood to remain his mother's beloved boy. In both a modernist Freudian as well as Jungian reading, the puer aeternus, a castrated boy in fantasy, may be male or female in external reality. While Melanie Klein's work on the castrating mother sought to express the power of a mother god to the infant, the castrating, phallic woman is often a representation of misogyny.

St. Augustine (1467), in his rejection of a literal reading of Mathew 10:19, said "What then doth all that which remained of (Atys) after his gelding signify?" Augustine's use of signification anticipates Lacan, postmodern feminism, and psycholinguistic signification's role in gender identification challenging Freud's omnipresent "anatomy is destiny." Muslim women are regularly gelded and are still signified as women. Men and women are gelded in lifesaving surgeries and still retain their gender identities. Melanie Klein's all-powerful castrating mother god is an iteration of Freud's all-powerful castrating father god, opening gender ambiguity of god figures, a parent god that is both male and female. "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

Symbolic castration, the freedom of the demands of instinctual passions, opens the gates of heaven, beauty, art, and civilization to men and women.

See Also

- ▶ Circumcision
- ▶ Clitoridectomy
- ▶ Dualism
- ▶ Father
- ▶ Female God Images
- ▶ Femininity
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Id
- ▶ Instinct
- ▶ Lacan, Jacques
- ▶ Mother
- ▶ Oedipus Complex
- ▶ Puer Aeternus
- ▶ Repression
- ▶ Superego
- ▶ Symbol
- ▶ Taboo
- ▶ Unconscious

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Catharsis

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Introduction

Etymologically, the term "catharsis" is derived from the Greek word *Katharsis*, meaning "purification," "cleansing," "healing," "transforming," and "purging." Bharat's *Natyashastra* and

Aristotle's *Poetics* discuss catharsis in their dramatic theories. Bharat states that drama evokes a particular aesthetic–emotional experience, i.e., *Rasa*, which deals with and transcends the problem of egoism, whereas Aristotle claims that dramatic experience is uplifting and edifying. Both Indian and Greek scholars argue that the process of purification leads to liberation.

Most of the definitions of catharsis emphasize four chief aspects: cognitive, psychological, emotional, and religious. Aristotle and Bharat discuss the emotional effect of catharsis in their dramatic theories. An almost similar connotation of catharsis is mentioned in medicine: Hippocrates considers catharsis as a purifying agent, and he associates it with healing. Breuer and Freud bring forth the cognitive and psychological aspects of catharsis in modern psychology by introducing the therapeutic method in their "catharsis therapy." Finally, the religious aspect of catharsis is associated with practices such as attending sermons, confessions, reading scriptures, chanting prayers, fasting, observing silence, mourning, and beating and torturing oneself.

Catharsis and Psychology

Freud and Breuer describe catharsis as an instinctive and involuntary body process, whereas the American Psychological Association describes it as "the discharge of affects connected to traumatic events." Scheff incorporates the idea of distancing into catharsis – cognitive awareness and emotional–somatic discharge – while emphasizing the components of catharsis. Similarly, Schultz and Schultz define catharsis as the process of eliminating a complex through conscious awareness. Most of the psychological theories claim that unreleased negative emotions get stored in the psyche, and they create pressure on the human system – so much so that these emotions increase hypertension, hysteria, and other mental disorders; therefore, venting of negative emotions is necessary to keep us healthy. Many psychologists and health professionals support the hydraulic model, which is supported by an analogy of fluid flowing through the human body.

Catharsis and Religion

Religious texts add a spiritual aspect to catharsis, where the emphasis is on discharging harmful emotions from the head and the heart, so that followers can become pure. Mostly, religions consider human beings as sinful, and they provide prescriptions of dos and don'ts in the form of allowed actions and prohibited actions. Purification is generally performed in response to a diverse set of actions, circumstances, and objects: sex, birth, death, killing, disease, dirt, menstruation, bodily fluids, food, sorcery, prayer, adultery, and entry into religious places. Religions across cultures perform activities of purification with the help of sacrifice, prayer, food, water, blood, fire, pilgrimage, and changing of attire.

In Hinduism, *vrat* ("fasting") is observed for many purposes: to please gods, to correct the metabolism of the human body, and to develop strong will and determination. Also, there are many types of fire sacrifices practiced in Hinduism to help seek the grace of a god as well as purification of the heart. In Christianity, the traditional "Sunday Mass" is a good example of providing relief to Christians and of increasing solidarity and social identity affirmation. In Islam, prayer, alms giving, the Ramadan fast, and pilgrimage to Mecca are compulsory for every Muslim. Further, the traditional religions have ceremonies such as curing rituals, funeral rites, and mourning, where cathartic activities such as crying, weeping, dancing, and drumming are performed so that the practitioners may convert negative emotions into virtuous dispositions.

See Also

- ▶ Healing
- ▶ Hinduism
- ▶ Mourning and Grieving
- ▶ Mourning Superego

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Celibacy

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Celibacy is derived from the Latin word *caelebs*, which originally means a state of being "unmarried" or "single." The scope of the term, moreover, extends to complete abstinence from sexual congress with any man, woman, or animal, and the popular concept of celibacy encompasses the absence of sexual desire. In addition, celibacy is deeply rooted in religious philosophy and becomes a metaphor for chastity and purity structured in mental and physical landscapes. St. Augustine's prayer, "Grant me chastity and continency, but not yet" (*Confessions*, VIII: VII, 17) suggests that celibacy is a significant means of coming to terms with sexuality. Having developed culturally, in time and space, it has become an important aspect of human existence – religious and secular – pulsating throughout people of all ages. It has encompassed the sacred scriptures, political discourses, and medical literatures. Away from the antagonistic sensual self of erotic desire – often considered "impure," "polluting," "shameful," and "evil" – celibacy is located in the purity of inner self, constructed in a psycho-sensual-spiritual synthesis by sublimating sexuality into spirituality. This spiritual reorientation of the self is shaped and given an expression through religion with its ritualized character which gives an insight and acts as a critique to multiple subjects such as psychology, spirituality, sexuality, gender, and sociopolitical discourses. It wafts through history under a legion of names – Athena, Artemis, and Hestia (Minerva, Diana and Vesta in Roman pantheon) in Paganism, St. Augustine in Christianity, lord Shiva in Hinduism, lord Buddha in Buddhism, Mahavira in Jainism, Talmudic rabbis in Judaism, and Sufis in Islam – all of them underwent psychological struggle against sexuality for a heightened sense of spirituality. In short, the concept of celibacy, which is redefined as "New Celibacy" in contemporary understanding of sexuality, is a new pattern of behavior towards physical and emotional closeness to one's own self, others, and to God without sexual engagements.

The choice of marriage or singlehood and the choice of intimacy with or without sexuality remain crucial to the development of self-knowledge and self-identity. The expression of sexuality is manifested in its realization or in its renunciation as an individual's internal adjustment to social attitudes and values. Whether or not sexuality or marriage is valued, it is perceived as a practical principle of civilization for its procreative role. But every sociocultural tradition emphasizes the moral grammar of sexuality. Consequently, celibacy is formed as a schema for the sexual self in response to sociocultural values. Celibacy is fashioned as an alternative but normal libido as opposed to popular assumption that human behavior is driven to sexual satisfaction. Hensel and Fortenberry (2014) term celibacy as "absence" and consider it "normal" in most humans at some point of life span. Sexual distress is an integral aspect of celibacy and it

occurs in one's celibate choice as a corollary of a mental conflict between sexuality and the decision for its control. Spiritual practices and religious backgrounds catalyze celibacy as a desire of asexuality by behavior in reducing this distress. But there is no clear evidence of the role of religion to reduce sexual distress in the process of celibacy. Sometimes it is said that nonreligious celibates feel less sexual agony than religious celibates.

The dynamics of celibacy has a spiritual motive, realization of asexual chaste self through the realization of divinity. Spirituality depends not on social norms or emotional states but on the acts of the psychological structure that each celibate self aspires to discover. The priest-psychologist Martin W. Pable (1975) contends that doubts about the culturally accepted things such as sexual relationship and marriage for self-development lead to celibacy. Celibacy develops a notion of alternative reality and identity with new social relations as a form of dissent towards the normative reality (Wimbush and Valantasis 1998). The operational forces of celibacy – personal images of body as "flesh" and soul as "spirit" and the subsequent responses to sexuality as "sinful" and spirituality as "ethical" – inject a sense of religion in persons. Celibacy thus can be described as facilitating an interaction with psychology, spirituality, and religion (Sipe 2007). It involves a process of integrating with one's sexual self after it proceeds from many phases of permutations, individualizations, perversions, failures, and frustrations. Scholars such as Louis Roy and Donald Goergen note that celibacy interacts with the psychic, social, and religious aspects of our being. From religious perspectives, celibacy is the most restricted aspect of sexual behavior. It is visualized to celebrate pleasure out of the pain caused by the deprivation of sexual desires and austerities imposed on the body.

Celibacy is generally perceived as a voluntary act, but several internal distinctions such as vocational and philosophical, mandated and facultative, complete and partial celibacy exist. Its significance varies according to historical contexts, religious traditions, and cultural purposes (Olson 2008). Celibacy is largely understood and over-represented as a religious phenomenon. Some religious traditions, viz., Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity, preach and practice divinity by the paradigm of celibacy whereas some other religious traditions such as Islam and Judaism refuse to admire the celibate model of divine practice. In the Western context, celibacy refers to continence for the "kingdom of God." Within the Eastern context, celibacy is regarded as a pure state of being to stop the endless cycle of rebirth and to attain *moksha*, *nirvana,* or complete spiritual liberation. Celibacy has spread to Japan, China, Vietnam, and Korea with Buddhism. Celibacy has also been visualized as a method of nonviolence by several cultural icons such as Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dalai Lama. In the Eastern and the Western philosophies, sexuality is thought to be degrading physical and mental power of humans leading to their misery. Consequently, the concepts of holiness and purity are sought to make a person complete, perfect, and hence powerful. These three ideas – holiness, purity, and (divine) power – are thought to be embodied in Hindu ascetics, Buddhist monks and nuns, Sufi mystics, and Roman Catholic priests.

The genesis of celibacy in most of the select religions – Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism – lies in the mental struggle against and responses to the perceived notion of sexuality as lustful, destructive, and hence sinful. Though each of these religious thoughts prescribes marriage and sex as important elements for certain stages of life with a sense of existential purpose, they endorse celibacy as the sine qua non of eliminating the mental agony of lustful sex and for gaining purity, chastity, potency, and spiritual liberation. Paradox of obsession with sexuality and its overcoming remains central to celibacy. In Hinduism, two of lord Shiva's popular images – a semen conserved phallus raised upwards and a bumpy crescent or horns on his head – portray this paradox. Erotica and celibacy – *kama* and *tapas* – coexist in Hinduism. Shiva is the prototype of sexuality and celibacy. He is considered as both a *yogi* (ascetic) and a *bhogi* (sensualist) (O'Flaherty 1969). On the one hand, he is believed to be free of passions. Conversely, it is told that Shiva married Parvati with the power of

his asceticism, renunciation from sexual activity, and gratification. On the mortal plane, celibacy approximates to *brahmacharya,* which literally means entailing a conduct towards realizing Brahman, the Absolute. From a broader perspective, it refers to sexual renunciation and purity in thoughts, actions, and speeches (Sivananda 1934). Semen-anxiety, preservation of vital fluids, and channelizing of sexuality into spirituality for physical and mental vigor, potency, and higher knowledge are concepts of celibacy in Hinduism. The modern Hindu mystic Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836–1886) characterized the sexual/spiritual duality in his practice of married celibacy, *kundalini* and sacred transvestism. In Christian theology, this duality is also evident in the collective image of Eve as the archetype of "Original Sin" and in the decarnalization of Mary as an attempt of self-purification from the sin. Based on beliefs of prelapsarianism and the New Age of the Christ, the Church Fathers – Ambrose, Jerome, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine – and the Apostle Paul embraced celibacy as an act of symbolic castration from sexuality to make themselves asexual "eunuchs" for the holy kingdom, as it was preached by Jesus. (Matthew 19: 12). But a psychological conflict "to wed or not to wed" has become a central focus of Christianity right from the origins of the Jesus movement when celibacy became a Christian faith to the present debate regarding the legitimacy of clerical celibacy in Roman Catholicism. A concern to save the "superior soul" from the perceived "wicked passions" initiated celibacy into pagan vocabulary as it was introduced by the Pythagoreans long before the advent of Christianity. Monks and nuns of three Buddhist disciplines – *Theravada*, *Mahayana,* and *Vajrayana* – have to follow celibacy for spiritual practice in accordance with the *Vinaya* which proscribes all forms of sexual activity, including masturbation and nongenital contact with the opposite sex. For a lay follower of Buddhism celibacy is a voluntary conduct.

In Jainism, celibacy is also a route to salvation. The last and greatest of 24 teachers of Jainism Mahavira brought forth the ideal of celibacy to the center of his philosophy. Both Judaism and Islam endorse sexuality within marriage. But celibacy has a place – though minor – in these two religions. Some Talmudic rabbis took the vow of celibacy to study the Talmud, the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law (Abbott 2000). In Islam, the Sufis swear to follow a celibate way of life. It is believed that Shamans and Vodoun priests and priestesses communicated with spirits with the power of their supposed celibacy. In Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and in Christianity, women were earlier viewed as "seductive temptresses," but there is a long tradition of female celibacy in each of these beliefs. Transcendence of gender, emancipation from the stereotypical burdens of marriage, motherhood and private space, and a sense of autonomy define female celibacy. Christian celibacy gives women a broader sense of independence. Desert Mothers, Beguines, St. Catherine of Siena, Ann Lee of Christianity, Mirabai (1498–1546), a Hindu mystic singer of *Bhakti* cult and Brahma Kumaris (daughters of Brahma) of Hinduism are notable female celibates. Hijras of India embrace celibacy to create a pure third gender identity but their practice of prostitution alludes to ambivalence entwined in the concept of celibacy.

Celibacy is sometimes employed as a tool of coercion. The Middle Eastern "Female Genital Mutilation" and "honor killings" are examples of the extreme forms of celibacy. Nevertheless, celibacy – which creates a perennial fascination all over the world – is now modified as "New Celibacy." It is perceived as a personal choice to adopt an unconventional way of life. True Love Waits, BAVAM of Western philosophy and Siddha Yoga Path of Eastern philosophy are movements of New Celibacy. The decision for celibacy is appropriate for specific categories of people who voluntarily renounce their sexuality in the twenty-first century. But throughout the ages, celibacy has been viewed as a mental condition in which sexuality is not utterly eliminated but it is directed not to its original aim but to the alternative. Consequently, religion forms a focal site of manifesting the psychic struggle for this alterity. In the present era of gender and sexual fluidity, celibacy has become a complex phenomenon.

See Also

- ▶ Asceticism
- ▶ Asexuality

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Celtic Religions

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Pre-Christian Celtic religion, mythology, and symbolism have left an incredibly rich and varied legacy in European culture. That being said, it is a field of folkloric mythological studies that is extremely diverse, varied, and, to some extent, historically quite problematic. The extent to which perceptions of Celtic culture and religious practices have been shaped by contemporaneous sociopolitical factors and the ubiquitous problems raised by Christian and Roman transmission has made attempts to develop a holistic understanding of the religious beliefs of the pre-Christian Celts an inordinately difficult and complex affair. However, despite the very murky waters surrounding the historical record of Celtic polytheistic religion, there are very powerful archetypal themes and cultural forms that resonate through to the present.

Unlike the Paleolithic peoples before them, the Iron-Age Celts were semi-historic in that they left traces of their culture in written records and in the enormous wealth of archaeological finds (Hutton 1993). In particular, there are minted coins from Gaul, Raetia, Noricum, and the British Isles; sculptures and other cultural artifacts; Roman eyewitness accounts; and an array of literature and bardic lore transcribed in the Middle Ages. However, these sources leave a great deal to interpretation. The materials left in artwork and archaeological finds suggest a great deal regarding Celtic religious practice and leave many tantalizing themes for speculation on the nature of Celtic culture and religion. However, what remains is also quite fragmentary and open to fanciful fabrications based in more contemporary themes. The classical eyewitness reports, especially that of Caesar and Poseidonius, attempt to directly translate Celtic gods and rituals into Roman equivalents and the medieval accounts of Celtic folklore, such as that of the *Mabinogion*, strongly reflect medieval Christian and Saxon/Norman preoccupations, power structures, and social mores (Darvill 1987).

The Roman Conquest and the Celts

When examining the religious practices of Celtic polytheism, there are three distinct phases in the transmission of Celtic religion, folklore, and mythology. Firstly, there are the religious practices, artwork, and festivals of pre-Roman conquest Celtic civilization. Secondly, there is the synthesis and syncreticism of the Roman colonization of Britain and Gaul. Finally, there is the further synthesis and development during the Christian period. In this context, however, and given the diversity and localization of many of the religious practices and rituals recorded, it is a problematic exercise to attempt to find a pure or unadulterated form of Celtic religious belief.

Rather, it is a living cultural tradition engaged in constant evolution and development in relation to sociopolitical issues, cultural transmission, and eclectic engagement with other societies and religious beliefs, forming a synthesis of mythological, religious, and cultural forms held together by common archetypal themes and symbols of powerful aesthetic and psychological resonance (Matthews 1991).

Celtic Culture, Religion, and Folklore in the Roman Era

While there is an enormous amount of diversity between Celtic regional and tribal affiliations, there are several key hierarchical, ritual, and festival themes that remain central to the religious practices of the Celts of antiquity. Caesar and Poseidonius both refer to Celtic religious practices being dominated by a triumvirate of religious castes – the druids who acted as priests and judges, the ovates who acted as seers and prophets, and the bards who specialized in versecraft, lineage, and lore keeping (described as filid in Ireland). This pattern of three religious castes was also chronicled by the later Christian scholars of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the number three seems to have been of enormous significance to the Celts appearing in numerous pieces of artwork, in the triple aspect manifestations of many of the deities, and in much of bardic lore transcribed by medieval Christian scholars (Darvill 1987).

Similarly, while there were immense variations between districts and language groups with regard to seasonal festivals and their ritual/festive activities, it is fairly certain that the four quarterly seasonal festivals associated with the solstice and equinox were practiced through Celtic society. Of these, Samhain, commemorating the end of the year and communing with the spirit world, and Beltane, celebrating the beginning of summer and the harvest, were the most significant. However, recent research by Ronald Hutton suggests that the centrality of Samhain and Beltane to Celtic religious practice may be far less than is generally accepted (Hutton 1993).

Attempting to understand the nature of Celtic deity is similarly difficult in that there was a complicated system of localized tutelary gods and, more commonly, mother goddesses, deities mixed with folkloric hero archetypes such as Lugh, and a collection of zoomorphic deity beings such as Epona the horse goddess and Cernunnos the hunter god which was appropriated as the divine male deity figure by contemporary Wiccans. This network of polytheism varied immensely between districts and language groups and is extremely difficult for the contemporary historian to study in earnest due to the aforementioned problems raised by Roman and Christocentric transmission. The result is that we are left with a bewildering and fragmentary array of evocative and powerful images, rituals, symbols, and archetypes open to much speculation and interpretation (Hutton 1993).

The Problems of Roman Transmission

During the post-Roman conquest period, this problem was further exacerbated by the well-documented tendency of Caesar, Poseidonius, and other Roman chroniclers to assume that the Celtic deities were direct equivalents of Roman and Greek deities without attempting to contextualize them within the established Celtic cosmology and social system. Furthermore, during the period of Roman colonization, many of the deities and ritual practices that did merge together with Roman equivalents and cults to Mercury (associated with Lugh in Celtic folklore), Mars (associated with Toutatis), and Jupiter (Taranic), among others, became increasingly common and widespread through Gaul and the British Isles. This merging of Celtic and Roman mythology, religious beliefs, and deities problematizes anthropological and historical interpretation through the loss of the original cultural meanings ascribed to the historical archetypal images of Celtic deity. At the same time, however, this synthesis enriches the analytical psychological perspective through the analysis of what the underlying mythic figures and deities in Celtic religious beliefs archetypically represent in the

collective unconscious. A similar pattern occurs when studying the influence of Christian chroniclers who were similarly preoccupied with an alternate cosmology and religious world view. They also found the symbolism, mythology, and archetypal resonance of the Celtic polytheistic mythos deeply inspiring, albeit in a medieval Christian context. Indeed, artwork and mythology inspired by Celtic mythology and deities deeply permeate the nominally Christian artwork and literature of medieval Western Europe. Perhaps the most notable example being the merging of Celtic mythic figures and deities with Catholic saints, in particular St Patrick and St Brigid (Hutton 1993).

The Celtic Revival

Another important legacy of Celtic religious practices has emerged in the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century pagan revival movements. Of particular relevance are the druidical pagan revivals spawned by folklorist and poet Iolo Morgannwg and related organizations such as the "Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids" and the "British Druid Order" (Hutton 1993). Drawing on the Romantic literary tradition's fixation on nationally oriented cultural authenticity and sacrality of the landscape, the impact on Welsh and English national identity and culture inspired by these movements is immense and speaks to the archetypal power and psychic resonance of the mythology and religious beliefs of Celtic civilization. Similarly, Celtic-inspired mythology also deeply permeates other pagan revivalist movements, most notably Wicca and Goddess or Dianic Paganism with a strong fixation on the role of feminine-associated Celtic deities such as the Morrigan and Brigid (Bonewits 2006). Thus, while developing an empirical historical understanding of Celtic religious practices can be a fragmentary and problematic exercise, in analytical psychological terms it is a powerful and pervasive model of archetypal symbolism in European culture and a rich source of symbolism in the collective unconscious.

See Also

- ▶ Celtic Shamanism
- ▶ Celtic Spirituality
- ▶ Christianity

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Celtic Shamanism

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Though coming into increasing popularity as a contemporary spiritual practice, Celtic shamanism has also generated quite a bit of controversy over the past two decades. The term "shamanism" is not a religion as much as it seems to be a term that refers to ancient techniques for altering consciousness to accomplish spiritual purposes (Eliade 2004) nor is it in itself Celtic. There is no substantive historical evidence that individuals recognizable as shamans existed among Celtic tribes or Druid groups (Matthews and Matthews 2002). Nevertheless, several folklorists and historians have noted intriguing similarities between elements of Celtic mythology, tradition, fairy tales, and art and practices traditionally identified as shamanic (e.g., Cowan 1993, 2002; Matthews and Matthews 1994; MacEowen 2002). These Celtic elements do, in fact, closely resemble what anthropologist Michael Harner (1990) has identified as common or nearly universal elements of indigenous shamanism. He has labeled these

elements core "shamanism," and they are typically experienced in what he has identified as the "shamanic state of consciousness" or "SSC" (Harner 1990). These similarities have inspired a contemporary system of spiritual practices for healing, alteration of consciousness, and self-development that proponents have termed "Celtic shamanism." Celtic shamanism has been particularly popular among those of European and Celtic descent who are demonstrably hungry for a sense of spiritual connection with their ancestors.

Harner's identification of common elements of shamanic experience around the world has led some to identify the shaman as an archetype – one of the universal thematic patterns of experience found in what Jung calls the collective unconscious (e.g., Cowan 1993; Smith 1997). Cowan (1993) identifies several elements as shared by both Celtic mythology and the shamanic archetype. To paraphrase Cowan, they are (1) the ability to sojourn in the "Otherworlds," (2) the assistance of animal guides or powers in order to acquire or retrieve wisdom or power, (3) an initiatory experience (usually a literal or symbolic death and rebirth) or other experiences of a calling to heal or quest for wisdom or power, (4) a transformational experience of interconnectedness of all things or a state of unity, and (5) abductions by Otherworldly entities in this case faeries – into the Otherworld proper (pp. 13–14). Matthews and Matthews (1994) additionally point out that contacts and communication with ancestors and otherworldly beings are frequent elements found in Celtic stories, as are omens found in appearances of animals and plants, as well as acts of nature (p. 2). These authors also argue that in these stories, druids, poets, and seers are frequently inspired by divine wisdom and are identifiable as shamans. Finally, themes of heroic retrievals of lost objects of power, such as are found in the Grail quest stories call to mind Ingerman's (2006) work, in which she describes in detail a key task of the shaman – namely, that of soul retrieval. Ingerman shows that throughout history, indigenous shamans have worked to bring back lost parts of a person's spirit or soul that are regarded as having fled in response to trauma or illness. The fact that the Grail is frequently identified with the Sacred King himself (i.e., Arthur) supports a correspondence between Celtic and shamanic concepts.

This link between Celticism and shamanism may have important implications for psychotherapy and counseling – particularly when spiritual issues are a focus of consideration. Moodley and West (2005) point out that many forms of indigenous spirituality and healing practices (which often go back more than a 1,000 years) are resurfacing and are enjoying popular contemporary practice – often in concert with traditional psychotherapy and counseling. Many such individuals find that such practices compensate for what they see as shortcomings of conventional therapeutic approaches due to lack of sensitivity to their particular experience of diversity or even outright contempt for "folk healing." Celtic shamanism may afford individuals of European ancestry a means of connecting with their own unique cultural heritage. Familiarity with Celtic shamanism in psychotherapeutic contexts may enhance the therapist's competence in the area of spiritual diversity, thereby contributing to an overall understanding of issues and phenomena related to diversity.

See Also

- ▶ Archetype
- ▶ Consciousness, Altered State of
- ▶ Heaven and Hell
- ▶ Holy Grail
- ▶ Shamans and Shamanism

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Celtic Spirituality

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Celtic spirituality is a contemporary term that encompasses practices, beliefs, attitudes, and values that are loosely based on themes and remnants of Ancient Celtic traditions that survive in fairy tales and Celtic mythology. It is difficult to ascribe to the Celtic tribes an ancient, coherent, and organized religious structure, though arguably Druidry in various permutations embodied religious elements. For this reason, the term "spirituality" is particularly useful when describing contemporary Celtic spiritual practices, as it is widely regarded as embodying less authoritative, organized, institutional, and dogmatic phenomena than is generally implied by the term "religion." Many scholarly works, book, and websites are devoted to discussion of the distinction and relationship between religion and spirituality, a full consideration of which is beyond the scope of this article.

Contemporary Celtic spirituality routinely and syncretically blends Christian and Pagan elements of ideology and practice. For excellent examples of such syncretism, the reader is referred to O'Donohue (1998, 2000), Cowan (2003), and MacEowen (2002, 2004). All of these works focus heavily on the idea of "longing" or "yearning" as a significant feature of the Celtic spirit – longing for connection, for deep meaning, for a sense of power and significance, and for a realization of one's place in the natural world. Drawing on such themes, deeply rooted as they are in mythology and practices that date back to pre-Christian Ireland, Wales, and Scotland primarily, practitioners of Celtic spirituality uniquely find a sense of balance and connection to others, to place, and to natural rhythms of life. Such a sense of connection arguably comes closer to a "universal" definition of spirituality than anything else.

Other Celtic themes utilized by practitioners of Celtic spirituality are shape-shifting (or identifying with animals, plants, stones, or other features of the natural world to experience a multiplicity of perspectives of the natural world); awakening to one's place and purpose in the world; fostering recognition of the body as sacred and as the gateway to higher spiritual consciousness, initiation through rites of passage (or spiritual death and rebirth experiences); making choices that are in alignment with a higher purpose and accepting responsibility for said choices; living in balance and harmony with the cycles of seasons and of the earth; communing with ancestors and with the immanent divine spirit in the land; and recognizing the divine spark within oneself.

It is not difficult to discern within these concepts a strong correspondence to humanistic-existential and transpersonal psychology. Humanistic-existential psychologists, such as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Victor Frankl, Carl Rogers, Fritz and Laura Perls, James Bugental, and Leslie Greenberg, all speak articulately about the psychological value of an active search for connection, meaning, and purpose in one's life. They also emphasize that psychological health is rooted in a sense of moving from a state of fragmentation and separation into a state of balance and wholeness and integration. They identify the value of living in congruence between one's inner perceptions and values and the

external reality of one's life. The existentialists, in particular, stress the necessity of "waking up" and actively resist a somnambulistic tendency to conform and surrender to the "herd mentality" – not to mention actively and responsibly making choices and exercising our inherent power and freedom. Transpersonal psychologists such as Ken Wilber, Stanislav and Christina Grof, Stanley Krippner, and Roger Walsh broaden and expand the definition of "human" to encompass a connection with the "higher" or divine aspects of ourselves and the world.

Celtic spirituality affords its practitioners a unique, culturally congruent means of seeking and finding meaning and purpose in their lives. A culturally competent psychotherapist or counselor would benefit from an understanding of these spiritual practices in order to help clients of Celtic and European background who are experiencing a sense of cultural disconnection that underlies more superficial problems, challenges, and difficulties.

See Also

- ▶ Celtic Religions
- ▶ Celtic Shamanism
- ▶ Cultural Psychology
- ▶ Frankl, Viktor
- ▶ Initiation
- ▶ Transpersonal Psychology

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Centering Prayer

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C

Centering Prayer is a method of Christian contemplation based on the fourteenth-century mystical text *The Cloud of Unknowing*. *The Cloud* offers spiritual guidance to one who is ready to progress in the spiritual life from verbal to nondiscursive prayer. Following the apophatic strand of Christian mysticism which holds that the divine is ultimately beyond human comprehension, *The Cloud* envisions God lying above the one who prays with a cloud of unknowing in between. The goal of the practice is to focus attention on God by directing "sharp darts of longing love" into the cloud. The text envisions a second cloud, a cloud of forgetting, lying between the one who prays and the world. The anonymous author insists that any ideas or thoughts that arise during prayer are distractions that pull attention away from God and must be avoided by placing them under this cloud of forgetting.

Method. Centering Prayer originated in the 1970s at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Two Trappist monks, M. Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating, have popularized this method of prayer through publications and retreats. The method itself is quite simple. One begins by concentrating attention on God. This is done by choosing a word that focuses one's desire for God. The word is then repeated slowly. Repetition of the sacred word serves as an aid in focusing one's attention onto God. (In the course of prayer, one may find that the word is no longer needed and stop repeating it altogether.) As one attempts to quiet the mind and focus the attention, distractions will inevitably arise. Instead of heeding the thoughts and images that clamor for attention, simply return to the prayer word. This helps return focus onto God. Finally, after 20 min, end the prayer by repeating the Our Father.

Distractions. Centering Prayer acknowledges that distractions are unavoidable during contemplative prayer. In *Intimacy with God*, Thomas Keating addresses the mental noise that plagues attempts to pray using this method. Much of this noise is simply distracting material, including items from our to-do list, intellectual insights, and the temptation to reflect on how well the prayer is progressing. Keating asserts that other types of material that pop up (such as long forgotten memories, fantasies, or disturbing images) are symptomatic of deeper issues and claims that the practice of Centering Prayer can facilitate the healing of these emotional problems.

Healing. Keating explains how Centering Prayer contributes to healing by interpreting it as a cycle composed of four moments. The first moment of the cycle initiates the sacred word and establishes attentiveness to God. This ushers in the second moment, which brings a deep sense of rest and refreshment. During this moment, Keating envisions that God is present in an analogous way to that of a therapist. Such a supportive relationship creates an atmosphere in which painful memories can be shared. Because such an accepting space has been established, in the third moment, Keating claims the unconscious unloads images that represent emotional wounds into consciousness. During the course of the prayer, these images are registered as distractions. Finally, in the fourth moment, which Keating terms "evacuation," the emotional baggage is released from the psyche. Then the cycle continues by returning to the sacred word.

Distractions and the Unconscious. Ann Ulanov envisions how healing can occur through prayer in a different fashion. Sigmund Freud refers to the psychic life of the unconscious as primary process thinking. This level of the psyche is a raw, rushing flow of being composed of wishes, images, instincts, emotions, urges, and drives. One characteristic of the contents of the unconscious is that they continually attempt to communicate their presence to consciousness. Utilizing these concepts, Ulanov refers to the distractions that plague attempts to pray as "primary speech." She interprets them as unconscious material trying to get the attention of consciousness. Ulanov does not agree that healing occurs by the simple unloading and evacuation of unconscious emotional baggage. Instead, she recommends deliberately directing attention to distractions as they emerge during prayer. For her, it is by being honest about all the parts inside of us, and using them as conversation starters in a dialogue with God, that psychological healing occurs when one prays.

See Also

- ▶ Christian Mysticism
- ▶ Contemplative Prayer
- ▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality
- ▶ Meditation
- ▶ Prayer

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Central American Religions

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Introduction

Central America's religious beliefs and practices inform individual and collective thinking

and behaviors, psychologists conclude. Central America is comprised of El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. Some countries in Central America are termed "The Northern Triangle": Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. During colonialism, Central America was introduced to the religions of Europeans, including the Spanish. The Spanish brought with them Roman Catholic and Christian views and thereafter forced the inhabitants of these countries to surrender their religious traditions and practice and acknowledge these new religious ideologies. Such decision, along with the oppressive government and military regimes during colonialism caused natives living in Central America to lose their ties to their ancestry and religion, and as a result of such maltreatment, natives felt inferior and nihilistic. Researchers observe also that during European colonization, many Central American civilizations were destroyed and replaced by Christian and or Catholic regimes which forced individual and communities to rethink and revise their identity and behavior to that of the colonizers in order to survive. Consequently, women, men, and children of Central American descent were victims of these conflicts and experienced ongoing government and military oppression, threats of and actual bombings, too poor and unsafe living conditions. Such perils caused many victims to abandon their families and countries.

However, there were many individuals of Central America who stayed and sought to identify the effects colonialism and post-colonialism had on individual awareness of religious ideologies and their mental states. Some of these individuals were psychologists and they termed their efforts to unravel nihilism and the ways oppression influence religion and identity a kind of emancipation psychology. Such study identifies that culture not only influenced religious expression and mental thought but also left individual and community traumatized (later renamed post-traumatic stress). While psychology is defined by the study of thinking and behavior, religion is described as a belief system of ethics that attaches important public figures, rituals, and traditions to a deity. Religion and psychology are intertwined when examining the peoples of Central America and can be reinterpreted as an emancipation "narrative" enabling answers to and transformation of Central American social identity and cultural memory.

C

Background

When Europeans arrived in the countries of Central America, beginning in 1509, they colonized the areas and consequently caused the Indians living there cultural genocide. The 1980s saw a rapid response to colonialism that resulted in revolutionary wars and movements. The Salvadoran government killed 75,000 civilians during the civil wars of the 1980s. During war, many men, women, and children hid their religious belief or renounced them in order to avoid persecution. Some scholars coin this threat of persecution of Central Americans as "state terrorism." In El Salvador and Nicaragua postwar, religious priests known as Jesuits called for a new national consciousness.

Religion

Religious communities in Central America, with their evangelical meetings and leadership, sought a collective response against the dominated religious ideologies forced upon them from colonialization. In Guatemala, there were many priests who publicly opposed European Christianity, calling it the source of cultural loss and oppression. During war and postwar, many villages saw an increase in gang violence by youths interpreted as a rebellious response to colonialism and an attempt to secure protection and raise their socioeconomic status illegally. In reaction, churches began a gospel of "anti-gang sentiment" through holistic perspectives. They believed in the idea of escaping the now "national trauma" that plagued Central America. Religious priest began to participate in politics, as seen by Guatemala's first Pentecostal Chief of State, General Jose Efrain Rios from 1982 to 1983.

During postwar, there were also the revitalizing of religion in Central American from the practice of Pneumatic Christianity. This religion acknowledged the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit, a religious being. Such religious fervor and participation resulted in the healing of the subjective mind, body, and soul from their national traumatic culture.

The rise in participation of religious theology in Central America helped to remove the domineering emotional and mental oppression by replacing such ills with sound doctrines biblically based and relevant to the amelioration of the soul. Religion held socioeconomic, political, and cultural importance for citizens who were both victims and perpetrators of war throughout the years in that such expression and practice relieved and recovered Central America from the trauma of the civil wars. Themes such as reconciliation rang loudly in Christian churches, for example. Postwar Guatemala utilized religion to rebuilding efforts at a communal level.

The absence of religious revival meant to most nihilism. Religion prescribes hope and healing for victims of war. Other religions that have influenced men, women, and children in Central America postwar were Evangelical Christianity and Neo-Evangelicalism. Mexico showed a high percentage of (Neo) Pentecostals while in Guatemala the numbers of Pentecostals increased in 1960–1985. French educator Allan Kardec (1804–1869) is considered the most influential religious leader, and he contributed to the development of religion in Central America. Kardecian Spiritism involves the idea of conversing with the supernatural world in which he states contain worlds and spirits that can involve themselves in helping the living. Spiritism, practiced throughout Central America, also became a source of emancipation from ongoing oppression. That Spiritism is the belief in reincarnation and the aftermath of the afterlife, and followers believe in the religion's healing power; religion in Central America sought public and local expressions of "truths" about themselves and society in opposition to the dominant oppressing government.

Ernesto Cardinal was a poet and priest in Central America's Nicaragua who intertwined religious ideologies and its application to society and cultural politics of the peasant. The Cardinal announced a roundtable of members of the community of peasants to respond to local politics and reveal their insecurities surrounding culture and the oppressive government. Children from these practices performed "sociodramas" as a political and religious response to their society and church, hoping then to increase awareness and cultural appreciation.

Psychology

Psychologists beginning in nineteenth century were urged to cite behaviors and thinking that can reroute an individual's identity. Gang members are often cited by psychologists as harboring an intricate identity that baffles both religious groups and psychologists. In Central America, many youths retreat to gangs to escape torture and unsafe conditions at home. Gangs offer members attention and safety and a route outside of poverty. They violate the laws and even in prison remain a constant threat. They are referred to as being "married to death" and initiating "transnational gangs." However, there are former gang members that seek religion to overcome their turbulent lifestyle. That they are numbed to their emotions and wrongdoings and also afflicting violence towards others, psychologists suggest reveal that they suffer from psychosocial trauma. Their poor and violent conditions as youths caused negative and violent thinking and behavior. However, religion reversed the consequences internalized by these former gang members. Importantly too, psychotherapy has been suggested to highlight social identity as a place to begin when probing into individual past trauma.

In Central American countries, there have been priests and psychologists that have advocated to unveil the causes of violence, shame, and nihilism within these countries during war, postwar, and reconstruction. There was a priest who was assassinated, Ignacio Martin Baro (1942–1989), and as many argue, it was due to his cultural politics of emancipation psychology. He warned the church and psychologists to not forget the reasons

causing society's insecurities and gang rage – individuals' poor socioeconomic status. He especially argued that children experienced post-traumatic stress after having lived through war conflict. Baro, who was both a psychologists and Jesuit priest, advocated that the profession of psychology should adhere towards teaching emancipation psychology. Baro and his likes suggested that psychologists not only study behavior and thinking processes of men, women, and children but also find ways to alleviate such oppression of marginalized people, especially women and children. He observed their emotional dangers during wartime and sought ways to develop doctrines motivating individual and communities' spiritual lives too. Baro believed in psychology efforts "from the bottom up" – so to restructure perceptions of the victimized poor. He views trauma as a "collective," "disruptive," and an "oppressive" experience for victims of war. He proposes instead of a "psychological trauma" inflicted on society, especially children, and he seeks to unravel the reasons why society has been oppressive to children. As a result, he warns psychologists to examine the ways society distorts children's conceptualization of community and identity from its repressive regime. He prescribes children of war as plagued with post-traumatic disorder and recommends that psychologists complete ways to reinstate children's "trust" of themselves and their community, which should alleviate issues associated with society during war and postwar.

Baro also likened the results of war as a lesson in behavior and thinking of men, women, and children. He advocates for a "critical consciousness" or perspective examining war and postwar society. In post-Baro, psychologists also call for a new kind of "social psychology," with the intent to support societies' conception of identity and ideologies. Research suggests that psychology is classed and accessed only to the elites. Social psychology is crucial here to understanding the ways community informs individual behavior and thought processes. Community social psychology, which began in Latin America, also concerns itself and study towards transformation of the "oppressed minority" and the revising of government procedures that can enhance community. Community social psychology delves into a kind of social response and thereafter is considered a type of social responsibility to react to post-traumatic stress on the individual and community.

Additionally, psychologists inform that a psychosocial trauma should be examined from the perspective of an individuals' mental health condition caused by traumatic experiences such as war. Psychologists are urged to follow and proceed with caution when examining psychosocial trauma. Such victims' identity in this scenario requires inquiry, resolutions, and inclusion. Psychologists argue too that society should see themselves as projections of a community knowledge and identity. These same psychologists examine the reasons why government have "closed communication" to their citizens, causing nihilism in victims of war. Central American countries distorted social identities for the people and overtime caused destructive thinking and behavior.

Some psychologists provide a study of the effects of oppression and government repression on the individual and the community, arguing that both determinants level and distort identity. Psychologists also concern themselves with transformational politics, or ways to renew the individual and community from oppression and practices deemed distorting civil society and rights of its citizens.

Conclusion

Religious leaders and psychologists are warned about psychosocial trauma rampant in victims of war in Central America and are urged to develop religious doctrines and practices, and psychotherapy to lessen the severity in victims. Researches observe that treatment options for victims and perpetrators of war should include therapy to relieve themselves from a poor and traumatized social identity. There is the call for psychologists to unearth the root cause of war (i.e., "failed economic order") so to understand collective and individual consciousness and the way it fluctuates during war and postwar. Though there are peace

treaties being signed in Central American countries, many women, men, and children experience insecurities about prospects of a new identity that is not constructed or a result of government sanctions. These religious commissions provide relief both individually and as a community to loosen the national trauma and memory of past destructive wars. Places and events might trigger mental illness so it is the responsibility of the government, churches, and psychologists to return their countries into reconstruction and a new national consciousness. Globalization could reverse the countries' loss of cultural religion and cultural internal tensions by exchanges of religious and psychological thinking about identity. The Psychologists of the Committee for Health Rights in Central America and religious churches in Central America, for example, could join together to bring local political roundtable discussion on identity issues plaguing men, women, and children postwar and how psychology informs their truth.

See Also

- Anxiety
- Christianity
- Communal and Personal Identity
- Cultural Psychology
- Depression
- Ethics and Ethical Behavior
- Faith
- Liberation Psychology
- Liberation Theology
- Migration and Religion
- Psychology
- Religious Identity
- Religious Conversion and Social Transformation
- Spiritualism
- Trauma

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Chakras

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The term chakra (Sanskrit cakra but pronounced chakra and in general printed usage in the West) comes from the Hindu/Yoga tradition and is a Sanskrit term meaning wheel or mystical circle. The term refers to psychoenergetic centers in the subtle or nonphysical human body (*lingadeha*) discovered in ancient India. The chakras are believed to move in a circular manner and funnel universal energy into the human energy system. References are made in the ancient (ca. seventh century BCE) Upanishads to an esoteric human anatomy composed of subtle life energy or *prana*. This anatomy is comprised of 72,000 *nadis* or channels along which subtle energy travels. Although the chakras or energy centers are not specifically mentioned in the *Upanishads*, the *Maitri Upanishad* (6.21) mentions the *Sushumna* channel which is central to the *Kundalini Yoga* philosophy and practice as are the chakras. The Upanishads also describe five elements – earth, water, fire, air, and ether associated with this subtle body.

Investigation of this subtle body by later Yogic and Tantric practitioners led to a more thorough description including the three vertical channels – *Sushumna, Ida, and Pingala* – aligned with the spinal axis. It is in the Tantras composed in the medieval period that the term chakra was first applied in written form to these focal points or centers. The Sat-Cakra-Nirupana (ca. 1577)

Chakras, Table 1 Seven major chakras

Chakra	Sanskrit translation	Location	Associated element
Sahasrara	Thousand-petaled	Crown of head	
Ajna	Command	Third eye	
Vishuddha	Pure	Throat	Ether
Anahata	Unstruck	Center of chest	Air
Manipura	Gem site	Solar plexus	Fire
Svadhisthana	Own abode	Below navel	Water
Muladhara	Root support	Base of spine	Earth

describes each of the seven chakras in detail. It was the translation of this text by Sir John Woodroffe (penname Arthur Avalon) entitled *The Serpent Power* published in 1919 that brought specific knowledge of the chakras and Kundalini to the West.

The five elements are associated with the first five chakras. The higher chakras are associated with spiritual knowledge beyond the physical realm. Knowledge of this subtle anatomy and the association with these elements spread from India to Tibet, China, and Japan where distinct practices developed. For example, Chinese acupuncture is based on the flow of subtle energy or chi through the nadis or meridians and the balance of elements in the body.

Tantrism and Yoga typically distinguish seven chakras aligned along the spinal axis. A reserve of spiritual energy or Kundalini is believed to abide in the *Muladhara* chakra located at the base of the spine. Meditation, breathing, and mantra practices arouse this dormant energy and encourage it to rise up the spine through the *Sushumna* channel. During this process the other six chakras are encountered and energized. Depending on their energetic state, they can either block or facilitate this upward flow of spiritual energy. Kundalini Yoga especially focuses on this subtle body and the raising of the Kundalini from the base chakra to the *Sahasrara* chakra at the crown of the head with the intention of attaining spiritual realization. However, all forms of Yoga have the intention of awakening and raising the Kundalini in order to stimulate moral and spiritual growth.

Just as the associated elements progress from gross (earth) to fine (ether), the energies associated with each chakra are believed to be more gross or lower vibration in the lower chakras and finer, or higher, vibration in the higher chakras. The spiritual journey is, thus, a developmental one with sequential steps or levels on the path to transformation of consciousness.

Each chakra is believed to control specific physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological functions and elaborate mandalas came to be associated with each. These mandalas include Sanskrit letters, colors, god or goddess with associated symbols, geometric shapes, an element, seed sound or mantra, animal, and specific number of lotus flower petals (the chakras are sometimes referred to as *padmes* or lotuses) indicating the rate of vibration of the energy associated with the particular chakra.

There is variability related to the number and placement of the chakras, e.g., *Sahasrara* is sometimes placed above the crown of the head. In Buddhist Yoga there are five such centers, and in Hindu Yoga six or more chakras. Following is a table of the major chakras depicted in Hindu Yoga and located along the central *Sushumna* channel (Table 1).

Reference is also sometimes made to minor chakras located at various parts of the body.

While knowledge of the chakras has come to the West primarily from the Indian Tantric tradition, other religions such as the Jewish Kabbalists, Sufis, and Taoists also describe energy systems and centers.

Psychology and the Chakras

Meditations and asanas have been developed by Yoga masters to heal both body and mind, and

there are specific practices developed to open the chakras and alleviate anxiety and depression as well as medical illnesses.

The emergence of Western depth psychologies coincided with the translation and dissemination of Yogic texts in the West. However, the Western distinction between philosophy and psychology, its emphasis on empirical methodology and ignorance of subtle energy mechanics, has prevented the acceptance of the chakras as a subject of serious consideration and research in the West.

Jung was very interested in the chakras and viewed them as symbolically depicting inner experience and psychological stages of development. He thought of the Kundalini process as a metaphorical journey such as climbing a sacred mountain. A series of lectures he gave on this topic with J. W. Heur in 1932 reveals his deep interest and intensive study of available material, particularly Sir. John Woodroffe's *The Serpent Power*. Jung saw Kundalini Yoga as a process of individuation and translated Kundalini Yoga terms into those of analytical psychology. Jung viewed the system as strictly metaphorical and eastern spiritual realization as a projection of unconscious contents. At the same time, Jung also talked about Kundalini as if it were a real phenomenon and warned that transitions from one chakra to another can lead to psychological crises. He cautioned Westerners away from experimentation with the chakras and Kundalini.

There is a phenomenon known as "meditation sickness" in the East, wherein headaches, chest pain, or stomachaches may occur when the beginner practices excessively. This is believed to result from chi (Kundalini energy) rising too fast. The antidote is to leave off meditation practice until it goes away. This may take weeks or months.

This laddered hierarchical model of the chakras corresponds at places to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with physical safety and security associated with the first chakra (Muladhara) and autonomy with the seventh (Sahasrara).

During the past few decades, many books have been published about the chakras in the West particularly by New Age authors, yet few psychotherapies have developed utilizing this subtle energy system. However, Western clinicians with experience with Eastern spiritual practices are beginning to develop psychotherapies incorporating this focus. OME (Organic Mind Energy) psychotherapy and Seemorg Matrix Work are two such psychotherapies.

Reichian, Bioenergetics, and Rolfing are related body therapies that work to release constricted vital energies in the body.

See Also

▶ Hinduism
▶ Tantrism
▶ Yoga

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Chan Buddhism

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Chan Buddhism is a major Chinese Buddhist sect attributed to Bodhidharma that emphasizes attaining Buddhahood, the supreme Buddhist religious goal, through enlightenment of one's own mind, which subsequently spread to Japan and named as Zen. In Chan Buddhism, the word "Chan" comes from "Dhyana" in Sanskrit (Soothill and Hodous 1937), which refers to meditation, samadhi (one-pointed concentration or perfect absorption), but nevertheless goes beyond the meaning of dhyana to become the manifestation of wisdom with simultaneous perfect composure of the mind (Huineng 1969).

With its focus on personal enlightenment of the mind in the present life, Chan Buddhism is characterized from the other Buddhist sects by its disrespect for religious rituals, sacred texts, godly figures, or intellectual understanding but instead emphasizes on meditation, intuition, master-student relationship, and practicing and realizing within the mundane here-and-now life.

Development of the Enlightenment Sect

Our Buddha-nature, the mind of enlightenment, is considered to be ever present, just awaiting for discovery through meditation, practice, or direct intuitive insight. Lineage transmission between enlightened minds is stressed with Bodhidharma, transmitting the right enlightened mind from Buddha to the Chinese patriarch Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, and Hongren and to the sixth patriarch Huineng, considered the source for the subsequent flourishment of the five Chan sects, including the dominant and still surviving Linji (Jap: Rinzai) and Caodong (Jap: Soto) sects.

The Six Patriarch's Platform Sutra, likely to be written by the disciple Shenhui (Hu 1953), established Huineng (638–713) as beginning a Chan era of sudden enlightenment, for which the Chan sect is externally received and recognized.

Sudden enlightenment refers to the sudden or quick glimpse of self-nature, Buddha-nature, or emptiness, without necessarily going through extended years of meditation or practice. Chan masters were recorded to be able to set off an enlightenment experience in their students through twisting a student's (Baizhang) nose to pain, skillful verbal remarks (Master Mazu) enlightening instantly a novice hunter, or banging a door on the student's (Yunmen) leg. Analytically, there are probably two relevant causes that make these sudden enlightenment experience possible:

1. A significant piece of psychological (or spiritual) attachment is suddenly forced to detach and an enlightening experience is resulted (Chan 2008).
2. The discursive mind is suddenly forced to halt or bypassed whereby the nondiscursive enlightening mind is revealed.

The gradual enlightenment path refers to a more gradual or relatively continual revelation of enlightenment in parts attained normally through extended years of meditation or practice.

Essentially the practice of Chan Buddhism had mainstreamed into two sects, namely, the Linji sect that emphasizes the sudden enlightenment path with instructional methods including shouting and hitting and the Caodong sect, predominantly a gradual enlightenment path that relies heavily on meditation practice.

The sudden enlightenment era of Chan in the Tang Dynasty gradually went to its historical downturn, and by the Song Dynasty, the myriad

masterful ways of initiating sudden enlightenment had gradually receded and the Chan sect began a more safeguard way of practice with more fixed form for enlightenment.

The Linji sect, attributed to Dahui (1089–1163), adopted the "Huatou" or "Gongan" method of practice. By huatou or gongan method, a practitioner is instructed to generate real "doubts" by paying attention to a phrasal excerpt of a gongan, the recorded open case of enlightenment experience, or the whole gongan itself, such as the phrase "What is Wu (nothing or emptiness)?" or the gongan whereby Master Zhaozhou said "Dog has no Buddha nature!" Vigorous immersion into the query might eventually lead to the disbursal of the "doubt mass" with a shattering of the illusive mind so that one can suddenly "see" the Buddha-nature.

The Caodong sect, through Master Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157), had come up with a method of practice called "silent illumination," by which a practitioner practices a kind of formless (no fixed concentration focus) meditation (Chan 2004) whereby nondiscursive silence is coupled simultaneously with illuminative contemplation so that a nonmoving mind with clarity and wisdom is gradually attained, which is itself enlightenment. This method was subsequently transmitted to Dogen who established the Soto Zen in Japan with a similar practice called Shikantaza (just sitting).

In final analysis, there are no definite advantages of sudden enlightenment over gradual enlightenment, for sudden enlightenment can be quick but not thorough while gradual enlightenment can be slow but firm. Ultimately, it is the degree of vexation dissolution and attachments disintegration (Chan 2006b) that count toward attainment of no-self and genuine complete enlightenment.

Since the Ming Dynasty, Chan sect further declined in China as the Amitabha sect of recitation of Buddha's name became more popular and prevalent. Many Chinese Buddhists combined the methods of Chan with recitation of Buddhas' names. A common huatou within the Chan sect had become to investigate "Who recites the Buddha name?" transforming the Buddha name recitation into a huatou method that can lead to enlightenment.

The Chan sect today has witnessed some revival led by efforts of Master Sheng Yen (1930–2009), who had led numerous international Chan retreats on both huatou and silent illumination methods and espousing a three stage Chan theory (Sheng-Yen 1979) of (1) Small self, the discursive self of the ordinary people and beginning practitioners; (2) Big self, the unified self of the concentrated mind and harmonized body; and (3) No self, the mind who has seen Buddha-nature or attained enlightenment.

Distinctive Expressions of Chan Buddhism

Chan Buddhism is also renowned and distinguished from other Buddhist sect by its disrespect for literal medium and rational thinking, a strange exhibition of uncommon behaviors in the gongans, and sometimes a display of highly abstract symbolism in language and art. The underlying thread linking all the above Chan characteristics is actually a need to bypass the ordinary defiled and discursive cognitive thinking mind such that the pure and nondiscursive mind of enlightenment may have a chance to reveal.

Unlike other Buddhist sect, there is also a de-emphasis on precepts or practice. Absolute freedom and spontaneous rightful action appropriate to the circumstances are believed to be attained through enlightenment such that prima facie adherence to strict moral rules becomes both unnecessary and a hindrance. Famous gongans are Guizong's ploughing dead a snake in a field work and Nanquan's chopping a cat among disputes among monks.

The ultimate Chan practice is believed to be both effortless (no concentration effort) and methodless (everyday life as practice) (Chan 2004) and that explains why Chan masters instruct students practice only by eating or excreting, wearing ropes, or daily works with no meditation needed, e.g., Linji sleeping at the Chan meditation hall after enlightenment. The Chan sect is also well known by its disrespect for religious symbols, such as Buddha, patriarch, or sutras. This is in accordance with the need to attain absolute non-

dwelling emptiness (Madhyamika, the middle way) for which any attachment to "sacred" symbols, even Buddha or Buddhism itself, could stand as the last hindrances to complete enlightenment.

Lineage transmission between master and students is considered essential in Chan Buddhism for it is the self-experience of realizing Buddha-nature and liberating enlightenment that is important, not the understanding of religious facts, principles, or the acting out of religious behavioral guidelines. Typical attainment verification guidelines include, e.g., the "*Ten Ox Herding Pictures*" (Sheng-Yen 1988), which depicts the progressive stages a practitioner would go through, by the analogy of taming the mind like taming the ox; and Master Dongshan's (Five positions of king and minister), a list of five successive Chan attainment stages through the transposition of the manifestation between wisdom and vexations (Chan 2006a).

See Also

- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Enlightenment
- ▶ Enlightenment Initiation

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C

Chaos

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In archetypal creation myths, the origins of the cosmos are believed to be a state or condition called chaos. Even Western science with its "Big Bang" theory can be construed as being an origin in chaos. In ancient wisdom we find many creation stories that began with chaos. In the Judaic tradition, for example, God's voice called out over the deep and thus did creation emerge from chaos and darkness. In similar fashion, in the Vedic tradition, when the Absolute spoke the primal word "*Om*," the wonders of the created universe emerged from chaos, each element pervaded by the Divine. Thus, ancient visionaries seemed to recognize the intimate connection between chaos and creativity, and this is an interrelationship that many scientists have been actively exploring today. As Briggs and Peat state:

> Although we humans tend to abhor chaos and avoid it whenever possible, nature uses chaos in remarkable ways to create new entities, shape events, and hold the Universe together. . .. Just what is chaos? The answer has many facets. . .. To begin with, chaos turns out to be far subtler than the common sense idea that it is the messiness of mere chance. . .. The scientific term 'chaos' refers to an underlying interconnectedness that exists in apparently random events. Chaos science focuses on hidden patterns, nuance, the 'sensitivity' of things, and the 'rules' for how the unpredictable leads to the new (1999, pp. 1–2).

Chaos is ubiquitous. From weather patterns to the behavior of homing pigeons, from raging rivers to the nerves and blood vessels in the human body, and from craggy coastlines to the intricacies of fern leaves, nature is filled with complexity, and

scientists are discovering common, archetypal patterns that underlie seemingly chaotic systems (Conforti 2003). Moreover, science is discovering that there is an enduring interrelationship between chaos and order. Like waves in the ocean, all the energetic patterns of life arise and fall, wax and wane. Chaos organizes itself into order, and order inevitably dissolves into chaos. The sequence – chaos to order to chaos to order – repeats itself in the ever-changing patterns of life.

Chaos Theory as a New Paradigm

Today's chaos scientists have rejected the compartmentalization of the sciences, where part systems have long been studied in isolation from the whole – a compartmentalization that often leads to reductionism and oversimplification. Rather, the new inter-scientific paradigm crosses the fields of physics, mathematics, biology, astronomy, meteorology, psychology, physiology, and more. James Gleick was among the first to recognize and articulate the interrelationships of chaos patterns across the varied scientific fields. He wrote "Patterns born amid formlessness: This is biology's basic beauty and its basic mystery. Life sucks order from a sea of disorder" (Gleick 1987, p. 299).

Among the many component parts of chaos theory, perhaps the most widely known is termed "the butterfly effect," after Edward Lorenz's discovery in 1960 that tiny changes in initial conditions can have major impact on resulting weather patterns far away. This occurrence has been likened to the mathematical properties of feedback loops and iterative processes, both of which are common in many areas of nature. In his 1972 paper, "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wing in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?," Lorenz (1993, pp. 181–184) sets about correcting misconceptions due to his use of the ancient Chinese proverb about the far-reaching effects of small variability such as a butterfly's wings flapping. But the fact remains that feedback loops and nonlinear mathematical systems often appear to create chaos when, in reality, they are behaving precise laws that are often so subtle as to be undetectable. The very unpredictability of weather systems, for example, makes the current debate about global warming most intense. One must remember, however, that feedback loops often reach a point of no return where one pattern is irrevocably shifted into another entirely different pattern. The butterfly effect lies behind many currently unknown subtle effects and unanswered questions. In climatology, for example, how much change in average temperature will cause sufficient ice melting to irrevocably raise sea level so as to wipe away shorelines and inundate coastal cities worldwide? Or the butterfly effect from the perspective of individual clinical health psychology: how much does a tiny taste of sugar affect a dieter's resolve? How much does a whiff of alcohol disturb the precarious balance of an alcoholic's life? Or in the complexity of a family system, how much can a single eyebrow raised in criticism trigger the eruption of chaos that may affect the entire system with repetitive, dysfunctional patterns?

Repeating Patterns

Another element of chaos theory that is well known is the mathematics of "fractals." First introduced and named by Benoit Mandelbrot at IBM, fractals are complex forms that possess self-similarity at many different levels or scales – whether seen in a microscope or viewed from a great distance. Intricate patterns repeat in the many branches of a fern, for example, or in the folds and crevices of the human brain. In psychotherapy, similar patterns are seen over time when one studies the dynamics of an extended family system. This "multigenerational transmission process" described by Murray Bowen can also be conceptualized as a fractal viewed over time.

Just as chaos and order are interrelated, so too are such apparent opposites as competition and cooperation. They are complexly interwoven.

> A complex chaotic system. . .contains a constantly unfolding dynamic in which what we call competition may suddenly become cooperation and vice versa. In chaotic systems, interconnections flow among individual elements on many different scales (Briggs and Peat 1999, p. 63).

Furthermore, patterns repeat. Because it is thought that the system is "attracted" to a particular pattern of behavior, that pattern is called a "strange attractor." Clinically, one needs only to recall Freud's description of the "repetition compulsion" to know that these strange attractors are found in psychology as well as in the other sciences.

The spiritual dimension of chaos theory is found in the profound glimpses that this theory gives into the basic mechanisms that underlie all of life. In studying the interweaving complexities of chaos theory as it applies to all of the sciences, the sacred dimension of mystery is heightened, and a sense of awe is engendered. We humans, with our own complex patterns of intrapsychic and interpersonal group life, in many ways echo the complex patterns – the archetypes – that are being discovered increasingly in the entire creative/chaotic environment in which we are embedded.

See Also

- ▶ Creation
- ▶ God

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Chaplaincy

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The concept of "chaplain" has a long history, originally associated with the priest who performed religious rites and rituals in the military. The role of chaplain expanded to mean any minister who performed such religious care in public and private institutions, including the military, hospitals, schools, and prisons. The term became more closely associated with Christian faith traditions but in recent years has been embraced by a wide variety of religious traditions.

Chaplaincy is the broad term used to describe the work of and ministry provided by chaplains. In recent years, as the profession has recognized diversity, particularly religious pluralism, terms such as "chaplaincy care" and "spiritual care" have been added to the more traditional concept of "pastoral care" to describe the work of a chaplain.

While original chaplains were ordained priests and ministers, laypersons may also be commissioned by their faith group to function as a chaplain. In addition, the ministry provided by chaplains has expanded beyond religious rites and sacramental rituals to include crisis ministry, counseling, ethical decision-making, education, staff support, worship, and the coordination of community and congregational services and relationships to the institution (Smith 1990, p. 136).

In North America, chaplains have their strongest history in the military and in hospitals. The first military chaplains were priests and ministers who traveled with the military units into battle, praying for victory and administering prayers and Last Rites to the wounded and the dying. In the mid-1920s, the first known formal training for those providing pastoral care in secular institutions occurred through the inspiration of Dr. Dick Cabots in the general hospital setting

and then in the early 1930s under the leadership of Rev. Anton Boisen in the mental hospital setting. This clinical training became known as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) which continues to exist as the primary education and training for those preparing for ministry in specialized settings. In the 1940s, the movement to create standards for the professional certification of chaplains was initiated.

Today, the professionally trained, certified chaplain is the norm for most institutions and agencies that employ or utilize chaplains. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is offered by a number of organizations, including the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP), and the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care/Association Canadienne des Soins Spirituels (CASC/ACSS) in North America. CPE is also offered by various organizations and institutions in Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa. Once trained, chaplains are certified by a number of organizations, including the Association for Professional Chaplains (APC), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC), the National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC), and the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). A number of other organizations and faith groups also train, certify, and/or commission chaplains. Many of them are members of the COMISS network in North America, a network of institutions, agencies, and faith groups that endorse, employ, support, or train chaplains or accredit chaplaincy training programs. COMISS operates under the umbrella of the concept of ministry in specialized settings.

While the criteria to become a professional, certified chaplain varies from organization to organization, a standard set of basic requirements have emerged, including ecclesiastical endorsement from one's faith group, ordination or commissioning by one's faith group, a predetermined level of theological education of degree, and clinical training and education (usually CPE) (Smith 1990, p. 136). Most certifying organizations also require some time of demonstration of competence through written papers and other documentation, as well as a face-to-face interview with the Certification Commission or Committee of the certifying body.

The chaplain in the millennium era is confronted with a variety of crises situations for which one must be well trained. While a majority of chaplains spend their workday in the institution or facility providing routine care; listening and counseling the clients, constituents, and staff; organizing and conducting religious worship services; and providing sacramental rituals such as baptism, communion (also known as the Lord's supper or the Eucharist depending on one's faith tradition), and the Sacrament of the Sick (formerly known as "Last Rites"), the role of chaplain has expanded to include a variety of services of functions reflective of a diverse and complex world.

In many institutions, the chaplain works closely with institutional leadership to make sure the religious and general services provided by the institution are culturally sensitive and reflective of the diversity of the community and clients that the institution serves. Chaplains are also included on institutional Ethics Committees, advising on the complex biomedical ethical issues that emerge in today's technology-driven world of care and serving as a direct consultant to patients, families, clients, and staff as ethical decisions are considered and made.

Chaplains are also active participants in the end-of-life care protocols and bereavement programs at many institutions. They assist interdisciplinary care teams, patients, and families in making decisions around care at the end of life and often manage the institution's care to families at the time of death. Chaplains are trained to deal with the intense and often painful realities that accompany tragic and accidental deaths, prenatal and neonatal deaths, suicides, long-term illness and hospice care, war fatalities, and the deaths of prisoners. Chaplains often advise on issues of living wills and durable power of attorney for healthcare, formal processes for individuals to establish the life-saving measures they do or do not desire to have should they become unable to make those decisions or the person(s) who they designate to make such decisions.

Research on the impact of chaplains and pastoral/spiritual care has increased to demonstrate

and determine the ways in which these professionals and ministries affect such things as hospital length of stays, pain management, recovery periods, rehospitalizations, and recidivism. The abstract of an article entitled "Chaplaincy Research: Its Value, Its Quality and Its Future" sets the stage for current research in the field. The article is divided into four major sections, the first of which presents and discusses various reasons given by major researchers in the field why chaplains should do research. The second section summarizes findings on the sophistication of research on religion and health published in (a) medical and other healthcare journals and (b) specialty journals on religion and health, chaplaincy, and pastoral care and counseling. The third section revisits suggestions that have been made by prominent chaplain researchers to increase and improve research by chaplains. The last section offers some suggestions for expanding several lines of current research in the future, including research: (1) to elucidate the nature of spiritual care chaplains provide to different populations, including patients, families, and staff; (2) to assess the prevalence and intensity of patients' spiritual needs and the degree to which they are being met; (3) to identify that subset of patients who are spiritually at risk in terms of having high needs and slow religious resources; (4) to identify the biological causal mechanisms by which religion influences health; and (5) to measure the effectiveness of chaplain interventions (Weaver et al. 2008).

Specialty professional journals in the field have emerged since the 1940s to chronicle the work of the chaplain, describe the practical skills required for chaplains, and identify the common functions and ministry of chaplains, in addition to the research being done in the field. Some of these journals include the Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling and the Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy. A number of professional medical journals have also published articles related to spirituality and medicine, faith and health, and other connections between the healthcare and religious worlds, with the mainstream recognition and acceptance of holistic care.

The most recent movement in chaplaincy is the creation of "standards of practice" for a variety of subspecialties in chaplaincy. The Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), a multifaith organization that certifies chaplains in North America, has been the leader in defining these standards in the areas of acute care, long-term care, and hospice care. The APC plans to develop standards of practice in other subspecialty areas such as mental health, children's health, and corrections. Modeled after standards of practice for physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals, the "Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains" are intended to define and describe the minimal standards for chaplaincy care and the consistent, observable skills in which professional chaplains should be competent.

The "Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains" built on two earlier collaborative works by several of the pastoral care/education/certification organizations to define professional chaplaincy in the healthcare setting ("Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Healthcare," edited by Larry VandeCreek and Burton 2001) and to create common standards and a common code of ethics in the field ("The Common Standards and The Common Code of Ethics," created by the Spiritual Care Collaborative 2004).

Chaplaincy has grown into a professional ministry with its own unique identity, as well as a diverse field in and of itself. Today, there are associations of police chaplains, race track chaplains, airport chaplains, correctional chaplains, workplace chaplains, and campus chaplains, in addition to those for the traditional hospital and healthcare chaplains. As the world recognizes the mind, body, and spirit connection as essential to the care of persons and embraces a respect for the diversity of faiths and religious traditions, the role of chaplain will be a critical and more essential one in public and private institutions.

See Also

- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Body and Spirituality
- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Christianity

▶ Ethics and Ethical Behavior
▶ Faith
▶ Interfaith Dialog
▶ Jewish Mourning Rituals
▶ Liminality
▶ Orthodoxy
▶ Pastoral Counseling
▶ Sacraments
▶ Theodicy
▶ Trauma
▶ Violence and Religion
▶ Wounded Healer, The

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Charisma in New Religious Movements

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Charisma is something that we may find hard to define or predict, but easier to recognize. It is an observed and inferred personality trait, usually diagnosed after the fact when discussing historical events, and often used as a causal explanation, e.g., "group X gained many followers because of the leader's charisma." If leadership is a status conferred by a leader's followers, charisma is a type of leadership we infer from its exceptional effects.

Some researchers have suggested that charisma, an innate trait, is experienced through certain signals that the charismatic leader radiates in a particular communicative manner. It may be recognized as an awe-inspiring rhetorical style, which is emotional, positive, and excited, effective in inspiring and attracting followers and peers. Thus, the oratory skills of the Peoples Temple's founder, Jim Jones, have often been recognized by observers.

New religious movements (NRMs) are, by definition, belief minorities and often find themselves under majority pressure. In religious movements, a leader is the embodiment of religious ideals; in many NRMs, he is the founder and the origin of these ideals. The challenges to leaders are extreme, as the group's existence and survival are often in question. The charismatic and direct nature of leadership, in the absence of articulated structures involving multiple levels of hierarchy, create internal tensions. The idea that leaders are chosen through the power of revelation or religious creativity may legitimize schisms.

How can we account for of the high emotional involvement and total commitment in members? The transference hypothesis, derived from psychoanalysis, proposes that followers experience leaders subjectively as parent figures. A broader and more obvious suggestion is that the leader is a love object. An effective leader creates a mutually empowering relationship with his followers, at least for a while. Followers feel empowered through fantasies about being the elect, a small group of virtuosi chosen to proclaim the truth of new revelations before a reluctant world. Being in the minority and defying established orthodoxy serve as evidence for the correctness of their beliefs. Intimacy with the charismatic leader means sharing his power and wisdom, and energizes followers.

How do we measure performance, or success, in religious movements and especially in NRMs, as compared to secular organizations? How do we judge the effectiveness of a religious leader? Success requires creativity in the midst of competition and resistance. Some leaders, and some

groups, have shown remarkable resilience in the face of challenges and crises.

Charisma operates in attracting new recruits to a small group and retaining them. Founders of NRMs have sufficient charisma to attract the numbers of followers necessary to keep the groupalive. In all of these cases, charisma as measured by the leader's ability to recruit followers has been limited. Most groups under discussion here had fewer than 100 members.

In some cases, charismatic leadership made possible not only survival but thriving in the face of insurmountable odds. One of the more remarkable cases of leadership in a new religious movement in the face of adversity and opposition involves the early history of the Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), known as Mormons. This Christian-polytheistic millenarian group was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844) in 1830 in northern New York State. At age 14, Joseph Smith declared he had spoken with God. Later he had written a text known as The Book of Mormon and has given its name to the Church.

Smith announced to the world that he was "seer, translator, prophet, apostle of Jesus Christ, and elder of the church." In 1835, 12 apostles were appointed and sent to gain converts in the United States. In 1835 Joseph Smith also prophesied the Second Coming. In its early years, the movement encountered much violence because of its unconventional beliefs and its advocacy of polygamy. Opposition forced the group to move first to Ohio, then to Missouri, and then to Illinois, where the city of Nauvoo was founded in 1840. In 1844 Joseph Smith and his brother were killed by a mob there. Again, the members embarked on a long voyage away from the Eastern United States, led by Brigham Young (1801–1877) and settled in Salt Lake City. It was Brigham Young who was responsible for saving the group from oblivion.

A less dramatic case of a lone founder who managed to create a small movement with no resources save his own personality is that of the little-known Emin (The Template Foundation), founded in London by Leo (aka Raymond Armin or Raymond Schirtenlieb, 1924–2002) in 1972. The founder was a bankrupt never-do-well, who propagated Western "occult" ideas. Group followers numbered only in the hundreds in the high point of its existence, but the founder died a millionaire, and the group survived his death.

David Berg (Moses David, 1919–1994), founder of the Children of God (The Family) can be described as another man who used his personality to create a group known for its Christian antinomianism. It started in 1969 in California and gradually attracted global media attention. Berg told his followers that they were the elect and showed contempt for conventional sexual morality. This meant "sharing" wives of group members, child sexual abuse, and incest.

Over the past 50 years, researchers and media observers have used charisma as an explanation when faced with dramatic and shocking events that defy both understanding and imagination. They involved a form of leadership so powerful that it would create a selfless dedication to leader-defined goals, including self-sacrifice in death. A despotic vision creates an identity and a loyalty, which then veers towards an imagined "apocalypse," which does not end the world, but the lives of most followers. Vulnerable, needy individuals fall in love and display not only compliance, loyalty, and adherence but total devotion and slavish submission. An excess of love becomes the root of horrifying events.

The tragedy of the Branch Seventh Day Adventists is well known. Originally, its members followed the teachings of Victor T. Houteff, who deviated from established Seventh-Day Adventist teachings in the 1930s by predicting the coming of a Davidian kingdom in Palestine. In the 1960s, Ben Roden (–1978) renamed the group Branch Davidians and was succeeded by his wife Lois (1915–1986). Their son George Roden (1938–) tried to become leader in the 1970s but was then ousted by a new leader, Vernon Wayne Howell (1960–1993), known after 1990 as David Koresh. Howell joined the Branch Davidians in 1982, became the lover of Lois Roden, and then assumed the leadership in 1987, after she died. He gathered a veritable

arsenal in the 1990s, including 350 guns and two million rounds of ammunition.

There was evidence not only of violent potential but of real murderous acts in the group long before any government intervention. In November 1987, David Koresh, fighting for the group leadership, was challenged by George Roden to a final showdown. Roden dug up the body of a Davidian who had been dead for 20 years and challenged Koresh to raise her from the dead. This led to a 45-minute gun battle, with Roden was slightly wounded. Koresh and seven of his followers were charged with attempted murder. The followers were acquitted, while Koresh won a mistrial and was never retried. George Roden left the group, and in 1989 shot his roommate and then cut the body to pieces. He was found innocent by reason of insanity by a court in Texas and hospitalized. In 1995, he escaped to New York, but was caught and returned to Texas.

On February 28, 1993, the group's compound near Waco, Texas was raided by more than 100 agents of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), searching for illegal weapons. The Branch Davidians opened fire, and four agents, as well as six group members, died. This led to a 51-day siege by the FBI and the ATF.

On April 19, 1993, as millions around the world watched the horror on television, the compound went up in flames. We know now that the fire was started by group members, who followed orders from Koresh. Seventy-nine individuals, including 22 children died. Five (or fourteen, according to other sources) of the children were believed to have been fathered by Koresh.

In the case of David Koresh, both sex and violence were heightened and visible for years, as was the prediction of the coming end. One aspect of the tragedy which has received some attention is the sexual exploitation and domination of group members and their children by the leader. In 1989, Koresh officially announced to the members his rights to all females, and some followers left because of this. At age 12, girls were moved to gender-segregated quarters, where they became available to Koresh.

In January 1984, he legally married 14-year-old Rachel Jones, the daughter of a long-time Branch Davidian. In 1986, he announced his marriage to 14-year-old Karen Doyle, whose father was also a group member. Later that year Koresh "married" Michelle Jones, 12-year-old sister of wife number one. The contact with Michelle started in what seemed like a rape. Later he took at least three more wives, ages 17, 16, and 20, who had children by him. Later on, there was another "wife," whose relations with Koresh started when she was 13. It is also clear that in some cases, Koresh had sex with both a daughter and her mother. By 1993, there were more than a dozen women in the group who considered themselves the leader's wives.

Cases of fantasied rebirth gone tragically wrong have come to our attention in recent years. They include The Peoples Temple, Branch Davidians, the Solar Temple, and Heaven's Gate. Each case in unique. What is involved in all cases is an authoritarian leadership which sweeps the members into a cataclysm of killing.

Religious organizations are undemocratic by definition (and by claimed revelation), but these groups were totalitarian organizations where exploitation and violence were inherent. The questions we ask about these groups are similar to the ones raised about historical twentieth century totalitarian regimes. In every case of NRM tragedy over the past 50 years, there was a reality of despotism and exploitation, with extremely narcissistic leaders being followed by a group of dependent, obedient individuals. The feeling before the actual disaster is that the leadership, and the group, has reached the end of the road and is facing destruction or severe disruption by outside forces.

Long before the final cataclysm of violence, the undivided, unquestioning, loyalty by followers is very much in evidence through sexual subjugation which becomes public knowledge. This was the case with (the bisexual) Jim Jones in the Peoples Temple, David Berg in the Children of God, and David Koresh in the Branch Davidians. Joseph Smith Jr. also practiced sexual

domination over women in his group. Sexual abuse of followers is has been reported in hundreds of modern groups, ranging from Buddhist to Roman Catholic, and the popular concept of alpha male seems identical with charisma. With hindsight, it seems like followers were being deliberately manipulated, or engineered, into total submission through the leader's sexual domination. Some members left in response, but those who accept the leader's sexual tyranny are totally committed.

In a religious context, both success and abuse of power may be redefined as part of a cosmic salvation plan. When group members lose their lives in mass murder/suicide, the event is described as "moving to another level." This is not unique to NRMs, as martyrs in many traditions are promised eternal life. The abuse of power is justified by revelations, as in the cases of Joseph Smith, Jr., Jim Jones, David Koresh, and many others.

Reading the literature on NRMs, one is likely to encounter the term charisma most often when reading about abuse of power, exploitation, and mass murders. It seems that the latter are used to confirm and prove a leader's exceptional qualities. Charisma becomes an explanatory concept when faced with exceptional and shocking behaviors.

See Also

► New Religions

Charismata

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"*Charismata*" is the former usage of the new word charisma. Today it means two phenomena:

1. Spiritual gifts which come with charismatic endowments. These endowments include wise words, special knowledge, faith, miracles, prophecy, power to rule, healings, connection with divine grace, discerning of spirits, and diverse kinds of tongues as in religious leaders.
2. Nonreligious, non-supernatural, and secular applications as have been elaborated by Max Weber (1864–1920 CE). In both usages, charisma is the special quality some people posses that tends them "to be attractive to others, to be influential and inspirational, and to be characterized as brilliant and effective communicators." Despite its wide applications in humanities, it seems to be very difficult to define it. Hence, as Conger has rightly pointed out, "there is no generally agreed-on definition of charisma" (Conger 2004, p. 158).

As an adjective, charismatic characteristics or charismatic authority can be used to mean having a supernatural origin. In the New Testament, Paul writes of spiritual gifts/endowments or charismata, which is the first-known illustration of charismata. In this religious context, the term denotes any good gift that flows from God's benevolent love (*charis*) unto humans, any divine grace or favor originating in the Holy Spirit to distribute it for the good of others according to his discernment (1 Cor 12–14). In the same context, all such charismata are attributed not only to the chosen ones but to every Christian to be qualified to perform his task in the church (1 Cor 7:7).

This separation between general and special meaning of charismata also occurs in Romans. This word is used in Romans in the singular six times and refers to God's grace given by faith in Christ (Rom 5:15–16). Although the sinner should be sentenced to death, by faith in Christ, he is bestowed eternal life (Rom 6:23). In Romans (11:26) when talking about Israel, the term in its plural form refers to certain privileges – such as forgiveness and redemption designated by God to Israel. "*Charisma*," which is the newer form of the term "charismata," derives from the Greek word *charis* meaning "grace, kindness, and favor."

The German sociologist and economist Max Weber developed the term "charisma" and it

became a central theme in his writings. In his book *Economy and Society*, "charisma" is a certain attractive quality of an individual personality, either with a divine spirit or an extraordinary nonreligious secular quality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men (Holton and Turner 1989, pp. 454–455 [1384H, the year following the Hijrah, when Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina]). Weber's original idea was to apply the term in a nonreligious meaning. In sociological analysis, "charisma" is a power of leadership or a certain type of authority that may have supernatural, superhuman, or any other kind of extraordinary origin. In this usage, "charisma" found its new place in the process of leadership and institution building in modern society. This definition of "charisma" is secular and asserts "denial of the validity of the sacred, and of what is accepted in any given society as sacred" (Eisenstadt 1968, p. xix).

In the Weberian sense of the word, "*charisma*" has also two opposite tendencies: to create and to destroy. This dichotomy between two different situations is the very potential of charismatic activities (Eisenstadt, xx). In Christianity, we perceive many concepts of charisma such as charisma of office *(Amtcharisma)*, charisma of kinship (*Geltilcharisma*), and hereditary charisma *(Erbcharisma)* or contact charisma. All of these concepts, "especially that of the charisma of office, have been used by Weber to denote the process through which the charismatic characteristics are transferred from unique personality or the unstructured group to orderly institutional reality" (Eisenstadt 1968, p. xxi).

There are two differences between religious, divinely usage of charisma and that of the secular. (1) In the religious context, charisma is mostly an inherited or inborn quality, whereas in the secular context, it is believed to be a constellation of personal characteristics. (2) Charisma in the Weberian usage more likely emerges during times of crisis and social upheaval; so it is situational. But in the former application, it is mostly individual. Contrasted to religious meaning, in the sociological context "charisma" is not regarded as a gift, but an attractive influential force belonging to irrational, exhilarating aspect of life that appears to answer to the question of meaning.

Similar charismatic virtues are honored in other religious traditions. Some observers have perceived a model of leadership and authority in Shiite Islam as a charismatic leadership. In this sense, Shi'ism is regarded as a millenarian movement founded on the basis of the right of prophet Muhammad's male descendants for leadership. Every descendant, who is called "Imam," inherits leadership from the former one up to the twelfth Imam who entered on occultation at 842H. ("Occultation" in Shiite Islam refers to a belief that the twelfth Imam who is the messianic figure was born but disappeared and will 1 day return and fill the world with justice.) Imams are recognized as charismatic leaders possessing this quality as inborn and should have it by their office too. Such beliefs have served to unite the faithful community over history. In this sense "charisma is considered the result of contact with a supernatural being from which the individual receives revelation and power enabling him to mediate spiritual grace to other people" (Parrindeh 1987, p. 218).

One can also find this tendency in Judaism. In this cultural context, the notion of *Barakah* among Muslims and of its Jewish counterpart *zechut avot* (ancestral merit) "connote a strong sense of inherited blessedness and ascribes virtue" and regarded as a source of legitimation and charismatization (Bilu and Ben-Ari 1995, pp. 226–229).

In Islamic philosophy, the term "*feyz*" literally means "grace" in the same sense as charismata in Christianity. *Feyz* is the first practice of God: everything emanates from Allah, since he is the Prime Agent. Therefore, the Prime Agent or *Fayyaz* – the one who emanates *feyz* or grace – is the very self-existent (Arab 2007, p. 424). In this sense, *feyz* means kindness. Some Islamic philosophers such as those who believe in the School of Illumination also use the term "*light*" (*noor*) instead of *feyz* to refer to the act of emanation. God is called light or "light of lights" (*noor al anvar*). Allah's flow of emanation, or the rise of

the sunlight over everything, would not be cut off. His eternity necessitates the everlasting process of emanation flowing from him onto beings (Suhrevardi 1976, p. 186).

"In this sense," as Hossein Nasr says, "the mind of a human being is continuously illuminated by the light of the Divine Intellect and revelation and protected from error by the grace provided by God" (Nasr 2006, p. 32). In fact, this interpretation of *feyz* or grace as light has its origin in Zoroastrianism (Nasr 2006, p. 229). In the religious application of the term, charisma is an extraordinary gift that mostly refers to kings and prophets. This godly gift is called *xvarnah* or *xvarah.* In the two ancient languages of Pahlavi and Avestai, the term means that the light or shining emanates from God onto Persian emperors in supporting them to govern, defeating their enemies, organizing society, constructing civilizations, discovery and contrivance, prophecy, intuition, and so on. Here again the original source of the term is religious (Nafisi 2002, p. 31). But in some cases, God chooses a certain individual – not necessarily a prophet or a king – who himself owns a personal capability requesting *Farrah* from God and through hard trainings become worthy to receive it (Dehghan 2002, p. 163). So, it seems that in this context, the separation between the secular and the religious, as it is predominant in Christianity, is confusing. The charisma of the kings could not be regarded clearly as religious as opposed to nonreligious and secular charisma. It is both a constellation of personal characteristics and divine gifts and endowments.

"Farrah," the newer form of the old words *xvarnah* or *xvarah*, has different meanings such as glory, greatness, light, force, and special authority of kings and prophets (Tabatabae'i 1996, p. 134). In narrower meanings resembling Christian usages, Farrah refers to some qualifications such as to think, to speak, and to act according to the "Just Religion" which is Zoroastrianism (Avesta, Zamiad yasht, 1:9). These modes are Zoroastrian styles of thinking, speaking, and acting (Avesta, Zamiad yasht, 1:79).

Farrah has two aspects: the first aspect enforces its human owner to do his or her social, spiritual, and moral responsibilities; authority; guardianship; and rule. The second aspect refers to the charismatic's insight into God and relation to Him (Dehghan 2002, pp. 27, 37, 163).

In modern usage, we also find charismatic movements founded by charismatic individuals possessing a human quality, which is mostly a leadership quality, without reference to the supernatural or divine grace. For example, despite the dissimilarity in their political aims, when we speak of Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution he headed, Gandhi's India, or Adolf Hitler, we do not intend some charismatic characteristics such as healing and revelation, but rather admiration and respect (Hajarian 2001, p. 170). In this sense, there is usually an elating unity between leader and followers. This relationship is precarious and the state of charismatic authority is transitory and "problems of political continuity necessarily accompany such a phenomenon" (Kruger and Silvert 1995, p. 296).

The concept of charisma has evolved over the years, progressively shifting from its religious usage, in which a certain individual is granted spiritual gifts of divine revelation, prophecy, special knowledge, faith, and leadership. The sociological usage is predominantly leader centered, situational, and secular. This nonreligious use was begun when Max Weber examined varieties of charismatic authority. For Weber, although charismatic individuals posses an extraordinary quality, the relationship between the leader's qualities as a charismatic individual on one hand and the followers' devotion to the leader on the other hand is of more importance.

Charisma is also found in other religious traditions such as Islam and Judaism, which is labeled under *Barakah* and *zechut avot*, respectively. Currently, one can observe that "charisma" is used as synonymous with popular appeals in magnetic or alluring movements, religious or not.

See Also

- ▶ Hero
- ▶ Miraj
- ▶ Muhammad

- Persona
- Possession
- Projection
- Prophets
- Sacred King
- Transference

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Charity

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How has charity been seen in religious tradition? How has it been understood by psychologists? What are the relations between religious affiliation and charitable activity, and how well do we understand the psychological processes involved?

Religion and Charity

The practice of charity is demanded in all religions (Argyle 2000): all major religions have clear requirements – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and others. Charity is generally seen in two ways in religious tradition. First, donating a fixed proportion of one's income and agricultural produce to appropriate beneficiaries is a religious duty. Religious traditions also endorse providing assistance – financial, food, and whatever else is required – to the needy. These two practices overlap, but there are distinct religious duties: taking and donating a fixed proportion of property, even if there is no desperately needy recipient and assisting the needy – even if one has already given away ones tithes, one is still obliged to help. Charity is considered as enhancing the spirituality of the donor and is regarded by many commentators as the highest religious virtue (e.g., Porter 1993; Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1796/1973).

Psychology and Charity

In psychology, the term "charity" is seldom indexed in social psychology and psychology of religion textbooks. This does not mean that the topic is seldom studied: charity has come under the heading of altruistic behavior in general

(Macaulay and Berkowitz 1970). Altruism has been defined as "behavior that aims at a termination or reduction of an emergency, a neediness, or disadvantage of others and that primarily does not aim at the fulfillment of own interests" (Montada and Bierhoff 1991), the behavior being carried out voluntarily.

There was an early debate about whether altruism, helpfulness, and charity can be truly selfless or whether they result from innate own group and kin helpfulness or other motivations which are not selfless. These include increased status, social desirability or social approval, and the assuaging of guilt (Carlsmith and Gross 1968), and the closeness of the relationship between donor and the person requesting or needing the help (Maple 2012). There has been focus on positive psychology and the benefits and importance of practicing psychological strengths. Seligman (2002) has argued that the practice of charity and kindness results in greater psychological health. For example, Thoits and Hewitt (2001) examined the positive consequences for well-being flowing from volunteer work. Park et al. (2004) showed that love and kindness were among the character strengths consistently and robustly associated with life satisfaction. Loewenthal (2007) cited the case of a depressed holocaust survivor who reported a steady gain in psychological well-being after being advised by a rabbi to give charity regularly.

How Does Religion Affect Charity?

Does religion promote altruism in general and charitable behavior in particular? Most recent work has supported the view that this is the case (Inaba and Loewenthal 2009). For example, in the UK, in 1993, those for whom religion was said to be very important gave about $50 monthly, compared to $15 monthly from those who said religion was not important (Argyle 2000). In the USA (Myers 1992), weekly church attenders gave away 3.8% of their income and nonattenders, 0.8%. Regnerus et al. (1998) reported that charitable giving was affected mainly by whether a person professed a religion, regardless of what that religion was. The relations between socioeconomic status and charitable giving are slightly complex, but on the whole, the better-off give away more. The straightforward explanation of these findings is that religiously active people are likely to behave according to religious injunctions. The relations between religion and charity apply not only to financial giving but also to voluntary work (Lynn and Smith 1991) and to humanitarian compassion (Perkins 1992). Religiosity is a much better predictor of charitable giving and activity than is economic status, and religion predicts giving to nonreligious causes as well as to religious causes (Brooks 2003).

Conclusion

We can conclude that there is growing evidence that religious activity and identity correlate very reliably with the practice of charity, and some suggest that charitable activity may promote psychological health. There is great scope for more detailed investigation of the cognitive and motivational factors that underlie these effects.

See Also

► Religiosity

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Child

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In describing the significance of the child and childhood, a brief historical overview provides a perspective in which to place the developments of psychology and religion in relation to the child. In the classical period, children were not considered individual beings, but were useful to the family and society in the fact that they would eventually become good citizens (Cunningham 2005, p. 23). In antiquity, children were often abandoned when families were not able to take care of them, to the extent that almost every family had abandoned at least one child (Cunningham 2005, p. 19). Christian emperors challenged this practice but seemed to not enforce penalties for it (Cunningham 2005, p. 25). Developments in theology increased the visibility of the experience of the child. With Augustine's *Confessions*, and his development of the idea of original sin, the child began to be seen as being "on par with the adult" in terms of its "moral dilemmas" (Cunningham 2005, p. 26). Caregiving and childrearing began to concern adults in the Middle Ages, as evidenced by the publication of literature relating to the care of children (Cunningham 2005, p. 29). However, it seems that the child of the medieval period was understood as less than fully human, being described as "lacking in adult attributes, marked by his or her deficiencies" (Cunningham 2005, p. 34).

An important transition began to take place from the era of Humanism and the Reformation, culminating in the nineteenth century. People started to believe that what happened to a child would contribute to what the adult person would become. Children thus became the subject of interest and even idealization. During the height of Romanticism, children were described as "fresh from the hand of God," but at the same time, some Puritan writers called for "rigid disciplines" which would break the will of the child (Cunningham 2005, pp. 29, 69). During the eighteenth century, especially among the middle and upper classes, a "wall of privacy" separated the family from the wider world, and the home came to symbolize the safe haven from the degradation which surrounded it (Cunningham 2005, p. 59). On the other hand, with the advent of industrialization, poor children were separated from their families at the age of ten and forced to work in grueling circumstances under the supervision of strangers (Cunningham 2005, p. 89).

The twentieth century has been called the "century of the child" (Cunningham 2005, p. 170). First, state governments took over from philanthropic organizations to provide compulsory schooling and outlaw child labor. Second, psychology demonstrated the influence of childhood on the adult self and began to see children as sexual persons. Finally, children began to be viewed as agents with rights (Cunningham 2005, pp. 160, 177). In the second half of the twentieth century, children asserted this autonomy as "parental authority declined," "[demanding] and [receiving] entrance into the adult world" in their teenage years (Cunningham 2005, p. 194). As children became members of the consumer culture, they began to exercise authority in ways that would have been unimaginable in previous centuries. In spite of this fact, children continue to be the victims of abuse and neglect and are seldom seen as complete persons, either in religious settings or within the wider culture.

Commentary

Psychology was born at the beginning of the "century of the child," and it provided its own view of childhood, suggesting that the riddle of the adult self was rooted in the experience of the child. Freud once claimed that the development of the superego was a direct result of the unusually long period of dependence on her parents which the human being experiences (Freud 1923/1960, p. 31). In his controversial *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud described childhood as a time in which the child experienced sexual satisfaction at the hands of her caregivers and began to entertain fantasies in relationship to them (Freud 1905/1962, pp. 90, 93). Freud concentrated his clinical work on the oedipal period, spanning between the ages of three and five, when the child negotiates these fantasies. If they are unresolved and repressed, they can become the bedrock for future neurosis, but if they are accessed through psychoanalysis, they can serve as a source of creativity. Freud occasionally alluded to anecdotes about children but only seems to have had one child patient, Little Hans (Freud 1920/1961, p. 13). Most of his clinical conclusions about childhood were drawn from his interpretations of the free associations of his patients, attempting to break through the barrier of repression that blocked out all memory of childhood sexuality.

In a quite different approach, Carl Jung explored the prevalence of the Divine Child motif across a wide range of religious and mythological material and suggested the presence of a "child archetype" (Jung and Kerenyi 1949, p. 111). This archetype gave the person who was in the process of individuation a ground in the "still existing state of childhood," thereby freeing her for future growth in responsibility (Jung and Kerenyi 1949, p. 113).

Anna Freud began direct work with children which shaped the development of ego psychology the theoretical field for which she was largely responsible. Erik H. Erikson began his psychoanalytic career teaching in a Montessori school under his tutelage and continued this interest in the direct experience as a source of psychological insight. In his first book, *Childhood and Society*, Erikson studied children in a variety of societies and cultures, placing the problems and concerns of children front and center (Erikson 1950/1963). While Freud thought of dreams as the "royal road to the unconscious," Erikson suggested that it was actually the play of children. Reflecting on the sayings of Jesus late in his life, Erikson marveled that Jesus claimed that the "kingdom" is only available to those who "turn and become like children" (Erikson 1981, p. 348). Erikson considered this exhortation to the "preservation and reenactment of the wonder of childhood," to be a humbling word to those psychologists who imagined they had "discovered" childhood in the first place (Erikson 1981, p. 349).

The child's earliest experiences became important in the object relations school of psychoanalytic psychology. Margaret Mahler's influential theory of infant development traced the adult psyche back to the earliest experience of the child with his mother (Mahler et al. 1975, p. 43). From this perspective, the child's relationship to his mother in the preoedipal period proved to be

important to psychic health in even more fundamental ways than the child's resolution of the oedipal complex. D. W. Winnicott, a pediatrician who became a psychoanalyst in the object relations school, focused his clinical work on the direct observation of mothers and infants and developed the theory of the transitional object. The transitional object was an object chosen, or "created," by the child that existed in the space between mother and infant. This object received the child's affection and rage, yet remained intact, thereby helping to establish the child's own sense of self.

For Heinz Kohut, being denied the original experiences of childhood narcissism in which one is the object of love and attention can provoke serious and long-lasting damage in the child and subsequent adult. Kohut found himself increasingly working with persons who had an extremely fragile self-structure, including feelings of unreality and a strange sensation of the passage of time. Kohut suggested that while "classical analysis discovered the depression of the child in the adult," his own version of psychology had "discovered the depression of the adult in the depths of the child," in the child who senses that her development will not be fulfilled and thus sabotages her own growth with isolation (Kohut 1985, pp. 215–216).

Religion has attempted to address the needs of children, but it has also perpetuated many myths that have been harmful to children. Judaism was born in a Near Eastern context in which child sacrifice was a current religious practice. In spite of the attempts to distance themselves from this demand, stories such as the binding of Isaac and the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter indicate that such traces had not entirely disappeared (Bergmann 1992, pp. 76, 93). In a psychoanalytic view, such images perform an important function, bearing their roots in the "murderous wishes of children directed at their parents and murderous wishes of parents directed at their children" (Bergmann 1992, p. 314). David Bakan focuses on the latter, suggesting that Job may have not lost his children, but wished they were dead, as a reflection of a father anticipating his own rejection (Bakan 1968, pp. 110, 116). Religion addresses the trauma of a forbidden and buried past, but in its attempts to do, it may sometimes leave traces of the original wish. In the case of Christianity, the trauma of these wishes is reflected again in the sacrifice of the Son to the Father (Bergmann 1992, p. 315).

There are also more redeeming traces of the meaning of children within religion. As mentioned earlier, the statement of Jesus that all must become like children as well as his invitation to children to be close to him provide counterpoints to some of the cruel imagery of the Judeo-Christian tradition, even that which stands behind his own sacrifice. The intimacy with which Jesus addressed God, using the familiar Aramaic form for father, indicates the childlike nature of religious belief. Religious persons have often seen themselves as God's children and thus incorporated into a wider family in which they are cared for by God.

However, within religious circles, children themselves have often been neglected as sources of insight. While the education and moral formation of children has been a traditional religious activity, the experience of children itself has seldom served as a centerpiece of theological thought (exceptions are Coles 1991; Miller-McLemore 2003; Lester 1985). Frequently, those who educate children in religious faith are not given the same status as ordained leaders in the tradition. In the same way, religion frequently neglects the actual experience of children, focusing instead upon adult emotional and spiritual needs.

See Also

- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Divine Child
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Judaism and Psychology
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Klein, Melanie
- ▶ Puer Aeternus
- ▶ Superego

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Child Abuse and the Psychology of Religion

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There is sometimes disagreement between health, mental health, and law enforcement professionals as to whether a specific incident can rightly be referred to as child abuse. Whether parental behavior is characterized as abuse is frequently influenced by factors such as the seriousness of any resulting injury, the age and developmental level of the child, and the frequency or chronicity of the act. Societal perceptions of what constitutes abuse, in contrast to discipline, may also vary across regions and time periods. Despite the variation that exists in the definitions of child abuse and neglect relied on by researchers and by government, social welfare, and law enforcement agencies, it is now recognized that the maltreatment of children in high-income countries, including the United States, constitutes a major social welfare and public health problem.

Child abuse is rarely explainable by one determinative factor. Rather, a multitude of circumstances likely contribute to parental behavior that may be considered abusive. Parental approaches to child rearing are influenced by individual-level characteristics, such as the parent's personality; the parent's formal and informal networks (exosystem), such as though that are developed through employment, school, place of residence, and religion; and the larger environment in which the parenting occurs (macrosystem), that is, the cultural, social, legal, and political environment, including shared beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors. Parents obtain support from within these systems: emotional support in raising their children and guidance and instrumental support in the form of advice and assistance with child rearing.

Some individuals may look to their religious affiliation and religion-related activities as sources of support in their childrearing efforts. Accordingly, how individuals interpret the scriptures of their faith, how clergy depict the meaning of that scripture, and the extent to which parents rely on their clergy and their faith community for a sense of identity and acceptance have enormous implications for how they raise their children. Religious leaders may serve as an important source of advice to parents on the issue of child discipline.

It has been suggested that individuals who read the Bible literally may be more likely to abuse their children physically, relying on passages such as those found in Proverbs 13:24 ("Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them") and

Proverbs 22:15 ("Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy, but the rod of discipline drives it far away"). However, there are no empirical data to support this presupposition.

Research has, though, found an association between exclusive reliance on faith-based care and what has been termed the medical neglect of children. Exclusive reliance on faith-based care, such as prayer, the laying on of hands, and exorcism, may in some situations lead to the disability and/or death of the child that would have been otherwise preventable through the use of standard medical care. In some instances, such as the use of conversion or reparative therapy to "convert" a homosexual child to heterosexuality, the religiously based treatment may cause the child to have a disorder where none existed previously, e.g., depression. Parents whose children are not healed through such efforts or who die despite such efforts may find themselves blamed and isolated by their religious communities for the perceived inadequacy of their faith.

Adults who have experienced abuse as children, whether or not that abuse was premised on religious beliefs, not infrequently change their religious affiliation, reject religion or formal religious practices, and/or believe that God is distant or unloving. In some cases, religiosity or spirituality may moderate the development of posttraumatic symptoms. Mental health professionals providing services to clients who have suffered abuse associated with religious beliefs may find that some clients wish to explore their relationship to religion and a deity, while others reject an exploration of such issues. In some communities, spirituality-based intervention programs for the treatment of abuse-related trauma may be available.

Mental health providers may work not only with clients who have been abused but also those who have been implicated in the commission of child abuse. Just as some scriptural passages may be interpreted literally to characterize and/or justify abuse as recommended discipline, so too can scriptural passages be utilized to counsel alternative approaches to child rearing. As one example, Psalm 37:8 provides, "Refrain from anger and forsake wrath." In some circumstances, mental health providers may find it helpful to consult with clergy to gain additional understanding of possible approaches.

See Also

▶ Family-Based Religious Abuse

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Chinese Cowherd and the Weaver Girl

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"The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl" is one of the four great love legends in China. This was listed by the Chinese government as one of the intangible cultural heritages in 2008 (ihchina). The

legend expresses the conscious and unconscious themes of separated lovers.

The Mythical Legend

There are mainly two versions of the mythical legend as described below. They express the ancient Chinese beliefs that souls can appear as stars and do cosmic tasks similar to earthly ones and can be reborn on earth as gods/goddesses or people, according to their karma.

Version One: The Emperor of Heaven as the Authority

According to the story in *Xiao Shuo* edited into the encyclopedia-style book *Records in Tianzhong* by Yaowen Chen in the Ming dynasty (1368–1664 CE) (Yaowen). There was a weaver girl (*Zhi Nü*) in the East of the vast starry River of Heaven (the "Silver River" in Chinese, the "Milky Way" in English), who was the precious daughter of the Emperor of Heaven.

For 10,000 years the Weaver Girl (*Zhi Nü*) had woven stunning, enchanting, colorful clouds into the starry clothes of the sky. But she was lonely and sad. So the Emperor of Heaven took pity on her loneliness and married her to the Cowherd (*Niu Lang*) in the West of the River of Heaven.

They were very happy, but she stopped weaving after marriage, just indulging herself in the cozy family life and neglecting her cosmic weaving task, which made the Emperor of Heaven very angry, because everyone loved to gaze at her colorful clouds of stars. So he ordered her back to the East of the River of Heaven and only allowed them to meet during the evening of July 7 every year.

The story of this version happened largely in Heaven. So we can say that it is a myth (Fig. 1).

The star's photo shows the positions of (1) the star Niu Lang, the Cowherd, that is the left lower star of the triangle, which belongs to the Aquila constellation (the upper star of the triangle is Aquila) and (2) the star Zhi Nu, Weaver Girl,

Chinese Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, Fig. 1 The Silver River (Milky Way) and the Lover Stars (Baike) (copyright-free)

that is the right middle star of the triangle in the Silver River (Milky Way).

Version Two: The Queen Mother as the Royal Authority

This version is longer, more widely spread, and well-known in China. It first took place in Heaven, developed on Earth, and ended in Heaven. The Cowherd (*Niu Lang*) and the Weaver Girl (*Zhi Nü*) have long been seen as two stars in Heaven, who loved each other deeply. But their love was against the heavenly principle, because only those who have gotten rid of human desires could become a heavenly star and stay in heaven forever. Otherwise they would have to become a human again, because of their own human-like thoughts and actions. So the Cowherd star was banished from Heaven to the human world on Earth. As the granddaughter of Queen Mother (*Wang Mu Niangniang*), who was the leader of

all Goddesses, the Weaver Girl star was punished by having to weave "the clothes of the sky" – awesome, wondrous, beautiful colorful clouds, with magical silk, that change according to the different times and seasons.

After the Cowherd star was expelled from Heaven, the Weaver Girl star was so sad that she often washed her face with tears because of missing him. She turned to weaving incessantly, in order to try and make Queen Mother happy, so that the Cowherd star could come back to heaven sooner. One day, another sympathetic Goddess begged the permission of Queen Mother to let the Goddesses and Weaver Girl swim in the Green-Lotus pool on Earth. Queen Mother took pity on the Weaver Girl star, allowing her to swim together with the Goddesses, but she required that they must go back to Heaven without delay.

Meanwhile, for his daring to love the Weaver Girl, daughter of the Emperor of Heaven, the Cowherd was banished from heaven, then born in an earthly farmer's family, and named *Niu Lang*. After his parents died, he lived together with his elder brother and sister-in-law. His sister-in-law treated him so badly that he had to live by himself with an old cow. But this was a special cow who was highly spiritual. One day, the old cow suddenly spoke to *Niu Lang,* saying "*Niu Lang*, you should go to the Green-Lotus pool today. There are some Goddesses swimming there; hide the red robe, and its owner will become your wife."

Niu Lang was very surprised to find the old cow talking, but he did as he was told. When they saw the country boy *Niu Lang* approaching, all the other Goddesses flew up to the sky like birds, and only the Weaver Girl star was left, because she could not find her robe. But she quickly found her robe and put it on. Then, when *Niu Lang* approached the beautiful Weaver Girl Goddess, and asked her to marry him, he did not know who she was. But she was the Weaver Girl star (who was later called *Zhi Nü*). The Weaver Girl was so thrilled to be reunited with her beloved *Niu Lang,* the one she missed day and night! So they happily married on Earth and later had one son and one daughter. But such human love was forbidden in heaven. When this was discovered by the Queen Mother, she was so angry that she sent some heavenly warriors and generals to Earth to take the Weaver Girl star back to Heaven.

As the warriors approached, one day while *Zhi Nü* was making food at home, *Niu Lang* hurried back home from the field and sorrowfully spoke to her with red swollen eyes: "Our elder brother, the cow passed away. But before death, he told me to take off his skin and deposit it in a safe place, so I can fly to the sky with it someday." Hearing this, *Zhi Nü* was puzzled about the cow's death, because she knew the cow was the Golden-Cow star, who was also expelled from Heaven for his trying to argue with Heaven for fairness for the Cowherd star.

Then just when they took off the skin of the old cow and buried it, a strong wind arose. Suddenly, the heavenly warriors and generals encircled them, grabbed the Weaver Girl star and fled up into the sky! This astounded and startled the Cowherd *Niu Lang* so much that he did not know what to do. Then he heard the cow's voice urging him to quickly take his cow skin and chase up into the sky after his beloved Weaver Girl *Zhi Nü*. Soon *Zhi Nü* heard the voice of *Niu Lang* following and calling to her.

Looking back, she was excited to see *Niu Lang* flying nearer and nearer to her, with the cow's skin on his shoulder and at the same time carrying their two dear children in a pair of bamboo baskets. But, when they almost met, the Queen Mother arrived on the clouds. She took out her golden hair fork and drew a cosmic line that divided the two lovers. It became a vast heavenly river (the Milky Way, or Silver River in Chinese). Its roaring waves appeared, which separated the family forever.

The two lovers on each side of the river cried so hard that even the heavenly warriors and generals could not help being sad, and this also moved the Queen Mother. So, she relented a bit and allowed *Niu Lang* and the two children to stay together in Heaven. She asked a crow to pass the order that the family was allowed to meet every 7 days, but the crow misunderstood it (an old folktale motif) to mean once a year on July 7. Magpie birds were so moved by their love that they came to make a colorful bridge

Chinese Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, Fig. 2 The Cosmic Lovers rejoin (Baike) (copyright-free)

over the Silver River with their bodies and let them unite there.

Hence, in the autumn evenings, people will see a big and bright star twinkling on each side of the Milky River, which are the Cowherd star, holding their son and daughter, and the Weaver Girl star. According to the legend, if people on earth listen quietly among the grape leaves on the evening of July 7, according to the Chinese lunar calendar, they will hear the fairy music and the chattering of the two happy lovers.

In ancient records, the Weaver Girl was regarded as being beautiful and versatile, so girls usually beg for intelligence and crafts from the Weaver Girl on the evening of July 7, so that day is also called "the day of begging for skills." Because the participants are mostly girls, the day is also called "the daughters' day." On that day, women, especially daughters, will gather in the court with new clothes, put all kinds of fruits and cakes on the tables, kindle the incense, and pray for the two stars. This ritual is to ask the heavenly couple to bless the girls so they can be more skilled in crafts, be more intelligent, and have a happy family. Then they would be able to communicate with each other, teach other girls different ways of needlework, embroidery, and other crafts.

The Fig. 2 photo shows the family uniting on the Magpie bridge.

The Conscious and Unconscious in the Mythical Legend

From the first version, in which the Heavenly Emperor as the authority, we can see that the text is mythic. The Emperor of Heaven represented and sanctified earthly patriarchal social power, which his daughter obeyed. Perhaps she did not dare to complain, because we did not hear her complaining of her hard work and loneliness, let alone her wish to marry. Maybe her enjoying marriage was her unconscious rebellion against the heavenly law, although consciously she accepted the law. After her father married her to the cowherd star, her happy married life with *Niu Lang* aroused her desire for a more cozy, comfortable life, immersed in her unconscious, and led her to give up her work as the weaver of colorful heavenly clouds. But this way she stirred up her Father's anger, and so he separated her from her husband.

The earliest recording of the two-star symbolism was in *Shijing• Xiaoya• Dadong* (《诗经·小雅·大东》). The eight-line poem only described what jobs the two stars were doing; it does not mention their relationship. A complaint of heavy work and less reward was regarded as criticism of the cruel domination of the rulers in Western Zhou dynasty (1027 BCE?–771 BCE).

Perhaps in the Western Zhou dynasty people lived a tough life, working hard but getting less, so they began to admire the good life of the Shenxian (roughly equal to "god and goddess") represented by the stars. Star worship in China has existed since ancient times. When people were observing the two stars that can be seen clearly on each side of the Silver River in the evenings of July, they imagined the stars to be working hard (twinkling all the time) but owning nothing. So perhaps consciously the poem expressed people's

complaint, but unconsciously, it implied a kind of encouragement to endure a hard life, taking the stars as an example to learn from, as well as the hope for a happily married life. This conflict drives the story.

The poem in *Gu shi shi jiu shou• tiao tiao qian niu xing* (《古诗十九首•迢迢牵牛星》) first depicted the love story between the cowherd star and the weaver girl star. When it reached the period of Southern and Northern dynasties (420–589 CE), the myth developed into a legend marked by the stars coming to live in the human world, as in the version of Queen Mother as the authority.

Chinese traditional religious culture, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, all are strongly against excessive human desires, especially sexual desire, which is regarded as the greatest evil because it is the primary reason leading to *samsara,* so romantic love is not allowed in heaven. That's why the Cowherd star and the Weaver Girl star did not protest when he was expelled from Heaven, because they clearly knew they had violated the heavenly law.

Niu Lang and *Zhi Nü* lived a typical happy family life as a woman weaving at home with her husband farming outside. But consciously she knew that her love and life in the secular world was against the heavenly law. That is why she did not rebel against heavenly authority after being discovered, which shows her deeply rooted unconscious respect for divine authority. In the second version, heaven's authority is represented by the Queen Mother, the maternal power.

Because the crow unconsciously made them meet only once a year by wrongly passing the information, it has been used to refer to those who announce bad news as having a "crow's mouth" – the saying that usually indicates that there are bad things to happen. Also, because the magpies are glad to make a bridge to help them to meet, they have been called "the happy birds" – this is the saying that usually indicates that there are good things to happen.

The overall and worldwide psychological theme is one of separated lovers and social-religious pressures that try to keep them apart. The lovers' struggle, between being required to obey authority and their desire for love and marriage, is a widespread social-religious and romantic-psychological tension, also evident in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

See Also

- ▶ Chinese Popular Religions
- ▶ Chinese Religions
- ▶ Guanyin
- ▶ Women in Chinese Religions
- ▶ Women and Religion

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Chinese Popular Religions

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Despite restrictions and prohibitions by a modernizing state, first by the Guomindang government of Republican China (191–1949) and then more severely and systematically attacked by the Chinese Communist Party (1949–the present), Chinese popular religion continues to be practiced in China and the offshore Chinese communities of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and pockets in Southeast Asia. Long condemned by Western missionaries and Chinese intellectuals and officials as "backward," "superstitious," and an obstacle to China's modernization, since the 1980s in Mainland China, popular religion has sprung back to life in many parts of rural and small-town China. The boundaries between popular religion, Daoism, and Buddhism are very porous, and people often feel free to worship in deity temples as well as Daoist and Buddhist ones.

The rational state ideology of national identity, patriotism, and economic development has not been able to satisfy people's psychological, emotional, and spiritual quests for the meaning of life and death and for a deeper connection with family and local community rather than the nation-state. Through rituals to honor deities and ancestors and to ward off demons, people express their desires for health and longevity in the face of unpredictable natural forces that rule the earth and the human body. They also exhibit a longing for family prosperity, an ethical society, and social justice in an often corrupted social world where the strong, such as officials, often oppress the weak. The gods, goddesses, buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Daoist immortals are regarded as benevolent forces that are omniscient and legitimate because they help the needy and uphold ultimate justice by punishing evildoers in this world or the afterlife. Thus, when human officials and the law fail to function as they should, there is psychological solace in a notion of ultimate justice that transcends human life spans.

Shamanism

Shamanism is also called "spirit possession" or "spirit mediumship" and its history extends far back into archaic China. Today, shamans are gifted individuals who have special abilities to see and communicate with ancestors, gods, and demons in other worlds and are also believed to heal illnesses where modern medicine has not succeeded. Male shamans are often called *shenhan* or *shentong*, and female shamans are often called *linggu* or *wupo*, although *wupo* has a slightly pejorative sense. The act of inviting, speaking to, and being possessed by a spirit is called *tiaodashen* (跳大神) or "dancing for the great spirit." In trying to diagnose a medical or psychological problem of their clients, shamans enter into altered states of consciousness, losing their self when their bodies are overtaken by a deity, ancestor, or demon who speaks through them, often in an unfamiliar voice. When the shaman awakes, he or she may not remember anything from their trance, but they often know what steps their clients can take to appease an angry spirit and improve their situation. In healing illnesses, shamans will prescribe prayers and chants, rituals, food and alcohol offerings to spirits, good deeds, and sometimes the burning and ingesting of magical written talismans. Shamans usually operate out of their own homes, where they receive their clients and perform rituals, but sometimes a local deity temple allows them to operate there in public. In many areas of China today, female shamans outnumber male ones.

Feng Shui (風水) or Chinese Geomancy

Chinese civilization invented the magnetic compass or *luopan* several thousand years ago, but it was not used for navigation until much later in its

history. Early compasses were used to site graves, tombs, and dwellings in auspicious locations and directions to ensure the well-being and good fortune of their occupants and their families, kinship networks, and descendants. Today, as the Chinese government increasingly bans earth burials, *feng shui* masters now often apply their expertise to siting new homes, factories, and office buildings.

A primary principle of *feng shui* (which means "wind and water") is that human constructions should be in accordance with the flow of *qi* (pronounced *chee*) in the landscape. *Qi* is the originary "life force" or "vital energy" of the universe that flows through the cosmos, the veins of the earth, and throughout the human body. *Qi* is believed to endow life-giving positive energies. The compass taps into the earth's electromagnetic field in order to establish the best ways to ensure the smooth flow of the *qi* towards the structure or to block the bad energies or feared unconscious energies. Hills, large rocks, the slant of the land, and bodies of still or running water in the landscape must also be taken into account when siting against the four cardinal directions. The temporal dimension, such as the current season, and alignments with particular stars and constellations in the heavens are also important. The ancient technology of the eight trigrams is another central principal of *feng shui*. Each trigram is composed of three horizontal lines, either broken or unbroken, giving eight variant trigrams. These eight trigrams are based on the waxing and waning of *yin* and *yang* forces in the cosmos at a particular time and the alternating five phases of the "five elements" (metal, earth, fire, water, and wood) which make up the earth's matter. Finally, the number of the family members and their sex also play a role in determining how to site the structure. *Feng shui* seeks to locate and align the self and loved ones into the natural terrain in a balanced way, in harmony with the movement of *qi* energies and natural laws, so as to ensure smoothness, stability, and security in their lives. It is believed that radical intervention and violation of natural flows will disturb natural balances and cosmic order, resulting in misfortunes in life. Thus, psychologically, not consulting a *feng shui* master before building will result in anxiety for the future of one's family and descendants.

Divination

When a family member dies, many families consult a diviner to calculate the best date and time to hold the funeral, because the right timing will ensure family prosperity. Indeed, any important undertaking, activity, or event calls for consulting a diviner. People want to know whether or not to start a new business and when to start it, whether or not to marry or divorce, whom to marry, whether they will have a son or daughter, when to start a long trip, whether their child will pass an important examination, or whether they will recover from an illness. On the eve of the Chinese New Year, crowds will flock to the most popular local temples to consult with diviners about what the New Year will bring them in good or ill fortunes.

Ancestor Worship and Appeasement of Ghosts

Ancient ancestor worship is part of Confucian culture which teaches filial piety towards one's parents and respect for the elderly and regular rituals to honor and remember them after they are deceased. Within the home, photographs of the deceased parents and grandparents are often hung up and receive incense and food offerings on their birthdays and festivals. The annual Qingming or "Tomb-Sweeping" Festival in Springtime for honoring deceased family members. Families will make a picnic trip to the family tombs with food and grain alcohol offerings and sweep the graves clear of weeds. Psychologically, this reinforces family identity and a sense of continuity through the generations, even though it may require the repression of negative memories of the deceased.

Lineages are large kinship organizations whose families all trace back through the father's descent line to a common male founding ancestor

many generations in the past, often recorded in genealogies. Many lineages have their own ancestor hall where lineage members gather to present food and alcohol offerings in rituals of ancestor sacrifice. Many of these sacrificial ceremonies still follow the basic liturgy set forth by the Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi back in the twelfth century CE. Psychologically, these rituals reinforce family and kinship solidarity and identity, a sense of life after death for all, and respect for the elderly.

People who die without leaving descendants are often pitied because they will not have anyone to remember them and make offerings. When they die, they are thought to become "hungry ghosts" or "orphan ghosts" (*guhun*) who harbor resentment towards the living and to cause trouble. People who die an unnatural or unjust death, such as a grisly accident or murder, are also thought to become wandering ghosts who can cause harm to the living. Families try to appease these restless spirits with offerings, especially on the Buddhist festival of Universal Salvation (*pudu*). The aim of this festival is to help the souls of the dead who are languishing in purgatory get released. Psychologically, ghosts invoke people's guilt about abandoning or mistreating strangers in their midst and enjoin people to treat beggars and non-kin with kindness. Ghosts teach people that all human beings deserve to be remembered.

Deity Worship

Worship of gods or goddesses forms the heart of popular religion. China has always been a polytheistic culture with innumerable deities (Fig. 1). Nature deities personify natural phenomena such as a constellation, the sun or moon, a river or mountain, or an animal, such as a dragon or tiger. Psychologically, one feels more secure and confidant in praying and making offerings to them to gain their aid. Most gods were once a human being who made a great contribution to humankind or who led an exemplary selfless life helping others. Some gods are so ancient that their biographies are more like mythologies: the God of Agriculture (who receives offerings for a good harvest in the face of uncontrollable natural forces), the Western Queen Mother, and the Jade Emperor (the supreme deity). Examples of major gods or goddesses worshipped across China include Guandi, the God of War (once an admired, model righteous general); Mazu, the maritime goddess of the southern seas (who is called on to rescue drowning sailors); Long Wang, the Dragon King who helps bring rain; Wen Chang, the God of Literature who helps students on exams; and Bao Gong, the upright god who defends justice and honesty in officialdom. These are some of the prominent gods worshipped across China and the offshore Chinese communities of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Southeast Asia. Local

Chinese Popular Religions, Fig. 1 Center: Guan Gong, A God of War, with his son Guan Ping to the *right* and Zhou Cang to the *left*. Baosheng Dadi Temple, Xiamen City, China (Photo courtesy of the author)

communities also have their lesser known local deities or tutelary gods. One prays to the gods to request help in life, to swear an oath to do good deeds, or to ask for forgiveness of sins. Worship takes the form of bowing; kowtowing on the floor; offering incense, food, and grain alcohol; and burning imitation money in deity temples.

In temple rituals, the gods are often arranged in a rough hierarchical order of differential ranks. The images of many male gods are dressed up like officials of the old imperial state, and in ritual processions, they are carried out of the temple in a palanquin with a retinue of guards and sometimes shamanistic troops. The ritual procession takes the god to inspect the boundaries of the local community he is responsible for protecting, just like imperial officials in the old days. Anthropologists have called this hierarchical arrangement of gods resembling human officials, the "celestial bureaucracy," a unique feature of Chinese popular religion. These images not only express divine sanction for social hierarchies but also project an ideal officialdom of benevolent gods against which human officials are measured and uphold a transcendant justice that is higher than the power of human officials. Thus, corrupt local officials may escape the law with their venality, but psychologically, some may also fear the wrath of the gods.

In ritual processions in Taiwan, the surging and devout crowds, the cacophonous firecrackers, and the shamanistic trances and self-mutilations all contribute to an overpowering psychological and religious experience for believers and a grand spectacle for outside observers. In Mainland China, due to official restrictions, both actual and psychological, religious events are more sober and restrained, in keeping with the emphasis on secularism in the society.

See Also

- ▶ Amita Buddha
- ▶ Chan Buddhism
- ▶ Chinese Religions
- ▶ Goddess Spirituality
- ▶ Guanyin
- ▶ I Ching
- ▶ Indigenous Religions
- ▶ Ritual
- ▶ Sacred Mountains
- ▶ Shamanic Healing
- ▶ Shamans and Shamanism
- ▶ Women in Chinese Religions
- ▶ Wong Tai Sin

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Chinese Queen Mother of the West: Xi Wang Mu (西王母)

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The Chinese Queen Mother of the West (*Xi Wang Mu*) is a very ancient goddess who was absorbed into Daoism. Her powers include the peaches of fertility and immortality, and the female Yin. She originated in the Kunlun Mountain mythology, which is the most complete and large collection

of ancient Chinese mythology. The large Kunlun Mountain Range is on the border between the Xinjian province and the northern border of Tibet. Its highest mountain is called Kunlun Goddess (*Liushu Shan*), rising 7167 m (23,514 ft). In very early Chinese mythology, this region was ruled by the *Queen Mother of the West*. The mythical region slowly moved farther west into an intangible region, as the Silk Road brought China Western curiosities such as Greek images. Her tradition is an important one of the intangible cultural heritages listed by the Chinese government (ihchina 2014).

Xi Wang Mu is also called "*Wang Mu (Queen Mother),*" "*Jin Mu(Gold Mother),*" "*Yao chi Lao Mu (Old Mother of the Yao Pool),*" "*Yao Chi Jin Mu (Gold Mother of the Yao Pool),*" "*Gui Shan Jin Mu (Gold Mother in Tortoise Mountain),*" "*Jin Mu Yuan Jun (Gold Mother the First Lady),*" "*Wang Mu Niangnian (Queen Mother Her Majesty),*" "*Xian Mu,*" and so on. Her images and beliefs in different times and different Asian countries made her become a "Goddess with thousands of faces."

Early Shamanism

The earliest record of the Mother of the West was found on oracle bone inscriptions from the fifteenth century BCE that record sacrifices to "Western Mother" (Cahill 1993). The text *Shan Hai Jing* (*Mountain-Sea Sutra*) appeared about the period of the Warring States (475 BCE–221 BCE). It had the earliest record of *Queen Mother of the West*, who lived in a cave of a jade Kunlun Mountain, and was a fearful creature with a human face, tiger's teeth, a leopard's tail, and flowing decorations on her hair. She was sometimes portrayed wearing a crown signifying an ancient tool of weaving. She sat on a shamanic stool situated on top of the mountain's steps (like an *axis mundi*), with a cane in her hand; she was good at gathering people by whistling and had three birds called *sanqingniao*(三青鸟) that fetched food for her. When she wanted to visit someone or some place, one bird would go in advance to be the ambassador, the other two would go together with her and on each side of her for protection. These qualities were typically shamanic. This mythic image suggests that she may have been the leader of a tribe, half-human and half-animal. This image may be the interpretation of a shamanic woman who wore symbolic tiger and leopard clothing and ornaments. Symbols on bronze sacrificial vessels associated her with a tiger. In China, tigers were western Chinese symbols since neolithic times, an agent of death, and transportation into the spirit world, before it was linked to the Queen Mother (Cahill 1993, p. 13).

The Queen Mother of the West had high authority, because she was believed to govern plague, pestilence, medicine, and heavenly punishment. In archaic times, her image as half-human and half-animal may have made it easy for her to be welcomed and supported both by humans and animals, in a worldview with thin barriers between humans and nature. Her unique image differentiated her from others, and granted her authority. This might be regarded as being given by Heaven, which became the basis for her being promoted above the image of a shamanic human. The earliest text after the oracle bones was in an early classic of nature mysticism: *Zhuang zi,* dating from perhaps the third century BCE.

Early Dynastic Relations

During the Warring States period (403–221 BCE), we find better textual sources. Several texts seem to describe different goddesses, each called *Xi Wang Mu*. They may have emerged from various social levels or local cults. Here she was described as a teacher, spirit of holy mountains, shaman, directional deity, divine weaver (creator), and star goddess (Cahill 1993, p. 13). By the end of the Warring States, these each merged into one goddess. Warring States authors elevated the Queen Mother to teacher of Emperor of Yu the Great. Since teachers were considered superior to their students, this gave *Xi Wang Mu* a great

promotion, not only to teacher of an emperor, but a leading figure in Chinese government circles. She was revered in the superior and sacred role of legitimizing imperial rule, thus blending religion and politics.

Queen Mother was involved in a text from 3 BCE in *The History of the Han,* describing wildly enthusiastic people running around barefoot in a collective trance, just before the end of the Western Han Dynasty, when a drought and widespread disorder threatened to bring down that Dynasty. They waved hemp manikins, called the wand of the Queen Mother's edict, beat drums, shouted, disrupted harvests, and passed through many kingdoms on their way to the capital city. They had festivals with singing and dancing and passed out texts reading: "The Mother tells the people that those who wear this talisman will not die." This was the first recorded Chinese messianic, millenarian movement, and was seen as a rise in *Yin* power (Ebrey 1996/2004, p. 73; Cahill 1993, pp. 21–22). Her political influence at court was apparently weakened by these disruptive demonstrations.

The Humanization of *Xi Wang Mu*

Xi Wang Mu was later widely regarded as one of the Grand Mother Goddesses, together with the creator goddess *Nǚ Wa*. The highlight of her history was during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE). With the development of Chinese society, *Xi Wang Mu's* image discarded the old tiger teeth and leopard tail and changed into an elegant, graceful woman and national leader, suitable for a royal court. She was seen as queen of the land of the dead (Cahill 1993, p. 239). During the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), she grew in importance and absorbed functions of other deities. She began to control the stars and metals and, most importantly, immortality and the yin (female) side of the yin-yang dualism of *Qi.* According to the records of *Huang Di Chu Jun Jue*, *Xuan Nǚ Zhuan*, and *Huang di Nei Zhuan*, *Xi Wang Mu* helped *Huang Di*, an ancient Emperor regarded as the forefather of the Han tribe, to defeat his powerful enemy *Chi You,* and he united the nation. The book *Jia Yi Xin Shu,* the chapter *Xiu Zheng Yu,* recorded an incident in the life of the ancient Emperor *Yao, who* was trapped by an enemy army on a mountain called Du Shan, so he went to nearby *Xi Wang Mu* asking for help. Excavated from the tomb of *Wei Xiang Wang*, the book *Mu Tian Zi Zhuan*, published during the Warring States, recorded *Zhou Mu Wang*'s visit to *Xi Wang Mu* with precious gifts, such as white jade. *Xi Wang Mu* asked whether *Zhou Mu Wang* would visit her again with songs. Two other books: *Zhu Shu Ji Nian* and *Shi Ji* recorded this event. *Xi Wang Mu* began to communicate frequently with the leaders of the central continent. By about 400 CE, bronze mirrors, considered numinous and magical, appeared and some had pictures of the Queen Mother on the back. They were found in graves, with expressions of hope for immortality through the Goddess.

The Queen Mother was sometimes paired as consort with the King Father of the East (*Dong Wang Gong*), who represented the masculine force of Yang, and kept the records of the Daoist kings, while the Queen Mother of the West represented feminine Yin power (Ebrey 1996/2004, p. 72). She was depicted ruling a Kunlun Mountain paradise and riding a white crane, symbolizing long life. She was attended by girls ("Jade Maidens") and had an orchard with peaches of immortality and five fairy handmaidens whose colors represented the four points and center of the compass. The Queen and King had nine sons and 24 daughters. The most beloved of the Eight Daoist Immortals *Li Tieguai* was the first of the eight to gain immortality, becoming a student of *Xi Wang Mu,* after she healed an ulcer in his leg. He was portrayed as a lame beggar with an iron crutch and was the patron deity of herbal healers and exorcists (Perkins 1999, p. 589). The Queen Mother absorbed the powers to protect against disaster and grant children. She was increasingly associated with Daoism and Daoist monks, which had been growing since the fourth century BCE.

The Immortalization of *Xi Wang Mu*

The enthusiastic pursuit of longevity by the Qin Emperor *Qin Shi Huang* and *Han Wu Di* made immortalization very popular, so *Xi Wang Mu* gained another function. She could grant immortality to worthy persons and refuse it to others, including emperors. She could take and give life and babies to people. In the book *Huai Nan Zi,* the chapter *Lan Ming Xun* reported that *Hou Yi* requested from *Xi Wang Mu* the elixir of immortality, but his wife *Chang E* ate it and became so light that she flew up to the moon and became immortal there. The book *Jiao shi Yi Lin* recorded that *Ji* (the agricultural official of Emperor *Yao*) visited *Xi Wang Mu* and requesting good children. Also *Han Wu Di* asked for medicine from her. The theme of flying on dragons, clouds, horses, or cranes in visions and poetry became widespread.

The Official Beliefs of the Daoist *Xi Wang Mu*

During the natural disasters at the end of Western Han Dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE), suffering people turned to *Xi Wang Mu* for help. In the book *Han Shu*, the chapter *Yuan Hou Zhuan* recorded that the Han Emperor *Wang Mang* (45 BCE–23 CE) gave orders to pray to *Xi Wang Mu*, which made belief in her official since then.

Daoism is an ancient Chinese mystical religion that emphasizes the *Dao* (the Way) as the source and substance of all existence. Its temples often center in a large garden and emphasize harmony with nature, by contrast with the more humanistic Confucian social order and ritual. The Queen Mother of the West was active in the Tang Dynasty, teaching Daoist religion and patronized by the Imperial state.

The Daoist image of *Xi Wang Mu* was widely acknowledged during the time of the Wei Jin Nan Bei Dynasty (222 CE–589 CE). *Han Wu Gu Shi* depicted *Xi Wang Mu*'s descent from Heaven to the Han Court of *Han Wu Di,* who requested the longevity medicine from her. He was granted five peaches, but he was eventually refused the magic of immortality, because he later indulged in human passions and killed some Daoist monks. So *Xi Wang Mu* cut off her relationship with him. Up through the medieval Tang Dynasty (618 CE–907 CE), *Xi Wang Mu* possessed the highest Yin power and was the leader of all Goddesses and the teacher who taught Daoist sutras to the pious and high-level practitioners.

The Secularized Image of *Xi Wang Mu*

After the Western Jin Dynasty (265–316), *Xi Wang Mu* descended from her altar and became more human, because for the first time she had human names such as in the books *Ji Xian Zhuan* and *You Yang Za Zu*, and she even had family members in many stories, such as in *Sou Shen Hou Ji* (Vol. 5). *Xi Wang Mu*'s compassion was shown by adopting 3-year-old girl *Du Lan Xiang* to grow up on Kunlun Mountain, after her family was drowned in Green Grass Lake. Some fruits and other things were named after *Xi Wang Mu*, such as Wang Mu peach, Wang Mu red dates, Wang Mu mat, Wang Mu bird, and so on.

In folk belief the Queen Mother of the West looked neither so grave and gracious, like Shakyamuna in Buddhism, nor so indifferent and remote as the Daoist San Qing. Rather, like a mother, she shared her benevolence and compassion, which brought her love and spirituality closer to the common people (Fig.1). In the *Declarations of the Realized Ones,* she headed up a matrilineal clan with religious figures traced through the maternal family line. This was quite a contrast with the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan lines (Cahill 1993, p. 34).

The Queen Mother urged Daoist spiritual practices on students, including emperors, such as meditation, visions, "pacing the void," compassion, moral behavior, to nurture the "immortal embryo" inside. She was said to be present in one's right eye, and a spiritual name was "Mysterious Radiance." Her cult contrasted with Buddhism, which entered China in the first century

Chinese Queen Mother of the West: Xi Wang Mu (西王母), Fig. 1 Xi Wang Mu on Chinese Porcelain vase. Qing Dynasty, Kangxi period. 1662-1722. Musée Guimet, Paris. Photo by Vassil. Wikipedia, "Xi Wang Mu." Public Domain. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Mother_of_the_West#/media/File:Porcelaine_chinoise_Guimet_271103.jpg

CE. This challenged the Daoists to clarify and organize their teachings and define their deities. But she shared some beliefs with the Buddhists, such as compassion and individual salvation (immortality). In her compassion, she was also similar to the popular Chinese Buddhist-syncretic goddess Guan Yin.

The goal of her teaching was to transform the consciousness of her adepts into "transcendence," rising above this world into the immortal realm of visionary flights (Cahill 1993, pp. 205, 208). A repeated theme is her visiting the palace, teaching the Emperor the spiritual principles of Daoism, including studying numinous texts, moral behavior, meditation, and seeking the transforming realization of the *Dao*. But later the Emperor would slip back into his crude old earthly ways and utterly lose his chance for immortality (Cahill 1993, pp. 155, 162, 171).

She would also host grand feasts at her Kunlun Mountain palace for the elite, linking heaven and earth, immortality and humanity. This was poetically expressed as a "visit to the palace Turquoise Pool" to overcome earthly concerns (Cahill 1993, p. 239). They celebrated with dance and music. Celibacy was practiced among monks and nuns who vowed to seek transcendence and seek the *Dao*. Others cultivated passion in courtly romantic affairs (as with "Jade Maidens"), concubines, and marriages. The Goddess was a divine matchmaker. Daoist priestesses and layman had love affairs that came under her protection. Monastic celibacy was preferred for Tang Daoist adepts, but the strong human instinct for love and family did not disappear in the Goddess's Daoism. Along with monastic celibacy, romantic passion and motherhood were all seen as valid ways to approach the mystical, ecstatic consciousness of realization of transcendence of death and love (Cahill 1993, pp. 231, 242).

The language of the Queen Mother's texts was a richly florid poetry, in the style of Daoists and imperial officials. The description of her walled mountaintop palace used ornate language such as "Mysterious Orchard Audience Hall," "flowing crystal," "halls of cyan and jade," "apartments of rose-gem efflorescense," "purple iridescent cinnabar chambers," and radiant "vermilion auroral clouds" (Cahill 1993, p. 37). Symbolic mythic figures flew about among the clouds, such as dragons, tigers, cranes, and adepts on visionary journeys toward heaven. Wine and secret alchemical elixirs were integral to this society. "Rain," "smashing the gourd," and "playing the syrinx flute" were typical poetic metaphors for sexual activities. It was said that:

> *If the lovers eat both divine peaches and alchemical elixirs, the rock crystal curtains of their bedroom will transform themselves into the jade staircase of the transcendents' palace, and their bedroom will become a microcosmic heaven on earth.* (Cahill 1993, pp. 234, 238, 245)

Mystical alchemical elixirs were meant to bestow enchanted flights to the eternal

transcendent Dao, longevity, and immortality; they were cooked in special bronze ovens. Sacred peach mush was mixed with various other magical ingredients, such as jade, that had been buried in graves since neolithic times. Lapis lazuli, with its flecks of gold pyrite, stood for the night sky and its stars. Alchemy had secret mystical meanings and included various ingredients such as divine fungi, rhinoceros horn (for fertility), sulfur, lead, arsenic, gold, and cinnabar (for eternal life), the red ore of mercury (quicksilver -yin), that they may not have known was toxic, even though some alchemists became a bit mentally erratic. The first known Chinese alchemist was the woman Fang, in the first century CE. She refused to tell her husband alchemical secrets, so he abused her. She also ingested so many toxic ingredients that she went mad and died (Rayner-Canham and Rayner-Canham 2001, pp. 4–5). Like Western medieval alchemy, a major goal was to transform base substances, such as lead (signifying melancholy) into gold (indicating soul treasures, like wisdom). These all had deep psychological and spiritual significance. The Daoists thought that it was all divinely passionate and transcendent (Cahill 1993, pp. 74, 184). Later (1940s, 1950s) the Swiss archetypal psychologist Carl G. Jung introduced the important concept of "inner alchemy" and counteracted the modern scientific view of alchemy as superstitious chemistry with a deep, mystical, paradoxical psychology. It was similar to the Goddess Mother's Daoist teachings on transcendence and alchemical secrets, such as elixirs being symbolic of psyche and spirit, and union of opposites [*cuniunctio oppositorum*], as in Yin-Yang philosophy (Jung 2009, *Red Book* and *Collected Works*, Vols. 12, 13, 14).

The beautiful and gracious Queen Goddess's most important roles were creation, psychologically and socially balancing Yin and Yang, preparing adepts for the afterlife, teaching and cultivating the *Dao*, growing and guarding the peaches of immortality, and dispensing some to those worthy seekers who had attained the transcendent *Dao*, and thus immortality. She was a nurturing mother and supreme ancestress of all. She provided both a grand model for women in a patriarchal society and a psychological image (*anima*) for men of an ideal mother, lover, and teacher. She especially protected women of all kinds, rich or poor, despised and respectable, lay or religious, especially those outside the family circle, such nuns, widows, hermits, artists, and prostitutes. The opportunity for an education was a major attraction for many women to become nuns (Cahill 1993, pp. 214, 216).

The Goddess's palace on Kunlun Mountain was surrounded by a golden rampart and a magic Turqoise fountain, where the feast of the immortals was regularly held at the edge of the Lake of Gems for the Queen Mother's birthday. The meats included bear paws, monkey lips, and dragon livers. The culmination of the feast was serving the peaches of immortality, to continue her guests' immortality. The magic peach tree took 3,000 years to blossom and another 3,000 years to ripen (Christie 1968, pp. 78–79). Belief in immortality is an important religious way to give meaning to life and overcome the natural fear of death. The Queen Mother shared this concern with Daoists.

Later, in the middle of Ming Dynasty (1368 CE–1644 CE) and Qing Dynasty (1644 CE–1912 CE), the spread of *Xi Wang Mu* mainly depended on *Bao Juan,* a speech and singing script combining belief, education and amusement, and *Nian Juan,* group singing and narration for great events, such as funerals, or in leisure time. The belief in *Xi Wang Mu* has spread to Taiwan and many places of Eastern south Asia.

Psychologically, the mythic image of *Xi Wang Mu* provides a strong Queen and Yin feminine figure, lover, mother, teacher, and creator-goddess who balances Yin and Yang. Religiously, she teaches paths to transcendence, such as celibacy, alchemical elixirs, sexual passion, meditation, visions, and morality. She represents the soul's important coming to terms with death (the way of the western setting sun), symbolized by her garden of the peaches of immortality and her decision about who, having sought transcendence and the Dao, is worthy of this gift (Fig. 2).

Chinese Queen Mother of the West: Xi Wang Mu (西王母), Fig. 2 Queen Mother of the West (*Xi Wang Mu*) Dashu, Max. "Xi Wangmu, the Shamanic Great Goddess of China" with a peach of immortality in her left hand. http://www.suppressedhistories.net/goddess/xiwangmu.html

See Also

- Amita Buddha
- Chinese Popular Religions
- Chinese Religions
- Counseling Asians in the West
- Female God Images
- Great Mother
- Guanyin
- Immortality
- Psychology of Religion in China
- Taoism
- Women in Chinese Religions

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Chinese Religions

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According to the International Religious Freedom Report (2005), 8% of the population in Mainland China claimed to be Buddhists, and another 20–28% of the population practiced traditional folk religions. The latter include worship of local gods, heroes, and ancestors and often present as loose affiliates of Taoism, Buddhism, or cultural practices of ethnic minorities. In Taiwan, 35% of the population claimed to be Buddhists, 33% Taoists, and 4% believers in *Tiende Jiao* and other traditional folk religions. However, the 2006 *World Fact Book* indicated that 93% of the Taiwan population could be followers of a hybrid of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Distinct religious classification may be difficult.

A substantial portion of Chinese people claim that they do not believe in any religion. Data showed that 59% of the population in Mainland China are nonreligious (Johnstone 1993). Some 8–14% called themselves atheists (Barrett et al. 2001; O'Brien and Palmer 1993). The 2001 *World Value Survey* showed that 55% are nonreligious and 24% are convinced atheists. More recent investigations show that religions are thriving in the state ruled under atheist communism (Yang 2012). In Taiwan, 12–24% of the population call themselves atheists (Inglehart et al. 2004). In another study conducted in Taiwan, 43% of the respondents labeled themselves as not believing in any religion (Chou and Chen 2005). The statistics presented above paint a confusing yet true picture that it is difficult to arrive at clear distinction among religions in Chinese culture.

Taoism

Taoism could mean the Taoist school of philosophy as well as the Taoist religion. Tao (or D*ao*) means "way," everlasting and yet ever changing. Chuang Tzu believed that the world is in peace and harmony in the original state. Disorders arise because of human intending to manipulate and mistakenly dichotomize the world and our understandings of it. The only solution is to acknowledge the limitation and relativity of dichotomized views and to embrace them all. Based on the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Taoism emerged in the second century, being propagated as *Tianshi Dao* or *Wudoumi Dao* (Celestial Masters) and *Taiping Dao* (Great Peace). Much of its philosophy, values, and religious practices could be traced to its sacred text *Tao Te Ching*. However, as Lai (2003) noted, scholars on Taoism are still debating on what actually constitute the religion.

Certain concepts attributed to Taoism have found favor among some psychologists, especially those with a humanistic persuasion. They include the following:

1. *Qi* or ch'i. According to Taoist belief, *qi* (energy) runs in every individual. Such *qi* is connectable to the energy of the universe. Davis (2004) applied this belief to organizational psychology and posited that leadership energy similarly flows through the social network of an organization. Empirical evidence for *qi* is, however, lacking.
2. Yin and *yang*. The universe, as well as each individual person, is a reflection of the balance of two principles or natures, the *yin* (negative, darkness, weakness) and the *yang* (positive, light, strength). Health is when a person experiences a balance (or homeostasis) of the *yin* and the *yang*. According to Taoism, too much of one thing, however good in its own right, can be dysfunctional. It remains an empirical question how much is too much.
3. Taoism advocates being *wu wei*, which is effortless, spontaneous nonintervention in handling the external world. It entails the return to quiescence and harmony with nature. *Wu wei* is the way to achieve absolute happiness, a high

level of mental health (Yip 2004). A leader exercising *wu wei* is, however, like adopting a less effective, laissez-faire style of leadership (Bass 1985).

4. Intuition. In Taoist conceptualization, true understanding (*Dao*) cannot be named but can only be experienced and understood through meditation and intuitive awareness. Intuition is knowing through personal and subjective experience, in contrast with the objective scientific method. Instead of being a cognitive process, intuition is spontaneous. It attends to the presence (Olson 2002). According to Taoism, in spite of its elusive nature, intuition can be nurtured through experiential learning and formal education, like what clinicians have done to develop their clinical intuition.
5. Mindfulness. In Taoism, being mindful is when a person is fully involved in the present moment and focused on what is being done, rather than worrying about the outcome. This process enhances the wisdom of the person, by freeing the person from worries about the past or future, to perceive and understand oneself and others more accurately. This person can then readily attain peace and be able to work interdependently with others. The concept of mindfulness is also found in Buddhism.

In Taoism, a person is an integrated whole, embracing physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Illness and suffering result from the disconnection of the person from himself/herself, others, nature, and the universe. That is why it is important for a Taoist to enhance the harmony between yin and yang and get in touch with the inner self. Through meditation, Taoism develops one's self-awareness and intuition, bringing about "an emotionally and spiritually balanced individual who relates harmoniously with others and with nature" (Olson 2002, p. 161). In other words, this religion contributes to personality development and helps people attain humility, simplicity, genuineness, flexibility, adaptability, spontaneity, persistence, and acceptance (Olson 2002).

Learning Taoism may have positive impact on subjective well-being among senior citizens in China (Zhou et al. 2002). Taoist philosophy has been incorporated into some cognitive psychotherapy to help college students high on neuroticism and patients with generalized anxiety disorder. The technique may improve coping and reduce neurotic symptoms. However, more empirical evidence on its effectiveness is needed (Huang et al. 2001; Zhang et al. 2002).

Confucianism

In the midst of civil struggles, Chinese people in the suffering slowly turned away from their gods and spirits to focus on the problems confronting human society and governance. This is the *zeitgeist* in which Confucius (551–479 BCE) lived. Aiming at restoring just rule and legitimate government of the early Zhou dynasty, Confucius advocated a new form of education and expounded ethical principles. He described *ren*, the "way" of the perfect man. Avoiding the subjects of the supernature and afterlife, Confucius would rather "revere deities and ancestral spirits, but keep them at a distance." His concern was on the earthly, human situation in the world. Thus, some people consider Confucianism more a philosophy than a religion.

The influence of Confucianism diminished after the third century and the emergence of Buddhism. It was only until the eleventh century, by the effort of thinkers like Zhu Xi and Wang Yang Ming, influenced by Buddhist theories of mind and enlightenment, that Confucianism revived, consolidated, and reclaimed its status among the Chinese elite. Despite the interest in spiritual elements such as self-awareness and meditation, the original goal towards establishing order within society remained unchanged in neo-Confucianism (Overmyer 2002).

Behavior with other people is regulated in accordance with the "ethical system of benevolence-righteousness-propriety (*ren-yi-li*)" (Hwang 2001). *Ren* is showing affection to all humankind. *Yi* is respecting others. *Li* is treating others according to their status and roles. Confucianism has a strong faith in people's own ability and power in attaining perfection. According to Ho's analysis (1994), it is the root of parents' authoritarian moralism and

cognitive conservatism, as well as children's high rigidity and low cognitive complexity. Nevertheless, it is also the basis of many Chinese people's high achievement motivation.

Buddhism

Buddhism took root in ancient India in the sixth and fifth century BCE and arrived in China in the second century BCE. Buddhism and traditional Chinese thoughts were at odd with each other in the beginning. However, Buddhism had an appeal to both the ordinary people and the intellectuals, because of its simple religious practice, sophisticated philosophy, promise of life after death, as well as a range of religious and social advantages such as full-time religious vocation in an institution independent of family and state (Overmyer 2002). Buddhism underwent much "sinicization," incorporating some Taoist and Confucian concepts.

Buddhism has much to say about human motivation and emotion. For example, *sukha* is an enduring trait that arises from an equilibrium in mental state and awareness of the true nature of reality. It can be likened to happiness. Achieved through sustained training in attention, emotional balance, and mindfulness, it results in changes in mood and even changes in temperament (Ekman et al. 2005). According to Buddhism, some mental states (such as craving and hatred) are afflictive regardless of their level or context in which they occur (Ekman et al. 2005). This view is different from the prevalent psychological perspective that emotions are adaptive (Cosmides and Tobby 2008; Ekman et al. 2005).

Psychological well-being (e.g., happiness, peacefulness, personal growth, and self-reflective insights) seems to improve among participants in Buddhist retreats (e.g., Page et al. 1997). Tori and Bilmes (2002) observed a positive correlation of Buddhist beliefs with reaction formation and a negative correlation with regressive emotionality and projection. They found that in Thailand, Buddhist monks' defense mechanism (unconscious coping) was low in regressive emotionality and high in denial, reaction formation, and repression when compared with a local sample.

Ancestor Worship, Folk Religions, and Animism

Chinese people worship natural objects (e.g., trees, thunder), heroic personalities (e.g., *Guandi*), and even one's own deceased relatives. Many religious activities such as ancestor worship are based on a belief in afterlife (Overmyer 2002). That is why in burial grounds for important people as early as the Shang dynasty, extravagant burial offerings including "decapitated human beings, horses, dogs, large numbers of bronze vessels, and objects of jade, stone, and shell" (Overmyer 2002, p. 258) can be found. To contact the deities, people engaged in sacrificial rituals. Sacrifices were made alongside requests for some benefits in return. According to Overmyer, this principle of reciprocity is the prevalent pattern of human-deity interaction throughout the history of Chinese religions.

A fear of the unknown and an inability to master nature are probably some psychological roots of this line of religious beliefs and practice. Inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze sacrificial vessels show how ancient Chinese asked for help or favor from their ancestors. It was believed that the longer ones had been dead the more powerful were their spirits. The deified ancestors are like the "intermediaries between their living descendants and the more powerful gods of natural force" (Overmyer 2002, p. 258). Since they can bring harm or aids to them, it was "necessary to propitiate the ancestors to ward off their anger as well as to bring their blessing" (Overmyer 2002, p. 258). Besides this desire to gain and to avoid curse, there may also be a Taoist-based desire to become *xian*, namely, deities. In addition, the Confucian doctrine of filial piety provides the ethical basis of ancestor worship. Ancestor worship is practiced not only to comfort the dead and to make them harmless; it also reflects the "authority on the part of the parents and filial piety on the part of the son" (Hsu 1948, p. 276). The practice extends and strengthens the impact of ancestor in shaping the descendants' personality as well as their lives.

Conclusion

The four religious traditions differ in terms of how the "self" is treated. The self is the ultimate goal being served by ancestor worship and animistic practices. In the Confucian tradition, people are viewed as embedded in a social network, with the family as the most important environment for personal development. The self is thus defined in terms of membership in a collective. In the Taoist tradition, the self is "but one of the countless manifestations of the Tao and . . . an extension of the cosmos" (Ho 1995, p. 120). The ideal self is, paradoxically, selflessness. In the Buddhist tradition, construction of self is rejected while "owning" one's self is an illusion and the source of suffering (Ho 1995, p. 121). To Ho (1995), the commonality among the three religions is about psychological decentering. While the reciprocity principle in Confucianism masks the differentiation between the self and others, the selfless person advocated by Taoism embraces the dichotomy between self and others. The abandonment of selfhood in Buddhist tradition essentially puts the self and craving to death.

Historically and at a doctrinal level, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and animistic folk religions have distinct worldviews and belief systems. However, as these religions evolved over the years, being formed and modified by the sociohistorical contexts, there were competition as well as amalgamation among them. For example, the cosmology in the classic Confucian text *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (Taiji tushuo)* has incorporated Taoist description of genesis of the cosmos. Likewise, the neo-Confucian's ideas of self-consciousness, innate knowing, and meditation did not originate from Confucius or Mencius (another leader of Confucianism) but are rooted in the Buddhist philosophy and Taoist practice. Conversely, Taoism has adopted from Confucianism social ethics (such as loyalty, filial piety, and social responsibility towards the society) into its religious practice and linked them to the Taoist philosophy of immortality. These adoption and fusion have been done by each religion to refine and supplement their own doctrinal systems.

At a practical level, Chinese people do not make clear distinctions among various religions. Chinese people worship deities and honor sages from more than one religion at the same time. It is therefore not surprising to find someone who claims to be a Buddhist to practice Taoist rituals and a Confucian offering incense to a *xian*. Hui et al. (1989) found in a factor analysis of beliefs about death that the Buddhist view and the Taoist view congregate in the same factor. Regardless of the kind of religion one holds, it has impact on the way one interprets the world. Yip (2003) reported that Chinese religious beliefs affect the contents, manifestation, and meaningfulness of delusion and hallucination of Hong Kong schizophrenic patients. Such influence on subjective psychotic experience would in turn affect one's cognition and behavior (Yip 2003).

See Also

- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Chan Buddhism
- ▶ Confucianism
- ▶ Taoism
- ▶ Women in Chinese Religions

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Chinese Shooting Suns

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There are two versions of myths of Chinese shooting suns, one is Da Yi she ri (大羿射日) and the other is Hou Yi she ri (后羿射日). The powerful and heroic heavenly beings in these legends, who shaped the early creation, were divinities.

Version One

According to the book *Shan Hai Jing·Da Huang Nan Jing*, beyond the East and South Sea, up to the Gan River, a woman named Xihe (羲和) took bath in the Gan River every day. She was so beautiful and graceful that the Heavenly Emperor Jun (帝俊), when he travelled there, fell in love with her at the first sight. Since their marriage, the Heavenly Emperor Jun no longer felt lonely, so he travelled less. Soon they gave birth to ten suns. They had a more happy life there. There was a big tree called Fusang (扶桑) in the nearby valley, whose diameter was 4,500 m. After bathing the ten suns every day, Xihe would put nine suns on the lower branches of the tree and one on the top.

The ten suns were taught by the mother to go up to the sky to serve earnestly by turns; when one sun, carried by a crow with three feet, arrived at the tree, another one would leave. Everything went smoothly like this for a long time, and people lived a hard but happy life. Many years passed. One day, the ten suns felt it was too boring and lonely to serve alone each time and decided to fly to the sky together for fun, but since they often did this, they brought too much chaos to the world. Trees and plants were burned, rivers dried up, people had nothing to eat and drink, and all kinds of animals came out from the forests to eat people.

At first, the Heavenly Emperor Jun was very surprised to see these disasters. He thought that he must have done something wrong that caused these disasters, so he reflected and even punished himself. After these, he found that the situation had not changed. Then he began to do an investigation. In his meditation, he: the Heavenly Emperor Jun found that all these problems were caused by his ten suns, and their mother was not with them since they were old enough to work alone. He was very angry, but he could not bear to kill them himself. According to the book *Shan Hai Jing* •*Hai Nei Jing*, he ordered his official Yi, who was good at shooting, to go down to the human world to help common people and gave Yi a red bow and white arrows to represent his authority. So when Yi came down from the Heaven to help the human world, he was appointed as a shooting master by the human Emperor Yao(帝尧), and Yi happily married the previous Emperor Ku's (帝喾) daughter Chang E (嫦娥). He did not know that Chang E was the reincarnation of Xihe, who came to the human world earlier to help people. Yi did not get lost in the marriage and happy life but instead strengthened his will to get rid of those harmful things for people. So he made up his mind to say farewell to his newly married wife and start on his journey to conquer troubles.

The first thing Yi had to do was to shoot the suns. But it was not an easy job. This was because he knew that the suns were born during the early formative time of the Heaven and Earth, and their parents were called Fuxi and Nǚwa in the human world, so they were very, very powerful. When they were happy, the suns would eject water from their mouths, drowning the fields and roadways, causing floods; when they were angry, they would eject fire from their mouths, burning everything. No one dared to challenge them. They were very surprised and then very excited when they knew that Yi wanted to fight with them. At first, they did not pay any attention to Yi, because they did not know the red bow and white arrows that Yi used were given by their father, that increased Yi's power. After Yi shot down three brothers, they began to feel nervous; they ejected water and fire at the same time, forming a network, which prevented Yi from going forward. Yi tried hard to avoid the water and fire, seizing every chance to shoot; finally nine suns had been shot down, and the remaining one ran away. So it became completely dark and people could not see at all; then Yi decided not to shoot the remaining sun and let him serve people. Since then, the sun moves regularly, and the climate is now proper for everything.

Yi's story was written in *Huai Nan Zi ·Ben Jing Xun* (《淮南子•本经训》). Here, besides shooting down nine suns on the river, Yi was ordered by Yao to kill many harmful animals. First was Zaochi, in the wilderness of Chouhua, a kind of animal whose teeth were so sharp that he could bite hard stone like a chisel. Second was to defeat the great wind in the marsh of Qingqiu. Third was to kill Yayu, who was originally a heavenly god with a human face and a snake's body. But after Yayu was murdered and came back to life by a magical power, he lost his natural form and fell down into the Ruo River at the foot of Kunlun Mountain. There Yayu became a horrible monster with a human face, a snake's body covered by long red hair, and horse's feet. When he shouted, he sounded like a baby crying. When the ten suns made the water in the Ruo River boil so much that Yayu could not bear it, he jumped out of the river and ate many humans and animals, so that people were very afraid of him. Yi's fourth task was to cut up the long snake in Dongting Lake, and fifth was to capture Fengxi, a wild pig in Sang forest. Then people were very happy.

Finishing his tasks in the human world, Yi took his wife Chang E back to Heaven. Yi's achievement was praised by the Heavenly Emperor Jun,

but this aroused some people's envy. The most important was that the Heavenly Emperor Jun recognized at once that Chang E was his former wife Xihe; he worried if the couple stayed a little longer in the Heaven, the familiar environment would soon make Chang E remember who she really was, which would bring trouble to the three and increase their pain. So, using the excuse of believing the envious scandal, the Heavenly Emperor Jun restrained his own emotional sufferings and firmly banished Yi and his wife Chang E to the human world forever. Yi felt very sorry for this, so he begged the Goddess Xi Wang Mu for the long-life medicine. At first, Xi Wang Mu did not agree, but when she learned of his deeds, especially when she saw Chang E, whom Xi Wang Mu recognized at first sight, she was very happy to give the medicine to him, expecting Chang E, the former Xihe, to come back to Heaven soon. Yi asked his wife to keep it because he had to go out hunting every day with his disciple Fengmeng. He taught Fengmeng very patiently, telling him all his shooting skills, and Fengmeng became a sharp shooter next to Yi. The idea of being the number one shooter always appeared in Fengmeng's mind.

One day when Yi went out hunting, Fengmeng found an excuse not to go hunting with him and came to Yi's and Chang E's house and forced frightened Chang E to take out the long-life medicine. Alarmed, Chang E swallowed down the medicine and her body became so light that she flew up to the moon. But it was so cold there that beautiful Chang E became a toad. Fengmeng was so scared that he hid on his teacher's path back home, where his desire to become the number one shooter made him assault his teacher with a stick made from a peach tree branch. After death, Yi was apotheosized as the God Zongbu, the leader of ghosts, and that's why ghosts were said to be afraid of peach trees.

People called this hero Yi Da Yi, meaning Great Yi, so his story of shooting the suns is called Da Yi she ri (大羿射日).

Version Two

Many people, even many scholars, confused Da Yi in the very Chinese ancient myth with Hou (latter)Yi, a tribe leader in the Xia Dynasty, around 2000 BCE.

According to the records in the book *Zuo Zhuan·Xiang Gong Si Nian* (《左传·襄公四年》), Relying on his skill of shooting, Hou Yi was welcomed by the people of Xia and so he replaced their king. Later he did not work for people but indulged in negotiating with animals, expelled upright officials, trusted the flattering Hanzhuo. These errors led to his own death by the manipulative Hanzhou, who cooked his corpse and served it to Yi's son. But his son refused to eat the soup and was killed by Hanzhuo, who had taken Yi's wife. Here we can see no heroic deeds by Hou Yi at all.

Different Interpretations of Shooting Suns

Some scholars interpreted shooting suns by Hou Yi as the fights among different tribes, who had the same blood origin and worshipped the sun and birds, which might be identical with some historical events in Xia Dynasty.

Some interpreted shooting suns by Da Yi as a reform of calendar system, because the action of Yi's shooting was regarded as an action of measuring the sun. The arrow in ancient Chinese was written as "矢," besides meaning arrow, it also means measuring and making something upright. A round shape was called "规(gui)," which means compasses, or drawing a circle with compasses. A square shape is called "矩(ju)," referring to a carpenter's square; "guiju" together indicates rules and principles. In ancient portraits, these tools were usually held in the hands of Chinese first ancestors Fuxi and Nǚwa, meaning they were measuring and planning the Heaven and Earth, so "guiju" were the apparatus of measuring, hence arrow, the left part of "矩 (ju)" also means measuring (see Fig. 1, which shows a gui [compass] in Nǚwa's hand and a ju [carpenter's square] in Fuxi's hand).

All these shows that images of shooting arrows were connected with measuring sun movements, so shooting suns can be regarded as a reform of a calendar system. This would have been seen as a cosmic, thus a divine decision.

Chinese Shooting Suns, Fig. 1 Chinese first ancestor Creators **Nǚwa** (with carpenter's compass) and **Fuxi** (with carpenter's square). (http://image.so.com/v?q=伏羲女娲图片&src=st_rel&correct=伏羲女娲图片&cmsid=53d95f784fc91a08926edc7a0dce8162&cmran=0&cmras=0&cn=0&gn=0&kn=0#multiple=0&gsrc=1&dataindex=1&id=030c547475911701698d7e8b9de61dd5&currsn=0&jdx=1&fsn=60). Copyright-free

The Conscious and Unconscious in the Blending

It's a pity that nowadays most Chinese only know the wrong saying of "Hou Yi she ri" and do not know the correct saying of "Da Yi she ri" because of the confusion about the hero who shot the suns. Why were the two confused by later generations? Simply because they shared one skill, being good at shooting. It was Qu Yuan (340 BCE-278 BCE), the famous poet and politics in the Warring States Period, who played a key role in the confusion. In his long poem "Tian Wen (天问)," Qu Yuan asked a series of questions about the phenomena of Heaven and Earth, the natural and human world. The text started with the separation of Heaven and Earth, the change of yin and yang, cosmology, up to mythology, legends, saints, wars, and historical events of rising and declining of the dynasties, revealing Qu Yuan's exploration of cosmic truths. In this poem, Qu Yuan put the heroic deeds of Da Yi into the story of Hou Yi, thereby completely mixing up the two. People did not know whether he did it on purpose or not, but it was too much an obvious mistake, so Wang Yi (王逸) during the East Han Dynasty (25-220 CE) tried very hard to separate them in his interpretation of "Tian Wen"; but his effort was in vain. Qu Yuan's mistake stimulated many literary texts, which in turn helped to spread the mistake further.

I think Qu Yuan did this on purpose, because it reflected Qu Yuan's conscious and unconscious wishes, which he could not express in words. We know both Da Yi and Hou Yi were good at shooting, suggesting that they were capable. Da Yi was trusted by both the Heavenly Emperor Jun and Human Emperor Yao, who was loyal to them, but Da Yi was expelled by the Heavenly Emperor Jun to the human world forever because of the envious scandal from his colleagues. Qu Yuan's personal experience was very similar to Da Yi's. Qu Yuan was a patriot poet, who was a high official in the state of Chu, in charge of the internal administration and foreign affairs. He insisted that they should make laws clear and should select and employ capable persons at home and should make an alliance with the state of Qi to resist the state of Qin.

Qu Yuan's suggestions for reform were not accepted by his king, and he was expelled to the area of Yuan and Xiang. Disappointed and distressed, Qu Yuan tied a large stone to himself and plunged into the Miluo River near Changsha. In order to save him, the legend goes, people took out a boat and threw rice wrapped with a kind of leaves (called Zongzi) into the river so that fish and other animals in the river would not eat him. Now we have the festival of eating Zongzi and the

dragon boat competition on May 5, according to the Lunar Calendar, to memorialize Qu Yuan. We can see that consciously he compared himself to Da Yi. The most important thing Qu Yuan admired was that Da Yi was given the authority symbolized by the red bow and white arrows to reform. Da Yi succeeded, although he was murdered by his disciple in the end, so he had nothing to regret.

Things were different with Qu Yuan. He had great ambition and capability but no support from the king. Unconsciously he wished that he could be like Hou Yi, who was trusted by the common people of Xia and pushed to replace the king of Xia to do reforms for the people and the country. But consciously this was against Qu Yuan's morality, because he was a high official who must be loyal to the king all of his life. So Qu Yuan put Da Yi's deeds onto Hou Yi, consciously indicating that he wished the latter kings could learn a lesson from Hou Yi's life experiences, that was no matter how great you were and how many contributions you have done in the early life, you must cautiously continue to work diligently for the public in late life, otherwise you would have a bad end.

The Significance of the Union of Yin and Yang

The first union of yin and yang was represented by the happy marriage of Xihe and the Heavenly Emperor Jun, who were regarded as the Old Yin and Old Yang. Before meeting Xihe, the Heavenly Emperor Jun kept travelling around without stopping. But after the marriage, the Heavenly Emperor Jun did not feel lonely anymore, he became peaceful and stable, so they could give birth to ten suns. This led to the production of the sun, the moon, stars, and everything on the Earth by the union of yin and yang, indicating the psychological and religious Daoist saying that "Nothing can grow from single yin or single yang." In the human world, they were a couple called Fuxi and Nǚwa, who were regarded as the first human ancestors, because there was a myth about Nǚwa's making of human beings out of mud, according to her own image.

The second union of yin and yang was represented by the happy marriage of Da Yi and Chang E. They represented the Young Yin and Young Yang and later generations in the human world. The sending of Da Yi to the human world to shoot suns and killing harmful animals suggested that the Heavenly divinities cared for the Earth, so Earth was the center of the universe in this sense.

The third union of yin and yang was represented by Chang E's flying up to the moon. Since Chang E was the reincarnation of Xihe, her flying up to the moon indicated that the Heaven needed the Old Yin, otherwise, the universe would lose its balance.

The Sun-Son Linguistic Clue

From the myth, we know that the tree on which the ten suns stay is called Fusang, or Sang, pronounced as [sʌŋ] in Chinese, very much similar to the English pronunciation of the two words "sun" and "son." Because Xihe was the wife of the Heavenly Emperor Jun, and she gave birth to ten suns, the ten suns in Chinese were also their sons, and they all connected with the Sang tree. So the pronunciation of the tree maybe was used to refer to the "sun" and "son" connection, and so that's why they have the same pronunciation. In the collective unconscious, it seems that since sons have traditionally been highly prized children in China, who continue the family name, perhaps they are linguistically being equated with brightly shining lights. This suggests a possible patriarchal connection between the dazzling cosmic power of the sun and the importance of family lines in Chinese and other cultural traditions. Interestingly, the two words in Chinese have the same pronunciation in some dialects even nowadays, for example, in Hanshou, a county in Hunan province, China.

See Also

- ▶ Culture Heroes
- ▶ Chinese Popular Religions
- ▶ Deity Concept

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Christ

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Christ as the Ideal Individual

Psychologically speaking Christ is not only the ideal individual but he is also the representative individual. The life of the evolving human being is lived in archetypal patterns, consciously or unconsciously. Christ's life is human life, and true wholeness is genuine Selfhood, which involves the recognition that this reality is one's own reality. Thus, by curious paradox, it is precisely in respect of those features that give Christ his uniqueness (his dual nature) that his essential identification with all humanity is all-important.

If Jesus had been seen only as a historical figure and his humanity had been regarded as the whole truth about him, then it is likely that his present effect would be no greater than Socrates or Plato. It is precisely because he was regarded or recognized and responded to as being God himself, and therefore beyond the reality of the historical, that his life takes on the quality of revelation. This recognition or response was shaped by the "consensus of unconscious expectation" and continues into the present because of the perseverance of this same unconscious in the contemporary Western world.

Therefore, when Carl Jung speaks of the life of Christ, he is concerned primarily with that life as interpreted by some other person or group of persons. Jung ranges widely in his quotations about Christ and is prepared to establish the psychic facts of his life from the New Testament, from the early Church Fathers, from later exponents of orthodoxy, from the mystical traditions, from medieval alchemists, and from dream experiences of contemporary men and women.

There is a miraculous element in Christ's birth, the account of the annunciation, Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit, and the virginity of Mary. This miraculous element corresponds to the "non-empirical" genesis of the Self. Since the Self is a transcendent reality that encompasses the essentially unknown realm of the unconscious, it cannot by its very nature be known in empirical ways. Both the birth of Christ and the rise of the Self from the collective unconscious come upon one unaware. They are unexpected and surprise happenings, much like Jung's experience of the underground chamber and the vision of God's enormous turd shattering the cathedral.

The Bearer of Light

In spite of the extraordinary elements, the birth of Christ was an obscure and insignificant event by ordinary standards. He was born without the basic

comforts and security of a home. He was born to parents who were powerless in the religious and political power structures of their day. His mother was a Galilean peasant woman and his father a carpenter. Shortly after the birth the child was supposedly taken on a trip to Egypt to escape the rage of the king. Almost nothing more is heard of the child until he is nearly 30 years old. This obscurity combined with the element of danger is symbolic of the extraordinary difficulties an individual must face and overcome in the attaining of psychic wholeness. The very possibility of achieving individuation is precarious. The emerging Self is realized by the conscious but is brought into consciousness by the unknowable and unpredictable forces of the unconscious.

The child Jesus is recognized by Simeon and Anna as the expected Savior of Israel. The Isaiah prophecy is repeated at this time, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Luke 2:25–38; Isaiah 9:5).

Jung speaks of the child god, or child hero, as a familiar archetypal figure in myth, religion, folklore, and in spontaneous psychic images in contemporary visions and dreams. The Christ child is only one among many such images, e.g., Apollo, Belder, and Hercules. Each of these has, in common with Christ, an obscure or miraculous birth, threat from the outset of life, the apparently invincible powers over which he ultimately triumphs, a destiny to bring light into darkness, and a death brought about by something intrinsic to his existence.

Christ's childhood and the appearance of symbols of Christ in the form of the divine child correspond to the necessary link that the Self forms with the primitive origins of humanity in general and with the individual person in particular. However, the significance of the Christ child and other child gods go beyond this. The child is represented as growing to become a future deliverer. The child therefore suggests potential. Individuation is a movement toward a goal. The child figure points to the necessity for the continued development of the emerging Self, but it is a development that does not involve the severance of the necessary roots in the past.

Birth of Christ

The emergence of the child figure in the individuation process is an anticipation of the future synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore, writes Jung, "a symbol which unites the opposites: a mediator, a bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole" (Jung 1951/1979, par. 278).

The Christ child is also recognized as the one who brings light into darkness. The theme of light opposed to and threatened by darkness is recognized in connection with Jesus at a number of points in the New Testament and particularly in the writings of the Gospel of John. Light and day are, according to Jung, synonymous with consciousness, and similarly, darkness and night are synonymous with unconsciousness. Thus the advent of the bearer of light reflects the eruption of consciousness into existence and consequently its differentiation from the unconscious, a necessary prerequisite of true Selfhood.

In this context the infant Christ can be understood as the archetypal child-god/child-hero image, who performs the function of healing the individual and group by connecting back to the true origins, who gives a sense of destiny which is necessary to complete psychic wholeness, and who unites the opposites of light and dark, human and divine, conscious and the unconscious, in order to form a transcendent reality, a wholeness which is the Self. The child is the irrational third that consciousness could not conceive of unaided and which provides the necessary union of opposites and psychic attraction by its meaningful, but essentially unknown, content. In the individuation process the Self has to be experienced in terms that take seriously the materiality of the body. The child symbol also fulfils this objective because children provide potentiality, the promise of growth and development, but they also need to be physically cared for and nurtured.

Jesus of Nazareth

The Gospel records that after he commenced his public ministry, Jesus had nowhere to lay his

head: He lived a life of hardship, which culminated in the agony of Gethsemane. Christ's life parallels the process of individuation. In Jung's construction of this, there is much suffering and estrangement in the process of becoming individuated. In the individuation process, in a very real and frightening way, the rational person is threatened by this process, threatened with being swallowed up in a dimension greater than his ego can comprehend. All securities seem to be lost, menace seems everywhere present, and there seems to be no clear resolution to the conflict (Jung 1942/1948, par. 233). The experience of Christ upon the cross signifies the dramatic and extreme nature of the loss of all values that must be endured before the supreme value can be realized (Jung, 1940, par. 149).

Christ was crucified between two thieves: the one destined for paradise and the other for hell. The suffering emphasized here in the crucifixion clearly has a redemptive quality about it. Jung expresses the psychic analogy in terms of the crucifixion of the ego "in its agonising suspension between two irreconcilable opposites." The confrontation between consciousness and the unconscious presents a tremendous threat to the ego, but one that must be endured if the Self is to emerge. The ego must die, must relinquish its claims to being the center of the whole of psychic reality in order to make individuation possible (Waldron 2003).

After death comes 3 days in hell in which the loss of all value seems to be a permanent state. Then follows the resurrection and the ascension and newness of life. In the genesis, that is, the creative process by which the Self moves from a state of primeval chaos and unconsciousness into consciousness, order, and balance, the apparent chaos and absence of securities and order turn out to be a necessary part of the coming to terms with the depth of unconsciousness, in order to establish a new order of values and hence a supreme clarity of consciousness, by the integration of the contents of the collective unconscious into consciousness. The New Testament records few postresurrection appearances and the nature of these is often veiled. The woman at the tomb does not recognize the risen Christ (John 20:11–15). The disciples on the Emmaus road did not know him until he broke the bread (Luke 24:13–35). The disciple Thomas needed to feel the wounds of Christ before he would believe the testimony of his compatriots (John 20:24–39). So too, says Jung, "the transferred values are not easy to find or recognise" (Jung 1951/1979, par. 79).

See Also

- ▶ Christ as Symbol of the Self
- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Jesus
- ▶ Jungian Self
- ▶ Self

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Christ as Symbol of the Self

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The Self and the Christ

Jung wrote, "Anything a man postulates as being a greater totality than himself can become a symbol of the Self. . ." (Jung 1942/1948: par. 232). He also argues that not every image is fully adequate.

For him, the figure of Jesus Christ is not a symbol of totality because it lacks evil and sin. Rather, it is Christ's suffering at the hands of the collective society that is significant for it is an image of the suffering that the ego must go through at the expense of the unconscious, in the process of individuation (Jung, 1942/1948: par. 233).

Within the process of individuation – the realization of the Self – the image of Christ suspended on the cross between two thieves aptly expresses the tension between good and evil and between consciousness and the unconscious.

It is a paradox, a statement about something indescribable and transcendental. Accordingly, the realization of the Self which would logically follow from recognition of its supremacy leads to a fundamental conflict, to a real suspension between opposites (reminiscent of the crucified Christ hanging between two thieves), and to an approximate state of wholeness that lacks perfection (Jung 1951: par. 123).

Jung argues that the imitation of Christ does not consist of casting one's burden on Jesus but means undertaking the same experience of life that Jesus had, the way of individuation. That is the great and liberating thing about any genuine personality; he voluntarily sacrifices himself to his vocation and consciously translates into his own individual reality what would lead to ruin if it were lived unconsciously by the group.

There is a parallel between the symbol of Christ and the process of individuation. The incarnation of Christ is God becoming a human, the breaking into the world of consciousness from the unconscious, an integration of one with the other. For Jung, the Christ symbol is a part of the wider symbol of the Trinity. The Trinity symbolizes a process of development and consciousness that has taken place in the individual and the collective community over the centuries. Jung postulates that while the Trinity is symbolic of the process of individuation, it is not a symbol of the goal of that process, the realization of the Self (Jung 1954: par. 400).

Within this process, God the Father is representative of the unconscious state of childhood. At this stage of development, life for the child is habitual and law regulated. The incarnation begins with the Son taking over the Father's position. This is not reflective of a development of consciousness because the old customs are still retained. Differentiation and development of consciousness occurs when the individual begins to reflect, discriminate, and suffer the conflict of the moral opposites resulting from his or her freedom from the law.

The advent of the Holy Ghost represents the recovery of the Father and his reintegration with the Son. Consciousness recognizes the unconscious as a higher authority that stands beyond the power of reason.

However, Carl Jung argues that a symbol of the Self requires a form that embraces good and evil and masculine and feminine. He perceives that evil and the feminine are both missing from the Trinity. Jung postulates the need for a compensatory essence within the god symbol. This is a fascinating development in Jung's thought. He is proposing, out of his conscious, clinical rationale to add to and modify a symbol which he has postulated emanates out of the unconscious and therefore is transcendent and universal. Jung partially addresses the question in *Psychology and Western Religion* when he states:

> The God-image is not something invented, it is an experience that comes upon a man spontaneously. . . The unconscious God-image can therefore alter the state of consciousness, just as the latter can modify the God-image once it has become conscious (Jung, 1942/1948: par. 289).

For Jung, the inclusion of the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary within the god image is psychologically more satisfying. He proposes a quaternity which he states:

> Is [a] consistent and logical restoration of the archetypal situation, on which the exalted station of Mary is revealed implicitly and must therefore become a 'conclusio corta' in the course of time (Jung 1938: par. 122).

Behind this dialectic interaction between the Trinity and quaternity stands Jung's hypothesis of the psyche. In his continuing pursuit of this missing fourth dimension, Jung seeks to explore the relevance of Satan and Christ as the dark and light sons of Father. God the Father is the equivalent to the unconscious. Christ and Satan are symbolic

representations of the tension between good and evil which originate in the development of consciousness. The continued incarnation of God in humankind through the Holy Ghost is representative of the process of individuation. The culmination of this conception of the symbol of quaternity is the birth of the Self.

For Jung, Jesus Christ is and is not a symbol of the Self. Jung argues that in the New Testament figure of Jesus of Nazareth, we see the development of a myth in which the portrait of Christ takes the place of the historical Jesus. It is significant and should be noted that Jung writes out of a time when one of the central issues in theology and biblical scholarship was the question of the differentiation between the historical Jesus and the overlays of reflection evident in the gospel narratives.

In this perspective, Christ became an object of his contemporaries' collective unconscious expectations, resulting in a general projection of divinity onto the figure of Christ.

The Christ and Jesus of Nazareth

The life of Jesus Christ has all the hallmarks of the hero's life: improbable origins, divine father, hazardous birth, miraculous deeds, symbolic death, and resurrection. These characteristics point to the underlying archetypal idea of the Self that is present in humanity as an unconscious process. In this way Christ realized the idea of the Self. Jung postulates that the Christ figure is "perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the Self, apart from the figure of Buddha." Jung appears to carry his own personal contradictions on this issue. While at one point he argues Christ is the most highly developed symbol of the self, a little later he argues that Christ is not an adequate symbol but is an image of the journey. Christ "becomes" an embodiment of the Self. It is perhaps because Jung is not able to separate himself from a Calvinistic interpretation of Christ which is rather docetic in character. Waldron (2003) sees Christ as removed from the reality of normal human existence, and in this context, he is able to parallel the Buddha and the Christ, which would seem an unlikely marriage. Buddha eschews the experience of human passion to attain paradise, but Christ embraces the passions, suffering, and evil in order to transform them.

Docetism was a second-century heresy which conceptualized Christ as a phantasm in order to address an inability to conceptualize God existing in a material and finite human form. To the Docetists, their perception of God as utterly holy and good was incompatible with God's existence in the form of a human, for being human meant being subject to the imperfection of the flesh, to dirt, to suffering, and, most significantly, to death.

In saying that Jung's view of the Christ is Calvinistic and as a consequence has a docetic character, I allude to the tendency of Calvinistic theology to have such a high view of the divinity of Christ that even though Calvin would say that Christ is fully human, his work suggests that the divinity of Christ strongly overshadows his humanity. Calvin sees Christ as all good. He may be a human being, but he is not a human being as others are human beings. He knows all. His words and actions are totally good. In his goodness, he redeems us who are of sinful flesh.

Jung always addresses the Christ question from the perspective of Calvinistic Christology. In Jung's framework, the self-revelation of God in Christ illustrates the way in which the problem of opposites arises when God becomes an object of conscious reflection.

In the Christ figure, because evil is absent, there is a void, a construct emanating out of a seemingly conscious reflection on the god-image. Jung sees the opposition between Christ and Satan as a more accurate reflection of the god-image (Jung 1951: par. 351).

When conscious reflection modifies the god-image, our sense of identity becomes based on our ideals of perfection instead of upon the complete psyche and the images emanating out of it. It is from this construct that Jung is able to differentiate between the god-image that is an aberration of one's unconscious and the god-image that is a totality, holding in tension the opposites and so engendering a reconciliation of the psyche.

Images of God

Jung reflects that while our images of god are a projection of our own unconscious, it is important not to confuse the image of god with that transcendent power which all images point to and hint at. As collectively and individually we move toward individuation, the god-image will, inevitably, correspondingly metamorphose to parallel the psychic reality. The transitions in the god-image are reflective of this journey. And yet, inevitably, the difference between the image of god which is a construction of reason and the image of god which represents the transcendent unconscious and is beyond perception of reason is only conceivable through our conscious perception. This conscious perception of the image of Jesus and the image of god is a reflection of our psychic journey. It is a reflection of our image of the Self.

See Also

- ▶ Calvinism
- ▶ Christ
- ▶ God
- ▶ Hero
- ▶ Individuation
- ▶ Jesus
- ▶ Jungian Self
- ▶ Self

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Christian Female Saints

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Female saint veneration occurs throughout Christendom, though most prominently within Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Known as models of holiness, these women contribute to the communion of saints: the Church Militant (saints living on Earth); the Church Penitent (saints in Purgatory); and the Church Triumphant (saints in Heaven) (McNulty 1998). Some denominations adhere to an official canonization or recognition process, but also understand there exists innumerable saints outside of earthly knowing called the "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). A saint's historical significance is twofold: she serves as an exemplary model for Christian living and promotes psychological, emotional, and spiritual solidarity. Modeling associated with rituals, narratives, symbols, relics, liturgical practices, and mystical experiences cultivates relationship between saint, believer, and the Trinitarian God. A communion such as this can aid in "identifying, articulating, maintaining, or transforming [the believer's] relationship with the sacred" (Oman and Thoresen 2003).

Divine Union and Mystical Experience: Teresa of Ávila and Julian of Norwich

The female Christian saint shares a nuptial relationship with the deity of Jesus Christ: as a bride of Christ, her *marriage* reflects both Jewish and Christian "Scriptural image" of God's "spousal relationship with His people" (Migone 2018). Here, holiness or sanctity is "a relationship. . .an absolute relationship to the Absolute" (Kreeft 2013). This kind of union can include intense mystical moments; these "spiritual experiences are based in the neuropsychological process of 'selflessness'. . .The less individuals focus on the

self, the more capable they are of focusing on things beyond the self" (Johnstone 2012). Spiritual transcendence with the divine can manifest "dramatic conversions, visions, stigmata, and ecstasies" (McBrien 2001).

Spanish Doctor of the Church and foundress of the Discalced Carmelites, Teresa of Ávila's (1515–1582) *The Interior Castle* captures her mystical experiences, including her spiritual ecstasy (see Fig. 1): Her Spouse [God] removes and restores the ability to breathe, speak, or feel her body – "the hands and the body grow cold." For Teresa, the aftereffects on the mind can last days: the intellect "seems incapable of understanding anything that doesn't lead to awakening the will to love." Psychologically, these types of heightened occurrences reflect the "dissolution of boundaries, with the ego merging into all of being" (Burton 2015). The person lets go of the self, suspending the external senses to an interior experience with the "religious subject" (Poulain 1909).

Christian Female Saints, Fig. 1 Bernini, G. L. *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*. Sculpture. Santa Maria della Vittoria. Rome, Italy. (Photographer: Miguel Hermoso Cuesta). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernini_Santa_Teresa_02.JPG. Accessed 8 October 2018

English anchoress Julian(a) of Norwich's (1342–1416), *The Revelations of Divine Love* describes 16 notable revelations she receives from God. She recalls her severe suffering during her time of transcendence: "the greatest pain that I felt was my shortness of breath and the ebbing of my life" (Colledge and Walsh 1978). Smith (2016) relates these kinds of "sensory inputs drive response in the limbic system, which houses those functions responsible for deep-seeded, primal emotions." Also, Julian speaks of God as mother: "[In] our true Mother Jesus our life is founded in his own prescient wisdom from without beginning, with the Holy Spirit." Here, Julian unifies the godhead as "a result of her own psychological, spiritual and mystical integration" (Colledge and Walsh 1978). Her contemplative practices provide revelation of the divine's motherly characteristics – nourishing, caring, merciful, wise, tender – within the masculine Trinitarian model (Colledge and Walsh 1978).

Martyrdom, Virgin Bodies, and Collective Memory: Agnes, Agatha, and Joan of Arc

Martyred Christian women remembrance includes the way they live(d) life (with joy in Christ's resurrection) as well as their purposed gender within patriarchal structures. Many early Christian women met martyrdom with forgiveness for their executioners, as a Christian martyr's death "can be forgiven by others. The remnant community names the martyr *by their forgiveness*" (Hovey 2015). Narratives, artwork, and relics (including body parts and incorruptible bodies) assist in preserving memory, connecting present and past.

A virgin tween, Agnes (d. 304 CE) was beheaded, a swift death afforded to Roman citizens. However, prior to her point of death, she faced attempted rape and public burning.

Death by continuous rape was common for Christian virgins because these women considered their bodies consecrated. Virginity allotted "reunification of sex as a sacramental way to experience God, along with freedom to renounce the social conventions that restricted women to marriages arranged for the sake of property and family status" (Conn 1993). Her tiny skull – located at St. Agnes at the Circus Agonalis in Rome, Italy – serves as a relic assisting in keeping both the archetypal martyrdom narrative and religious veneration alive. DeSoucey et al. (2008) understand attention to the corpse (in this case, Agnes's skull) creates heightened reputation: "[Framing] the story of execution is an important moment to invoke the body for powerful visual and rhetorical effect." Agnes is one of the female martyrs listed and read in the first Eucharistic Prayer of the Catholic Roman Missal used for the celebration of the liturgy; this repeated act of reading creates retention within the modeling of observational learning (Oman and Thoresen 2003). The other six women include Agatha (d. 251 CE), Anastasia (d. 304 CE), Cecilia (d. 230 CE), Felicity (d. 203 CE), Perpetua (d. 203 CE), and Lucy (d. 303/304 CE).

A direct result of her refusal to marry a local official named Quintianus, Agatha (d. 251 CE), a Sicilian virgin known for her beauty, was convicted of and martyred for practicing Christianity. Her narrative contributes to the landscape of early martyred women. Although she faced a variety of cruelties, she is most notably known for enduring a forced double mastectomy; Saint Peter supposedly healed her in prison, while she awaited execution. She later perished during forced submersion in a bath comprised of pottery shards and live coals (Butler 1990). The image of her breasts and brutal mastectomy create an "embodied martyrdom"; the body becomes a "marker" of "religiosity," contributing to the cultural, historical collective memory and cause (DeSoucey et al. 2008).

Joan of Arc's (1412–1431) triumph against the English and subsequent crowing of Charles VII as France's king began with her mystical experiences with two other female saints, Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret, as well as Michael Archangel. Joan's body and gendered martyrdom have provided "reputational entrepreneurs" an opportunity to recreate her, memorializing the French heroine's life and martyrdom; Joan's rhetorical ethos (faith, fashion, patriotism) and suffering body encompass all at once a religious, cultural, and national marker embedded into a collective memory (DeSoucey et al. 2008). History would present la Pucelle (the Maid) as a point of national and religious ideological motivation in the nineteenth century, a political and women's liberation symbol in the twentieth century, and a point of reference for gender and sexual orientation interpretation in the twenty-first century (DeSoucey et al. 2008). The use of Joan's body within the narrative – or particular aspects of that narrative – promotes psychological retention, as produced in ritual and cultural "storytelling, devotional plays, singing, or textual material" (Oman and Thoresen 2003). This type of ritual observational modeling creates in her story a religious, historical, and folk heroine.

Modeling the Exemplars: Anna Ellison Butler Alexander and Teresa of Calcutta

Female saints serve as models for Christian living, creating a sense of solidarity and encouraging spiritual growth. Oman and Thoresen (2003) apply their concept of spiritual modeling to Bandura's (1986) four major processes of observational learning: "attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation." Briefly, attention occurs via directed focus; retention requires modeling repetition; reproduction functions to promote spiritual refinement; and motivation prompts living a positive spiritual life (Oman and Thoresen 2003).

Born to African American emancipated slaves, Anna Ellison Butler Alexander (1865–1947) was consecrated as the "only African American set aside in the order of deaconess in The Episcopal Church" (Saltzgaber 2011). Anna's work positively affected those living locally and globally. She built a church-based school and a mission called The Church of the Good Shepherd. Although Anna lived within a southern culture

of segregation, racism, and misogyny, she rejected anger as "a wasteful emotion. Love energized." She understood Christian ministry as intended for all people: though her mission was poor, "proportionately, Good Shepherd gave more support to needy folk throughout the world than any church in the Diocese" (Saltzgaber 2011). Applying positive psychology, Anna's example of serving others provides moral elevation, prompting the reader/listener to become a better person, and "[facilitating] observational spiritual learning processes, such as attention and reproduction...of modeled spiritual skills" (Orman and Thoresen 2003).

Recipient of the 1962 Padmashri Award, 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, and 1985 United States' Presidential Medal of Freedom, Albanian-Indian (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta (1910–1997) lived a life of service to God and others. She answered the *call within a call* to minister to the poorest of the poor, living with them. This foundress of the Missionaries of Charity would become a model of spirituality. Within the context of reproduction modeling, Oman and Thoresen (2003) identify observing "virtues such as charity, truthfulness (veracity), and humility" can model refinement in the life of the observer. Yet during her model life, Teresa experienced spiritual dryness for almost all of her final 50 years. Not hearing from God lead to feelings of abandonment and thoughts of disbelief in the existence of God. She "acknowledged the value of her pain—the absence of Jesus, her beloved" (Bedrick 2016). This state could fall under the category of absent grief (Bonanno in Garfinkel 2012), a type of grief that does not adversely affect people's functionality. Garfinkel (2012) understands absence as positive:

> The power of absence can be a vital, productive life force. . .the human search for immortality, or the eternal, or God [provides completion]. . .We can only know this fragmented and incomplete reality, so we are continuously frustrated by what it lacks.

Teresa agonizingly longed for the once-ecstatic relationship she and God shared. These expressions of pain contribute to the fullness of the life of a female saint, more wholly molding a model for authentic life – including joys and hardships – lived within a psycho-physio-spiritual-emotional response.

See Also

- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Women in Christianity

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Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care

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Pastoral care practices within the conservative protestant Christian community (e.g., Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches) include methods of pastoral care and counseling that are derived from the Bible (Adams 1970; Kellemen 2014), approaches that draw from the accumulated wisdom of the Christian tradition as well as scripture (Roberts and Talbot 1997), and models that integrate theology and psychology into pastoral practice (Collins 1980; Kollar 2011). While conservative Protestants who practice each of these approaches to pastoral care share a commitment to the authority of the Christian scriptures, those who are known as Fundamentalists have a preference for models of pastoral care that derive their practices from scripture rather than psychology, e.g., the Nouthetic Counseling movement (Adams 1970), the Psychoheresy Awareness movement (Bobgan and Bobgan 1979, 1994), and the Biblical Counseling Coalition (Kellemen and Forrey 2014). Themes that characterize these approaches include a belief in the sufficiency of Scripture to inform the priorities and methods of counseling practice, a perspective that embraces the tension between viewing people as being created in the image of God and believing that the problems of living are caused by sin, and a conviction that the goals of counseling are to help people experience God's love and to advance the work of God in their lives (Adams 1970; Bobgan and Bobgan 1979; Kellemen 2014).

Jay Adams is considered by many to be the founder of the Biblical Counseling movement. In his seminal book (*Competent to Counsel*, 1970) Adams proposed a model of pastoral care and counseling which he named Nouthetic Counseling. While Powlison (2010) characterizes Nouthetic Counseling as an antipsychiatry movement, Adams's primary concerns were that he believed psychiatrists and psychologists had usurped the role of the pastor and that the worldviews which inform these counseling approaches are incompatible with a Christian worldview. Adams (1970) characterizes the Freudian approach to psychiatry as creating an ethic in which personal problems are viewed as a sickness or a consequence of factors outside a person's control. Adams (1970) also takes issue with two humanistic assumptions that underlie Rogerian counseling: the assumption that the solution to a person's problems is within the person and that counseling is to be nondirective. Other psychologists with whom Adams disagreed include Alfred Adler, Albert Ellis, Rollo May, and B. F. Skinner (Adams 1970, 1973, 1975). Adams believed that Christian counseling should not be dependent on psychology and was against integrating within

pastoral practice any assumptions concerning human nature and behavior that are not derived from the Bible (Adams 1970, 1973, 1975). This perspective sets Adams and Nouthetic Counseling apart from Evangelical Christian counselors and pastoral care givers who integrate psychology and Christianity when they counsel people, e.g., correlational approaches (Farnsworth 1982), levels of explanation (Myers and Jeeves 1987), complementary approaches (Ingram 1995), and transformational psychology (Coe and Hall 2010).

Nouthetic Counseling differentiates between organically based mental health disorders which require medical intervention and *hamartiagenic* illness (i.e., caused by sin) which requires pastoral and spiritual intervention (Adams 1970, 1973). When it came to organically based mental health disorders, Adams supported people obtaining medical assistance and encouraged cooperation between the pastor and the physician (Adams 1970). When it came to *hamartiagenic* illness, Adams believed that true change required a spiritual process rooted in a person's experience of God's forgiveness and shaped by what Christians call sanctification, i.e., the process by which a person becomes free from the control of sin (Adams 1970). For Adams the strengths of this approach were that the person takes responsibility for their actions and that the person submits themselves to God. Adams recognized the limitations of using this approach with those who are not Christian and cautioned against using Nouthetic Counseling as a tool for proselytizing (Adams 1970). In terms of its methodology, Nouthetic Counseling effects change through the use of rational persuasion, scripture, and an emphasis on personal responsibility (Adams 1970). Both Adams and the Nouthetic Counseling approach have been critiqued for the authoritarian position into which the counselor is placed. Other criticisms include misusing Scripture, an inadequate view of human nature, a lack of interest in the internal dimensions of human life, failing to consider the impact and influence of a person's social context, a faulty view of change, and too much focus on a person's behavior (Powlison 2010). Lastly, Adams has been criticized for a superficial understanding of modern psychology that overly simplifies and misrepresents the psychologists he criticized, conceptual dependence on the views of O. Hobart Mowrer, and an unacknowledged conceptual and methodological affinity between his approach and some behavioral therapists, e.g., B. F. Skinner, William Glasser, and Albert Ellis (Powlison 2010).

Larry Crabb's (1975, 1977) counseling approach shares some of Adams's concerns about psychology while at the same time integrating aspects of psychology and theology. His critique of counseling theory highlights what he believed was the amoral and antibiblical stance of Freudian psychoanalysis, ego psychology's emphasis on adaptive functioning, Rogerian therapy's optimistic view of human agency, the mechanistic nature of Skinner's behaviorism, and the subjectivity of Viktor Frankl's existentialism (Crabb 1975). Notwithstanding these critiques, Crabb integrates psychology and theology through a methodology in which his Christian worldview functions as the metaframe that organizes his selection and use of psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, and existential insights and methods (Crabb 1975, 1977).

The Psychoheresy Awareness movement represents an alternative approach to the Biblical Counseling models. As with Adams, Bobgan and Bobgan (1979, 1994) are concerned with the cure of souls rather than the cure of minds and raise questions concerning the role of psychiatry and psychology in pastoral care and counseling. Their critique of nonreligious counseling includes concerns about a lack of precision in diagnosis as well as concerns about the worldviews that inform psychoanalytic, behavioral, humanistic, and existential approaches to psychotherapy (Bobgan and Bobgan 1979). To their credit, Bobgan and Bobgan provide more extensive descriptions of Freud and Rogers than Adams provides and reflect on other secular therapies, e.g., Reality Therapy, Scream Therapy, and Transactional Analysis. Their approach to the cure of souls is holistic in that it views people as bio-psycho-spiritual beings, emphasizes the person's relationship with God, and recognizes the role of hope and the therapeutic relationship in the change process. In addition, the Bobgans affirmed the central importance of scripture in the practice of soul care. It is worth noting that Bobgan and

Bobgan (1994) also criticize the Biblical Counseling movement for being unbiblical. Specifically they claim that one effect of Biblical Counseling training programs is that those who have not been trained in the methodology do not feel equipped to counsel, that the Biblical Counseling approach is too problem-centered, and that it is not in line with the historical practices of Christian soul-care (Bobgan and Bobgan 1994).

Despite, or perhaps because of, current trends in therapeutic practice which acknowledge the role of common factors that transcend specific models and which highlight the value of working with the religious and spiritual values of the counselee, Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care continues to ground itself in the Christian scriptures to the point that psychological insight is minimal or absent. For example, while MacArthur's text on counseling (2005) does not explicitly incorporate psychology, some of the discussion parallels what has been written about therapeutic common factors, i.e., the importance of the counseling relationship, the role of hope in counseling, and the role of extra-therapeutic factors such as the counselee listening for God and engaging in spiritual exercises.

Lastly, the Biblical Counseling approach rejects the integration of secular counseling theory with biblical theology on the basis that the worldviews which inform psychology are incompatible with a Christian worldview (Kellemen 2014; Kellemen and Forrey 2014). Similarly, the Biblical Counseling model emphasizes that God, not human activity, is the source of transformative change and that the purpose of life is to live in God's presence (Kellemen 2014; Kellemen and Forrey 2014). Thus the Biblical Counseling model is a religious soul-care model rather than a psychotherapeutic model. Although the Biblical Counseling model does not integrate psychology and theology, there is acknowledgement of the diagnostic categories of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as well as the use of psychotropic medication for depression (Kellemen 2014; Kellemen and Forrey 2014). The Biblical Counseling approach can be critiqued for its preoccupation with ideology and worldview questions, forcing Scripture to fit the constraints of the counseling situation, placing the counselor in the role of expert, failing to understand the dynamics of serious mental health issues such as eating disorders, failing to understand the dynamics of serious interpersonal problems such as abuse, an inadequate view of change, and failing to make appropriate use of insights drawn from the field of psychology in its reflections on serious mental health conditions.

In summary, Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care refers to a cluster of pastoral care and counseling models that are suitable for use within Fundamentalist churches to support those who view life's problems through the lens of sin and personal responsibility and who do not present with serious mental health conditions. Because of the religious orientation of Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care, those who are outside Fundamentalist circles will find that these approaches tend to be overly concerned with sin and answering questions of personal responsibility. Methodologically, Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care rejects the worldviews that inform psychology and does not integrate psychology and theology. Whenever Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care acknowledges the value of psychology, or integrates psychology within its practices, theology determines the manner and extent to which these psychological perspectives are employed. Lastly, a key concern that is especially relevant in an era of professional licensure is that all forms of Christian Fundamentalist Pastoral Care open the door to the possibility of inadequately trained pastors doing damage to their counselees if they use these models to counsel people with serious mental health and relational disorders that may seriously impair the individual's judgement, insight, behavior, etc.

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Christian Mysticism

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Introduction: Mysticism as a Psychological Phenomenon and in Christian Context

Mysticism is a psychospiritual process that exists in relation to the rational, intellectual process and is a psychospiritual phenomenon, a human and divine phenomenon. It is the same process but is experienced differently by each individual person and expressed variously within each religious tradition or outside of all traditions. The intrapsychic mystical process and experience is phenomenologically the same, while psychic contents being processed and religious and social manifestations vary by cultures through time. We as persons experience the mystical process universally, but each of us experiences it in a uniquely individual way spiritually and psychologically, and the mystical right brain interacts with our intellectual left brain in our consciousness.

Carl Gustav Jung's theory of Individuation – of spiritual development across the life cycle from ego emergence to ego transcendence toward the transpersonal and eventual merger with divine consciousness – describes the spiritual developmental process and concomitant transformation of psychological consciousness. This process is also understood in Roberto Assagioli's theory of psychosynthesis that as the person transforms spiritually, the person must resynthesize the personality at the higher level of consciousness. Both theories describe psychologically the spiritual process of mysticism in human experience, which is understood in various ways within and outside of the practice of religion. Mysticism begins its expression within Christianity with the incarnation of Jesus.

Mysticism as Religious Experience

Religion can be considered to have three main dimensions: religion itself, religious practice, and religious experience. Mysticism is religious experience, and each religion has a mystical component. Religious experience is personal religion, or spirituality, which has its roots in mystical states of consciousness. William James in his classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* gives this foundational understanding of mysticism psychologically and experientially. "Mystical states . . .add a supersensuous meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness. . .facts already before us fall into a new expressiveness and make a new connection with our active life"

(James 1902/1958, p. 356). He concludes, "We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled" (p. 425).

Mysticism brings to our newly expanded consciousness both wisdom and joy. "Expansion of human consciousness into cosmic consciousness by the art of concentration brings to the devotee a joyous wisdom far greater than the satisfaction of theoretical knowledge – however profound – resulting from the study of books" (Yogananda 1994, p. 280). The mystic lives an increasingly spiritual life and discovers experientially the scriptural teachings that God-relationality provides for our spiritual and temporal needs.

Through history and across world religions, mysticism as religious experience has waxed and waned in relation to religious education, doctrine, scripture, practice, and other social institutions and customs. In times when mystical Christianity has been at low ebb in relation to formal doctrine, practice, and theological education, the mystics themselves have kept the mystical tradition alive until it could again outwardly flourish. We see in Christianity today that the focus on doctrine and practice has evolved through literary and historical-critical analysis to be primary, but mystical and religious experience is once again emerging to be essential in desire for personal religious experience for spiritual growth and psychological healing and wholeness.

Mystical Consciousness in the Christian Tradition

The original mystical state of consciousness in Christianity is that of Jesus. From his birth Jesus was imprinted with Jewish tradition, from which emerged his own mystical consciousness. As he continued through his life and ministry, his teachings were about mystical consciousness in the person, or human consciousness, and the relationship of human mystical consciousness to divine or cosmic consciousness. Christian mysticism consists of Jesus' teachings about the mystical nature of the person, the mystical process within the person, and the relationship of the personal mystical consciousness to the divine consciousness.

Jesus as Mystical Cosmic Christ

Jesus was identifying with his Cosmic Christ essence, God's essence, when he said, "What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father [God] and I are one" (John 10:29–30). It is this oneness that makes the Father-Son-Holy Spirit Trinity one cosmic essence. He was also demonstrating that his personal mystical consciousness was aware of and in relationship with his universal eternal mystical essence, cosmic consciousness, which in Christian tradition is named God.

In the life of Jesus, Christ consciousness incarnate, we see his essence as omnipresent, from the draw of the Magi to visit him as a child until he ascends into heaven to rejoin God after his resurrection. We see this in the first four books of the Christian, or New Testament, scriptures: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, called the Gospels or Good News. Jesus showed that this would be good news for people spiritually because of the message it delivered, and he knew the news would be received psychologically as good.

Examples of the Good News Jesus delivered can be seen in two scripture passages. The first is, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among/within [Greek *entos*] you" (Luke 17:20–21). This passage points to the intrapsychic spiritual mystical process and implies inner, personal locus of control. The second is, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near/is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). In this passage Jesus speaks in prophetic voice to instigate change in psychological consciousness of people regarding their own behavior, to encourage spiritual transformation in preparation for union with divine consciousness. His directness indicates urgency and immediacy, and he indicates that human agency, or motivation and choice, accomplishes spiritual transformation into the kingdom of God.

Jesus' ministry, as described in the four Gospel books, taught that the mystical inner relationship of the person to God exists by nature in everyone – as in Jungian individuation – and Jesus set his life,

death, and resurrection as evidence of the eternal mystical essence as core to human existence. Subsequently, in the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples of the Master Jesus the Christ, led by Peter, began to travel outward after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension to tell the Gospel story and teach the spiritual, mystical principles Jesus had taught to them.

Paul Emerges as Mystic and Christian Scriptures Are Formed

At this time in the book of Acts, Saul, who was persecuting Jesus' followers, had his mystical conversion experience while going blind and regaining his sight (Acts 26) and became Paul, a disciple. He was transported as a prisoner to other countries, freed, and began to tell the Gospel in foreign lands including Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossus, and Thessalonica. Letters written from Paul to the fledgling churches in these lands form biblical books that follow Acts. He testified to his own spirit's mystically and physically transformative experience of the Spirit of God and preached and taught Jesus' mystical teachings, such as the nature of human spirit as part of God's Universal Spirit, particularly in Corinthians.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple (I Corinthians 2:16–17).

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal (II Corinthians 4:16–18).

Throughout the balance of Christian scripture, the locations expand and the mystical teachings culminate in the final and prophetic book of Revelation. John writes, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth… the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away" (21:1–4).

Traditions Develop, Mystics Make Their Marks, Psychology Understands

As churches cohere the Christian religion develops into what we now know as the Catholic tradition that remained Latin, the Greek tradition that became Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the Anglican Church that became English tradition, and Protestantism that has continued to develop into distinct denominations, particularly in the West. Christian mysticism has evolved in all four traditions, although uniquely in the Orthodox tradition, "The inward and personal aspect of the mystical experience…remains hidden from the eyes of all" (Lossky 1957).

In psychology, the psychologists of religion and spirituality understand the mystical process and spiritual nature of humanity to be integral to the human psyche and at the core of the human person, existence, and life. Carl Jung's colleague Jolande Jacobi summarizes Jung's theory of individuation of the person, personality, and spirituality across the life cycle.

It is a question of moving from an "ego-centred" attitude to an "ego-transcending" one, in which the guiding principles of life are directed to something objective…from one's children, one's house, one's work to the state, humanity, God…The possibility of a maturation and rounding out of the psyche is in principle inherent in every individual…The important thing is not the widened scope which consciousness attains, but is "roundedness"…i.e., a state in which the greatest possible number of man's hidden qualities are made conscious, his psychic capacities developed and condensed into a unity. This is a goal which generally can be reached – if at all – only in life's late evening (Jacobi 1973, pp. 24–25).

Some mystics are clergy, some laity, and some saints. All are loved and revered as part

of the story of Christianity and exemplars of the mystical body of Christ. All mystics speak of the goal of mysticism as union with God through love.

c. 1–34 CE Jesus

Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. . .I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me (John 12:44–50).

c. 33–64 Saul/Paul

From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth. . .so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him. . .For "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17: 26–28).

1542–1591 St. John of the Cross

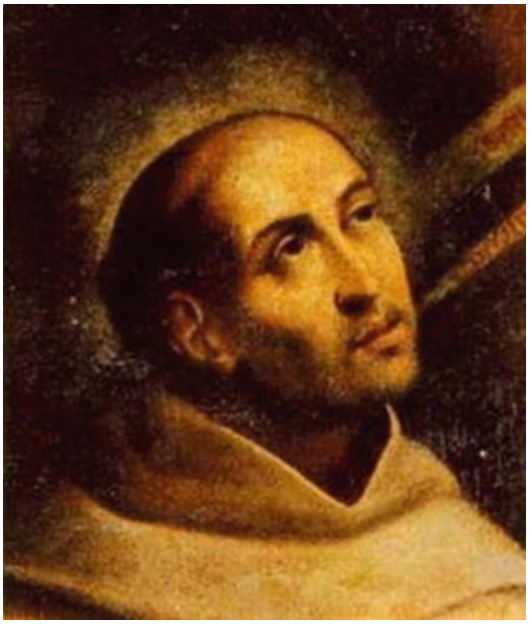
The first passion of the soul and emotion of the will is joy. . .Joy. . .is nothing else than a delight of the will. . .The will should rejoice only in what is for the honor and glory of God (1991, p. 294) (Fig. 1).

1898–1963 C. S. Lewis

Out of ourselves, into Christ, we must go. His will is to become ours and we are to think His thoughts, to "have the mind of Christ" as the Bible says (1945/1996, p. 189).

1901–1981 Howard Thurman

Mysticism deals with the inner personal response to God. . .It speaks . . .of utter and complete absorption in the experience of union with God. . .[spiritual] exercises are meant to "ready" the spirit for an awareness of the Presence of God dwelling in the core of the individual's being (2002, p. 189).



Christian Mysticism, Fig. 1 Saint John of the Cross (Figure is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license. http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Saint_John_of_the_Cross.jpg)

1929–1968 Martin Luther King, Jr.

I've been to the mountaintop. . .[God has] allowed me to look over. And I have seen the promised land. . .we, as a people, will get to the promised land. . .Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord (1968).

See Also

- ▶ Active Imagination
- ▶ Analytical Psychology
- ▶ Collective Unconscious
- ▶ Consciousness
- ▶ Contemplative Prayer
- ▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality
- ▶ God Image
- ▶ Individuation
- ▶ John of the Cross
- ▶ Julian of Norwich
- ▶ Meister Eckhart
- ▶ Merton, Thomas
- ▶ Mysticism and Psychoanalysis
- ▶ Mysticism and Psychotherapy

- Nonduality
- Numinosum
- Psyche
- Psychoanalytic Spirituality
- Psychospiritual
- Religious Experience
- Self
- Unconscious

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Christianity

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Christianity begins in the first century CE and occurs as an outgrowth of a variety of groups that constitute Judaism during this time. It has as its focus the figure of Jesus of Nazareth who preached, taught, and practiced an interpretation of second-temple Judaism and the Torah which drew both adherents and opposition. He was eventually martyred in Jerusalem ca. 33 CE. Christians claim that he was resurrected by God from the grave and that he yet lives and is present as *ho Christos*, "the Christ" (meaning the "Anointed One"). Early believers gathered in their homes to worship and partake in rituals including the Eucharist and baptism. A variety of Christian groups emerged, including the Petrine following in Jerusalem, the Johannine community possibly in Palestine, the Montanists in Asia Minor who focus on eschatology, and the Pauline movement with its focus on Gentile membership. It is not until late first century and early second century that the "church" and Christianity as a religion begin to take form as an institution, evidenced, for example, in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 100 CE) who gives much attention to ecclesiology and the central role of the bishop as head of the congregation. "We are clearly obliged to

look upon the bishop as the Lord (*ton kurion*)," he writes to the church at Ephesis (6.1). To the church in Smyrna, he writes: "All of you should follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father; and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles. Respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything involving the church without the bishop" (8). For early Christians, the Jewish scriptures represented the authoritative sacred writings. At the same time, a new collection of literature begins to emerge from an oral tradition of the sayings of Jesus. The letters of Paul represent the earliest Christian texts and, along with other writings deemed important by Christian leaders, become part of the New Testament canon. Together, these writings which include stories, teachings, exhortations, parables, sermons, travel accounts, and sayings relate the Jesus of history and even more the Jesus of theology. Paul speaks of encountering the posthumous Jesus in a vision experience and the potency of that experience for Paul leading to his Christian conversion (2 Cor. 12.1-10; 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.1-6). From this event, Paul becomes passionate to include Gentiles into Christian membership, as he establishes church communities in places such as Corinth, Philadelphia, and Galatia. The NT canon consists also of the Gospels. The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as one who exorcizes demons and moves in mysterious secrecy amid the crowd and his followers. The Gospel of John presents Jesus who is the logos made flesh and dwelling in the material world. The Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as a social reformer, and the Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as a great teacher. In this way, the Gospel writers each present Jesus in ways specific to their own sociopolitical and religio-spiritual concerns. They all however present Jesus as the bringer of a new age. In Mark, Jesus is clear to say: "The time has been fulfilled (*peplērōtai ho kairos*) and the kingdom is near; repent and believe in the good news (*euaggelion*)" (Mark 1.15; cf. Matt. 4.17; Luke 4.15; cf. John 13.31-33). With regard to the era of Christianity, Jung refers to the emerging of the Aion, or *piscus* (Latin, "fish"), the new archetype embraced by the collective (unconscious). The fish is symbolic of Christ coming to the surface and made manifest as the true Light (1 John 2.8-11) in the waking, conscious world. Early Christian catacomb includes the fish as symbol of Christ, the Greek spelling for fish, *ichthus*, taken to mean "Jesus Christ Son of God, Savior." In the Gospels, there are accounts of Jesus providing fish to feed large groups of people (Mark 6.35-44; Luke 9.10-17; Matt. 14.13-21; cf. John 6.1-13), and in the Gospel of John, Jesus' final post-resurrection appearance is to the disciples whom he causes to have a great catch of fish, a portion of which they all share as a meal (John 21.1-14). The early church into the Middle Ages struggles to define the relationship between the human and the divine in the figure of Jesus. The Council of Nicea (325 CE), consisting of about 300 bishops called together by the Roman Emperor Constantine, is significant for establishing the notion of *homoousios*, Christ being of the same substance as the Father. Through Constantine's conversion to the faith, Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman world, which includes the western Latin church and Rome and the eastern Greek church with its center at Constantinople. Many of the religious beliefs and practices of these two traditions remain into the present time.

See Also

- ▶ Christ
- ▶ Jesus
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav

Christianity and Sexuality

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No topic has been the object of greater controversy in Christian circles in recent decades than sexuality. Families, congregations, and even denominations risk being torn asunder by the question of whether homosexuality, in particular,

is compatible with Christianity. Though this controversy hardly exhausts the topic at hand, it provides a useful point of entrée into the topic's complexities, which are frequently overlooked.

Let's start with two questions often heard in these debates: (1) Is homosexuality "natural" or is it a "lifestyle choice?" and (2) What does the Bible say about homosexuality? Both questions tacitly assume that the forms that sexuality takes in our time and place – and our understanding of "sexuality" itself – are universal and ahistorical. Yet the very terms of the questions belie that assumption as contemporary scholarship has shown. "Homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" are European inventions that date from the late nineteenth century (Foucault 1994; Katz 2007). Let me spell out carefully what I mean – and do not mean – by making this claim. I do not mean that same-sex desire, same-sex acts, or same-sex relationships are modern European inventions. That we think we find answers to our second question in the Bible shows that this is clearly not the case (though whether the Bible actually *answers* our question is highly debatable). But how such aspects of human behavior are named, understood, organized, and lived out in relationship to social norms varies with time and place. My claim here is only in part an etymological one; the words "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" are of recent European provenance, but so is the fullness of what they reference. The emergent field of psychology, which sought to catalogue and to understand the variety of humanity's erotic interests and practices, was formative in their creation. As its work made its way out into the larger world (largely through efforts to manage public, familial, and personal health), those under its sway incorporated them into their sense of identity – their own and others. So much so that we now understand "sexuality" as a singular root of who we are. Sigmund Freud's work was particularly influential here. He established identity formation as a project that starts at infancy and draws on unformed but powerful energies with which we are born, which are shaped and channeled by our experiences in family and society.

Moreover, it is not just the *categories* of sexuality that we currently use that are of relatively recent vintage; it is the larger framework in which they are embedded. That framework links "sexuality" (erotic desire and acts) to (anatomical) "sex" and to "gender" (cultural roles) in a linear fashion. Ours is a binary taxonomy; we expect people to be either homosexual or heterosexual, male or female, and masculine or feminine. Moreover, we expect biological males to act masculine and to desire women. We expect biological females to act feminine and to desire men. Professing or exhibiting same-sex desire calls into question one's gender (e.g., we associate male homosexuality with effeminacy) and even one's sex. Certain contemporary scientific investigations into the biological roots of homosexuality, for example, look for signs of deviation from certain normative features of male or female embodiment – in, for example, the size of one's hypothalamus, in finger length (Armour 2010; Hamer and Copeland 1994; LeVay 1996).

The Greco-Roman culture in which Christianity came into existence thought about these matters rather differently than we do (Martin 1995). Instead of a binary and linear system that cleanly distinguishes male from female, masculine from feminine, and heterosexual from homosexual, their system was more of a continuum in which manhood was normative and womanhood was derivative. The philosopher Aristotle is infamous for calling women "misbegotten males," a statement that may sound like an insult but is intended as merely factual. When reproduction went normally, according to his understanding of biology, it yielded a male body. The birth of a female meant something had gone awry. But simply being born with a male body didn't guarantee the development of manliness. Bodies – especially infant bodies – were both vulnerable and malleable; caregivers needed to mold and shape those bodies through applying proper amounts of heat or cold and dryness or moisture and through massage to develop their proper shape and character. Though much less malleable, the bodies of elite male youths (and even adult men) also needed careful cultivation to attain and sustain the full degree of manliness of which they were capable. Although diet and exercise were central, so also was erotic practice, that is, who one had sexual relations with

and how. For example, whereas our culture associates what I will call homosex (same-sex sexual acts) among men with effeminacy regardless of who penetrates whom, the ancient Greeks distinguished between the penetrator (a virile position) and the penetrated (an effeminate position). But they also believed that too much sex with *women* made the penetrator vulnerable to effeminacy. In general, though, what mattered in this context was less the gender or sex of one's partner than his or her social status. Pederasty, a sexual relationship between a young elite man and an older elite man was a standard practice in ancient Greece. These relationships were essentially apprenticeships in which the older schooled the younger in the *mores* of elite manhood and helped him make important contacts with other elite males.

We may get the *word* "family" from the Latin *familia*, but our families look quite different from those of ancient Rome – and ancient Israel, as well, for that matter. Families in both contexts were organized around married patriarchs, but, as exemplified in the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis, Israelite patriarchs practiced concubinage; Abraham was married to Sarah, who gave him Hagar as a sexual partner (by whom Isaac was conceived) when it became clear she was barren. Jacob, the father of the eponymously named 12 tribes of Israel, was married to two wives who were sisters, Leah and Rachel. Roman patriarchs married only one wife, but were allowed – even expected – to have sex with other women (as long as they were not married to other men) and men (as long as they were of lower status). Having sex with one's male slave, for example, compromised neither a patriarch's marriage nor his masculinity (as long as he did the penetrating).

Yet culturally, experientially, and scientifically, we are coming to know that things are more complex than that. Thanks to the second wave of the feminist movement, what counts as appropriate behavior for men and women has broadened considerably in recent decades. Where athleticism used to indicate latent if not active lesbianism (and thus a "masculinity complex" of some sort), we now expect and encourage girls and women to take up sports. There are limits, however, to the compatibility of athletic success and femininity (Levy 2009). Getting a manicure or wearing a scarf and earrings is acceptable masculine behaviors these days, though carrying a "murse" (a man purse) may be pushing it in some contexts. More significantly, consider the now-ubiquitous acronym "LGBTQI." The last four letters, in particular, index forms of gendered, sexed, and/or sexual identity that we are only recently acknowledging as a society. And each of these forms troubles our neat binary system. The "B" refers to bisexuals, people who are attracted to sexual partners of both the same and opposite sexes. The "T" stands for both trans *gendered* and trans *sexual*; in the first case, people who do not identify with the *gender* they have been assigned or, in the second case, with their anatomical sex. While some in these categories seek to live as the opposite gender or sex, many more live out their lives somewhere in between – or outside – normative masculinity/femininity or normative manhood/womanhood. These people may identify as "queer," a formerly derogatory term for homosexuality that has been retrieved as a catchall for non-normative identities. A number of people now identify as genderqueer, for example. Finally, the "I" stands for "intersexed," people whose anatomical and/or biological sex is in some way ambiguous or combines features usually seen only in one or the other sex.

By "anatomical sex," I mean what we have come to call primary and secondary sex characteristics: whether one has a penis or vagina and the accompanying internal reproductive organs (primary) to match along with the bodily features (secondary) we expect bearers of each of these organs to have such as breasts, facial hair, and a certain body shape. By "biological sex" I mean all of the internal genetic and chromosomal markers, hormones, and other factors that produce anatomical sex – and other features of human embodiment – in the various forms it takes. Intersexed conditions take a variety of forms at both the anatomical and biological levels. While, most of the time, a person with an XX chromosome, say, will exhibit all the bodily signs we associate with normative femaleness, things can turn out differently at just about any point along the way. The result can be, for example, a female with a vagina

and breasts but with internal reproductive organs that are more like testes than ovaries or whose external sex organ is more penis like. And one can neither predict nor assume, on the basis of these bodily configurations, gender identity *or* sexual orientation. Clearly, our binary system is inadequate to the reality of this complexity (Fausto-Sterling 2012).

So what are the implications of all of this for how we think about sexuality and Christianity? And where can the discipline of psychology be of help to Christianity's ongoing attempts to work out what count as faithful expressions of sexuality? Let me return briefly to the two questions with which I opened this entry. The account I have offered above suggests that both questions are framed far too narrowly – and thus so are the answers they invite. To inquire after the Bible's views on homosexuality is to pose a question it cannot answer, since there was no such thing as *homosexuality as we understand it and live it* in the biblical worlds. Again, that does not mean, as we have seen, that ancients did not experience same-sex desire or engage in same-sex acts. Rather, those desires and acts were *understood and lived* under very different social and familial systems than ours. This, it seems to me, is an important insight for ministers, therapists, and pastoral counselors to bear in mind when working with parishioners or patients who are struggling to reconcile sexual issues of whatever sort with their Christian faith. Similarly, to claim homosexuality is a "lifestyle choice" simply ignores the role sexuality currently plays in our sense of identity and in our lives – whether we are gay or straight. Yet to claim homosexuals are "born that way" is too simplistic, a claim that scientists researching the biology of homosexual make clear. Whatever our sexual orientation or gender identity might be, it is likely the result of multiple factors: biological factors, no doubt, but also our individual histories and experiences, including choices we make.

Psychology has played a critical role in both the pathologization and the normalization of the various senses of self that LGBTQI attempts to capture. So, for many years, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (popularly known as the *DSM*), authored and published by the American Psychological Association, classified homosexuality as a disorder, but ceased doing so in 1973. In fact, the APA has spoken out strongly against so-called reparative therapy that claims to "cure" homosexuality. As the APA moves toward its 5th major revision of the manual, a similar shift is occurring around trans issues. "Gender dysphoria," a less pejorative term, will supplant gender identity disorder as a direct attempt to "stop 'pathologiz[ing] all expressions of gender variance'" (Lowder 2012). What impact this will have on Christianity as it continues to wrestle with issues of sexuality, identity, and faith remains to be seen.

See Also

- ▶ Abraham and Isaac
- ▶ Anima and Animus
- ▶ Bible
- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Cultural Psychology
- ▶ Family Therapy and Pastoral Counseling
- ▶ Gender Roles
- ▶ Jewish Sexual Mores
- ▶ Postmodernism
- ▶ Psychiatry
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Sacred Prostitution
- ▶ Sex and Religion

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Chthonic Deities

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Chthonic is from the Greek, χθονιοζ or *khthonios*, meaning "of the earth" and is used in reference to that which is beneath the surface of the earth or the underworld and its state of darkness. Chthonic also refers to a state of abundance. For the ancient Greeks, chthonic was not to be confused with the visible layer of the soil, where Demeter reigned as the goddess of the harvest or with Gaia, the earth mother who bore and united with Ouranus and is a primal life force (Farnell 1908/1971). Rather, chthonic implies lower, abundance, darkness, and death.

The chthonic deities and heroes were worshipped in their own cults and sacrificed to in specific ways that differentiated them from Olympian deities. For example, black-skinned animal offerings were preferred for sacrifice to the chthonian gods and light skinned for the Olympians. However, any sort of strict lines of demarcation to categorize the Greek's system of religious affections meet with frustration. The line between the chthonic and the Olympic is immediately blurred as soon as one considers Persephone, Hermes, or, for that matter, Zeus himself, who had cults where he was worshipped with the epithet *Zeus Chthonios* (Burkert 1977/1985).

A chthonic deity, then, is the carrier of the projection of human nature's instinctive drives and dark, rejected propensities and yet is also a fertile and divine source of abundance. Aspects of human nature that were wisely discerned by the ancient Greeks with caution and recognized as potentially dangerous in humans were nonetheless honored in their gods. Through rituals, the Greeks were participating in a relationship with the projected darker parts of their own nature. Devotion to this principle has fallen into disuse.

Psychological Implications

Today, rather than a reverential attitude toward the awesome power of the chthonic force, even in psychological systems and religions, much of this drive is the target for a lifelong battle to contain, banish, or defeat it in oneself and in society. Unlike the Greek chthonic cults, today, darkness is not worshipped, it is feared. Denial of the dark side of the soul (dark did not mean evil to the chthonic cults, but implied an insufficiency of illumination) inevitably creates projection of one's own unacknowledged urges onto others.

Death was considered transformative for human beings in religion in the ancient Greek cults and is still thought to be so today. Today, only if the darker aspects of the personality are defeated does the transformation end in a better life. The dead were understood to be of aid to the living by the Greek cults, and all mortals went to the underworld after death. Immortality was not bestowed upon a mortal based on a judgement of the quality of their life. The chthonic cults worshipped their ancestors and heroes at their gravesites, believing that the dead were able to deliver oracular messages that could help them with their daily burdens.

Dualistic Thinking

Dualistic thinking categorizes the chthonic in a split between good and bad. Chthonic is bad. Olympian is good. But to the ancient polytheistic cult members, this would be a gross oversimplification. They might even view it as the one

psychological state they perceived as sinful: hubris. The chthonic gods and goddesses all had healing and destructive tendencies, as did the Olympians.

The Greek God Pan

One well-known example of the chthonic is personified by the Greek goat-god Pan. Pan's cult began in Arcadia on the Peloponnesian peninsula. He was half divine and half beast, a god of fertility, the hunt, and an aide to men and the divine in battle. He also brought panic and unbridled sexuality. Other Greek chthonic cults worshipped Hermes, Hades, Persephone, Dionysus, Hecate, and Hephaestus, among others. Each carried different shades of the chthonic spirit, which the polytheistic Greeks saw as aspects of the many sided mystery that surrounded and animated all of life.

See Also

► Dualism
► Pan

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Circumambulation

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Circumambulation literally means "walking around." As a religious practice it can take two different outward forms, each with a slightly different but related psychological meaning. The first use of sacred walking comes in the form of a communal act of celebration of a particular deity or saint. At various times in the religious calendar of ancient Egypt, an image of the god was taken out of its shrine and paraded for the people to see. In many Roman Catholic countries, statues of saints are taken around the plaza on the saint's festal day. These acts of circumambulation are a kin to an animal ranging over the domain of its territory. The parade marks the loyalty of the local populace to the patron deity or saint. Another form is solitary or more solemn pilgrimage. An example of this would be the circumambulation of Mt. Kailash in Tibet. This is a multiday journey and involves not only the physical travail of a difficult and long hike, but becomes a focal period of reflection, meditation, and devotion.

In either form, the act of circumambulation is a human attempt to create or observe what Eliade (1959) termed "sacred space" and "sacred time." In the act of marking off a space through physically walking its circumference, humans create a boundary between the sacred and the profane or mundane aspects of their world. In the course of the journey of circumscribing a space, the person or group exists in sacred time. Often, the opportunity provided by a daylong or even multiday event allows individuals who participate to enter into ecstatic trance states or deeply focused meditational states even as they are active in a bodily sense.

See Also

► Mandala

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Circumcision

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General

Circumcision refers to the removal of the prepuce (foreskin) covering the glans of the penis. Egyptian mummies from 2,300 bce were found circumcised, and earlier wall paintings suggest that the practice began long before. Approximately one-sixth of the world's men today are circumcised; the vast majority are Muslims or Jews. Throughout history, the basis for the procedure has traditionally been religious or cultural; however, in America, Canada, and Australia, many men are circumcised for medical or esthetic reasons.

No consensus exists as to how circumcision originated. Anthropologists have proposed theories including that it began as a mark of defilement for enslaved man, that it served as a sign of cultural identity similar to a tattoo, and that it once was believed to enhance fertility. Today, circumcision is the norm among Muslims, Jews, some African churches, several African tribes, and Australasian Aborigines.

Judaism

Religious Jews traditionally circumcise male babies on the eighth day unless there is a health-related reason to postpone it. The act is performed by a *mohel* (circumciser) who need not be either a rabbi or a physician. The baby is held firmly by the *sandak* (holder) who is usually an elder male relative. Traditionally, the procedure is done without anesthetic. In premodern times, blood was sucked from the penis following the cut. Among most Jews today, this is done only symbolically using a straw.

Circumcision is understood by Jews to signify acceptance into the covenant between God and the Jewish people whereby Jews agree to follow the laws of the Torah and God and, in turn, agrees to bless the Jewish people. An early iteration of this covenant between God and Abraham is described in Genesis 17; the passage concludes with the command for all of Abraham's descendents to be circumcised. Covenants in biblical times were often sealed by severing an animal, with the implication that the party who breaks the covenant will suffer a similar fate. In Hebrew, the verb meaning to seal a covenant translates literally as "to cut." It is presumed by Jewish scholar that the removal of the foreskin symbolically represents such a sealing of the covenant. A number of sovereigns, beginning with Hadrian and Justinian, attempted to forbid the practice among Jews and anti-Semitic rhetoric throughout Western history has often included a notable anti-circumcision component. Some Reform Jewish theologians of the nineteenth century argued that circumcision should be abandoned as it ran contrary to the Jewish principle of universality. Despite common misconceptions, a child born to a Jewish mother is considered fully Jewish regardless of whether or not he has been circumcised.

Christianity

With Paul's teaching that faith served as a sufficient prerequisite for conversion to Christianity, circumcision fell away as a religious ritual for early Christians. It is explicitly rejected as a requirement for conversion in Acts 15:3–11 and Galatians 5:6, but nontherapeutic circumcision was never forbidden by the Roman Catholic Church until the fourteenth century. The practice has been retained in Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

Islam

Though circumcision is not mentioned explicitly in the Koran, it is considered to be a binding

"prophetic tradition" among Muslims. There is a great diversity of opinion among Islamic jurists as to the proper time for the ritual to be performed. Often it is during the first 40 days of life, most commonly on the seventh day; however, it can be as late as age seven in some communities. Who performs the circumcision and how vary significantly from community to community in the Muslim world.

Psychology

Freud understood Christianity as a "religion of the son" which held an Oedipal desire to kill the "religion of the father," Judaism, from which it was born. Freud further viewed circumcision in Judaism as symbolic of man's submissiveness to God. Consequently, by rejecting circumcision and thus removing that symbol of submission, the "son" asserts its authority over the "father." Freud views circumcision as symbolic of castration, and he posits that much anti-Semitism may be rooted in the anti-Semite's fear of castration. Other psychoanalyst theorists have disagreed with Freud, arguing that far from serving as a symbol of castration, circumcision gives the penis the appearance of a permanent erection. The ritual then may seek to ensure fertility and the continued existence of a group which perceives itself as threatened.

Contemporary Debate

A passionate debate as to the value of circumcision rages across the literature in the fields of medicine, psychology, and anthropology among others. Proponents often cite medical benefits and the importance of respecting cultural traditions. Opponents generally focus on the pain of the procedure to the infant and rights of the neonate. No solid data exists as to the long-term psychological impact – positive or negative – of circumcision on the individual. The mere intensity of the debate attests to the fact that the practice strikes deep psychological chords for many.

See Also

- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Islam
- ▶ Judaism and Psychology
- ▶ Rites of Passage

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City

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Cities (and villages) have traditionally represented various concepts associated with the idea of centering. For many cultures, their major city or village is the World Center. In Egypt, creation itself occurred when a primal mound rose from the Nile and became the cult center at Heliopolis. Delphi, home of the Greek oracle, was the navel of the world. Any village into which the people emerged from Mother Earth into this existence is the World Center, as in the case of many of the pueblo cultures in the American Southwest.

Most ancient and medieval cities were built around a central temple or church, often defined by walls with four gates representing the four directions. In a sense, then, cities were mandalas, representing wholeness and security and a sense that through the structure of the city, the inhabitants participated in that wholeness. In terms of collective psychology, cities have represented not only wholeness but a reasoned barrier against the chaos surrounding their walls. Cities were often

referred to by the feminine pronoun, and a constant fear was of the ravishing of the city by invading armies. In mythology, as in history, the fall of a city is a terrible tragedy equated with the psychological and emotional destruction of the culture. The fall of Troy is a prime model for this tragedy, its gates penetrated and its streets filled with the murdering invaders.

Cities, like humans, can be corrupted and can serve as a model for the psychological corruption of a people. A sphinx torments the sinful city of Thebes, and inside at its heart, we find the specific crimes of incest, regicide, and patricide in the person of Oedipus, who lacks the one psychological quality he needs, self-knowledge.

Cities sometimes have mythological, spiritual, and political significance related to particular events. As we know in connection with Jerusalem, a city can be holy to more than one people. Jews, Muslims, and Christians who have fought for the right to occupy that city have, from their points of view, fought for their cultural souls, for their very being. Take away Jerusalem and the people in question no longer are connected to what or whom they believe themselves to be. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept," sings the psalmist of the Hebrew exile to Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (wither away) (Psalm 137).

In the *Republic*, Plato discussed the city as an expression of our lack of self-sufficiency and our need to look for help beyond ourselves – i.e., in the collective experience. Ultimately, then, the city, whether Jerusalem, Troy, Athens, Thebes, or Heliopolis, is a mandalic model for a culture's psychic wholeness, a model, like the heroes who defend it, of the collective self, the perfect union of the society's psyche in both its unconscious and conscious forms.

See Also

- ▶ Axis Mundi
- ▶ Mandala

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Clergy Sexual Abuse

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The issue of clergy sexual abuse is real and relevant today. Awareness building is essential for prevention. Sexual abuse by individual priests is often varied, and the victims include both genders (Hansen 2015). Many organizational, psychological, and situational factors contribute to the susceptibility of individual priests to perpetrate abuse. It is important to note that no single cause of sexual abuse of minors by clergy has been identified as stated in the John Jay report (2004). Several causes or a combination of causes predispose clergy to abuse.

Clergy Offenders' Personality Characteristics

Priest-abusers are likely to have experienced some of the following: Poor relationships with "their parents when they were youths" (Wong and Rossetti 2004, p. 14), a history of sexual abuse, isolation, loneliness, insecurity, poor social skills, lack of identity, confusion over sexual identity, psychosexual immaturity, and substance abuse (Stappenbeck et al. 2016). The transition from seminary to parish life may induce high levels of stress in some priests that can lead to higher levels of susceptibility to abuse. They may have served as stressors or triggers (Terry and Ackerman 2008). Stressors in the lives of clergy may lead to reactive behavior to relieve stress, such as high levels of alcohol use, which could in turn act to decrease inhibitions that allow abuse to occur.

During the peak years of abuse, the use of alcohol and drugs by abusive priests increased significantly. It is to be noted that homosexual orientation is not a significant predictor of sexual abuse of minors (Wong and Rossetti 2004).

The John Jay report (2004) also maintains that clergy offenders display shyness, loneliness, and passivity. Offending clergy exhibited the presence of over-controlled hostility more than non-offending clergy. One specific clergy study found that offenders came from backgrounds characterized by rigidity and dysfunction, with themes of abuse (Post et al. 2015). They had little insight into these areas, and had insufficient training in the issue of transference/counter transference, had virtually no training or education concerning sexual abuse, domestic violence, addictive disease, or healthy professional boundaries, and failed to appreciate how their history of trauma affected their professional life. Many clergy offenders who were studied psychologically showed some personality based markers on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).

Psychological Tests

The John Jay report (2004) states that priests who had abused minors cannot be differentiated significantly on psychological tests from priests who had not abused minors. Nonetheless, there were several personality-based risk markers on the MMPI that merit attention. In clergy abusers, the MMPI primary scales show elevations on the subscales of denial of social anxiety, authority problems, persecutory ideas, amorality, and over-controlled hostility. Risk markers include need for affection, social imperturbability, imperturbability, and inhibition of aggression but these elevations are to be interpreted with caution.

Grooming Behaviors

Grooming behaviors are opportunities created by the abuser for the abuse to take place, such as socializing and building trust with the victim's family. They include disproportionate attention, enticements, games, seduction, verbal and/or physical coercion. They also include seduction or manipulation, building of personal and family relationships, providing benefits such as drugs, alcohol, "verbal or physical intimidation, seduction and testing of a child, emotional manipulation and verbal coercion, catching the victim by surprise, using verbal or physical force" (Bettina Bohm et al. 2004, p. 8), and disguising sexual advances using alcohol and drugs.

Persistence of Abuse

Abuse persisted because the accused priests claim that they were compelled by sick or sinful impulses, were controlled by forces beyond their control, and so denied full responsibility for their behavior. They often denied the victim his or her status by claiming that the victim participated by being seductive or precocious, or did not fight back or say anything during the abuse. They even blamed the victim or the victim's family for setting up conditions that allowed the abuse to occur by inviting him into their home, engaging him socially, and including him as part of the family. They often downplayed the crime and explicitly blamed victims by placing the onus of the initiation of the physical intimacy on the accuser referring to the abuse as a relationship. They said that the victims were willing or precocious and considered themselves the victims because they were accused of these indecent acts. They viewed the sexual behavior as consensual, not harmful, and that any behavior short of intercourse as not wrong because it is not sex. They also insinuated that a single incident of sexual behavior was not harmful and that only repetitive acts caused harm. Some even said that the harm should be forgotten because of the time between the incident(s) and the accusation. They tended to explain their transgressions theologically.

Theological Misunderstandings by the Perpetrators

Priest-abusers explained their identity in relation to acts of abuse by using the image of sinner-self (Terry 2011). Their understanding of their sinfulness and the possibility of forgiveness in confession meant that after the Sacrament of Reconciliation, their relationship with God was restored, without reference to victims. It is only many years after the acts of abuse took place that they came to understand the impact of their behavior on victims. There was a cognitive dissonance that arose from the disconnect between the abusers' perception of norms of behavior, potential harms, and motivations for their own behavior, and the reality and the impact of their behavior. Adapting by justifying or excusing behavior allowed the abusive behavior to persist. They believed that seeking forgiveness from parishioners and victims and having completed some distinct punishment or treatment was enough to end the process of condemnation (Bange 2004).

Some priest-abusers stopped because of internal reasons, feeling guilty about their behavior, having a sense of remorse, and shame because of their behavior (Terry and Ackerman 2008). More commonly, abuse stopped because of external reasons, like being removed from the parishes and situations in which they could abuse. Others stopped because of a combination of internal and external reasons. The John Jay report (2004) states that no priest said that the vow of celibate chastity was the problem.

Prevention, Deterrence, and Treatment

Prevention policies in Churches should consider situational and social factors that could influence future harmful behavior, as new opportunities would arise over time, and offenders could adapt and change their modus operandi. Therefore, strategies should incorporate a general framework that can be adapted to new situations using new techniques.

Some measures could be to increase the effort it takes for priests to commit acts of abuse by implementing mandatory safe environment training to raise awareness among priests, and enforcing the zero-tolerance policy for abusers, which would make the risk greater if one is recognized as an abuser (Coughlin 2003). A periodic evaluation of the performance of priests, so that questionable behavior would be more likely to be detected and controlled, should be instituted (Wasserman 2017). Priests should acknowledge the importance of structures of accountability and transparency such as safe environment and audit programs. These should be implemented and maintained in a timely way (Rossetti 2004).

Priests should find alternate outlets for close and age appropriate bonds thus lessening the need for them to develop social bonds with adolescents. They should participate in priest support groups, which would decrease likelihood of isolation and stress. Stress-reduction seminars could help prevent provocations especially after transitions. Excuses could be reduced through education about what types of behavior are and are not appropriate with minors. The ability to use techniques of neutralization should be removed, whereby excuses to justify inappropriate behavior are given (Guerzoni and Graham 2015).

Conclusion

Priest-abusers blamed church leaders for the abuse and the Church's responses to the accusation. They shifted the blame to the Church hierarchy saying how poorly church leaders prepared seminarians for life in the priesthood, and how ineffectively Church leaders dealt with accusations of abuse, which they considered reactive and unforgiving. They felt they were poorly socialized to the life of a priest and if they were better equipped to adjust to the loneliness and realities of the life of celibate chastity, they might not have abused.

Therefore, change must come from the leaders in the Church, and the changes should be strongly implemented. Changes can be achieved through

transparency in reporting and dealing with sexual abuse. It should be ensured that transparency/accountability structures become routine and part of the ordinary practices and culture of dioceses. This may involve creation of review boards in parishes and dioceses. Thus, with continued transparency and accountability mechanisms in place, changes can become institutionalized.

Members of churches should be assured that the Church is committed to respond to all incidents of sexual abuse. Church members should be updated about steps taken to achieve changes through safe environment and audit programs and through gaining a better grasp of the problem by commissioning studies about the sexual abuse problem. They should be informed about how the church has acted. This would help in greater openness. Transparency requires that the whole church community be engaged at all levels, including laity and clergy, to maintain vigilance in the prevention of the abuse of children.

See Also

► Child Abuse and the Psychology of Religion

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Clinebell, Howard

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Howard John Clinebell, Jr. (1922–2005) served as a pioneer of the modern pastoral counseling

movement. Clinebell was born in Springfield, Illinois, to Howard J. and Clem (Whittenberg) Clinebell on June 3, 1922. He received a B.A. from DePauw University in 1944, a B.D. from Garrett Theological Seminary in 1947, and a Ph.D. in Psychology of Religion from Columbia University in 1954. Clinebell completed the Certificate in Applied Psychiatry for Ministry from the William H. White Institute and was highly influenced by the work of Harry Stack Sullivan, Paul Tillich, David Roberts, Horace Freiss, and Carney Landis (Sanborn 1975). A minister in the United Methodist Church, during his studies Clinebell pastored churches in Indiana, Illinois, and New York. Beginning in 1955, he spent 2 years lecturing in religious education at New York University before moving across the country to Southern California. In 1957, Clinebell formed a pastoral counseling center at First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, California, and in 1959 joined the faculty of the School of Theology in nearby Claremont.

Clinebell commenced higher education toward the end of World War II, a time of shifting paradigms in American mental healthcare. The center of psychoanalysis moved to the USA from Europe. Freudian authority waned as neo-Freudian influences began to dominate psychological discourse. And the American public, with knowledge of "shell shock" from World War I, began to understand the insidious impact of mental illness upon aspiring and returning soldiers.

In response to this changing landscape, by the 1950s, over 80% of theological schools offered courses in psychology. Thus, Clinebell's theological education at Garrett Theological Seminary and his training as a Methodist minister included instruction in both psyche and soul care. Influenced by Sullivan and this mental health milieu, Clinebell viewed "the individual (intrapsychic) and hence mental illness and health" as "abstractions when separated from the social (interpersonal) matrix of the individual's life" (Sanborn 1975, p. 65). Aware of the impact of context upon the individual, Clinebell contended that the growth of one toward his/her "God-given potentialities" (Moss 1984, p. 175) also contributed to the growth of others and the broader society. This precept led toward the construction of what Clinebell termed "growth counseling." In an interview with Moss (1984), Clinebell defined growth counseling as "a human potential's approach to the helping process that describes the goal as facilitating the maximum development of a person's potentialities, at each life stage . . . Growth counseling is both a way of seeing people and a way of helping them" (p. 175). According to Clinebell, "GROWTH = CARING + CONFRONTATION" (Clinebell 1979, p. 55). Therefore, "Confrontation needs to focus on both negative, growth-limiting attitudes, beliefs, and behavior in persons and on the positive potential for change of which they are unaware" (Clinebell 1979, p. 55). Based on assets – rather than a deficits approach, growth counseling foreshadowed tenets found today within positive psychology, ecological counseling, and motivational interviewing. As noted by Kathleen Greider, Clinebell's colleague at Claremont School of Theology, "Howard saw the need for counselors to understand how oppression and poverty wound a person" (Rourke 2005, para. 8). Thus, Clinebell was attuned to issues of race, class, gender, and ecology when many others in mental health broadly, and pastoral counseling specifically, remained focused on self-actualization devoid of systemic influences.

In addition to his work in the area of growth and growth counseling, Clinebell also wrote prolifically on the topics of well-being, ecotherapy, marriage, and addiction. Clinebell edited a volume of *The Journal of Pastoral Care* on the "Greening of Pastoral Care" in 1994, a time long before "going green" was so popular (Clinebell 1994). He wrote, contributed to, and edited over 30 books and more than 50 articles. He cowrote a significant number of books and articles with his wife, Charlotte Holt Clinebell. His work was translated into multiple foreign languages, including German, Spanish, Dutch, Finnish, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese, and he offered workshops in more than 60 countries. According to Mendenhall (1990), "His book *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (1966, revised 1984), perhaps the most widely used

seminary textbook for pastoral counseling, helped expand the scope of pastoral approaches from individual/intrapsychic dynamics and nondirective methods to a more inclusive focus on interpersonal dynamics and more directive human potentials approaches" (p. 177).

As previously mentioned, in 1957, Clinebell formed a pastoral counseling center at the First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, California. After joining the faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont as professor of pastoral psychology in 1959, this center became the training institute for the school's graduate program in pastoral counseling. Clinebell served as a faculty member at the school and pastoral counselor at the center from 1959 to 1988. During this time he traveled extensively, advancing the pastoral counseling movement across the globe and living out his commitments to justice, peace, and environmental ethics. Though the center underwent numerous name changes, from The Pomona Valley Pastoral Counseling Center to the Pomona Valley Pastoral Counseling & Growth Center, in 1989 the name was officially changed to The Clinebell Institute in recognition of his tremendous influence upon the discipline of pastoral counseling. Clinebell was a founding member and diplomate of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and served as president from 1964 to 1965. He was also the founder of the International Pastoral Care Network for Social Responsibility.

Archives of Clinebell's papers are housed at the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University as well as the library at Claremont School of Theology. In addition, as many of Clinebell's books are now out-of-print, a number are available in full text at http://www.religion-online.com.

Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. and his wife Charlotte Holt Clinebell lived in Santa Barbara, California, until his death in 2005.

See Also

► Ecotherapy

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Clitoridectomy

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Introduction

Clitoridectomy, or clitorectomy, the removal of the clitoris, is a term and practice that is not mentioned in formal psychological or psychoanalytic literature. There is incidental mention in Western medical texts of women in Europe, America, and Australia in the nineteenth century subjected to psychosurgical clitoridectomy as treatment for hysteria and masturbation (Duffy 1963). These surgeries never became common practice. The significance of clitoridectomy is within Islamic religious and cultural tradition. The Qur'an does not mention clitoridectomy but there is a hadith, the oral transmission of the words and deeds of Muhammad, discussing the physical alteration of the female genitalia in

language unclear to both Arabic and English speaking people.

Religion

African Tribal Religions

Clitoridectomy predates Islam, in ancient African tribal religions. There is much debate as to which force, the old tribal or Islam, is the primary religious force in African female genital cutting (Badawi 1989; Roald 2001).

Islam

Clitoridectomy is one of several ceremonial procedures often referred to as female circumcision, female genital cutting, or female genital mutilation. This is a Sunni tradition, now debated among Sunnis. Shi'ites have never practiced female genital cutting.

The four procedures are differentiated (Roald 2001) as:

1. Circumcision, the removal of the prepuce or hood of the clitoris.
2. Clitoridectomy, the removal of the clitoris.
3. Excision, the removal of the clitoris and of all or part of the labia minora.
4. Infibulation, the removal of the clitoris, labia minora, and all or parts of the medial part of the labia major. Infibulation is practiced mostly in the Sudan.

In one of the earliest efforts of a scientific, systematic inquiry into practice and psychological impact of female circumcision, the phrase female castration first appeared. In his small sample of female circumcision in Egypt, none of the samples were circumcisions; all were castrations – clitoridectomy and excision (Badawi 1989).

The Arabic word, *bazr*, from the circumcision hadith, is alternatively translated as prepuce of the clitoris or the clitoris itself. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies clitoridectomy as Type I Female Genital Cutting, including both circumcision and clitoridectomy, reflecting the Arabic dual definition. The WHO Type I clitoridectomy subsumes both. Muslim opponents of all forms of female circumcision quote Holy Qur'an in their argument, saying that clitoridectomy alters Allah's creation and is the work of Satan. The strength and authority of the clitoridectomy hadith is questioned by Islamic clerics and scholars because "in Arabic language, two things or persons may be given one quality or name that belongs only to one of them for an effective cause (al-Awwal)."

Cultural Psychology

The psychological and psychosexual function of female clitoridectomy is also debated. Scholars, clerics, and women who have been circumcised and/or castrated speak of controlling sexual desire, enhancing sexual pleasure, limiting sexual pleasure, the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, and even making the female genitalia more beautiful. Information about the psychological impact of clitoridectomy is also split; some are devastated, and some report enhanced self-esteem at being beautiful within a culturally defined beauty. Some women report frigidity, and some report increased sexual pleasure. There are reports of adult women who had sexual experience prior to clitoridectomy reporting no difference in sexual pleasure (Roald 2001). The split in psychological experience is blurred because of reporting circumcision and clitoridectomy as one category (Badawi 1989).

Commentary

Freud considered clitoral sexuality to be an infantile mimicry of male phallic sexuality, an expression of penis envy in the service of denying a woman's biologically determined identification as a passive, castrated being. To resolve her Oedipus complex, the girl must identify with her mother and reject the subsequent maleness of her clitoris. This is accomplished by the psychical

mechanism of decathexis or emptying of the clitoris' libidinal excitement in favor of the passive receptor of the vagina, thus fulfilling the destiny of feminine submissiveness that is determined by a woman's anatomy (Freud 1905/1953, 1924/1961, 1925/1961, 1933/1964). Freud's theory of female sexuality might be considered clitoridectomy by decathexis, or psychical atrophy, but most clearly a function of the unconscious. If Islamic clitoridectomy represents an externalization of unconscious fantasy, this kind of externalization happened within Freud's intimate circle. Princess Marie Bonaparte, a devoted friend and student of Freud's, subjected herself to a clitoral surgery to facilitate psychical decathexis and cure frigidity despite Freud's vehement objections. Bonaparte sought to do psychological research about excised women when she lived in Cairo during World War II, but was prevented from doing so by the Egyptian government (Walton 2001).

The concept of female castration anxiety and unconscious fantasy has been a topic of psychoanalytic inquiry which began during Freud's lifetime, challenging Freud's castration complex as being strictly male (Abraham 1920). The difference in unconscious fantasy and psychical structures regarding castration in Islamic women who have grown up with clitoridectomy in their collective cultural consciousness has not yet been explored. To do so at this time, utilizing Freudian-derived work on female castration would be imposing a Western lens on an Islamic unconscious. Clitoridectomy seems unquestionably repellent to the Western soul, and objective observations are easily swept away in passionate moralism and disgust. Vehemently supported and opposed within Muslim communities, the only seeming point of agreement about clitoridectomy is that the dilemma needs to be addressed within its own communities without Western interference or the imposition of Western sensibilities (Roald 2001). Today there are reconstructive surgical procedures available for female genital mutilation (Foldes et al. 2012).

Psychoanalytic theory postulates that male circumcision is experienced as symbolic castration (Freud 1909/1955). This unconscious confusion contributes to the difficulty of defining and signifying clitoridectomy as either circumcision or castration. The Freudian unconscious would not differentiate circumcision from clitoridectomy nor differentiate prepuce from clitoris, in parallel with the confusion of Arabic definition. East and West may need to return to God's covenant with Abraham, the circumcisions of Isaac and Ishmael, and follow the journey of those two circumcised boys to modern times to open a meaningful dialogue between psychology and religion about current-day clitoridectomy.

The word clitoridectomy does not appear in psychoanalytic literature, and the phenomenon is thus far unsignified in a psycholinguistic lexicon. In a Lacanian perspective, real meaning exists in the space behind the signifier and the absence of key signifier in a chain of signifiers creates a hole in the symbolic order leaving psychotic phenomena. The passionate madness surrounding clitoridectomy limits the dialogue between psychology and religion.

See Also

- ▶ Castration
- ▶ Circumcision
- ▶ Complex
- ▶ Femininity
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Islam
- ▶ Lacan, Jacques
- ▶ Rites of Passage
- ▶ Unconscious

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Cognitive Science of Religion

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The Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) is an academic subdiscipline that studies the mental capacities and processes that underlie recurrent patterns of religious thought and behavior. The main focus of CSR is on unconscious processes such as thoughts, biases, emotions, and motivations. Unlike the related field of the Psychology of Religion, whose primary level of analysis is the individual, CSR is primarily interested in accounting for cultural forms and explaining why these particular forms are more widespread than others. Like Cognitive Science in general, CSR is interdisciplinary, employing theoretical perspectives and methodological tools from such diverse fields as religious studies; cultural, cognitive, and evolutionary anthropology; cognitive, developmental, and evolutionary psychology; philosophy; neuroscience; biology; behavioral ecology; history; and archaeology.

Given the interdisciplinary and pluralistic character of the field, there are ongoing debates over methodological priorities and theoretical positions. However, CSR scholars by and large agree on a set of basic overarching assumptions. First of all, religion is not a *sui generis* domain of the human existence and therefore can and should be subject to explanatory scrutiny just like any other cultural expression. Second, a scientific study of religion must necessarily adopt a position of methodological naturalism; religious explanations of religious phenomena cannot be taken to have any explanatory value in themselves. In line with evolutionary psychology, it is accepted that cultural forms are subject to the biological constraints of the human brain and the universal mental capacities of the human species, as they have

evolved through natural selection. In line with Cognitive Science, it is also accepted that the mind is not a blank slate nor a general-purpose computational machine but comes pre-equipped with a host of specialized mechanisms, each with a specific function. Based on these premises, cognitive scientists of religion are interested in exploring the causal mechanisms that might account for the recurrent patterns of religious beliefs and practices found around the world.

The Development of CSR

Although the mental underpinnings of religion had often been the focus of earlier research in the psychology, sociology, and anthropology of religion, a more concerted cognitive study of cultural forms was inspired by the cognitive revolution of the 1950s and especially by the work of Noam Chomsky (1957) on language. Chomsky argued for a psychological approach to language, aiming to specify the biologically hardwired principles of the mind that constrain the form of all natural languages. Soon thereafter, growing attention began to be directed to studies that focused on underlying commonalities rather than on surface variability of human traits and sought to uncover a "universal grammar" underlying the particular semantics of cultural phenomena. In the 1970s, Dan Sperber (1975) argued for a cognitive approach to cultural transmission, calling for attention to the psychological dispositions that underlie the formation and distribution of cultural representations, while Thomas E. Lawson (1976) and Frits Staal (1979) proposed a cognitive approach to ritual forms. The first comprehensive cognitive theory of religion was outlined by anthropologist Stewart Guthrie (1980), who argued that the origins of religiosity lie in the evolved human predisposition to attribute agency and intentionality to ambiguous inanimate objects and events in the environment.

Some of the field's most important theoretical foundations were laid in the 1990s, with the work of Pascal Boyer (1992) on counterintuitive concepts, that of Harvey Whitehouse (1992), Thomas E. Lawson and Robert McCauley (1990) on ritual transmission, and others (e.g., Deacon 1997; Donald 1991; Mithen 1996). CSR expanded exponentially shortly after the dawn of the new millennium, which brought both theoretical sophistication (Boyer 2002; McCauley and Lawson 2002; Whitehouse 2004) and institutional grounding (Xygalatas and McKay 2013). The consolidation of the field came with the founding of the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion in 2006.

Methods

CSR uses a wide variety of methods, ranging from ethnographic observation (Cohen 2007; Xygalatas 2012) and textual analysis (Slingerland and Chudek 2011) to brain studies (Cristofori et al. 2015; Schjoedt et al. 2011) and computer simulations (Nielbo and Sørensen 2012). Following an initial period of purely theoretical applications of cognitive perspectives to religion, CSR turned towards experimental hypothesis testing. However, since religion is inextricably linked with local contexts such as culturally specific meanings, sacred places, etc., many aspects of religiosity cannot easily be studied in the laboratory. To deal with this problem, CSR scholars also turn towards naturalistic experiments to provide empirical data while addressing both sides of the cognition and culture continuum. These studies have used a variety of methods such as physiological measurements (Fischer et al. 2014; Xygalatas et al. 2013b), facial expression analyses (Bulbulia et al. 2013), contextual primes (Xygalatas et al. 2015), economic games (Sosis and Ruffle 2004), or various combinations thereof.

For example, in one such study (Konvalinka et al. 2011; Xygalatas et al. 2011), researchers used heart rate monitors to measure physiological arousal at a Spanish fire-walking ritual, where participants crossed a bed of glowing-red coals. The results revealed synchronous arousal between performers and observers of the event, despite the fact that the ritual did not involve any motor synchrony. In addition, the degree of the alignment in heart rate patterns could be predicted by

Cognitive Science of Religion, Fig. 1 A study of a Spanish fire-walking ritual revealed that the ritual created collective effervescence, which was measured as heart rate synchrony

the level of social proximity, suggesting that physiological and emotional synchrony were not merely the effect of mirroring but were also mediated by social familiarity (Fig. 1).

Key Topics

Some of the main topics in CSR research address the following questions:

How did religion come about? Some CSR scholars see religion as an evolutionary by-product. For example, according to Stewart Guthrie (1980), religion is a by-product of our innate tendency to overdetect intentionality in nature. This tendency is an adaptive trait that evolved to allow us to detect predators and prey, but it also makes us susceptible to seeing faces in the clouds and gods on toasted bread. Similarly, Boyer and Liénard (2006) see ritualized behavior as a by-product of an adaptive cognitive system aimed at precautionary behavior. Other CSR scholars, however, consider that religion evolved to serve specific adaptive functions such as eliciting prosocial behavior and promoting cooperation (Sosis 2003), while others argue that both models can coexist within the framework of Dual Inheritance Theory (Atran and Henrich 2010).

What does religion do? Irrespective of how it arose, religion undoubtedly has significant effects both for individuals and society. For example, the long-standing assumption that ritual may be an intuitive response to anxiety was tested by Martin Lang and his colleagues (2015), who found that inducing anxiety led people to engage in ritualized behavior. Similarly, CSR scholars are investigating the effects of religion on morality (Shariff et al. 2015; Xygalatas et al. 2013a). Overall, this research suggests that although religious disposition plays little role in moral behavior, religious situation does have prosocial effects (Norenzayan and Shariff 2008).

Are we natural-born believers? Developmental studies in CSR examine when religious beliefs are formed and how they develop over the course of the lifespan. For example, there is evidence that children from very early ages tend to see purpose and design in the natural world (Kelemen 2004). Furthermore, research suggests that dualism (the idea that body and mind are two independent entities and that the latter can survive the death of the former) also comes naturally to children (Bering and Bjorklund 2004).

What makes religion successful? Dan Sperber (1996) proposed a selectionist model in which religious ideas proliferate because they successfully trigger innate human psychological biases that constitute attractors in the cultural evolutionary landscape. Pascal Boyer (1992) has argued that the most successful religious concepts are

those that tend to be "minimally counterintuitive," violating just enough of our intuitive expectations to be exciting and more easily remembered. Finally, other scholars discussed the role of ritual by identifying a bimodal distribution of ritual practices, one relying on frequency and the other on arousal for the successful transmission of belief and praxis (Whitehouse 1992; Lawson and McCauley 1990).

See Also

- Evolution and Religion
- Neurology and Psychology of Religion
- Psychology and the Origins of Religion
- Psychology of Religion
- Reductionism
- Religious Experience
- Ritual

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Cohesion

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Cohesion in a social context can be defined in various ways depending on the scientific background of the researcher. Social cohesion has inspired many scholars from the beginning of many fields, mainly social psychology and sociology. Today, both fields suggest that cohesion does not just describe the social bonding of members of specific groups, community segments, or societies, but an array of more complicated structural, psychological, and biological processes.

Throughout history, religion has played both the role of a stimulus of cohesiveness and that of a power of deviance. We can study cohesion in different levels of analysis, such as the micro (group), the meso (community), and the macro (society). In order to understand the relational interactions of religion and cohesion, we should take into consideration all possible levels of analysis due to religion's multivariable visibility and forms of expression.

This chapter aspires to examine how cohesion works in religious groups and how religion produces or eliminates cohesion in societal approaches. The chapter comprises all three levels of analysis, and a particular emphasis is given on the cohesive function of rituals, a part of yesterday's and today's scholarship with a great interdisciplinary psychological interest.

Group Cohesiveness

Group cohesion is the phenomenon of cohesiveness that has been tested the most. Researchers have attempted to define its reasons of appearance as well as its consequences. Inside a (religious) group, the participating social subjects share common aims. Sherif and Sherif (1969) have interwoven in-group cohesion with the mutuality of need satisfaction. Group members co-develop a cooperative interaction, which emits structural vigor and attractiveness, attaining the participative maintenance of members. Interpersonal attractiveness (Lott and Lott 1965) as well as group attractiveness as a whole (Hogg 1992) was argued to be responsible for group cohesion itself.

The sense of we-ness and the need of belonging drives group members to be cohesive, as Bollen and Hoyle (1990) state. Membership in a

specific group can cause identity fusion, that is, when a social identity becomes an essential component of our personal self-concept (Swann et al. 2012) and since social identities are essential parts of a social subject's self-concepts, physiological arousal of the individual translates into pro-group action (Swann et al. 2009). As a general result, performative rates arise, due to the greater motivation of each team member (Beal et al. 2003). Nevertheless, many social groups tend to be multireligious and generally aims tend to differ on a multilevel scale, potentially interrupting overall cohesion.

Ritual and Cohesion

When it comes to group cohesion and religious scholarship, a chapter of paramount significance and long standing tradition is that of the cohesive functionality of ritual. Recent scholarship has focused on the connections of individual sacrifice and the collective cohesiveness affiliated with ritual behavior. Specifically, rituals that involve exposure to high levels of pain, energy expenditure, as well as any other form of personal sacrifice signal commitment to group values (Xygalatas et al. 2013). These personal sacrifices are translated as shared experiences among the group members, promote social cohesion, and empower the longevity of the social groups (Whitehouse and Lanman 2014).

An in-group performed ritual, though, can have effects also on inter-group cohesiveness, depending not only on the level of sacrifice, but the frequency as well. More specifically, Harvey Whitehouse (2013) distinguishes the rare traumatic rituals that are typical of small religious groups from the high-frequency routinized religious rituals that are typical of established world religions**.** The first ones contribute to intense relations of trust and tolerance within small religious groups but also in terms of out-group hostility and intolerance, while high frequency routinized rituals do not directly establish trust and toleration of the in-group in a great manner.

Community and Societal Cohesion

Macrosocial approaches of cohesion generally tend to be more theoretical, due to the impracticality of ultra large data empirical research and the need of wide coverage and multicomplex inclusion, accomplished mainly through reductionism. From the twentieth century, Durkheim (1995 [1912]) saw the *totem*, which in the end is the community itself, as a collective representation of the group that stimulates *collective effervescence*.

Although the complexity that characterizes today's multicultural societies indicates the necessity of new paradigms, Durkheim has provided us with an interesting theoretical framework for community cohesion, which has inspired many scientists. More detailed, he labeled two contrasting forms of social cohesion as *mechanical* and *organic* solidarity (Durkheim 1995 [1912]). Mechanical solidarity can be vastly found in small societies organized into equivalent segments due to collective conscience, while organic solidarity occurs in large societies divided into specialized organs, united not by likeness but by mutual interdependence in a division of labor (Durkheim 1997 [1893]).

In late modern societies, religion seems to have lost the attribute of collectivity and became a matter of personal choice, an individual subject (Hervieu-Léger 2006). However, it still remains a spectral phenomenon penetrating to every aspect of private and public life. Especially in the public sphere, fundamentalism and extremism, among others, have rendered religion to be seen as a social institution of conflict. Long-sustained conflict in social institutions weakens society's overall cohesiveness as well as the social capital it produces, due to the society's inability to provide the sense of stability and predictability (Bruhn 2013).

Therefore, phenomena of extremism and terrorism claiming religious reasons can drive cohesion in turmoil. For instance, Islamistic actions have stigmatized the members of the referring religious community, promoting community and societal deviance, particularly the phenomenon called Islamophobia, and governmental policies must be developed to strive to

(re-)establish social cohesion (Alam and Husband 2013).

See Also

- ▶ Affect
- ▶ Cognitive Science of Religion
- ▶ Collective Unconscious
- ▶ Communal and Personal Identity
- ▶ Emotional Intelligence
- ▶ Integration
- ▶ Intimacy
- ▶ Religious Fundamentalism and Terrorism
- ▶ Ritual

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Coincidentia Oppositorum

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God as Unity and Multiplicity

According to fifteenth-century cardinal, mathematician, and mystic Nicholas Cusanus (also referred to as Nicholas of Cusa and Nicholas of Kues), the *coincidentia oppositorum* – or "coincidence of opposites" – constitutes the "least imperfect" name for God and was the means by which humanity could achieve religious toleration and, ultimately, world peace. Cusanus' concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum* later influenced the work of a number of Western scholars, most notably Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, who considered the psyche of each individual to likewise be a coincidence of opposites – a blend of conscious and unconscious elements which together constitute a harmonious and unified whole called the "self."

Nicholas Cusanus (1401–1464) has been called "the first modern philosopher" (Bond 1997, p. 17) in part because of the era in which he lived but perhaps more importantly because he is considered responsible for heralding a new stage in the deconstruction of language and epistemology. Unlike most of the Christian theologians of his time who held a monotheistic vision of God as a supernal power that exists independent of the physical world of existence, Cusanus stood out as a controversial figure because of his

belief that God does not exist separately from creation but rather is both transcendent of and immanent within it – a simultaneous *un*folding of oneness into multiplicity and the *en*folding of multiplicity within the one.

[W]hen I am at the door of the coincidence of opposites, guarded by the angel stationed at the entrance of paradise, I begin to see you, O Lord. For you are there where speaking, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, reasoning, knowing, and understanding are the same and where seeing coincides with being seen, hearing with being heard, tasting with being tasted, touching with being touched, speaking with hearing, and creating with speaking (Cusanus 1997a, pp. 252–253).

Because God is infinite and absolute, Cusanus argued all things in existence are aspects of God, without which God would not be adequately represented. For Cusanus, this concept had not just theological significance but social implications as well, for he believed that it was the inability to accept all forms of religious worship as a necessary reflection of God that was the cause of humanity's most devastating conflicts. He felt certain that if people were educated to the truth of this idea, humanity would recognize its ultimate unity, and there would be perpetual peace.

But, as he bemoans in *De Visione Dei* ("On the Vision of God"),"How can the intellect grasp you, who are infinity? The intellect knows that it is ignorant and that you cannot be grasped because you are infinity. For to understand infinity is to comprehend the incomprehensible" (Cusanus 1997b, p. 258).

The "Least Imperfect" Name for God

For years, Cusanus struggled to find a way of describing his vision of God as both a unity *and* a plurality and an infinitude *and* a finitude. In what was perhaps his defining work, *De Docta Ignorantia* ("On Learned Ignorance"), Cusanus considers the difficulty of "naming" God, for – due to the limitations of reason-driven language – there is not one name that is not opposed to another. If one describes God as "this," it implies that God is not "that." However, since God is everything, there is nothing that God is not. For example, to call God "absolute" implies that God is not "not absolute." Therefore, Cusanus argued, any description for God must acknowledge and reveal its own limitations, for since God is everything, there is nothing that God is not. Because of this, many of the names that Cusanus used included linguistic contradictions such as "One-and-All" and "All-in-One."

In 1453, on his way home from Constantinople where he had gone with the hope of reuniting Eastern and Western Christendom, Cusanus claimed to have had a mystical vision in which he conceived of the "least imperfect" name for God: the *coincidentia oppositorum* or "coincidence of opposites." The *coincidentia oppositorum* was not a description of God, Cusanus insisted, but an explanation of how God works. That is, God was not *the* coincidence of opposites but rather *a* coincidence of opposites.

Although branded as a heretic by some of his contemporaries, Cusanus and his use of the name *coincidentia oppositorum* as a way of describing the simultaneous plurality and unity of the absolute had, and continues to have, a profound influence on the work of later Western thinkers. Religious historian Mircea Eliade used the term frequently in his work, citing the *coincidentia oppositorum* as being a representation of "man's deep dissatisfaction with his actual situation, what is called the human condition" (Eliade 1969, p. 122) and of humankind's "nostalgia for a paradoxical state in which the contraries exist side by side without conflict" (Eliade 1969, p. 122).

The Psyche as Coincidentia Oppositorum

Within the discipline of psychology, the *coincidentia oppositorum* found its most prominent articulation in the work of Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology. For Jung, the *coincidentia oppositorum* became a kind of meta-archetype to describe the workings of the human psyche, which he saw as being made up of binary

oppositions such as conscious-unconscious, anima-animus, and persona-shadow.

Like Cusanus, Jung devoted himself to tackling the problem of opposites. But while Cusanus focused his attention on the social and religious implications of this idea, Jung emphasized its use as a symbol for the "self" – the core essence and totality of the psyche. The self, Jung wrote, "can only be described in antinomian terms" (Jung 1968a, Vol. 9, Pt. 2, p. 63) for it is the dialectical unity of "both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It is the 'uniting symbol' which epitomizes the whole union of opposites" (1966a, Vol. 16, p. 265). Jung believed that all psychological imbalances (such as neurosis, addiction, and various dissociative disorders) represented a "self-division" (Jung 1966b, Vol. 7, p. 20) – a state of disunity with oneself due to this war between various processes within the psyche. "The self is made manifest in the opposites and in the conflict between them; it is a *coincidentia oppositorum*" (Jung 1968b, Vol. 12, p. 186), he wrote. The individual would not be whole until these opposing parts were brought into harmony within the self. Jung believed that psychological healing could be achieved through the ego's confrontation with and ultimate reconciliation of the "shadow" aspects of the unconscious. Only by doing so could one begin to withdraw projections and integrate the seemingly antithetical aspects of one's personality into a single, indivisible unity or whole. He called this process "individuation."

More recently, the *coincidentia oppositorum* as a symbol of both spiritual and psychological transcendence has been highlighted in the work of the contemporary philosopher Ken Wilber (2001), as well as others in the field of transpersonal psychology.

See Also

- ▶ God
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Jungian Self
- ▶ Self

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Collective Unconscious

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In Jungian psychology, collective unconscious is the totality of inherited potentials or the full complement of archetypal patterns that are universally human. In addition to ego-consciousness lies all the forgotten material of an individual's lifetime (called personal unconscious) as well as the vast reservoir of

latent possibilities that belong to the human species (collective unconscious).

Many popular discussions of the collective unconscious give the mistaken impression that it is a sort of storehouse of images or even a memory bank for everything that has ever happened in the course of the world. Jung insists that it is not images or memories that are inherited but rather the capacity to recognize, imagine, and enact typically human patterns of thought and action. The collective unconscious is best understood as the sum of all the behavior patterns we inherit with our DNA: the capacity to learn and speak a language, for instance; the propensity to fall in love, form lasting bonds, and propagate; the set of aptitudes for nurture and mothering; and so on. Thus, the seemingly effortless facility that very young children show for distinguishing linguistic patterns in the conversations going on about them, as well as for assimilating a huge vocabulary and the grammar to organize it. Such inborn facilities for language illustrate several aspects of the collective unconscious: (1) an inherited capacity to recognize relevant stimuli in the environment; (2) the motor capacity to reproduce sounds and gestures in order to communicate; (3) the possibility of combining those typical acts, ideas, and images in countless ways; and (4) the fact that all typically human patterns take on cultural variations, as the language capacity will become specified as the mother tongue of Japanese, Arabic, or English. On the basis of the collective unconscious, we recognize typical forms of human behavior when we encounter them, intuitively know how to respond, and also know how to enact them ourselves.

We not only enact the archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious; we also use them – or, more accurately, use the capacity to recognize and to imagine such patterns – consciously or unconsciously to reflect upon our lives. The evidence for such acts of imagination and their effects upon us when we encounter them are to be found in, among other things, literature, philosophy, theology, and dreams. Some dreams seem to be nothing more than variant retellings of the events of the previous day and can be understood without reference to the collective unconscious. Others that refer to crises, challenges, and life transitions, however, may be expressed in imagery that seems archaic, numinous, uncanny, and impersonal. These are images and themes in which the typically human patterns of the collective unconscious (archetypes) emerge relatively free of personal associations and take on mythic significance.

All of evolution is implicitly present in the collective unconscious, for it not only gives human beings a common foundation that accounts for the survival of our species and forms the basis by which we naturally understand and relate to one another but it also connects us with our primate cousins, who are also highly social beings who groom one another to form friendships and also cultivate "political" alliances for personal and communal advancement. Indeed, since the collective unconscious represents the sum of our inherited capacities, it links us to every DNA-bearing creature on earth. Jung imagined peeling the unconscious like an onion until he arrived at the psyche of an amoeba upon reaching the center.

The narratives of myth and the constructs of theology all express, in one way or another, the fundamental realities of the collective unconscious. Indeed, because they originate in that domain of the psyche which all humans share, such doctrines and stories move us deeply and seem to be eternally true. Religious rites, ceremonies, and rituals are also expressions of the collective unconscious that automatically engage the psyches of all participants, bring them into harmony with one another, and generate altered states of consciousness within which some of the originating ideas and aspirations of the tradition can be reexperienced in the present by each individual.

See Also

- ▶ Archetype
- ▶ Dreams
- ▶ Ego
- ▶ Individuation
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Myth

- ▶ Numinosum
- ▶ Psyche
- ▶ Unconscious

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Communal and Personal Identity

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Personal identity, one's own individuality, is a relatively late acquisition – both in life and in human history – and in its best sense not at all to be taken for granted. It is, in fact, an achievement, given the powerful influence of socializing pressures promising acceptance and support at the price of conformity. Personal identity emerges from communal identity only with effort and often longs to return. Sometimes personal identity changes and grows as an individual moves from one communal identity to another.

Emergence of the Personal

Human life begins within the mother and is so thoroughly dependent upon her bodily processes that a nascent human psyche can hardly be expected to distinguish its own experiences from those governed by the bloodstream and nervous system of its fleshly environment. Total dependency continues after birth in a different form, where the life, language, and customs of the family environment provide the socially interpreted world within which the infant's consciousness is fostered and shaped. The smiling, babbling, exclaiming protolanguage shared by caregiver and infant is the foundation not only for language learning but also for sociocultural indoctrination. A child begins to discover its individuality somewhat later, as disappointments and conflicts provoke conscious awareness of oneself and the unique otherness of each human mind.

As adults, we live in an environment that is tacitly structured by socially favored ideas, images, and assumptions which go largely unnoticed and uncriticized. They are implicit in the news and entertainment media, in casual conversations, in notions of politeness, etc., forming a collective consciousness that is taken for granted and that shapes even one's private thoughts. At bottom, communal identity is governed by a condition of participation mystique that provides security and belonging. Ritual and myth enact and articulate this largely unconscious foundation of communal identity.

Rites of Passage

In "traditional societies" – a loose phrase that describes communal life as it has been practiced over the vast course of human history – communal identity is ritually and mythically differentiated into life stages separated by rites of passage related to birth, maturity, reproduction, and death. For example, childhood ends with puberty rites that provide the individual with a new adult identity and role in society. The consequences of such rites shape the daily lives and experiences of every member of a community. While the newly defined adult steps directly and finally into communally established responsibilities and roles that belong to maturity, every other member of the community must relate to the new initiate as to a full-status adult; all

interactions and expectations that concern that individual will have changed.

Rites of passage change a person's social identity but always within a larger communal identity. True individuality is perhaps only possible in a more complex social world like that of the modern West, where communal identity in the traditional sense is no longer possible and where individuals are exposed to a variety of social customs, religious traditions, and the like, thereby revealing the less-than-absolute authority of any of them. Much of the meaningfulness of human existence is lost in the disillusionment that comes with modernity; one symptom of which is the longing to return to a simpler time with clearer definitions of what is right and wrong. Hence, the recent rapid growth in fundamentalist religions.

Cultural Differences

Although modernity is disruptive, it lays down a challenge as well; for in the world as it exists today, religiously defined communal identities are no longer effective for most people. Consequently, each individual must find his or her own mythic foundation in the sense of what Jung has called one's "personal myth" and Kohut has described as "the self's nuclear program." Real personal identity is not a pose like individualism and not to be found in following fads. Rather, it is discovered as one's own meaningful relationship to the universally human themes of the collective unconscious.

The tension between communal and personal identity may be quite different in the East, for many studies have shown that the Western model of individuality is not shared by the East. In the West, it is commonly said that the squeaky wheel gets the grease, whereas in the East it is said that the nail that sticks up will be pounded down. Similarly, figure/ground studies of picture interpretation have shown that the central figure in a scene is not perceived in the East as standing out from and opposed to the ground as it is in the West, but rather as standing in dynamic relationship with the ground. Evidently therefore, in the East, communal identity is far more important than personal identity.

Religions of the Dispossessed

Individuals and minorities within a society that have been labeled as deviant or irrelevant have historically reacted to their exclusion from an honorable membership in their society by reinterpreting the symptoms of their unworthiness as signs of election to subgroups that pursue ecstatic experience – often direct experience of the spirit world through possession trance. Some 90% of worldwide societies have one or more institutionally recognized form of pursuing altered states of consciousness, while 74% have possession trance religions that offer an honorable communal identity to individuals whose personal identity is viewed as inadequate by the larger community. As a consequence of such new membership, their personal identity is potentially transformed and made honorable, although it must be pointed out that, again, such an individual's communal identity is stronger than her personal identity. (Women, for reasons of gender discrimination, are more apt to become trance mediums than are men.)

Evidence shows, however, that all societies have used religious rituals to alter the consciousness of their members at least since the Upper Paleolithic and very likely much further back in human history – indeed, ritual behavior has also been documented in primates in the wild. Communal rituals draw individuals together into an emotionally satisfying group identity and are also used to reduce suspicions and hostilities between groups that need to cooperate with one another on behalf of common goals.

See Also

- ▶ Collective Unconscious
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Participation Mystique
- ▶ Rites of Passage

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Communitas

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Introduction

From the Latin, *communis* (community, fellowship, condescension, affability), various meanings of *communitas* (a term taken up under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church traditions) include joint possession in the hands of a religious community, stockbreeding society, land subject to rights of common, the whole of the clergy and the people, common property tax in mass, sworn association, urban commune, the commonality of the inhabitants of a city having the status of a commune (especially in connection with a military expedition), the Commons (estate of the realm), and the common people. This Latin term was taken and developed by cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1920–1983) to describe a society during a liminal period that is unstructured or rudimentarily structured with a "relatively undifferentiated comitatus, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" (Turner 1969a, p. 96).

The Moment and Marginality of Communitas

Communitas is a "moment" in or out of secular structure. It seems to be possessive of an effervescence, making this moment one of religious creativity. One is reminded of the troubled waters in the Pool of Bethzatha in John 5: 2–9 (Aland et al. 1998, pp. 259–260). Turner's work with communitas often goes hand in hand with concepts of pilgrimage, although recent anthropological studies on pilgrimage such as Eade and Sallnow (1991/2000) take issue with this idea with regard to pilgrimages to Lourdes. Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that Turner's work has greatly influenced countless anthropologists and the deepening of psychological understanding of human beings. The acquired sacred component in liminal space proffers a suitable container for empathic holding of woundedness and the bringing of notions of the divine into shared consciousness. Even such work with psychoidal realms as that of Raff (2000) indicates the creation of communitas for those undergoing the process of individuation.

Communitas emphasizes the marginal, the alien, the alien foreignness of ourselves (Kristeva 1989/1991). It is the emptiness at the center that can only be identified or apprehended through its hybridization, or in-betweenness, with social structure. Communitas, like liminality and hybridity, is often subjunctive in mood; that is, it thrives in the imaginal world of possibility rather than concretized fact. As a threshold, it possesses an immediacy Akin to Bergson's *élan vital*. One

moves from structure into communitas and back to structure with renewed vision. Vision quests, *rites de passage*, contemplative prayer, spiritual retreats, and fasting are all part of the anti-structure of communitas; however, their purpose is to redirect, reframe, and revision the structures in which we live. Communitas is therefore viewed as cyclic, placed in a dialectic with structure in such a way that the revolutionary quality of communitas is summoned and participated in, structure is reentered, and communitas is summoned again.

Turner's Differentiations of Communitas

Turner (1969b) differentiates three types of communitas. The first of these, existential (or spontaneous) communitas, is often approached in the form of a "happening," or noteworthy event typically involving audience participation.

A second type of communitas Turner designates as normative. This occurs when the spontaneous or existential communitas is organized into a lasting social system. Such a system might include a religious sect, such as the Branch Davidians, Heaven's Gate, and millenarians. As with any structuring of movements, communitas tends to lose its anti-structural quality as it grows more organized as in, for example, an institution.

The third form of communitas is ideological. This is a utopian model based on existential communitas that can be expressed as an outward form of an inward experience of a happening. This is not unlike the question of the Westminster Larger Catechism (Office of the General Assembly 2002), "What are the parts of a sacrament?" to which the catechumenate replies, "The parts of a sacrament are two: the one, an outward and sensible sign used according to Christ's own appointment [the water of baptism and/or the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper (eucharist)]; the other, an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified" (p. 223). We could then say with Turner that structure is pragmatic and this worldly, whereas communitas is speculative and generates imagery and philosophical ideas. Taken further, if psyche is image, communitas is soul-making.

Turner's spontaneous/existential communitas is equated with the community of Martin Buber's (1947/2002) "essential We" or the I-Thou relationship built up in community. Tribal rites, vision quests, or other forms of invoked communitas are not for seeking the pleasurable company of relationship. Rather, in invoking communitas one is seeking transformative experience that goes to the root or core of a person's being in a profound and shared (even sharable) fashion. Psychoanalysis as a sort of communitas rationalizes Lacan's (2005) recognition in 1974 of the triumph of religion as a triumph of structure over movements. It is why he retorts that psychoanalysis will be around for a while longer as there always needs to be a revolutionary component.

Providing optimal occasions for communitas are life in the fringes, interstices, and margins of structural forms. Communitas can also arise from inferiority, described as coming from beneath structure. The ability to give free rein to imagination, entertain, and hold the doubts, mysteries, and uncertainties of negative capability also provides the circumstances of and for communitas. This works well for individuals, but not necessarily for groups that consider themselves in situations of communitas.

Communitas occasionally is associated with visions or theories of world catastrophe. Examples of such perceived catastrophic consequences of communitas include the People's Temple led by Jim Jones, the frenzy of the Y2k transition, and millennialist religious cults, sects, etc. Despite the infrequency of catastrophic associations with communitas, there remains the danger of severe discipline, the circumciser's knife (as in the establishment of a mark of the divine's chosen in the story of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac).

There is the communitas of withdrawal, of retreat. This form of communitas involves partial or total withdrawal from participation in the social structures of the world. Examples include Jesus the Nazorean, the Buddha, the Prophet Muhammad, Gandhi, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, and even the Rose-beetle man of Gerald Durrell (1956/1984). Vision quests, hermitage, and retreat are

also types of the communitas of withdrawal. Curiously, such examples as these either have a connection with or are possessed by the numinous.

Communitas offers a number of benefits. Among these mentioned by Edith Turner (2004) are joy and healing, the gift of "seeing," mutual help, the experience of religion as religion – not just Jewish, Muslim, or Christian, for instance, but *religion* – and the gift of knowledge (*gnosis* as opposed to gnosticism). Other attributes might include long-term ties with others as others, a humanistic conscience that supports, uplifts, accepts, sustains, and celebrates all of humanity (not just a small portion of it), and the ideals of human rights.

Communitas becomes structural when, like grace or the bestowal of favors, it becomes routinized. Turner (1974) notes the similarity between structural communitas and Freud's repetition compulsion. Expressions of routinized communitas include monasteries, convents, initiation camps, and communes.

Not unlike the scholastic notion of *haecceity* (Duns Scotus) or the individuation process of Jung, communitas preserves individual distinctions. Despite sharing the same cognate with *communio*, communitas is not the same as communion because there is no merging. It's more akin to synchronicity. It is not realizable, for it is a force, a dynamic. Turner (1987) argues that communitas is not being realized because "individuals and collectives try to impose their cognitive schema on one another" (p. 84).

Communitas is finally analogous, according to Turner (1983/1987), with flow, owing this understanding to the world of positive psychologist M. Csíkszentmihályi. In this understanding, action and awareness are one, and Turner observes that there is no flow when we are aware that we are engaged in the act of flowing. As long as structural rules and framing crystallize out of the flow rather than are imposed upon it from without, communitas can be observed as taking place. Communitas is then viewed as an imaginal framework, a third space container suitable for an *Einfühlung* (a feeling into something) of holding, viewing, and bringing of notions of the divine into shared consciousness.

A Critique of Communitas

The theory of communitas has recently been critiqued (Eade and Sallnow 1991/2000) in its associations with the practice of pilgrimage. The criticism argues that if aligned with pilgrimage, communitas is presented as a model of determinism, and this Eade and Sallnow see as limiting the usefulness of communitas. Sallnow's assessment is that "the most helpful, pre-analytic image to hold in mind is a tangle of contradictions, a cluster of coincident opposites" (p. 52). This assessment would align itself with the idea of the alchemical *massa confusa* (aka *prima materia*) and the concept of synchronicity, components the importance of which Turner acknowledges throughout his work. Another problem they view is that in identifying pilgrimage as communitas, a spurious homogeneity is imposed upon pilgrimage, prejudging its complex character as a phenomenon. While not finding fault with the value of the theory of communitas per se, Eade and Sallnow opt to neglect its capacity for and maintenance of negative capability that itself seems intrinsic to the pilgrimage experience. Instead, they replace negative capability with the power of religious hierarchies to determine the outcomes of pilgrimage. A rebuttal in the form of reminding us that this critique is simply a return to structural communitas is given by Edith Turner (2004).

Despite the recent critique of communitas with regard to pilgrimage, it should be understood that communitas as anti-structure really means it is an inversion of the normal. In this respect, we are open to the play and fascination of mirrors as apophatic third eyes. Communitas thus extends our gaze, including our backward gaze or regard. We are negatively defined – not contradicted – as *neti. . .neti*: neither this nor that. We are thus opened up to new experience and meaning-making such that we can work and play well with others as we see ourselves as others, too.

See Also

- ▶ Buber, Martin
- ▶ Contemplative Prayer
- ▶ Gnosticism

- ▶ Pilgrimage
- ▶ Psychoanalysis
- ▶ Rites of Passage

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Compassion

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The word compassion comes from Latin *com-* (with, together) plus *pati* (to bear, suffer). Compassion can be defined as "deep feeling for and understanding of misery or suffering and the concomitant desire to promote its alleviation" (Paiano 1999, pp. 1–291). Another source describes compassion as "the capacity to be attracted and moved by the fragility, weakness, and suffering of another" (Downey 1993, p. 102).

Compassion in the Bible

The Hebrew word for compassion, *rehamim*, refers to the womb or uterus. Just as the womb is the source of biological human life, so God's compassion is the source of life itself. God acts as a womb, and the place of birth is the vehicle of compassion (Trible 1978, p. 55). Psalm 103 names compassion as a paternal attribute of God: "As a father has compassion for his children,/so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him." And Isaiah 46:3–4 portrays God as a mother bearing the house of Israel.

The Christian Gospel refers to the coming of Christ as an act of God's compassion ("For God so loved the world. . ." – John 3:16). In the story of the feeding of the 4000, Jesus says, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now 3 days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry to their

homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come a long way" (Mark 8:2–3). Compassion is given a high priority in the parable of the Good Samaritan: "But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10:33–34). The parable of the Prodigal Son also highlights compassion: "And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

Compassion in Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists and psychoanalysts must first look at their own suffering before they can join their patients as fellow sufferers and participants in the individuation process. The psychotherapist has to be compassionate toward self in order to be compassionate toward the patient. One's own suffering can help one to soothe the suffering of another.

Genuine compassion is clearly differentiated from pathological symptoms that can mimic compassion but are only disguised forms of narcissism, projective identification, inverted envy, or even masochism, sadism, or apathy.

Freud

Compassion clearly plays a major role in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, but already in 1911 Freud had identified a hazard in the natural tendency of the analyst to frame, define, and resolve the issues emerging in the course of therapy. Instead, the therapist should exercise *evenly suspended attention*, not imposing his own feelings and interpretations on the proceedings. "If he follows his expectations," Freud wrote, "he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows."

Jung and Kohut

Jung's *unprejudiced objectivity* and Heinz Kohut's *vicarious* introspection express related concepts. Jung believed that suffering is unavoidable and that what matters is how one responds to suffering. He saw acceptance of suffering as paramount in the developmental process that he called individuation.

Rogers

Carl Rogers' *unconditional positive regard* addresses more directly the exercise of compassion in the therapeutic context. In Rogers' view, it is not enough for the therapist to be a nonintrusive partner to the therapy. The therapist must *care* for the client with an active, positive concern. Such active concern, Rogers believed, created the most favorable setting for the client to employ their own internal resources for personal growth.

Both in psychological and theological terms, compassion gives suffering meaning and purpose and is a vital connection between personal relationships and the relationship between the individual and God.

See Also

- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Psychotherapy

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Compassion Fatigue

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General Overview

"Compassion Fatigue" is a term given to the secondary stress suffered by those in the helping professions who are working with those suffering from trauma.

Pioneering theorist Charles Figley notes that "There is a cost to caring" (Figley 1995, p. 1). This cost or risk has been variously called compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress (Stamm 1995/1999), or "vicarious traumatization" (McCann and Pearlman 1990). It has also been associated with therapeutic countertransference (Pearlman and Saakvitne 1995).

Figley, who has been publishing on Traumatic Stress in families and the military since the late 1970s, writes, "Caring people sometimes experience pain as a direct result of their exposure to other's traumatic material. Unintentionally and inadvertently, this secondary exposure to trauma may cause helpers to inflict additional pain on the originally traumatized. This situation – call it compassion fatigue, compassion stress, or secondary traumatic stress – is the natural, predictable, treatable, and preventable unwanted consequence of working with suffering people" (Stamm 1995/1999, pp. 3–4).

Figley prefers the use of compassion fatigue or compassion stress as the "most friendly term for this phenomenon" (Stamm 1995/1999, p. 17). It is of note that this term, as compared with secondary traumatic stress or vicarious traumatization, focuses on the impact on the empathy of the caregiver, whereas the other two focus on the origin of the traumatic stress.

One of the earliest uses of this term comes from the nursing profession, where Carla Joinson described "situations where nurses had either turned off their own feelings or experienced helplessness and anger in response to the stress they feel watching patients go through devastating illness or trauma" (Yoder 2010).

One can see in this brief description the two strands of the phenomenon – the empathic relationship and the environment.

The symptoms of compassion fatigue described in the early literature parallel that of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) category of "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (PTSD): "A state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of clients as manifested in one or more ways: re-experiencing the traumatic event; avoidance/numbing reminders of the traumatic event; persistent arousal; combined with the added effects of cumulative stress (burnout)" (Figley 1995, p. 11).

A later more popular description notes "In simple to understand language, compassion fatigue is the 'cost of caring' of working with victims of trauma or catastrophic events that shows itself as spiritual, physical and/or emotional fatigue and exhaustion" (Roberts and Ashley 2008, p. 209).

This reflects both the evolution in the term and the tension of keeping clinical parameters with diagnostic categories not included in the most current DSM. Fleeting lapses in empathy for a parishioner, patient, or client; infrequent flashbacks to a traumatic story triggered by an association; and exhaustion after a particularly stressful day or week may be common for many in the helping professions. However,

like PTSD, compassion fatigue is not simply characterized by the symptoms of re-experiencing *and* avoidance or numbing *and* arousal but by the number of symptoms, intensity, duration, and how they may affect one's quality of life and ability to work, study, and engage in relationships.

This is further complexified by the relationship between the original trauma of the parishioner, patient, or client and the secondary trauma of the caregiver. PTSD defines two criteria of the traumatizing event that causes the disorder: "the person experienced witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others" *and* "the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror" (American Psychiatric Association 2000). One would think this would be true also for someone witnessing this secondarily through the narrative of a patient, parishioner, or client. It is of note that the current revisions for the upcoming DSM V are indicating that the latter criteria will be dropped and replaced by significant distress in the re-experiencing category. However, the criteria for the traumatizing event are tightened to the exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation that is direct or witnessed in person or one learns of the threat to a family member or close friend.

This highlights both the complications in defining what can be seen as an increasingly popular pseudo-diagnostic category and also the confusion and complexity with multiple nomenclature that each reflects a different part of the phenomenon.

Unlike the other descriptions for secondary traumatic stress disorder and vicarious traumatization, compassion fatigue appears simply to emphasize the exhausting nature of the disorder, which may draw from the criteria of arousal, avoidance, and negative changes to mood or thoughts, rather than those of intrusive re-experiencing. This tension, however, has been reflected and contained in the tests that have been formulated to indicate the probable presence of compassion fatigue, such as the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) tests.

Brenda Hudnall Stamm who has published, collaborated, and continued the work of Figley in this area since 1995 states explicitly that "Neither Vicarious Traumatization nor Compassion Fatigue are synonyms of PTSD or a mental disorder. (Figley and Roop 2006; Pearlman and Caringi 2009; Stamm 2006, 2010a). . . .Compassion Fatigue is not a diagnosis" (Stamm 2012, p. 1). She states "Compassion Fatigue breaks into two parts. The first part concerns things such as exhaustion, frustration, anger and depression typical of burnout. Burnout may have a gradual onset and reflect a sense of helplessness or assessment of ineffectiveness in your work" (Stamm 2010a, p. 12). Secondary traumatic stress (STS) is "work-related secondary exposure to people who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. The negative effects of STS may include sleep difficulties, intrusive images, or avoiding reminders of the person's traumatic experiences" (Stamm 2010a, p. 13). Unlike burnout STS may have a rapid onset. Stamm also notes an additional factor which may mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue, that of compassion satisfaction: the positive feelings associated with being able to help others and the ability to perform effectively, work collegially, and contribute to society.

The ProQOL Test assesses compassion satisfaction and the two components that Stamm cites for compassion fatigue – burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Some theorists in the fields of mental health debate the relationship between burnout and compassion fatigue. Patricia Potter et al. suggest that these sometimes ambiguous terms are closely related but different. "Definitions of burnout more often have environmental stressors, whereas definitions of compassion fatigue address the relational nature of the condition" (Potter et al. 2010, p. E56). Jenkins and Baird (2002) suggest a "useful distinction" between burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Despite these questions the ProQOL or some form of either Figley's or Stamm's early compassion fatigue self-administered tests are almost universally used to assess compassion fatigue. The use of such a test may indicate whether someone may

be suffering from burnout alone, secondary traumatic stress alone, or, cumulatively, compassion fatigue.

There is a growing body of research on compassion fatigue in a number of helping professions – nursing, psychiatry, social work, psychotherapy, and disaster response; however, research with religious professionals is still somewhat limited.

Research suggests that 9% of clergy are at extremely high risk for compassion fatigue through the stresses of their daily ministry (Darling et al. 2004). These stressors may include personal and family criticism, boundary ambiguity, and presumptive and unrealistic expectations of parishioners (Lee and Iverson-Gilbert 2003). Spiritual well-being was seen to "mediate the relationship between stress and compassion fatigue" (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011). From a United Kingdom context, Hendron et al. simply state "The vocation of clergy life can be a hazardous journey" (Hendron et al. 2012). These stresses are exacerbated by congregational conflict, financial stress, social isolation, and long work hours (Morris and Blanton 1994). Due perhaps to both liturgical and pastoral roles, research in the early 1980s indicated that clergy are often sought out five times more than all other mental health professionals combined in the face of bereavement and grief (Veroff et al. 1981). In discussing Jewish Rabbis, Bonita Taylor notes they "respond to individuals who have been exposed to a wide range of stressors, including criminal assault, rape and robbery, spouse abuse, child abuse, life-threatening illness, severe mental illness, assisted suicide and euthanasia, and human-created disasters, such as Holocaust death-camp survivors" (Taylor et al. 2006). Clergy are often turned to in the face of national disaster or involved in disaster response, such as that of the terrorist attacks at Oklahoma City and of September 11, 2001. *The New England Journal of Medicine* suggests that 90% of Americans used clergy as a coping resource after the 2001 attacks (Shuster et al. 2001).

A couple of studies on compassion fatigue in clergy who responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks focus of the impact of deployment with a single organization, such as the American Red Cross family assistance and respite centers and the mortuaries or voluntary chaplaincy at multiple sites, which may include church respite centers, and denominational disaster response organizations (Flannelly et al. 2005; Roberts 2003). Of note, contrary to what might be expected regarding intense exposure to victims who had suffered the threat of or witnessed sudden death of others, families who feared the potential and probable death of a loved one, and working alongside those recovering human remains that may occasion horror, helplessness, or hopelessness, Roberts found that persons that worked for the American Red Cross alone, with time-limited shifts and structured emotional defusing practices, suffered *lower* levels of compassion fatigue than those who had not been involved in this disaster response. Those that worked with other organizations were assessed as having the highest risk of compassion fatigue (Roberts 2003, p. 758). The research highlights issues of the necessity of not only good individual self-care but structured self-care practices that emphasized good boundaries, limiting work hours and exposure to traumatizing factors rather than overextending them, and the necessity of interventions that connect clergy to others rather than isolate them. Later analysis of the same data led Flannelly, Roberts, and Weaver to discern that chaplains who spent higher than average number of hours working with trauma victims and a greater number of days spent doing so showed increased risk of symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout. However, these were mitigated in those who worked for the American Red Cross and/or had taken at least one course of Clinical Pastoral Education (Flannelly et al. 2005). Swain's (2011) qualitative research on chaplains who worked at the temporary mortuary at Ground Zero in New York after September 11 also notes the impact of chaplain's self-care and spiritual practices and the transformative aspects of humor, the care of the disaster response community, and the association to what was held to be sacred in the disaster response.

Treating and Preventing Compassion Fatigue

Charles Figley notes that compassion fatigue is both preventable and treatable. He also emphasizes the necessity of awareness, warning those engaged in empathic work with trauma victims of their vulnerabilities to compassion fatigue and of strategies to mitigate the effect of trauma. Noting that empathy is a major resource in the helping professions, he also notes that unresolved trauma in the caregiver's own life will increase vulnerability, as will working with children and other vulnerable populations (Figley 1995, pp. 15–16).

For religious professionals, and others in the helping professions, the primary way to mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue is to practice self-care that includes (a) supervision or other defusing, debriefing, and problem-solving strategies; (b) maintaining a sense of "connectedness" with peers, with ecclesial or professional bodies, with those outside the sphere of their work: family, friends, and children; and (c) maintaining or developing a "reflective self-focus" (Roberts and Ashley 2008, pp. 212–213). Such a focus may range across the biopsychosociospiritual spectrum from using massage and relaxation techniques to personal counseling or psychotherapy to formal or informal prayer, liturgy, meditation, reading sacred texts, and journaling. The former strategies call attention to the necessity of being in relationships where one is the recipient of care and the empathy of others and not constantly the caregiver and those social relationships where one is not always "on the job." Additionally attention to life-giving transformative experiences, practices, relationships, and to one's relationship to the Divine can increase a sense of compassion satisfaction in such a vocation that can not only offset "the cost of caring " but build resiliency and lead to the possibility of post-traumatic growth. Figley suggests "5:1 ratio rule," which involves 1 h of personal processing for every 5 h of engagement with traumatic cases (Figley 2002, p. 215). Such personal processing can range from informal conversations "over a beer off duty" (without tolerating substance abuse) to post-shift defusing and group debriefings (p. 215) and for the religious professional or volunteer, the resources of spiritual direction, pastoral psychotherapy, and clinical pastoral supervision.

Charles Figley notes that the first step in treating compassion fatigue is being aware of it, through undertaking self-test that assesses the degree of risk. He commends the comprehensive "Accelerated Recovery Program for Compassion Fatigue" (ARP) of Gentry, Baranowsky, and Dunning (Figley 2002, p. 213). The ARP program facilitates a recovery process which they call "The Road Back Home" (p. 126). Originally designed for five individual sessions, the program has been further developed into a group models of 1-day intensive and 3-day retreats at the request of caregivers involved in the Oklahoma City disaster response. This "powerfully interactive and introspective" program (p. 128) includes components such as building a therapeutic alliance, a variety of assessment tests, anxiety management techniques, the use of narrative, exposure techniques drawn from behavior therapy to resolve secondary traumatic stress, cognitive restructuring, and a "self-directed resiliency and aftercare plan" (pp. 129–130) which builds professional and resilience skills, self-management and care skills, connection with others, and attention to internal and external conflict management (p. 130).

Compassion fatigue in the context of this article is rooted in the empathic relationship with the other for whom we are called to care. Care for the caregiver here is care for the client. Compassion fatigue, rather than simply denoting the empathic "feeling with" the other, etymologically indicates the risks of *com passio*, "suffering with the other." In professional helping relationships, such a risk includes an ethical demand to care for the self so that the reverse does not become true and that the client, patient, or parishioner begins to either bear or suffer the effects of our suffering.

See Also

- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Compassion
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Hope

- ▶ Locus of Control
- ▶ Theodicy
- ▶ Transference

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Complex

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Etymologically, the English word "complex" derives from the Latin *complexus*, "embrace" or "sexual intercourse," from *complecti*, "to entwine," made up of the prefix *com* meaning "together" + *piectere*, meaning "to braid." In the natural and social sciences in general, the word "complex" denotes a system composed of interconnected or related parts that, coming together as a whole, manifest one or more properties not evident from the properties of the individual parts. In mathematics, a complex number consists of a real and an imaginary part, either of which can be zero. In psychology, complexes are organized groups of ideas and memories that are, for the most part, outside awareness but that carry enormous affective power when activated, their presence significantly altering the psychic system as an entwined or braided whole.

Even though Freud and Breuer use the term "complex" in their early studies of hysteria, Laplanche and Pontalis, writers of the seminal *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, attribute its theoretical importance in psychoanalysis to Jung's studies in word association. Freud regarded Jung's empirical investigations with complexes (measured as delayed responses to stimulus words as well as by psychogalvanic response) as an important experimental corroboration of his theoretical concept of the unconscious. But Freud increasingly shunned the term "complex" after Jung and Adler placed complexes at the center of their theories as natural phenomena. That is to say, orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis regards complexes, including Freud's Oedipus complex, as symptoms resulting from failed acts of repression, whereas Adler's individual psychology and Jung's analytical psychology do not theorize complexes as synonymous with neurosis.

Adler employs the concept of a complex to account for psychological strategies such as the "will to power" and self-aggrandizement which individuals adopt often to avoid difficult feelings of inferiority. Jung characterizes conflicts between ego consciousness and other complexes as painful but not necessarily pathological: "A complex becomes pathological only when we think we have not got it" (Jung 1942/1954, para. 179). For Jung, a feeling-toned complex is an image to which a highly charged affect is attached and which is incompatible with the habitual attitude of the ego. Often attributable to a trauma that splits off a bit of the psyche or to a moral conflict in which it appears impossible to affirm the whole of one's being, a complex is a splinter psyche that behaves with a remarkable degree of autonomy and coherence, like an animated foreign property within the sphere of consciousness. It can override will or volition and block memory; that is to say, the individual ego is relatively powerless in a conflict with an unconscious complex. In his essay, *A Review of the Complex Theory*, Jung explicitly describes this as "a momentary and unconscious alteration of personality known as identification with the complex," although the opposing phrase "assimilation of the ego by the complex" could just as appropriately convey the action (Jung 1934/1960, para. 204).

Freud extended the work of Charcot and Janet with regard to hysterical symptoms when he realized that complexes as symptom-producing ideas rooted in unconscious affects needed to be abreacted. But Jung argues that psychoanalytic theory does not adequately convey the power and the positive potential of these symptom-producing ideas. Jung portrays Freud as wanting to unmake as illusion, to reduce to a psychological formula, what Jung describes in psychological terms as a "complex" but also, at other times, as a "spirit," "god," or "daimon." And Jung argues that his theory contributes to and corrects psychoanalytic theory by emphasizing the inherent ambiguity of complexes which the ego experiences as negative: "Spirits are not under all circumstances dangerous and harmful. They can, when translated into ideas, also have beneficial effects. A well-known example of this transformation of a content of the collective unconscious into communicable language is the miracle of Pentecost" (Jung 1920/1960, para. 596). Jung employs a

deliberately equivocal language of psychological "complexes" that are also "spirits," in order to honor their ontological claim as unlived potentialities of the personality. These forcefully seek to incarnate in time and space and kinetically push the individual psyche towards a more genuinely integral organizing or entwining of its parts, a process which he calls "individuation."

Jung argues that the technique of personification provides a psychotherapeutic means by which the ego can free itself from the affective power of an unconscious complex. In his memoirs, as well as in his theoretical writings, he describes his experiments with the personified image of the complex. Jung observes that if, rather than simply suffering the active complex's often difficult affect, we deliberately enter a state of reverie and permit the complex to manifest spontaneously to conscious awareness as a personified image, then we depotentiate its power over ego consciousness and make interpretation possible:

> The essential thing is to differentiate oneself from these unconscious contents by personifying them, and at the same time to bring them into relationship with consciousness. That is the technique for stripping them of their power. It is not too difficult to personify them, as they always possess a certain degree of autonomy, a separate identity of their own. Their autonomy is a most uncomfortable thing to reconcile oneself to, and yet the very fact that the unconscious presents itself in that way gives us the best means of handling it. (Jung 1962, p. 187)

Hence, an important component of psychotherapy focuses upon supporting the ego of the patient within the frame of the transference-countertransference relationship to the point that it can experience the autonomy of the unconscious complex as a splinter psyche and eventually reconcile itself to the contradictions inherent in psychic reality through a personified confrontation and meeting. Jung depicts the images and affects of a complex as clustering around an archetypal core which is both ambiguous and numinous. As a result, an archetypal aspect of the experience of the otherness of the psyche may cause the analytical container to feel tinged with numinosity. As contradictory as this may seem, in order to address contemporary mental disorders cast in the secularized language of "mind" and "complexes," the practice of psychotherapy needs to take into account a religious function in the experience of healing.

Post-Jungian theorists detach Jung's definition of the religious function in psychotherapy from connotations of an esoteric system of belief. At the same time, they defend it from classical Freudian interpretation that sees it as a component of transference phenomena which constitutes resistance and an obstacle to the process of healing. Jung's concept of synchronicity provides an important framework for understanding the numinous aspect of complexes experienced within clinical settings which is otherwise professionally considered taboo and for considering the interaction of religious and scientific imagery. This is important because there are potential risks within the transference – and for the therapy in general – when the religious dimension of psychotherapeutic practice either is not processed consciously but acted out in the transference and countertransference or is only interpreted reductively, that is to say, as infantile and illusory. Jung argues that psychotherapeutic healing depends on the degree to which the therapist carefully considers the implications of this religious function when the otherness of unconscious complexes manifests in the temenos of the therapeutic encounter.

Extrapolating from Jung's theorizing, James Hillman's archetypal psychology suggests that, by taking into account the inherent multiplicity and pluralism of the psyche, Jung's theory of complexes compensates for the dangers inherent in the one-sidedness of modernist Western cultures and the Western practice of an ego-oriented psychology of self-development. The personification of unconscious complexes provides an effective means by which one adopts the paradoxical position of, on the one hand, claiming the personified aspects as one's own and, on the other hand, experiencing their distinctness from ego consciousness and their autonomy. Furthermore, psychological complexes demand a dramatically engaged and lived response to the unconscious as other, in contrast to intellectualizing and conceptualizing unconscious contents which will not be psychotherapeutically effective.

Whereas psychiatry associates personification with the irrational and pathological hallucinatory phenomena of dissociative identity disorder and psychosis, Jung normalizes it as a natural psychological process through which complexes manifest. This process is comparable to what psychiatrist Laurence Kirmayer, in his review of cognitive research on dissociation (1994), designates as a component of "reverie." Indeed, Kirmayer (1999) describes the recent psychotherapeutic work of Witztum and Goodman precisely in terms of split-off aspects of the self which are experienced as supernatural entities and spirits. Witztum and Goodman report that patients, addressing their suffering through reverie and a manipulation of symbols rather than through abreaction and reductive developmental-based work, effectively reorganize cognitive schemas, unconscious dynamics, and interpersonal interactions.

Jung's theory of complexes proposes a looser definition of personhood than Western thinking traditionally promulgates. Jung describes this theoretically in terms of "the serious doubt [which the existence of complexes throws] on the naïve assumption of the unity of consciousness" (Jung 1934/1960, p. 96) and also personalistically in the last words of his memoirs wherein he acknowledges "an unexpected unfamiliarity with myself" (Jung 1962, p. 359). When psychoanalysts such as Goldberg (1980, in Samuels et al. 1986, pp. 32–35) write that "a person is a collective noun," they affirm Jung's theory of complexes, of a multiplicity of conscious mental functioning, as well as aligning contemporary psychoanalytical theorizing with current research into the inherent dissociability of normal cognitive functioning.

See Also

- ▶ Adler, Alfred
- ▶ Ego
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Oedipus Complex
- ▶ Psychotherapy
- ▶ Unconscious

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Compulsion

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Etymology

The noun, compulsion, generally means the state or experience of being compelled. It is the irresistible urge to act, regardless of the rationality of the motivation. In its verb form, compel expands qualitatively to include meanings such as force, drive, constrain, and sway. It comes from the Latin verb *pellere* (past part. *pulsus*), meaning to push, drive, or strike. The extended form *pelna* comes

from the Latin verb *appellare*, to drive to, address, entreat, appeal, or call. Each and all of these contribute to psychological and religious interpretations of compulsion.

Elaboration

Compulsion, referring to repeated, irrational action (distinguished from obsession involving repetitive thought), is a phenomenon that by its very nature bridges more than one domain. Although this experience is neither exclusively physical, psychological, nor spiritual, it manifests powerfully and problematically as all three. As a physical experience, compulsions fall under the category of addictions of all kinds. Specialists in substance abuse disorders range in focus from alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, shopping, sex, love, and relationship; and this list is not exhaustive. Caught in a compulsive cycle to reexperience the original pleasurable exposure to the substance, people become trapped in a whirlpool of cyclical agonies. In spite of negative consequences, the compulsion to repeat a certain action dominates the will of the individual and a pattern of predictable, yet irresistible actions follow.

In the realm of psychology, Sigmund Freud's first observations about compulsion include the curious desire in the psyche to repeat experience even though the return to it could not possibly be pleasurable (Gay 1989, p. 602). Referring to this as the "repetition compulsion," Freud noted that his earlier thinking surrounding the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain could not explain a need to revisit experiences that cause suffering.

Object relations theorists and analysts focused on the internal objects in the psyche and addressed compulsions as rooted in the inescapable desire to possess, reject, or relate to the object. Michael Balint talks about artists and performers of all kinds as ultimately serving a need to be seen by and thereby possess the object (Balint 1959). This gives new meaning to the saying that "the show must go on." Perhaps the need of some of the great painters, like Claude Monet, who painted more than 100 paintings of the lilies, answered a similar call.

But it was Carl Jung who first ventured into a spiritual understanding of compulsion's dynamics, thinking first that certain compulsions bore witness to a lack of moral restraint. While early therapy met with such compulsive behaviors more confrontationally than is acceptable today, Jung touched on the necessity of the analytic relationship to challenge a moral deficit. "Unless the doctor and the patient become a problem to one another, there is no cure" (Jung 1961, p. 142).

Later, and more specifically, Jung addressed the problem of alcoholism in a letter to one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. He had come to see compulsive drinking as a spiritual quest of deep proportions, a destructive cycle without the possibility of cure if there is no spiritual component to the recovery (Adler and Jaffe 1972 pp. 623–625).

Compulsion thus spreads its wings over the physical and the psychological and now reaches into the spiritual experience of the "call." Religious history the world over describes the individual compelled to move beyond their ordinary circumstances to take up the demands of a larger existence. St. Francis of Assisi quit the trappings of nobility and a career-driven life to minister to the poor. His devotion to the faith revealed to him in a series of visions moved him to the founding of a new religious order and later canonization. Joan of Arc would have died an obscure French peasant had she not heeded the voices of saints that came to her in a vision, "calling" her to lead her country's army to victory against the British after the 100 Years' War. Compelled, surely beyond reason at the time of the Inquisition, Joan held to her beliefs and was burned at the stake for following a compulsive service to a larger authority.

Compulsion presents a dilemma in terms of how to view it. For some, perhaps it is no more, nor less, for that matter, than the physical experience of addiction. Based on a compulsive need to re-experience the initial pleasure, the negative consequences are outweighed by even the hope of finding it. For others, perhaps it is a psychological coping mechanism to manage anxiety over

the loss of the original object. Or at depth, compulsions herald movement toward an enlargement of the personality. And finally for others, compulsion could answer a larger call of divine proportions, a response to a certain kind of destiny that effects the larger community and culture (Braden 2008).

See Also

- ▶ Individuation
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav

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Confession

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The act of confession either begins a process of reparation or affirms the subject's relationship with the transpersonal. That is, one can confess wrongdoing or confess one's faith. In most religious traditions, the former is accomplished through ritualized admission, absolution, and repair, while psychologically it begins the formation of therapeutic trust and unburdens the subject of poisonous secrets. The confession of faith can occur at moments of trial (martyrdom), or of ritual inclusion (initiation), and in the secular world can take the form of moral statements or even scientific stances which are determined by unconscious assumption rather than a rational or integrated practice (see especially Nietzsche 1992).

The word confess is made up of the Latin *com* (together) and *fateri* (to acknowledge), indicating that a process of change begins both *with* another person and by *admitting* that which is in error. A confession of faith can be seen as an acknowledgment of a relationship with the transpersonal. Both modes experientially parallel the psychoanalytic encounter.

In the Catholic tradition, penance is a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through the priest's absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to rectify them. The whole process of confession is referred to as a "tribunal of penance," because it is seen as a judicial process in which the penitent is at once the accuser, the person accused, and the witness while the priest pronounces judgment and sentence. The church father Origen is explicit: "[A final method of forgiveness], albeit hard and laborious [is] the remission of sins through penance, when the sinner... does not shrink from declaring his sin to a priest of the Lord and from seeking medicine, after the manner of him who say, 'I said, "To the Lord I will accuse myself of my iniquity"'" (Origen, Homilies on Leviticus 2:4 [CE 248]). The Council of Trent (*Session Fourteen*, *Chapter I*) quoted John 20:22–23 as the primary scriptural proof for the doctrine concerning this sacrament, but Catholics also consider Matt. 9:2–8, 1 Cor. 11:27, and Matt. 16:17–20 to be among the Scriptural bases for the sacrament (The Catholic Encyclopedia). This multilevel mediation of sin can be thought of, psychologically, as the careful exploration of the scripture, or transpersonal psychic reality, inscribed in the mind of a patient and read, through translation of the symbolic material, into an analytic session.

Protestant sects in general disavow the necessity of an intermediary between the faithful and God so that confession is a matter of a sincere admission of wrongdoing in prayer and the asking of forgiveness. In practice this also can occur in a communal and ritualized form during service or to

another person if he or she has been wronged by the sin committed. Jung interpreted this historical move away from mediation as quite precarious, since most people did not (and do not) have the necessary strength of character and interior conceptual equipment to directly encounter and live with the transpersonal, whether characterized as an archetypal unconscious, an instinctual inclination, or a social movement such as a political ideology or a new age spiritual system. Typically a subject without firm mediation is either overwhelmed by a psychic flood or reverts to some type of collective response but without the benefit of *knowing and choosing* the system.

Various sutras encourage the Buddhist to confess to someone who is able to receive the confession (usually a superior in the temple or a monk). The confessor should at a minimum understand the ethical precepts and ideally should have some experience in following them. The point of confession is to *experience remorse* and to reflect on the consequences of one's actions in order to *exercise* restraint in the future. In practice this results in a sense of relief. Confession does not absolve the Buddhist from responsibility for the actions committed. The *karmic* consequences of such actions will still manifest.

The following story illustrates the relative nature of confession in Buddhism (Sāmaññaphala Sutta – DN 2, various translations, but see also Macy 1991). The king Ajattasattu had killed his mother and father and has usurped the crown. His conscience bothered him, and so he went to confess to the Buddha. The Buddha said to the king: "Indeed, King, transgression [*accayo*] overcame you when you deprived your father, that good and just king, of his life. But since you have acknowledged the transgression and confessed it as is right, we will accept it. For he who acknowledges his transgression as such and confesses it for betterment in future, will grow in the noble discipline."

The word *accayo* means "going on, or beyond," and in the moral sphere means acting outside the established norms – so transgression is quite a good translation. However, once the king departs, the Buddha says to the monks: "The king is done for, his fate is sealed, bhikkhus. If the king had not killed his father. . . then as he sat there the pure and spotless dhamma-eye would have arisen in him" (Walsh 1995, p. 91ff). So it is quite clear that there is no hope for the king regardless of how many cycles of life he uses to work off his karma. Psychologically we can understand this as the harsh but all too common experience that some people are not going to get better (whatever the definition of getting better might be), regardless of treatment or effort. There is also in this story the aspect of appropriate teaching, meaning that for each listener, the king, the monk, and the reader, there is something quite different to integrate.

In Islam, confession in the sense of declaration of faith is very central, being one of the five pillars of Islam. Distinct from this is the act of seeking forgiveness from God, called *istighfar*. Confession of sins is typically made to God and not man (except in asking for forgiveness of the victim of the sin). It is one of the essential parts of worship in Islam. This act is generally done by repeating the Arabic words *astaghfirullah*, meaning "I seek forgiveness from Allah." Again we can see that a concept of relationship between the subject and the transpersonal is central and that the locus of authority rests in the latter. This attitude is in stark contrast with the social and economic norms for most populations at this point in history.

In Judaism, like Islam, confession is an important part of attaining forgiveness for both sins against God and another man. In addition, confession in Judaism is done communally in plural. Unlike the Christian "*I* have sinned," Jews confess that "*We* have sinned." An early form of this confession is found most directly in Daniel 9:5–19, especially verses 5, 9, and 18–19, where the supplicant acknowledges himself meritless and asks for God's forgiveness based only on God's own merit and that God's name should not be tarnished among the nations.

For Jung, confession was the first of four stages or levels of the analytic process. In some cases, confession is all that is needed for a complete resolution of suffering, and it would be merely a personal agenda for the psychoanalyst to push beyond that. In other words, embedded in the symbolic material is a moral imperative specific

to the movement of psyche itself, and it is this that forms the psychological imperative. However, if the analyst detects that further exploration is needed according to the symbolic communication from the psyche of the patient, Jung outlines three more stages of education, elucidation, and finally transformation (Jung 1955).

Confession appears quite universally in religious traditions (this includes tribal cultures not specifically discussed, as presented, e.g., in the journal *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, May, 2007), so we can safely translate it as the psyche's need to both orient itself in terms of interpersonal and social norms (because another person is necessary and often the mistreated party must be addressed as well) and relate to those areas of transgression against the transpersonal center of meaning. For the latter, it is seen as critical that this practice of relating happen in a dyadic manner and in a protected environment. In this way the journey of insight and integration begins.

See Also

- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Sin

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Confidentiality

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Confidentiality refers to the cultural expectation and legally protected right that the privacy of all persons' thoughts, conversations, feelings, writings, correspondence, and personal effects will be honored, guarded, respected, and protected. In Western society and culture, persons have a reasonable expectation and legal right that personal information will be kept private by clergy, pastoral counselors, therapists, chaplains, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other medical and mental health professionals.

Confidentiality assumes that persons have the right to choose when and to whom personal information may be disseminated and that permission (usually in writing) is expected. Shah (1969, 1970) notes that the purpose of confidentiality is to guard and protect persons from unauthorized disclosure of information without informed consent.

Aside from its ethical, moral, and legal ramifications, confidentiality is also understood as essential to the counseling process of establishing trust; maintaining a professional, ethical relationship; and providing a safe and positive environment that is critical to therapeutic growth and healing. Nearly all established helping professions have clearly articulated requirements of confidentiality in their respective codes of ethics.

Federal and state regulations also have their own legal statutes and exceptions regarding confidentiality. For example, mandatory reporting of child abuse is a well-established exception to confidentiality. Additionally, many jurisdictions require that helping professionals break confidentiality in cases where persons threaten to harm to themselves, others, and sometimes property (i.e., suicidal, homicidal, or terroristic ideation). It is critical, therefore, that all helping professionals familiarize themselves with federal, state, local, and vocational statutes and commit themselves to

adhering to these as well as the codes of ethics of their particular profession and/or place of employment regarding confidentiality.

When in supervision, clergy and other helping professionals should familiarize themselves with the legal requirements regarding gaining permission to record (audio or video) counseling sessions and the sharing of confidential information with a supervisor.

A distinction must be made between confidentiality and privileged communication. The *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Hunter 2005) notes: "Simply put, confidentiality refers to privacy while privilege to the legal protection of that privacy" (p. 209). Privilege provides legal protection for persons who wish to block the release of information from a pastoral or professional conversation. Any information shared in confidence with helping professionals belongs to the person who shared it and not to the professional who heard it. Thus, all protection from disclosure belongs to the one who shared the information and not to the professional providing the care. In other words, privilege is the legal right of one seeking help who alone can waive it, whereas maintaining confidentiality is the moral and ethical obligation of a helping professional.

The complexity of the right of privileged communication should be a sober reminder, especially to religious professionals, that they stand at the juncture of tensions between religious sensibilities about clergy privilege and competing civil statutes. It behooves chaplains, clergy, pastoral counselors, and other helping professionals, therefore, to familiarize themselves thoroughly with all legal statutes and employment protocols and particular professional or vocational ethics regarding confidentiality and privileged communication. Further, they must demonstrate due diligence in being transparent with parishioners and help-seekers regarding their personal practices regarding confidentiality and privileged communication and to seek professional consultation from an appropriate supervisor or other professional when issues or procedures regarding confidentiality or privilege are not clear.

Marriage and family therapists sometimes embrace differing views and practices on confidentiality when offering couples therapy, and one partner discloses a secret about oneself or the other without the other being present. Some therapists refuse to see one partner of a dyad so as not to be put in this awkward therapeutic position. While some therapists vow to keep a secret confidential when the other is not present, other family therapists are reticent to maintain secrets revealed when the other partner is not present so as not to collude in maintaining the secret and the systemic anxiety surrounding it (Bowen 1982; Friedman 1985). It is important for clergy, pastoral counselors, and therapists to be mindful of their profession's guidelines and their own therapeutic and ethical preferences on such matters and to embrace the highest levels of transparency by clearly communicating their particular ethical concerns and practices regarding confidentiality to help-seekers at the very onset of a professional or counseling relationship.

Since hospital chaplains are often seen as a part of a medical team and since military chaplain often come under different regulations and guidelines, they should both familiarize themselves with how their supervisors understand their role regarding confidentiality and privilege in the larger system in which they work. For example, hospital chaplains should be clear about the hospital's expectation regarding what can and cannot be noted in medical records and charts without a patient's permission. The hospital chaplain should be clear about what a medical team needs to know about a patient who shares personal and medical information or history solely with a chaplain, and military chaplain should acquaint themselves with protocols particular to military codes of conduct.

See Also

- ▶ Confession
- ▶ Pastoral Counseling
- ▶ Psychotherapy
- ▶ Transference

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Confucianism

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Confucius was born 552 BCE in the district of Tsau, China, during the 20th year of the reign of Emperor Ling. Little is known about his childhood. According to one myth, Confucius' mother Chăng-tsâi gave birth to him in a cave on a hill as instructed in a revelatory dream experience. The child was born in the night protected by two dragons who kept watch on the left and the right of the hill. At the time of the birth, a spring of warm water from the floor of the cave bubbled up cleansing the child, who was extraordinary in appearance. At age 19, Confucius married a woman of the Chien-kwan family from the state of Sung. They had a son, Lî (*The Carp*) shortly after. According to an inscription, Confucius had at least one other child – a daughter who died at an early age. Confucius first worked as a keeper of public grain stores and public fields. He later served as a public teacher in his early twenties, never refusing a student who desired to learn and eventually becoming teacher to students of the wealthy caste. In 501 BCE he was appointed chief magistrate of the town of Chung-tû, and his authority in the state continued to grow. He died 479 BCE. Some time afterwards public worship of Confucius began, including sacrificial offerings throughout the empire. The primary literary sources for Confucianism include "The Five *Ching*" and "The Four *Shuû*." The Five *Ching* ("textile" connoting regularity and constancy) are thought to have been used by Confucius for study. The oldest text, the *Yî*, contains a system of symbols used to determine cosmological and philosophical order in what is perceived to be chance events. The *Shih* (ca. 1000 BCE?) contains 305 poems of folk songs, festive songs, hymns, and eulogies. The *Lî Chî* dates possibly to 300 BCE and contains social forms and rites of the Zhou Dynasty (1122–256 BCE). The *Shû* contains the history of past Chinese heroes and dynasties. Of its 58 chapters 33 are thought to be authentic, dating to the sixth century BCE. Instruction in Confucianism mostly occurred through use of *The Four Books*, which became the core curriculum for the civil service examination in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE) and Qing Dynasty (1644–1911 CE). *The Four Books* is an abbreviation for *The Books of the Four Philosophers*. The *Tâ Hsio* or *Great Learning* is attributed to Tă Shăn, a disciple of Confucius. Containing reflections on the teachings of Confucius by some of his followers, it represents the first step for learners and aims "to illustrate illustrious virtue, to renovate the people, and rest in the highest excellence." (1) Knowing this place of

rest may enable a "calm unperturbedness" and a tranquil repose. (2) Issuing chapters expand upon the aim for virtue through the comments of Tsăng. One is to allow no self-deception (VI.1), make thoughts sincere (VI.4), and cultivate the mind, thus not being under the influence of the passions which leads to incorrect conduct (VII.1). In matters of governing, the regulation and well-being of the royal family has central place: "From the loving example of one family a whole State becomes loving" (IX.3). Similarly, when the sovereign shows compassion toward the young and helpless, "the people do the same" (X.1). The *Lun Yü* or "*Digested Conversations* (*Confucian Analects*)" consists of the sayings of Confucius compiled some time after his death. It gives instruction and guidance on how to be the "superior" person (II.2). One who loves virtue rather than beauty, serves his parents and his prince, and speaks sincerely with his friends is one who shows learning (I.VII). He is one who in wanting to enlarge himself seeks also to enlarge others (VI.XXVIII). He requires much of himself, and little from others, and so avoids resentment (XV.XIV). As a youth one should be filial in the home and respectful toward elders outside of the home. He should be earnest and truthful, overflowing in love and "cultivating the friendship of the good" (I.VI). Of the manner of governing – a subject often addressed – the "Master" says: "When a country is well-governed, poverty and mean conditions are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill-governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of" (VIII.VIII). The *Chung Lung*, or *Doctrine of the Mean*, is attributed to K'ung Chî, the grandson of Confucius. Not unlike the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* has a primary focus, which is the "path" called "instruction." It is never to be left for an instant (I.1–2). Attention to the path yields the states of equilibrium and harmony, and in its furthest reaches, it contains secrets unattainable even by sages (XII.2). It is never far from a person, and the practice of reciprocity – "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others" – is evidence of being near the path (XIII.3). One who is superior embraces this course; one who is mean lives contrary to it (II.1). One who is superior "stands firm in his energy," cultivating a friendly harmony without being weak and standing erect in the middle, without inkling to either side (X.5). The fourth writing consists of the writings of Confucius' successor, Mencius (372–289 BCE). The book contains dialogues between Mencius and various Chinese kings. Distinct from the concise manner of Confucius' teachings, Mencius' discussions are more elaborate and extended. The Four *Shuû*, along with The Five *Ching*, relate the cultivation of heightened consciousness through disciplined and considered practice of detailed and focused instruction. This orientation aims toward the experience of a tranquil, orderly state of being, one which is founded upon the implicit relationship between the individual and the collective. Self-control and sociopolitical regulation are essential means toward a desired harmony, and thus there occurs the emphasis upon the praxis of teachings and values. Confucianism in this way, at least in its beginnings, is not so much a religion as it is a teaching about how to live according to philosophical principles and reflections. As such, it sets forth initially little notion of deity worship. It is based upon life experience and observation of the natural world. In the Four Books the forcefulness of "conscious" existence appears to occur at the expense of the recognition and embrace psyche-soma movements such as *coniunctio*.

See Also

▶ Chinese Religions

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Conscience

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How has conscience been seen in religious traditions? How has it been understood by psychologists? What do we know about the psychological processes involved in the links between religion and conscience?

Religious Views of Conscience

The divine "still, small voice" (I Kings 19, 12) has often been used to depict conscience, the spiritual inner voice offering and urging the morally and spiritually correct path for the individual. Conscience in traditional Western religion is a given part of human constitution but one that may be drowned by bad habits, temptations, poor upbringing, bad examples, and lack of moral education and direction. Conscience is sometimes depicted as the "good inclination," arguing with the "evil inclination," both striving for the attention and obedience of their owner (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1973/1796). Current writings on religious education are often informed and made complex by current psychological understandings of the nature of conscience, of moral growth, and of philosophical issues (e.g., Astley and Francis 1994).

Psychological Views of Conscience

There have been important psychological contributions to the understanding of conscience. This selective overview will mention the contributions of Freud, Erikson, Frankl, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Hare. A more detailed discussion of conscience from the perspective of the psychology of religion may be found in Meadow and Kahoe (1984); recent textbooks and research in this area have given rather limited attention to conscience.

The controversy surrounding Freud's views has masked the force and accuracy of some of his observations. He was one of few twentieth-century psychological writers to give attention to conscience, an important topic otherwise widely overlooked. Freud (1924, 1940) suggested that young children experience specifically sexual feelings toward their opposite-sex parent. The wish to possess the parent is foiled by the knowledge that the parent is already owned and by fear that the same-sex parent will seek jealous retribution on the child. This so-called Oedipal situation is resolved by the child's identification with the same-sex parent. This gains the approval of both parents and enables the child to gain vicarious possession of the opposite-sex parent. Aspects of this theory remain controversial, although few would argue with young children can experience intense need for control, intense attachment to their parents, or that intense positive and negative feelings can be experienced by young children and their parents. Freud's account of girls' development is particularly fraught with difficulty. The key point however is that, however identification with the same-sex parent comes about, there is an internalization of the parent figure which becomes the foundation of the G-d image. Parental attitudes are introjected, forming the basis of the superego, experienced as the conscience. This may have a strongly punitive character, and a distinction is sometimes made between the harsh, introjected superego and the inspiring, internalized ego ideal.

Frankl (1975) trained in Freudian psychoanalysis but developed a very distinctive variety of psychotherapy, sometimes known as existential therapy. In Frankl's view, the overriding motive is the will to meaning. The guide in the search for meaning and purpose is the conscience, of transcendent origin, and the therapist's role is to support the client in their search for meaning, a search which is fundamentally spiritual (Wulff 1997).

Like Frankl, Erikson (1950) was a European-trained psychoanalyst, who moved to the USA and developed very distinctive ideas about the

nature of psychological health and growth. Erikson was probably the most influential twentieth-century psychologist to give attention to virtue. He put forward an elaborate – and plausible – account of psychosocial development as continuing throughout the life-span, with virtues resulting from the successful negotiation of the challenges at different life stages. Potential psychopathology occurs if emerging capacities are not nurtured and supported. Erikson described eight stages in all, and it is during the third stage – from approximately ages 2–5 – that conscience and guilt make their appearance. As the understanding and use of language develop, along with the capability of independent action, the child may experience guilt as a consequence of adult reactions to aggressive and uncontrolled actions. Guilt may become destructive, resulting in inhibition and self-righteousness, or it may impel the child toward worthy ideals, constructive initiative, and purposeful action.

We have seen that both Erikson and Frankl emphasized sense of purpose and focus on ideals as important functions of the healthy conscience. Both Freud and Erikson indicated the psychopathological functioning of the conscience whose development has been instilled too coercively or punitively. Finally, we have seen that Freud and Frankel see a close relationship (or identity) between the conscience and G-d.

We turn now to developmental theories of morality, first considering Kohlberg (1976). Kohlberg traced the development of moral thinking from the stage at which morality is bound by utilitarian considerations (what is good for the self), then by prescribed rules, and then through stages in which social welfare and social justice are the highest considerations, to a stage (probably not widely attained) in which an autonomous, individualized morality is concerned with universal ethical principles. In this developmental scheme, an intrinsic conscience is a feature of the stage involving autonomous morality. Kohlberg suggested that women were less likely than men to attain the higher stages of moral development, being more bound by social welfare considerations. This view attracted a strong response from Gilligan (1982), who suggested that while men are concerned with justice, which is inflexible and abstract, women's primary ethical standard is care for others, which is flexible and context sensitive. Belensky et al. (1986) emphasized the importance for women of connected knowing, which is nonevaluative, whose motive is to understand another person in order to live together in harmony in spite of differences. It is worth mentioning the view of Hare (1999) who among others held that psychopaths – charming, exploitative, and remorseless – lack conscience. Criminal psychopathy may respond to therapeutic interventions, for example, designed to improve empathy for victims (e.g., Friendship et al. 2003). There are variations in the ways in which conscience and morality are governed, indicating the importance of gender, social factors, and cognitive development.

What, empirically, is known about the relations between conscience, religion, and psychological factors?

It is generally found that religiously identified and religiously affiliated people behave "better" than do others. This is consistent with the possibility that religious identification and affiliation promote knowledge of moral rules and the self-monitoring of behavior in accordance with these rules. Bloom (2012) offers an evolutionary perspective. Religious people are less likely than other to engage in criminal behavior (Baier and Wright 2001) and extramarital sexual behavior and recreational drug use (Mattila et al. 2001; Rostosky et al. 2004). Religious people are more likely than others to engage in charitable activity (Inaba and Loewenthal 2009) and in deliberate moral practice and moral expertise (Rossano 2008). The effects of religion are not always straightforward, for example, the effects of religion may vary with gender (Rostosky et al. 2004) or with style of religiosity (Batson 1976).

The effects of religion on moral behavior are broadly consistent, and we might ask whether this is because religious people have greater knowledge of moral rules, because religious people feel greater shame at the thought of wrongdoing, or religious people feel greater guilt.

Shame is normally defined as the result of social anxiety, the experience of others'

knowledge that one has done wrong and/or is bad. Guilt is individualized moral anxiety, the experience of one's own knowledge that one has done wrong and/or is bad (Freud 1926; Meadow and Kahoe 1984). Work on religion in relation to guilt and shame suggests that guilt may often be higher among the religiously active (Hood 1992). Shame is not higher among the religiously active compared to others (Luyten et al. 1998). Maltby (2005) has shown a complex pattern of relationships between different styles of religiosity and different types of guilt, for example, intrinsic ("sincere") religiosity may be linked to healthy guilt. These findings have been produced in Western, generally Christian, cultures, and we know little as yet about guilt, shame, and religion in other cultural and religious contexts.

This entry has suggested three broad conclusions. One is that we may distinguish between two aspects of conscience: a harsh, introjected superego and an internalized, encouraging and inspiring ego ideal. Second, empirical work broadly supports the view that religion is generally associated with "better," more moral behavior. Third, religion may generally promote guilt but not shame. The psychological processes involved in understanding the relations between religion and conscience deserve closer study, for example, effects in different genders, cultures, and religious groups, the influence of religious role models, and the development of different styles of religiosity and their relations to conscience.

See Also

- ▶ Erikson, Erik
- ▶ Existential Psychotherapy
- ▶ Frankl, Viktor
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund

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Consciousness

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Introduction

The term consciousness has acquired several meanings, but it is generally associated with "the experience of awareness" though there is no consensus as to its cause(s) or extension. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, the phenomenon of consciousness attracted a considerable amount of attention from persons working in a variety of areas but especially in the neurosciences and cognitive sciences. While various theories have since been advanced to account for the phenomenon of consciousness, none have gained sufficient support to amount to more than proposals. The shared and seemingly reasonable assertion of the dependency of consciousness on neurophysiological processes has largely held the day though even here there is a range of opinions and some concerns about the limitations of such an assumption. At the very least, there is general agreement about a correlation between the two. In view of the aforementioned, what the precise relationship is between everyday consciousness and what can broadly be termed religious or transpersonal remains unclear and offers a rich field for future exploration and research.

Historical Background

There is an earlier, cross-cultural, and continuous history of reflecting on consciousness as well as various techniques and practices to bring about its alteration and extension that has been insufficiently explored and evaluated. These are largely to be found in the indigenous, religious, spiritual, and philosophical traditions of the planet.

The earliest indications of such reflections and practices are found in the artifacts of the distant past that are currently being tentatively reconstructed by cognitive archeologists and anthropologists (Lewis-Williams 2004, 2005). The evidence while fragmentary offers a compelling argument for the ubiquitous preoccupation with altered states of consciousness and their function and value in indigenous communities (Hayden 2003). Moreover, overcoming past prejudices and claims of the superiority of one culture over another, there is a growing appreciation that such knowledge may have value beyond the contexts in which it has emerged and have wider applications (Webb 2012).

In larger-scale religious traditions, there are a complex number of developed techniques and spiritual practices that have been taught and recorded and that have direct import for the subject of consciousness and its extension. While all of these are rooted in particular cultural contexts, they, too, as in the cases of yoga and various forms of meditation, have attracted wide attention in both theoretical and practical terms (Eliade 1969; Shear 2006; White 2012). Nor are initiatory and spiritual practices of negligible significance in the history of Western culture (Sluhovshy 2011; Ustinova 2011). While initially overlooked or deemed of secondary relevance, there is a noticeable change in attitude on the part of neuroscientists and others in the field of consciousness studies to include the investigation of such reflections and practices in their work (Goleman and Davidson 2017).

In the modern West, the first systematic and rational examination of consciousness begins with the distinction, commonly associated with Descartes (1596–1650), between the physical and the mental. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for subsequent discussion and debate as to its legitimacy, and this continues until today. Variations of mind/body dualism, psychophysical parallelism, immaterialism, and materialism held sway among philosophers in Europe over the next century. An increasing inclination towards empiricism can be found in thinkers like Locke (1632–1704) who distinguished between outer sense and inner sense, the former having to do with the experience of things and the latter with the experience of the experience of things. Such ideas along with interests in making correlations between, and attempting to localize, mental processes in the brain laid the groundwork for an empirical psychology. Nevertheless, Kant (1724–1804) undercut such optimism by denying the possibility of an empirical psychology on the grounds that while the brain could be systematically studied, mental phenomena were subjective and therefore inaccessible to the scientific method. This distinction between objective and subjective is mirrored in contemporary discussions of the problematic relationship between third-person (scientific) and first-person (subjective) approaches to consciousness and the so-called explanatory gap that is a consequence (Shear 2000; Velmans and Schneider 2007).

Psychological Perspectives

Subsequent developments in the study of human physiology and especially the anatomy of the brain and nervous system led to an increasing emphasis on measuring and correlating physiological and mental processes, the latter increasingly perceived as being dependent on the former. The outcome of this was the founding of a laboratory-based, experimental psychology by Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) that William James (1842–1910) well understood but found so abhorrent. James' own contribution was to widen the margins of an increasingly narrow physiologically based psychology to include the possibilities of a multifaceted approach to the study of consciousness, utilizing a number of methods and inclusive of transpersonal experiences as canvassed in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). His ambitious proposal for the exploration of consciousness was not implemented after his death, and with the consolidation of experimental psychology and the emergence of the behavioral school in the following decades, consciousness was effectively removed from being a plausible focus of academic attention and research (Taylor 1996). Largely outside of academic psychology, a number of different but related developments occurred that would have significant consequences for an understanding of consciousness and especially consciousness beyond the margins of everyday experience. This took two forms: the investigation for purposes of treatment of various mental states that were determined to be mildly to severely pathological and the investigation of exceptional mental states that appeared to be nonpathological and of a parapsychological or transpersonal nature.

The first of these is exemplified by the psychoanalytic school associated with Freud (1856–1939) that led to a psychology that interpreted abnormal mental states as indicative of psychological dysfunction and illness and extended this to religious and transpersonal experiences. For the most part, Freud understood consciousness as biologically determined and the consequence of sense perception even if it functioned to mediate between the outer and inner world, the latter being largely unconscious and of a psychosexual nature. Any claims that attempted to legitimize religious belief or a more expansive consciousness of a transpersonal nature were deemed evidence of regression to an earlier psychological state and indications of neurosis or a more serious psychotic condition (Freud 1990). Though, it should be added, Freud and some of his followers were intrigued by such phenomena as telepathy and what they termed more broadly "the occult" (Devereux 1953). In the end, psychoanalysis effectively eclipsed most other interpretive models of the psyche and psychodynamic processes and discouraged any views of

consciousness as extending beyond the perceptual reality of the ego. Like behaviorism, its own ideological limitations prescribed its views on what constituted consciousness. Remarkably, psychoanalysis, once the dominant and seemingly unassailable technique and reigning theoretical force in psychotherapy, has since suffered what appears to some to be an irreversible decline in the clinically focused mental health professions (Paris 2005). Its status in the current debates about the cause, nature, and purpose of consciousness appears to be correspondingly peripheral though it remains to be seen whether this will continue to be the case. The emergence of neuropsychoanalysis, a fusion of neuroscience and psychoanalysis, in the pioneering work of Mark Solms and others would suggest that Freud's work may, after all, be given a second life when placed on a neuroscientific foundation (Solms and Turnbull 2002; Schwartz 2015).

The second approach is to be found in the investigation of exceptional mental states that were deemed to be nonpathological and was undertaken by researchers associated with the Society for Psychical Research (Gauld 1968). F. W. H. Myers (1843–1901) can be taken as the chief representative of this group. His work is rich and suggestive in offering a way to accommodate a broad range of experiences of consciousness and, not least, his notion of "subliminal self," a larger sphere of consciousness housed in the recesses of the personality that James considered potentially revolutionary for the understanding of consciousness beyond the margins of everyday (Hamilton 2009). The investigations and theoretical proposals about the nature of consciousness coming from this group were almost completely overshadowed, if not discredited, by the rise and dominance of psychoanalysis. More recently, with the decline of psychoanalysis and the emergence of an interest in a broader view of consciousness, Myers' work has come under detailed reexamination, providing a theoretical framework for the possibility that though consciousness is correlated with, it is not necessarily entirely dependent on neurophysiological processes (Kelly and Kelly 2007).

Another related perspective should also be mentioned at this point and that is the one associated with C. G. Jung (1875–1961). While initially a colleague of Freud's, both Jung's formation and the range of his interests and originality of his ideas place him in an independent light. In many ways, he brings together the psychodynamic approach and a vision of consciousness that extends well beyond the personal and pathological. This is embodied in his conception of the psyche as a self-regulating system consisting of consciousness, the personal and the collective unconscious, and with a drive towards greater consciousness that Jung termed "the process of individuation." The deeper archetypal structures of the unconscious and the relationship between psyche, spirit, and matter that preoccupied Jung's latter work are rich in insights and theoretical possibilities for an understanding of religious and transpersonal experience (Charet 1993; Main 1997). The significance of Jung's psychology for the understanding of consciousness has been largely ignored in academic circles and hence yet to be adequately assessed. Along with James, he is one of formative influences in the emergence of transpersonal psychology (Cortright 1997; Daniels 2005).

Among the pioneers in transpersonal psychology, whose work is clearly focused on the subject of consciousness and its transformation, is a list of researchers and theoreticians. These include the names of Stanislav Grof, Michael Washburn, and a number of others. Grof, in particular, influenced by his experimentation with psychoactives, along with his wife, Christina, has not only developed theoretical additions to transpersonal studies but rooted this in their widely practiced technique of holotropic breath work to transform consciousness (Grof and Grof 2010). In addition, the publications and online presence of prolific integral philosopher, Ken Wilber, whose work was initially rooted in transpersonal psychology, have attracted considerable attention. Lastly, along with the Grofs, mention should also be made of the pioneering work using psychoactive substances to induce altered states and the more recent focused discussion and clinical research that offer considerable potential insight into

the further reaches of consciousness (Walsh and Grob 2005, Richards 2016).

Current Discussions

The cognitive revolution in the neurosciences in the second half of the twentieth century has sparked considerable interest in the relationship between brain function, cognitive processes, and the issue of the origin, nature, and purpose of consciousness. This interest has largely occurred among neuroscientists and persons working in the areas of cognitive science and philosophy of mind. The shared perspective of most working in these areas is rooted in the assumption that a scientific approach to the study of consciousness is the one best suited to attain dependable results. A second widely shared assumption is that consciousness is dependent on and the outcome of as yet understood neurophysiological processes (Velmans and Schneider 2007).

After decades of research, speculation, and discussion, it appears that the phenomenon of consciousness has not yielded to the various attempts to explain its cause(s) and purpose in scientifically acceptable terms. In fact, the extensive literature on consciousness indicates that for all the effort and theory making, it now appears that an exclusively scientific approach has so far fallen short of coming to terms with the "hard problem" of accounting for phenomenal experience and bridging the now famous "explanatory gap" between first-person and third-person approaches to consciousness. In other words, the determinedly third-person scientific approach in its bid for objectivity has not come up with a satisfactory explanation for what causes the subjective first-person experience of consciousness. This quandary has occupied much recent discussion, but there is still optimism that a detailed correlation of third-person observation and first-person experiences, utilizing the sophisticated technologies of brain imaging and other techniques, will eventually lead to more dependable data upon which a theory could be built. Not all share this view. In fact, serious questions have been raised about the need to reexamine some of the assumptions that inspire such optimism, such as the exclusive dependency of consciousness on neurophysiological processes that are implicit in what has passed as the normative scientific approach to the phenomenon of consciousness (Kelly and Kelly 2007; Kelly et al. 2015). Moreover, it would seem to be reasonable, given that subjective experience is essential to consciousness, to consider exploring the neglected phenomenon of the experience of first-person consciousness, a by no means easy task (Varela and Shear 1999).

To undertake to develop a rigorous methodology of first-person empiricism presents a considerable challenge, and not least because of the claim that objectivity and the conventional scientific method are the only means of attaining any degree of certitude. Yet, arguably, without first-person input, there is the risk of accomplishing little more than measuring ever more precisely the outside of the fishbowl of consciousness. And while arguments have been made about the limitations of introspection for the attainment of insight, it is becoming increasingly clear there are traditions of disciplined introspective analysis, developed in various cultures over the ages that have attained a remarkable degree of understanding about the geography of the inner landscape of consciousness. These mental disciplines and contemplative practices could be of considerable value in exploring and excavating the inner world of consciousness (Shear 2006). And in the contemporary West, techniques and approaches have emerged that have contributed to the mapping of the inner realm, such as Jungian and transpersonal psychology, both of which offer methods of disciplined introspection and analysis, largely ignored or dismissed by current neuroscience and those working in the philosophy of mind (Cortright 1997; Daniels 2005). If research into these techniques is pursued, in the course of time, a sufficient amount of accumulated experience and data could make a significant contribution to understanding the phenomena of consciousness and eventually lead to the bridging of the "explanatory gap" between third- and first-person consciousness (Lancaster 2004).

Yet, admirable as this proposal is, it nevertheless still confers on science a position of authority and even sovereignty over the entire field of consciousness that begs for examination. The qualifications and even reservations that are worthy of consideration have to do with the degree to which the current scientific model remains implicit in the proposal of supporting first-person empirical approaches in the study of consciousness. This ignores both the fact that current science is rooted in what Sir John Eccles called "promissory materialism" and that there are other, equally valid ways of knowing (Gadamer 1989). Moreover, undue privileging of the first-person perspective and especially assimilating it to a scientific model may, once again, end with limiting knowledge and truth to the control of the scientific method. In the case of religious or transpersonal events, this has the unfortunate consequence of reducing the spiritual and transpersonal to personal experience, uncoupled from the context of the traditions and communities that nurture such experiences. The result is to make such events vulnerable either to turning into extravagant forms of isolated beliefs and practices or being subsumed by an exclusivist scientific understanding, both to the detriment of the wider culture. The upshot of this is to require that religious and transpersonal knowledge claims be deemed valid or falsified only if they can or cannot be evaluated and replicated through various forms of strictly controlled disciplined methods of introspection (Ferrer 2002).

If such an approach claimed the high ground, it would be a further step in the direction of what has been called "the empiricist colonization of spirituality," something that many transpersonal theorists have been unknowingly working towards in spite of their intent and claim to do otherwise. There are other ways to include the spiritual into a transpersonal model of consciousness, and one is to follow the tracks of the religious traditions, practices, and cultures themselves that, after all, provide the sources and context for most of the spiritual experiences people have. Instead of the experiential and empirical approaches and their limitations, perhaps a participatory perspective that is inclusive and pluralistic and is expressed in personal, interrelational, communal, and place-based ways would be more adequate (Ferrer 2002).

To conclude, it would seem that a multifaceted approach to the study of consciousness would have the value of freeing researchers from the hegemony of scientific empiricism, as well as providing a way to steer cautiously through the channel of first-person consciousness and transpersonal experiences. After navigating these areas, a foundation could then be laid for a multidisciplinary and even transdisciplinary perspective where a disciplined pluralism would pervade and all parts of the spectrum of consciousness would be given due consideration, including perspectives from other cultures and times, religions, and spiritualities (Charet and Webb 2007).

See Also

- ▶ Consciousness, Altered State of
- ▶ James, William
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Psychoanalysis
- ▶ Self
- ▶ Transpersonal Psychology

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Consciousness, Altered State of

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Altered states of consciousness (ASC) are said to occur when an individual subjectively experiences a change away from everyday thinking, following a psychological or physiological interference with normal brain/consciousness functioning. Altered states may be involuntary, as in dreaming, hallucinating, hypnagogic dreaming, sleep deprivation, fasting, hunger, illness, stress, trauma, psychosis, epilepsy, hypoxia, or hypnosis. Voluntary altered states may result from ingesting N_2O, coffee, alcohol, cannabis, opiates, cocaine, music, tobacco, MDMA ("Ecstasy"), LSD, Mescaline, psilocybin, or DMT (Dimethyltryptamine).

The term first appeared in 1966, and the above description makes clear that the phenomenon is extremely broad and may cover a wide range of both subjective experiences and observable behaviors.

Altered states have been tied to general theories about the genesis and maintenance of religion in general and of the history of particular religions.

The altered states of consciousness hypothesis proposes that the genesis of religious ideas is the result of dramatic or "peak experiences," such as

trance, dissociation, or ecstasy. The rationale (if that is the right term) of this approach is that religious ideas appear in human consciousness as the result of unusual, dramatic experiences. When such experiences intruded into the consciousness of some ancient individuals, it led to the development of ancient religious systems. Popular books offer stories of ancient founders who had mystical visions, ate psychedelic mushrooms, and formulated religious claims which started particular traditions. Maslow (1970) stated that the origin of every "high religion" is "the private, lonely, personal illumination, revelation, or ecstasy of some acutely sensitive prophet or seer."

Beyond speculations about the appearance of religion in prehistory, there have been suggestion that religious changes throughout history and the development of new movements were similarly related to mystical experiences, which were themselves a consequence of altered states.

Such accounts tie religion to dramatic, unusual, irregular, or abnormal psychological processes, but most religious activities are rather undramatic, and most believers don't claim ecstatic or mystical experiences or revelations.

Altered states are sometimes related to the occurrence of religious experience, or may be synonymous with them. Fasting, meditation, and the study of religious texts are tied to reports of religious experiences. But this happens among religious virtuosi, and is irrelevant to the masses who maintain religion and institutions, and don't report mystical experiences.

When we try to reconstruct the actual appearance of religious practices, the evidence about the first activities related to religion is found in archeological finds. Discoveries in sites going back more than 100,000 years ago demonstrate the practice of significant investment in burials. We find grave goods, i.e., articles left with the dead body, usually food, enabling the dead person to survive in this new stage of existence. What we consider modest grave goods were a serious sacrifice. This is the first time we can refer to a denial of death by humans, and this is the actual beginning of religion. Later on, we find examples of massive investments in burials and in temples or pyramids. What is clear is that such projects require co-operation and leadership, and any kind of altered state would hamper their completion.

Minority experiences, however intense, cannot explain the hold of religion on the majority of humanity. The processes that give rise to religion cannot be anomalous or deviant. Religion first appears, or is learned and embraced, through the operation of ordinary, automatic, brain-based mechanisms. Universal and natural processes lead brains to develop and accept religious ideas. Religious ideation is natural and intuitively plausible because of innate mechanisms that lead us to imagine reality in terms of egocentric, anthropocentric, animistic, teleological processes and to interpret events through intentionality and design. These powerful mechanisms lead to the attribution of consciousness and volition to nonhuman objects, real, and imagined.

Xenophanes (sixth century BCE) coined the term anthropomorphism when noting the similarity between religious believers and the imaginary representations of their gods, with Greek gods being fair skinned and African gods being dark skinned, and wrote: "if an ox could paint a picture, his god would look like an ox."

In the discussion of individual and collective religiosity, what is often overlooked is that every aspect of religion and religiosity is socially learned. The way most individuals become committed to a particular religion is by being born into it, and that is how most believers have acquired the identity they so often proudly proclaim. The process of the social learning of local religious ideas is so smooth because religious ideas are naturally acceptable to young minds, unlike the counterintuitive ideas of physics.

A believer's specific persuasion is actually determined at the moment of birth, and formed as a specific identity, not related to conviction or choice. Of about one billion Hindus, the vast majority are the products of a Hindu family, and the vast majority of self-identified adult Roman Catholics similarly grew up in a Catholic family. Ninety-nine percent of the world's religious believers have followed parental and communal teachings in acquiring the belief system they hold.

We take it for granted that children will follow in their parents' footsteps, and they do. Social learning, despite its seeming simplicity (and maybe because of it), remains the best explanation for most religious actions. It is the best explanation for the overall prevalence of religion, for individual religiosity, and for the most varied and the most dramatic of religious acts and movements. To the question, "Why do people believe in God?" the best answer remains: "Because they have been taught to believe in God." The social learning of religion means that individuals believe in Krishna, Jesus, Jehovah, or Osiris, only because their parents taught them these specific beliefs.

Not only are religious beliefs predictable, following local culture and tradition, but even the particular content of religious experience is totally determined by cultural learning and tradition. The effects of peyote (containing mescaline) on Mexican and American Indians depends whether they belong to the Native American Church, in which case they have theistic experiences, or if they are Catholics, in which case they may have visions of the Virgin Mary.

Religious experiences or mystical states are by definition private events, like dreams, that we know about only by first-person reports. Laubach offered the following description: "perceptions of psychic intrusions into the stream of consciousness that are interpreted by the actor as not originating within the self's normal information channels." While religious experiences are reported as spontaneous, a psychological interpretation will regard them as being the product of combined brain processes and social learning.

Spirit possession is learned as individuals master the required cultural expertise, and glossolalia could be easily taught. Together with social learning, there is an individual, causative part. With the same exposure, not every individual will have such an experience, and it is assumed that personality factors and neural states play a role in creating this behavior.

Sometimes these private experiences become public or involve public activities. Well-known mystics in history felt compelled to report them publicly, even though they were said to be indescribable and unutterable. Individual experiences reported by religious devotees or leaders become part of religious histories and traditions and sometimes lead to the formation of new movements.

Psychedelic drugs or hallucinogens, such as LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin produce striking visual sensations, of intensified light and color, objects may seem alive, there can be distortion of time and space, objects change in size or shape or become two-dimensional, there may be depersonalization, and experience of union with the surrounding world. Sometimes the experience is reported to be religious, but the percentage of subjects who so describe it in this way has varied from 5% to 90%, though more typically 35–50%. Most psychedelic experiences include no references to religious ideas. There are some claims of "timelessness," depersonalization, and vivid visual sensations. Religious experiences do not involve the horrors sometimes reported with these drugs.

Brain pathology is directly tied to altered stares of consciousness and to reported religious experiences. Hyperreligiosity has been reported in cases of mania, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia, and temporal-lobe epilepsy (TLE). Is it possible that famous mystics in history suffered from specific brain syndromes? St. Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510) was diagnosed as a possible epileptic, and so was Teresa of Avila (1515–1582. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) started having visions of angels, heaven, and hell at age 55. According to his visions, the world is divided into three regions: the heavens, the hells, and the world of spirits. These visions were contained in his many books, and the movement he inspired is known as the New Church signified by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation. He has been described as a probable epileptic, in addition to suffering from mania and schizophrenia. Ann Lee (1736–1784), the founder of the Shakers, and Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844), the founder of Mormonism, have also been described as possible epileptics.

Research on religious experiences or mysticism refers on the one hand to reportedly spontaneous, personal experiences leading to written or

oral testimony and related religious commitment ("mystical experiences"), and then to the findings from mass surveys which ask respondents about private experiences. Over the past 50 years, one can find mass surveys of believers who report having had intense experiences. These are examples of the questions used in such surveys:

> Have you ever been aware of or influenced by a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self?
>
> Would you say that you had ever had a "religious or mystical experience," that is a moment of sudden religious insight or awakening?

Large surveys are important in assessing mass beliefs. With representative samples of the US population, a survey in 2004 showed that 37% responded to the item "I feel God's presence" by "many times a day or most days" and 22.4% of the population never or almost never had the experience. Some traditions and some social settings will increase the frequency of reported experiences. In the USA, the poor are more likely to report visions or hearing the "Voice of God."

In most reported private experiences, there is an alleged contact with a sensed presence, or "another consciousness." An illusory sensed presence or the conviction that another person or another consciousness are close by have been produced by the stimulation of particular brain areas. Another common description is of an experience of mystical union with a deity or with nature. In addition to the reported "sensed presence" of cultural spirit entities, which characterizes so-called mystical experiences, individuals report feeling the presence of loved ones who have died. This has been known as "grief hallucinations," bereavement hallucinations, "hallucinations of widowhood," or "hallucinations associated with pathologic grief reaction."

How significant are altered stated of consciousness in explaining religious ideas and acts? It seems that dramatic experiences are less representative than group co-operation inspired by beliefs about the spirit world. Reports of mystical states can be found only in recent historical times, with religious institutions well in place, so that a personal experience is already part of tradition.

Claims of revelations have been made, but there is no way of knowing the mental states of the founders of historical movements. Even if we want to assume that mystical experiences reached through altered states have played a role in the appearance of new movements, real evidence is hard to come by. Real leaders may be inspired by unusual experiences, but they also need to deal with the realities of this world to create any viable movement.

At the same time, we can point to the findings of mass surveys, where significant minorities of believers report "sensed presence" of spirit entities. Very few of these individuals will try to start a movement or even aspire to religious leadership positions.

See Also

- ▶ Consciousness
- ▶ Religious Experience

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Conservative Judaism

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Under the initiative of the German rabbi Zecharias Frankel, Conservative Judaism (also known as historical Judaism and Masorti in Israel) emerged in Europe in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Dr. Solomon Schechter, former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is credited with bringing the movement to the United States,

where it is now the second highest represented of Jewish denominations, claiming 40–45% of Jews who affiliate.

Viewing both the Orthodox and Reform movements to be extreme, Conservative theorists sought to find a middle ground, which maintains or conserves aspects of Traditional Judaism, while allowing for Judaism as it is lived to adapt to the modern world. Jewish doctrine has a stronger emphasis on behaviors and actions than on feelings, thoughts, and intentions (Cohen et al. 2003); this has different psychological implications across the various denominations. For Reform Jews, *halacha* (Jewish law) is not binding; rather, there is an emphasis on the autonomy of the individual to select which aspects of Jewish practice and ritual are personally meaningful.

Like Orthodox Jews, Conservatives believe in the authority of the *halakhah*; however, they interpret sources within their historical context in an attempt to balance traditional principles and rituals with modern life as it continues to evolve. In this spirit, Conservative Jews find it permissible for women to be rabbis and to worship together with men in services. Still, there remains an emphasis on the importance of keeping kosher, performing daily prayers, and observing the Sabbath and other holidays. The use of the Hebrew language is predominant in services so as to conserve original nuances of meaning.

Conservative Jews are more tolerant of other branches of Judaism than the Orthodox tend to be (Mayton 2009), but due to the perceived threat to Jewish cultural and religious identity, intermarriages are forbidden. Intermarriage additionally poses psychological problems, according to Conservative Jewish belief, as it negatively impacts family dynamics. Children of two-religion marriages may feel torn between desired religious practices and parental loyalties on a conscious or subconscious level (Kornbluth 2003).

For Conservative theorists, principles and stories from Jewish sources and texts are continually subject to examination and reevaluation so as to ascertain their applicability to modern circumstances. There is an intrinsic tendency towards retaining traditions and ethical positions; however, Conservatives invite dialogue and exploration within the Jewish community. The cultural valuing of externalizing internal thoughts and questions may make Conservative Jews less vulnerable to physical and mental health difficulties often associated with spiritual struggles and/or questioning religious practice. Further to Orthodox Judaism's emphasis on Torah study as a lifelong endeavor, the Conservative approach advocates also the study of sources outside of the tradition and not to be limited to the questions and answers found internally. Likewise, it calls on its congregants to take their knowledge of Torah into other areas where they are learned: science, literature, philosophy, history, and all other relevant disciplines (Jewish Theological Seminary of America).

Although Jews had a prominent role in the origins of talking therapies, there is little research on which psychotherapeutic approaches are most effective with Jewish clients, belonging to specific denominations, or in general. However, Schlosser (2006) points out that non-Orthodox Jews have a positive association with mental health and psychotherapy in contrast with Orthodox Jews, who have a tendency to ascribe to the stigmatism of psychotherapy.

See Also

- ▶ Jewish Reconstructionism
- ▶ Orthodox Judaism
- ▶ Psychoanalytic Spirituality
- ▶ Reform Judaism

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Contemplative Prayer

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Contemplative prayer, sometimes known as centering prayer, meditation, and mindfulness, has a long history of practice within both Western and Asian religious and metaphysical traditions. Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Hindu, Greek, Jewish, and Islamic sources all have examples of varying forms and practices of contemplation. Contemplation is the focusing of the mind on a single theme, idea, or spiritual concept. Through contemplation what is focused on gradually reveals its depth and secrets to the mind of the meditator, who gradually becomes aware of the whole of which he or she is a part. Contemplation is about silence and stillness, about receptiveness, listening, and love. "Be still and acknowledge that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). In the Christian tradition, the early Desert Fathers referred to HESYCHIA as stillness, quiet, and tranquility, the purpose being to create a solitary place where one could still the mind and focus in love on God or on God's Word within. Contemplative prayer is seen as a relationship with God. It is an opening of one's mind and heart to the ultimate mystery and goes beyond thoughts and emotions. It is in this receptive silence and listening that one finds contact or relationship with the Indwelling Trinity.

Mystical Traditions

Many of the mystical traditions use meditation or contemplation to reach transpersonal states of non-duality. Benedict, in the sixth century, developed a particular way of contemplating the scriptures – *lectio divina*. Eastern Orthodox practice used the Jesus Prayer for contemplation and this is well described in *The Way of the Pilgrim*. John of the Cross also wrote extensively about the way of contemplation leading to divine union (see Arraj 1986). From the Christian West many mystical writers emphasize the effect of the contemplative's encounter with God as one in which the Spirit of God becomes one with the subject. Thomas Merton could be described as perhaps the most prominent Christian contemplative of the twentieth century, and he classified Christian contemplation into three types, first from the teaching of the early Greek Fathers: active contemplation, natural contemplation, and mystical theology or "infused" contemplation (Rothberg 2000). Other authors who brought renewal of contemplative practices to modern times include M. Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating (Scotton et al. 1996). Along with Thomas Merton, these monks aimed to revive the contemplative tradition and bring it to the everyday world outside of the monasteries. There are over 40,000 practitioners in over 39 countries who form an ecumenical community and practice centering prayer (Ferguson et al. 2010, p. 309).

Mindfulness

Both the Buddhist and Taoist traditions speak of mindfulness – a wakeful awareness or presence to both the internal and external workings of oneself, again for the purpose of opening one to an inner consciousness. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist, sees the purpose of mindfulness as the development of what he terms "interbeing" – being in touch will all aspects of one's relationship to others and to the universe. This includes inner and outer relationships, a connectedness, in the present moment. "Mindful awareness is fundamentally a way of being – a way of inhabiting one's body,

one's mind, one's moment-by-moment experience" (Shapiro and Carlson 2009, p. 5). It is both awareness and practice, which is also the same for contemplative prayer.

Individual and Awareness

Carl Jung's psychological teaching about the stages of life has a direct relevance to Christian prayer. Jung's focus on the symbolic life and the need to journey inwards with focus and attention to bring what is in the unconscious into consciousness is similar to the contemplative journey; Jung's term for the God archetype in a person was the Self and the journey to individuation was a process of integrating all aspects of one's person and being governed by the Self. For him, it was also a reciprocal relationship. Edinger (1984) comments on Jung's notion of Christ's incarnation being a "continuing" incarnation and that "in psychological terms, the incarnation of God means individuation" (p. 84). In other words, the incarnation takes place within each individual. This process requires awareness of the transpersonal self within one's psyche and then living as one with the self. This transformation can be achieved through contemplative prayer, mindfulness, and meditation. The writings of John of the Cross also created a psychological climate in which people were led to consider if they were called to contemplation and to a life that led to deeper understanding of the divine mysteries and one's connection to these.

Psychological Effects

Cortwright (1997) summarizes research that has been done on meditation used in psychotherapy as having five possible effects: relaxation and self-regulation strategies, uncovering repressed unconscious contents, revealing higher states, reciprocal inhibition, and growth of new consciousness and transformation. While the focus in Christian contemplative prayer was not on these effects but more on a deeper knowledge of God, all contemplatives from the Desert Fathers through to modern day contemplatives experienced varying phases of the above. In striving for stillness and in listening to the Word within, they encountered many aspects of themselves both frightening and repulsive (unconscious contents), both conflict and struggles; they strove for self-emptiness of a nihilation of self (in Buddhist terms), till transformation was achieved. Psychotherapy can enhance spiritual practice, and conversely a spiritual practice such as contemplative prayer and mindfulness can enhance one's psychological well-being. From a Freudian psychological perspective, contemplation is similar to the technique of free association in that the latter leads a person to a progressively deeper understanding of what is significant and meaningful (Cortwright 1997). It leads, as noted above, to a greater unfolding of the self, an opening of intuition and creativity. More recently, Ferguson et al. (2010) examined the psychological and spiritual process which accompanied centering prayer and the impact of centering prayer on everyday stress with a group of Roman Catholic parishioners in northern California. After 11 weeks, participants experienced "a change in their relationship with the divine, and (2) a healing of stress through the effects of this relationship, substantiated signs of purification of the unconscious and positive coping behavior. Furthermore (3) the study offered an effective program to integrate spirituality and wellness while preserving the integrity of Centering Prayer as a way to deepen one's relationship with God without reducing it to a relaxation technique" (p. 324).

See Also

- ▶ Centering Prayer
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ John of the Cross
- ▶ Meditation
- ▶ Merton, Thomas

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Contemporary Paganisms and the Psychology of Ordeal

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Ordeal work is a fairly modern subculture term that came into use in the early 1990s by people who came out of the BDSM, body modification, and "hook sports" (i.e., recreational flesh suspension) demographics and who wanted a term with an emphasis on the psychological and spiritual rather than on the recreational. Ordeal work refers to a body of practices used to inflict a deep catharsis on an individual for purposes such as self-growth, religious sacrifice and/or offering, or rites of passage. These practices most often involve physical pain, and the rituals themselves are usually done in a spiritual or at least a carefully crafted context. The term "ordeal master" was coined by Belgian ordeal worker Lydia Helasdottir to refer to an ordeal worker who was skilled and trained in facilitating ordeals for others. (It should be noted that many Pagans choose to use pseudonyms or ritual names, either in honor of their Gods or, more practically, to protect their professional identities. These are most often names by which the individuals in question are known within their religious communities. In one case, the individual interviewed for this entry asked to be referenced only by her initials for greater anonymity). The physical techniques involved in ordeal work are varied but often include either singly or in various combinations scalpel cuttings, branding, skin removal (a type of controlled flaying), tattooing, hook suspension, hook pulls, flogging, needle play, sensory deprivation, endurance rituals, and ritual psychodrama. While there are many different Pagan religions, regardless of the religion involved, the lexicon of pain remains the same: according to ordeal workers, the viscera of these practices, when utilized in a controlled manner, have the power to heal, transform, and render the practitioner receptive to their Gods.

The use of pain and body modification as spiritual tools is not new. Examples of scarification, tattooing, body modification, branding, flogging, and the ritual use of pain predate modernity by thousands of years and are found in cultures the world over. Examples run the spectrum of experience from the Catholic devotee who crawls on his or her knees to visit a sacred shrine, to the Hindu who practices kavadi, to the Native American engaged in sun dance, and to contemporary polytheists and Pagans who choose to utilize pain-based rites as part of their own spiritual process.

Contemporary Paganisms are the modern reconstructions of pre-Christian polytheisms. While each Pagan religion may have differing pantheons, cosmologies, and cultural origins, in general they share the belief in many Gods and Goddesses, some degree of animism, and an emphasis on ancestor veneration. Heathenry is the commonly accepted name for contemporary Norse polytheism. The difference between Heathenry and Norse Paganism is a denominational one: Heathens tend to give far more theological credence to a body of medieval texts that include the Poetic Edda and Icelandic Sagas, whereas Norse Pagans rely not only on textual evidence for various practices but also on their own personal religious experience, called within these communities UPG or "unverified personal gnosis" (Krasskova 2005).

In his seminal work "Sacred Pain," Ariel Glucklich (2001) posits that the rise of the medical profession, the easy availability of pain killers, and the introduction of anesthetics into general use led to the development of a psychology of pain that quickly categorized anyone choosing to remain in pain as abnormal. From there, it was but a small leap from abnormal to mentally ill (Glucklich 2001, p. 195). By the middle of the nineteenth century, according to Glucklich, there was a deep divide between illness and religion in which "pain had lost its religious connotations" (Glucklich 2001, p. 196). This coincided with the rise of the medical hysteric and scientific positivism. Essentially as the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment social changes altered the status of religion, it also altered the status of pain. The result has been that Western society as a whole has lost its "capacity to understand why and how pain would be valuable for mystics, members of religious communities, and perhaps humanity as a whole" (Glucklich 2001, p. 201). This is the controversy surrounding the conscious use and inducement of pain that modern ordeal workers have inherited.

Self-defined Northern tradition shamans, practitioners of Heathenry or Norse Paganism, have largely pioneered the development of the ritual use of ordeal within their communities. The idea of shamanism is itself a very controversial practice within Norse polytheism (commonly called Heathenry by practitioners). While outside the scope of this entry, it is worth noting that despite its marginalized status, the impact on the greater Heathen and Norse Pagan communities has, over the past decade, been tremendous, leading to a possible schism within the religion. Northern tradition shamans refer to ordeal work as one of the many paths to achieving an altered state (Kaldera 2007). Other practices designed to induce trance and create a state of spiritual receptivity include prayer and meditation, ritual work, the use of rhythm and dance, ascetic practices such as fasting, the use of entheogenic plants, sacred sex or sexually based practices, and divine possession. Practitioners acknowledge that it is uncommon to work with all eight techniques but rather point to personal preference, brain chemistry, the influence of one's primary deity, and personal "wiring" as the determinant for which tools one might utilize (Kaldera 2006).

The use of pain and ritual ordeal raises many questions about the privileging of the body, not the least of which is quite simply: why pain? Ordeal workers consistently emphasize that the point of an ordeal is not in fact the pain experienced. Pain is viewed as little more than a tool to facilitate an internal emotional or psychological process. S. R., an ordeal worker for over a decade, offered the following insight:

> You must learn to share space with pain, to embrace it, move toward it, and enter into its dance. It is in no way a process of turning away from pain. Pain becomes one's partner in the dance that is the ordeal, the horse by which one travels, and the door through which one walks. In the center of pain, you know what's true (Personal communication with S.R. on August 26, 2008).

Northern tradition shaman Raven Kaldera, who has both practiced, administered, and taught ordeal work for over 20 years, notes:

> Pain gets one's attention like nothing else. All the distracting details of one's life fade right away when pain happens, especially if it's intense and ongoing. You are immediately fully present for the situation, assuming that you're not dissociating – and you shouldn't be, dissociation is the last thing you want to be doing. Pain is the focus of last resort, and it is also a wonderful tool to break through your psychological barriers, especially for people who place a high value on control. If it's done properly and mindfully, it strips you down, rips you open,

> and lets the Spirits in (Personal communication with Raven Kaldera on April 10, 2008).

Not only was pain consistently viewed as a sacred tool by those interviewed, so was the body itself. Many spoke of the body as the primary tool or "interface" between the world of spirit and the human world, the vehicle through which human beings experience everything, including spirituality. The need or desire to honor the body as holy figured strongly in their practices, despite the seemingly contradictory fact that these practices often involved extreme pain. Kenaz Filan, writer and Voudoun priest, commented that "ordeal work privileges the body in that it reminds us that we *have* a body" (personal communication on May 23, 2008).

The actual physiological change that occurs during the course of an ordeal is a complex biochemical process. When a person is being physically hurt in a sustained way, the first thing that happens is raw pain and usually a good deal of it. It takes some time for that to change. Which chemicals eventually engage, and how much of these chemicals the body produces, varies depending on each individual's biochemistry and, surprisingly, the attention they focus on their hurt as well as the purpose they ascribe to it. Ongoing, noticeable pain can affect one's concentration and one's attention to such a degree that it causes the body to release painkillers that will work to mitigate the pain. The major factor in this physiological process is the release of opiate-like endorphins, but this is by no means the only factor. Lesser chemicals calm, soothe, and create a certain amount of mild euphoria. At this point, the subject might still technically be in pain, but they simply may not care nearly as much (personal communication with Raven Kaldera, May 20, 2008). It is that this point, theoretically, that the transformative process of the ordeal begins, which raises a second question: are ordeal workers sexual and psychological masochists or perhaps addicted to that chemical release?

Surprisingly, the answer appears to be no. Many, in fact, expressed a fear and dislike of pain while at the same time affirming its usefulness as a spiritual tool. S. R. put it bluntly when she said, "every ordeal worker is no more a masochist than everyone who uses fasting as part of their spiritual practice is anorexic. For some of us, though by no means all, pain is an incredibly useful tool. That doesn't mean we like the pain itself" (personal communication with S. R. on May 25, 2008). Ordeal worker and shaman Eric Tashlin elaborated further on this particular dynamic:

> Masochism is defined as deriving pleasure, often sexual in nature from pain, humiliation or maltreatment (paraphrased from WebMD's article on masochism http://dictionary.webmd.com/terms/masochism). As ordeal workers, devotion or spiritual development rather than worldly pleasure is the objective in our work. I believe that an interest or fetish in masochism can be counter-productive for people looking to the ordeal path for spiritual fulfillment because enjoyment, and especially sexual pleasure, clutters the mind and distorts the spiritual process. In cases where masochists choose the ordeal path, it is important to tailor their ordeal process so as to avoid areas that are fetishized. For instance, while flagellation or flogging can be a valuable ordeal tool, I would not use it with someone I knew to have a sexual fetish for such acts. Instead I would work to find an ordeal tool that was not of "interest" to them sexually or emotionally (Personal correspondence with ordeal master Wintersong Tashlin on September 28, 2008).

As Mr. Tashlin inferred, while many (though by no means all) ordeal workers are also active in the BDSM community, they draw a clear line between their sexual practices and their spiritual work, and in the extremely open-minded microculture that comprises Northern tradition shamanism, in which nearly every (consensual) sexual variation is accepted including masochism, none of them self-identify as masochistic. Rather it appears that pain is conceived of solely as a sacred and very practical tool.

There are four primary ways in which pain-based ordeals are utilized within this community: (1) expiatory, in other words to make reparation to a specific deity for an offense or error committed; (2) as an offering to a specific deity, a devotional act of pain, or in *imitatio* of a God or Goddess' mythic ordeal. For instance a shaman devoted to the God Odin may choose to hang by hooks in a ritual setting in replication of Odin hanging on the world tree for power; (3) as a means of what some

ordeal workers call "hunting for power": in other words to overcome a personal weakness, face a fear, or open oneself to an experience that will, in the ordeal worker's mind, lead to greater wisdom; and (4) as an act of magic, i.e., to channel the pain and "energy" raised to achieve a specific goal.

Finally, inevitably the question arises about what the difference might be between an ordeal worker engaging in a cutting, branding, or some other painful practice as part of a ritual ordeal and a person who self-mutilates. According to ordeal workers, the difference between the two lies in personal agency (personal communication with S.R. and R. Fishman, November 1, 2008). The cutter has little control over what they are doing. They have stumbled into a practice that alleviates their pain and are using it because it works. The problem, from an ordeal worker's perspective, is that one who self-mutilates is using these techniques without control or knowledge, very much like an addiction. An ordeal worker, on the other hand, has no particular psychological attachment or *need* to use a particular technique. Their motivation derives from practicality and self-knowledge.

To those who practice it, ordeal work can be a powerfully transformative practice, one that connects ordeal workers more deeply to their spirituality. While this body of practices may seem strange or even repellent to the mainstream Northern tradition community and to others completely outside of this community, ordeal work is gaining adherents and gaining ground as one of the many practices within the growing body of devotional work coming to define contemporary polytheism in general and Northern tradition shamanism in particular.

See Also

- ▶ Animism
- ▶ Asceticism
- ▶ Body and Spirituality
- ▶ Ecstasy
- ▶ Indigenous Religions
- ▶ Masochism
- ▶ Mystery Religions
- ▶ New Polytheism
- ▶ Paganism

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Conversion

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Conversions are dramatic turning points in life, tied to external or internal events (personality processes and traumatic events), and leading to the reassessment of one's life, then to identity change, and then a biographical break with the past. It is higher self-esteem, or self-love, which allows us to define the new identity. During times of stress and crisis, as during times of individual distress, there is a regression to "artistic," religious, or magical ways of thinking. When realistic coping fails, magical thinking takes over. When realistic coping seems to be failing or futile, individuals may turn to magical or religious ways of coping. When all hope is lost, these ways of coping do seem worthwhile.

Magical gestures that aim at reaching a conscious break with the past and the shedding off of one's identity include name changes, body changes, and "sex change." These magical or symbolic gestures are not usually sufficient for a real metamorphosis in personality. A name

change does not lead to personality change, and a new nose does not do it either. Even a "sex change" often fails to bring about happiness, and these intentional scripts often end in disappointment.

Testimonials of conversion tell us of a miraculous transformation, from darkness to a great light, from being lost to being found. There is a sharp contrast between earlier suffering and current improvements. The conversion narrative always includes a wide gap between the past and the present, between corruption and redemption. The power of transformation through enlightenment is proven through this gap. In many religious traditions, pilgrimage, leading to conversion, is the magical route to achieving private salvation and healing.

Every religion tells us stories of miracles and transformations. For most people, they remain stories about events that happened long ago and far away. For others, they become part of their own personal history, which they are ready to share with us. These cases of rebirth should command our most serious attention, because what they represent are indeed immensely positive transformations, which are impossible under any other conditions. The lame do not start walking, and the blind do not enjoy the sweet light of day; these miracles do not often happen. But those who find themselves psychologically lame, self-destructive, and desperate, sometimes emerge from darkness and belie everything that happened earlier in their lives.

In all conversion stories, a past of doubt and error is transformed into a present of wholeness in one great moment of insight and certainty. This is a new birth, leading to a new life. And the new birth often follows reaching the lowest depths of despair and consists of (in the words of William James) "... an unexpected life succeeding upon death... the deathlike terminating of certain mental processes... that run to failure, and in some individuals... eventuate in despair." And the new birth creates a wider belief in "... a world in which all is well, in spite of certain forms of death, indeed because of certain forms of death – death of hope, death of strength..." (James 1902/1961).

Since William James, and even before, students of religion have looked closely at the phenomenon of conversion. First, because it is dramatic in the phenomenological sense. We have reports of "mystical states," visions, hallucinations, and voices. These may all be regarded as psychotic symptoms, but they are tied to even more dramatic events. The convert reports a cognitive illumination, a sudden apprehension, and a comprehension, of a divine plan for the cosmos and for individual destiny. The emotional reactions accompanying such a momentous revelation can then be easily justified and accepted. What the individual experiences is a true revolution.

The descriptions offered by James focuses on the subjective report of identity change and conscious mood change, which follows a narrative formula. It can be regarded as a literary or folklore genre, a miracle narrative so easily predictable, and so tend to doubt it. The convert's autobiography is divided into Before and After. Life until the moment of epiphany is described as wasted, a total mistake.

This formula is reminiscent of the death-rebirth idea, basic to initiation rites in tribal societies. Death and resurrection are claimed by the convert as her path to salvation, and her movement closer towards the sacred realm. There is another level, beyond the dramatic subjective "experience": objective reports which indicate a change in behavior and functioning, a true miracle cure, putting previously uncontrollable drives under good control.

A small minority within the small minority of converts in this world (99.9% of believers follow their parents' teachings) consists of those whose conversion has been followed by dramatic changes for the better in their lives. How do we account for successful, stable, conversions, which we might think of as "overachieving"? There are cases involving a real sea change in actual behavior, as sinners become not always saints, but productive members of society, self-destructive behaviors are dropped, and a lifetime of failure and hate is changed into garden-variety (or better) love and work.

In these cases the self-reported identity change is tied to a role change, a victory, maybe

temporary, over pathology, subjectively viewed as a victory over destiny. Because many of the people undergoing transformation are deeply disturbed, even a temporary improvement, as it happens in many cases, is impressive.

The religious career of a seeker, or a convert, is a totally modern idea. In many cultures today, religious identity is still determined by kinship and considered immutable, like "race." It is a matter of birth within a certain family. The idea of individual choice and voluntary change is in itself a relatively novel idea, tied to secularization and individualism.

Conversion experiences start with conversion dreams. Salvation stories appear in response to dreams of a new self, a new society, and a new world. We have to approach the phenomenon of the religious imagination and the inevitable collisions between religious fantasies and reality. The phenomenon of fantasies about self-transformation and world transformation, which is so common among humans, plays a major role in the history of religious movements. An examination of salvation dreams should start with the individual search for security and wholeness and with the general idea of self-transformation.

Susan Sontag, in an interview on the BBC, on May 22, 2000, said that the American dream is to reinvent yourself, be born again, but this is not just an American idea: it is a universal modern dream, and possibly a universal human dream. The broadest frame of reference we can use is the common human phenomenon of attempts to escape and transcend destiny and identity. I include here any attempt to redefine biography and identity against "objective" conditions defining that identity. Such attempts at rebirth, at identity change through private salvation, may be quite common in certain historical situations. We may speak about a private utopia, as collective utopias are less and less in vogue. Dreams and actual attempts at escape and rejuvenation should be examined on the basis of context, content, or consequences, and point to a whole range of possibilities. The fantasy of escaping one's destiny, the dream of identity change, is all too human. So many people see their lives so far as a first draft. We all dream of being of becoming somebody else and something else, breaking with our destiny. This is the dream of private (and collective) salvation. More or less often we feel "I am stuck in this life situation but I should be somewhere else." Behind the explicit, outspoken fantasy of a new self or a new world lie unspoken processes, which always parallel to those on the surface.

The source of self-reported rebirth is found in internal, conscious and unconscious, conflicts. These conflicts are solved and a balance is reached through an attachment to a set of beliefs, specific ritual acts, changes in everyday behavior and functioning, and support by a group structure. The problem with psychological rebirth is its inherent instability. Real transformation is hard to come by. The illusion of rebirth may lead to good outcomes but is often insufficient to maintain balance inside a personality system long beset by disharmonies and imbalances. This is clear when a variety of purely secular strategies, from psychotherapy to plastic surgery, are followed on the road to self-transformation.

Every successful case of individual rebirth is the result of an internal truce among opposing personality elements. One possible interpretation assumes that in conversion we see what is called a "superego victory." An internal conflict between the conscious ego ideal and the unconscious, archaic, parental introject is won by the latter. The child becomes more parental, and this often happens in postadolescence, as the child grows older.

Another interpretation of successful conversion uses Freud's concept of moral masochism. According to classical psychoanalysis, the superego is formed as sadistic impulses directed at the parent are recoiled and internalized. Then the superego, parentally derived, commands self-effacement, if not self-sacrifice, as the punishment for aggressive fantasies. In moral masochism, the superego is satisfied through submission and humiliation. The outer peace and happiness observed in many converts is the result of this final peace between ego and superego, which releases all the energy that was put into the conflict for productive use. This may be the source of many positive, altruistic behaviors. The yearning for peace and wholeness is met by religion

through the internal peace between superego and ego. At the conscious level this is experienced as acceptance by God or Jesus, forgiveness, and love, reported by converts ever since St. Augustine of Hippo. Freud suggested that what is achieved through superego victory is a reconciliation with one's father and with all paternal authorities, including father gods. We forgive our parents and are forgiven by them in turn. Of course, this happens in fantasy, and we are not talking of real fathers but imagined ones, consciously and unconsciously.

Another possible explanation is that the convert has gone through the internalizing of a loved and loving imaginary object, which then supports the whole personality system. This internalized object may serve as a new superego, supplying the ego with a control system, which has been missing, and making possible a real control of destructive impulses. A similar process may take place in secular psychotherapy. Early infancy splitting of the mother into good/bad object operates in converts who reach a state of complete euphoria, denying negative impulses and negative realities, which are bound to resurface nevertheless.

But at another level, a psychological analysis may direct us to noting that cases of rebirth actually represent a way of expressing hostility towards one's parents. In terms of individual and family dynamics, every identity change is a rebellion against one's parents, who usually created the earlier identity, and against one's past. When a young individual, who grew up in the average family, joins a new religion, he is declaring a revolt against his parents. He may rebel also through finding a new, better parent in his secular psychotherapist, and psychotherapists are always better parents. The message of a child's conversion is often one of denouncing parental hypocrisy and shallowness. On a collective, generational level, finding new identities is a total ideological rebellion. The new religious identities constitute in many cases a rejection of the faith of the parents and of the parents' everyday lifestyle. At the same time, the rebellion against the parents may also mean the assumption of the parental role.

What should we make of all these different and sometimes contradictory speculations? Only the realization that in cases of true self-transcendence, something important and far-reaching must be going on beneath the surface. The process is one of accepting authority, loving authority, or internalizing a loving and supportive (but still demanding) authority. What happens in these conversion miracles is an experience of love, both giving and receiving of love. On a conscious level, this is the unconditional (or maybe conditional) love of God, and St. Augustine has already reported on that. On an unconscious level, it is the unconditional love of a father, a mother, or a total parental image.

See Also

- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ James, William
- ▶ New Religions

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Conversion (Islam)

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Islam makes a distinction between conversion to Islam and conversion from Islam. The former is called *ihtida* or *hidayah* (divine guidance),

whereas the latter is *irtidad* (apostasy) (Watt 1980, p. 722). Islam introduced the concept of *din al-fitrah* (innate religion) to express that everyone is endowed at birth with a natural ability to know God. The Qur'an states that every soul before creation was asked the question by God "Am I not your Lord?" and the souls answered "Yes!" to it. Thus, Muslims consider all children as Muslims until they reach puberty. The tradition of the Prophet puts that "children are born possessing the *fitrah*, and it is their parents who turn them into Jews, Christians or Muslims" (Faruqi 1979, p. 92). Therefore, by converting to Islam, one turns to the religion which is already present in him by nature. It is for this reason that some converts to Islam prefers the word revert to convert (Kose 1996, p. 101). In Christianity, one cannot have a conversion experience unless the Will of God is involved (John 6: 44). In Islam, likewise, the act of conversion is attributed to the Will of God (Qur'an 10:100).

How to Become a Muslim

There is no specific procedure or ritual for joining Islam. The only condition for the person who converts is to declare, usually in presence of two witnesses, the *shahadah*: "I bear witness that there is no God but God (Allah) Himself, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger." Anyone who says this credo is considered to be a Muslim. However, one is recommended to undergo the greater ablution (*ghusl*) to purify the body symbolically of the earlier ignorance or disbelief. The new Muslim is supposed to believe in such basic creeds of Islam as the accountability in the afterlife and all Prophets (Qur'an 2:136) and also commit himself/herself to keeping the five pillars of Islam (praying, fasting, giving alms, etc.) as well as abstaining from alcohol, pork, and adultery.

It is believed that one's sins, upon embracing Islam, are forgiven by Allah and having the purification of the greater ablution signifies this belief. On embracing Islam, one may or may not select a Muslim name unless his present name has an un-Islamic trait. Circumcision is not obligatory upon adult (male) converts. The act of conversion to Islam should be voluntary, conscious, and out of free choice, relating to what the Prophet said: "declaration by tongue and affirmation by heart." There is nothing to prevent a person from becoming a Muslim; no conditions are imposed; none is debarred for Islam considers itself a universal religion.

A Muslim man has the right to marry a Christian or a Jewish woman (Qur'an 5:5). A Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian or a Jewish man according to Islamic jurisprudence though there is not a Qur'anic prohibition. It is forbidden for a Muslim man or woman to marry someone who does not believe in God or an idolater or polytheist (Qur'an 2:221).

The Propagation of Islam

Great religions of the world may be divided into missionary and non-missionary based on the definition that in missionary religions the spreading of the truth and the conversion of unbelievers is considered to be a sacred duty by their founders or scriptures. Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam may be classified as missionary while Judaism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism fall into the category of non-missionary (Arnold 1913, p. 1).

The propagation of Islam is called *tabligh* or *dawah* (literally means call or invitation). Both words are used in various verses in the Qur'an. *Tabligh* means to make available to non-Muslims the message of Islam. The Qur'an (16:125) commands the Muslim to enable others to share and benefit from the religious truth. The word *dawah* is used in the sense of the religious outreach or mission to exhort people to embrace Islam as the true religion. *Dawah* also covers the mission directed at fellow believers (Denny 1987, p. 244). The primary aim of *dawah*, if directed to the Muslims, is to remind them of the teachings of Islam. In the case of the non-Muslims, the objective is to enlighten them about Islam. However, Islam does not have an institutionalized form of missionary work if missionary means the deliberate activity or to send representatives to win converts. Islamic mission is regarded being a duty of every Muslim rather than being

an option. Thus, Muslims are charged with the responsibility of being the model of right conduct for all mankind. The absence of clerical order imposes on every Muslim the obligation to understand the message of his/her religion and to convey by precept and example to non-Muslims who inquire about Islam (Qur'an 16:125). It is the Muslim's responsibility to pave the way to reconcile non-Muslims to Islam. For example, the Qur'an (9:60) demands Muslims to render the legal alms (*zakah*), levied on every Muslim who is wealthy, to the people whose hearts have been recently reconciled, namely, converts or potential converts, among others (Hamidullah 1979, p. 155).

However, Islam has made it explicitly clear that the diversity of ideologies and creeds is natural to mankind. The Qur'an (2:256) states clearly that there is no compulsion in religion. Many Muslims today believe that the age of proselytization is gone, and Islam, being a fairly well-known faith, needs no active mission to attract converts. To them, the stability of Muslim family life; the absence of drinks, drugs, etc.; and the overall discipline of Muslims, in particular those who live in the West, will itself send powerful signals to non-Muslims. Studies reveal that converts to Islam enter into the fold of Islam by various means and for a variety of reasons. Some accept it after studying it for a long time, and some enter it in order to be able to marry a Muslim or after marrying a Muslim. Many converts recount that their conversion was the result of the positive example of Muslims. Thus, both intellectual and emotional motifs play a great part in conversions to Islam, especially in Western context (Kose 1996; Poston 1992).

See Also

- ▶ Circumcision
- ▶ Islam
- ▶ Qur'an
- ▶ Ritual
- ▶ Sharia
- ▶ Sin

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Conversion Therapy

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Conversion therapy is the practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual (or bisexual) to heterosexual by using psychological, religious, or spiritual interventions. Modern efforts to change sexual orientation date to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The most outspoken advocates of conversion therapy today are fundamentalist Christian groups and other organizations that have socially conservative understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality. The main advocacy group for conversion therapy is the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), which has worked closely with conservative political organizations, like Focus on the Family, since its formation in 1993.

There have been many therapeutic techniques used to assist the sexual conversion process.

These have included: ice-pick lobotomies; aversion therapies (such as electroshock therapy); hormone treatments; psychoanalytic talk therapy; and religious counseling. Recent forms of conversion therapy focus on the patient's gender identity, emphasizing how a deficient masculine or feminine self-identification causes men and women, respectively, to develop same-sex desires. In May 2000, the American Psychiatric Association stated its opposition to conversion therapy (Board of Trustees 2000). Other medical, scientific, and governmental organizations in the United States and parts of Europe have also expressed concern over conversion therapy's potentially harmful effects.

Freud and Conversion Therapy in the Early Twentieth Century

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, had conflicting views on sexual orientation change efforts. He stated that hypnotic suggestion could sometimes lessen homosexual urges in patients. Freud believed that Eugen Steinach (1861–1944), a Viennese endocrinologist who transplanted testicles from heterosexual to homosexual men in efforts to change sexual orientation, had shown biological determinants for sexual desires. He cautioned, however, that Steinach's transplant procedures could only be effective for men. Later research revealed how the body's immune system rejects transplanted glands, proving Steinach and Freud wrong.

Freud offered his most complete examination of female homosexuality in "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920). Freud described his analysis with a young woman whose parents were distressed over her same-sex desires. He wrote that efforts to change sexual object choice could only happen under favorable conditions. Freud also stressed how homosexuality was neither an illness nor a neurotic conflict, observing how "in general to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse."

In 1935, Freud penned what has become a well-known statement that sexual object change was unlikely. In a letter to an American mother, he wrote that being a homosexual "is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function, produced by a certain arrest of sexual development." Freud thought that, at best, he could "succeed in developing the blighted germs of heterosexual tendencies."

Other medical officials reported various results with homosexual patients. Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1933), a Hungarian psychoanalyst, hoped to eliminate same-sex sexual object choice in his patients. When this proved difficult, Ferenczi was satisfied with reducing what he considered homosexual men's hostility toward women. He also helped some patients increase their sexual attractions to the opposite sex. Abraham Brill (1874–1948), an Austrian-born psychiatrist, reported "very gratifying" results with his homosexual patients. Brill's cure for homosexuality consisted of restoring heterosexual potency. In 1930, Austrian Wilhelm Stekel (1868–1940) published his work on the treatment of homosexuals. Stekel stated that "success was fairly certain" for curing homosexuality, which he considered a disease. In 1932, Helen Deutsch (1884–1982), a Polish-American psychoanalyst, presented "On Female Homosexuality," a paper ultimately published in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. In the article, Deutsch relayed her analysis of a woman with same-sex sexual object choice. Instead of becoming a heterosexual, which Deutsch would have considered a successful treatment, the patient achieved a positive libidinal relationship with another woman.

Ego-Psychology and Post-World War II Conversion Therapy

The Second World War had a tremendous effect on conversion therapy. The United States military increased its surveillance of homosexuals, barring gay men and lesbians from military service as well as employment in defense industries. These

efforts helped pathologize homosexuality in the United States, which had its impact on medical diagnoses in many Western nations. In 1952, for example, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) listed homosexuality as a mental illness. For three decades, many psychiatrists considered homosexuality a disease that had to be treated.

In the postwar decades, psychiatrists, psychologists, pastoral counselors, priests, ministers, and rabbis helped homosexuals convert to heterosexuality. In the 1950s, Edmund Bergler (1899–1962), an Austrian-born American psychoanalyst, published several books that promised up to a 90% cure rate for homosexual patients. Bergler popularized his methods, which included bullying patients, in magazine articles and books aimed at non-specialists. In 1962, Irving Bieber (1901–1991), an American psychoanalyst, published *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals*. Bieber argued that a heterosexual shift was possible for men who had a strong inclination to abandon their homosexuality. He recognized that some patients, particularly those with a greater desire for change, benefited more from psychotherapeutic efforts to change their sexual object choice.

Religion influenced the practice of conversion therapy in several ways in the immediate postwar period. On occasion, American psychiatrists discussed Judeo-Christian understandings of sex, sexuality, and marriage. The Atascadero State Hospital in California, for instance, published a series on the causes and treatment of homosexuality in its periodical, *The New Outlook*. In the January 30, 1956 edition, one of the hospital psychiatrists wrote that patients felt long-standing feelings of guilt and anxiety. These feelings resulted from violating society's moral code and the Ten Commandments. Despite declarations of scientific objectivity, early Cold War psychiatrists fused religious morality with their therapeutic practices. The political climate of the postwar period, which included the accusations that homosexuals were likely communists, fueled homophobia. This, in turn, convinced men and women with same-sex desires that they needed to seek help for their supposed immoral, and diseased, behavior.

By the late 1960s, conversion therapy had taken an unexpected turn. Inspired by humanistic psychology, sexual liberation groups offered gay men and lesbians opportunities at heterosexual self-actualization. Proponents of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), a powerful hallucinogenic, believed that the drug could help gay men and lesbians achieve heterosexuality. Other humanistic-inspired therapies suggested that gay men and women engaged in sexual activity with members of the opposite sex. For these therapists, sex offered a spiritual redemption for same-sex desires.

Critics of conversion therapy observed how religious understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality had influenced postwar psychiatry thought on homosexuality. Scholars and activists in the anti-psychiatry movement criticized the religious moralizing of conversion therapists. This movement, which included psychiatrist Thomas Szasz (1920–2012) and social theorist Michel Foucault (1926–1984), condemned the moralizing language inherent in psychiatric diagnostic criteria.

Gay Liberation, Feminism, and the Transformation of Conversion Therapy

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality per se from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. The APA based its decision on years of gay activism which stressed that homosexuality was not a mental illness (Bayer 1981). Some gay rights activists agreed with the anti-psychiatry movement – professional psychiatry relied on religious moralizing to list homosexuality as a mental illness. Other gay men and lesbians worked within mainline Protestant organizations to build support for the acceptance of sexual variance. Over time, second wave feminism proved as important to the changes that happened in conversion therapy.

In the early 1970s, fundamentalist Christians became a prominent part of conversion therapy.

The Jesus People, a group who have a literal interpretation of the Bible, converted former homosexuals to Christianity and heterosexuality. Other fundamentalist Christians counseled homosexuals on the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Residential ex-gay ministries also formed in the early-to-mid-1970s. The most famous called itself Love in Action. Located in San Rafael, California, Love in Action provided Biblically inspired counseling for men and women with unwanted same-sex desires. Counselors fused fundamentalist Christian theology with ego-psychology's ideas about the family and proper sexual development (Erzen 2006; Gerber 2011).

By the early 1980s, a coherent form of conversion therapy began to take shape. Elizabeth Moberly (1949), a British theologian, developed an innovative approach for counseling men and women with same-sex desires. She theorized how fathers served as important love sources for their sons and how mothers did the same for their daughters. Moberly wrote that homosexuality developed when children failed to bond with the parent of the same sex. Instead of shunning the formation of homosocial bonds, as previous therapists had, Moberly suggested that men and women form close relationships with members of the same sex. This would help men and women satisfy the needs they had from poor relationships with, respectively, their fathers and mothers. Key for all of this, though, was prayer, which was at the center of the healing process (Moberly 1983).

In the United States, Leanne Payne (1932–2015), a prominent pastoral counselor, continued to revolutionize conversion therapy. In her writings and ministry work, Payne castigated the failure of professional medicine to understand the moral and spiritual dimensions of sexuality. She believed that, as a spiritual problem, homosexuality was easy for God to cure. The biggest problem, according to Payne, was opening up a space for God to heal. Payne, who had been influenced by Charismatic healing practices, harnessed every tool she could. This involved using the power of healing touch and anointing oil to treat her counselees' homosexual attractions. Unlike earlier therapists, Payne was blunt about what she was doing: expelling Satan from the homosexually inflicted (1981).

Moberly and Payne's therapeutic interventions emphasized the importance of performing normative gender roles. Women, for example, had to put on makeup and wear dresses in order to feel not only feminine but also rid themselves of same-sex attractions. Male therapists were inspired by these therapeutic insights. Joseph Nicolosi (1947–2017), the author of *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality* (1991), used these ideas as he charted a new path for healing men with same-sex attractions.

Conversion Therapy Today

Conversion therapy was in decline by the late 1980s. The American Psychiatric Association had removed ego-dystonic homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* in 1987. This designation had justified the treatment of men and women who felt that their same-sex desires were at odds with their ideal self-image. Over the next decade, professional medical organizations issued statements against conversion (or reparative) therapy, arguing that treatments to reorient sexual desires were, on the whole, damaging to patients. In 2001, the US Surgeon General issued a statement proclaiming that there was no credible evidence that sexual orientation could change.

In the 1990s, conversion therapy became a prominent part of the United States' culture wars. The National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) formed in 1993. NARTH's founders thought that the American Psychiatric Association, not to mention other medical organizations, had fallen victim to gay rights political correctness when they removed homosexuality from the *DSM*. NARTH formed close relationships with conservative religious groups, including Focus on the Family. Joseph Nicolosi, one of NARTH's founders, spoke at numerous Focus on the Family events beginning in the early 1990s. Nicolosi was also a contributor to other conservative political organizations, like

the Reverend Louis Sheldon's (1934 -) Traditional Values Coalition.

Conversion therapy has remained a divisive political issue. Gay rights activists have pushed for conversion therapy on minors to be banned. In the United States, 14 states, the District of Columbia, and over 40 municipalities have banned conversion therapy on minors as of October 1, 2018. Proponents of conversion therapy, for their part, are challenging these bans, contending that these legislative initiatives violate freedom of speech, religious freedom, and parental rights. Some conversion therapists believe that the conservative US Supreme Court will overturn these bans in the near future.

See Also

- Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling
- Ethics in Counseling
- Evangelical
- Femininity
- Freud, Sigmund
- Gender Roles
- Homosexuality
- LGBTQI and Queer Studies
- LGBTQI Counseling
- Oedipus Complex
- Pastoral Counseling
- Pastoral Psychotherapy and Pastoral Counseling
- Psychoanalysis
- Religion, Sexuality, and Psychoanalysis
- Religious Conversion and Personal Transformation
- Sexuality and American Religions
- Transgender and Gender Identity

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Coping Skills

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"How are you coping?" is a common question from a caregiver, be it a mental health professional or a religious or pastoral caregiver. At first blush it seems a relatively straightforward question, yet at depth the person suffering in a stressful situation is being asked to make a highly complex assessment of the nature of the stressor, their subjective sense of suffering, an appraisal of their ability to function and for how long under these conditions, and what physical, psychological, social, and spiritual resources, behaviors, and practices are enabling them to do so. It is no wonder that people sometimes respond "I don't know. I just am" or "I'm not."

The American Psychological Association currently defines coping as "The process of dealing with internal or external demands that are perceived to be threatening or overwhelming" (Gerrig and Zimbardo 2002).

Classical theories of coping used to focus primarily on the nature of the stressor following the logic that the more stressful a situation was, the

more difficult it was to cope. In 1967, psychiatrists Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe, working backwards from medical records, devised a stress (Social Readjustment Rating) scale that allocated a numeric amount that purported to assist one to calculate the cumulative effect of stress in one's life over the previous year (Holmes and Rahe 1967, pp. 213–218). Life circumstances such as death of a spouse were assigned the highest value of 100, divorce 73, and right down to events such as Christmas at 12 points. A person who was calculated to have more than 300 points in a year was seen to be in serious risk of developing a physical illness in the coming 2 years, those above 150 having a moderate risk. That is, the more stressful situations you encounter, the more likely it is that you will not be able to cope. The benefit of such a scale was that it alerted people to the fact that life changes viewed as life enhancing, such as marriage or going on vacation, may also be experienced as stressful.

However, what such a scale failed to indicate is that it is not simply the nature of the stressor that inhibits one's ability to cope, we need to also assess the person's subjective sense of suffering and ability to adapt and live into a new reality or at least hold onto the hope that one will be able to do so in the future. For example, divorce may be a great shock and occasion immense grief for one person and may occasion a sense of relief and liberation for another. The death of a loved one from physical deterioration near what would be societally expected as the end of a life cycle may be much easier "to cope with" than the untimely and unexpected death of a child or teenager. There is, therefore, a relationship between the nature of the stressor and the subjective sense of suffering that cannot simply be discounted.

Consequently, it is helpful to be conscious of whether this is what McGoldrick, Carter, and Garcia-Preto define as a horizontal or a vertical stressor (McGoldrick et al. 2011, p. 7). They see a vertical stressors as the "influence of historical issues that flow down the family tree, influencing families as they go through life," including factors such as poverty, racism, violence, and addictions (McGoldrick et al. 2011, pp. 7–8). Horizontal stressors are "developmental and unpredictable influences that affect families as they go through life," such as life-cycle transitions and unpredictable untimely personal, historic, economic, and political events (McGoldrick et al. 2011, p. 8). Here we can see that both stress and coping are highly complex, embedded as we are in our social locations, our family, and cultural and historic contexts. However, just as patterns of dysfunctional responses to stress may be generational, so may be patterns of coping and resilience in response to such.

In assessing coping skills, again, one must attend to the individual's assessment of their suffering and their ability to face it. Persons whose families have suffered in the past, such as in the Holocaust, or who have suffered violence in another context, such as in a country torn apart by civil war, may find their current situation relativized by suffering of a greater magnitude. However, current suffering may also activate trauma that was unable to be processed in another context or even in another generation. It may be in the context of safety that suffering is able to be borne and worked through in a new way that is more functional. The surest way to assess the subjective sense of another's suffering is by careful, attentive, empathic listening where you hear the other's story in the context of their own world view.

Like the growing recognition that grief is a process, there is also a growing recognition that coping is a process, not simply a static event. This process involves a number of different elements over time. Kenneth Pargament, one of the primary researchers in the field of religious coping, uses a model that draws on the earlier work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) which visually depicts the interdependent relationship between:

- Resources and Constraints
- Situations, Appraisals, Activities, Outcomes
- Coping Functions.

(Pargament et al. 1992, p. 132)

Taking into account the functions over time, it can be seen that coping may have its own life cycle according to the person, situation, and resources. How we cope after the immediate impact of an acute stressor may be different to

how we cope in the short term, to coping with long-term suffering. This reality is reflected in the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder that can currently only be diagnosed after 30 days. It may be normative to be acutely stressed after the immediate impact and even in the short term after a potentially traumatizing event; however, if the duration is longer than a month and seriously impacts one's ability to function in usual life circumstances and social relationships, the person is assessed not to be coping but traumatized if they exhibit symptoms of hyperarousal, avoidance, and intrusion of thoughts, memories, and images associated with the event. Therefore in assessing a person's coping, one must take into account the duration of time since the event and the level of impairment of daily life.

Researchers vary on how they describe the mechanisms people use to cope with stress. They often dichotomize the results into categories such as positive/negative (Abu-Raiya et al. 2011), adaptive/mal- or less adaptive (Pargament et al. 1992; Roesch 2004), reactive/responsive, and helpful/harmful (Doehring 2006). For example, Carrie Doehring notes that "Harmful ways of coping may involve compulsive behaviors such as overworking, overeating, overexercising, anorexia, substance abuse and addiction, excessive shopping, obsessive gambling, cutting oneself, and compulsive sexual behaviors, like excessive masturbation or use of internet pornography" (Doehring 2006, p. 85). For the purpose of this article, the terms functional and dysfunctional are used.

Functional and Dysfunctional Methods of Coping

Persons may use various physical, psychological, social, and spiritual resources to cope in the face of life stresses. These may range from unconscious defense mechanisms such as denial, rationalization, repression (Fenichel), and splitting (Klein), to sophisticated cultural belief systems that help people deal with existential anxieties and life events such as death, disaster, disability, and disease (Freud). Functional coping mechanisms in an acute phase of stress enable a person to soothe themselves and stay connected to reality as a whole, even if they may dissociate from the particular stressor. Examples of such may be someone who on occasion may have an alcoholic drink at the end of a stressful day to someone who denies the reality of the death of their loved one because they "can't believe it." Such an immediate response may be entirely normative. However, if someone cannot get through the evening without having a drink, stressful day or not, or cannot face the reality of the death of their loved one with the immediate evidence of their body after several hours, that may be seen as dysfunctional. This also has to be assessed in light on what is normative for each person. For some having a drink at the end of a day is normative and for others, depending on their culture or religion having a drink, may not only be rare but may be against their belief systems and contribute to the feeling that they are not coping. Coping needs to be assessed against one's world view, including one's religious and cultural location, and current practices.

Functional forms of coping are those thoughts, behaviors, and resources that enable a person not just to survive in the face of a changed reality but to adapt to that change. Examples of such may be physical anxiety management and emotional coping techniques such as deep breathing, muscle tensing, and relaxation; thoughts such as "this too will pass" and "I'm scared now but I trust I will get through this"; cognitive problem solving; seeking support from others; and religious coping mechanisms such as the use of prayer, meditation and devotional practices, religious ritual and community, reading sacred texts, and seeking guidance from a religious authority such as an imam, pastor, priest, rabbi, Rinpoche, or guru, depending on the person's tradition.

Much has been written on religious coping as a contribution to dealing with stressful events in life. One must be careful however to inquire about coping skills across the spectrum of the person's life, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual, so as not to discount the input of one form of coping that may be particularly functional for a person in the face of stress. An example of this may be the use of massage for recovery

workers or the choice of a respite center housed in a church, mosque, or synagogue over other non-religious respite centers, in a disaster.

Religious Coping

Harold Koenig states that "Religious coping is the reliance upon religious belief or activity to help manage emotional stress or physical discomfort" (Koenig 1992, p. 107). This focus is two pronged, that which examines religious activity and that which explores religious belief; in some faith traditions this means the crucial question of "how they relate to God when they experience stress and what kinds of religious activities are used to cope" (Doehring 2006, p. 88).

Despite the caution about making sure one assesses coping across the spectrum of resources, research has shown that religious coping does not simply replicate nonreligious coping but offers an additional element (Pargament and Koenig 1997).

Relation between unconscious defense mechanisms and religious world view is complexified by the question of embedded and deliberative theology. Often we regress to a prior, or more primative response in the face of threats to our well-being. We may also do this religiously. Hence, persons who may not consciously believe that God directly intervenes in person's physical illness may say "What have I done to deserve this?" or "God must have done this to teach me a lesson." The question may be whether this God is seen as benevolent or punishing or what control God and we may have in regards to the situations we encounter.

The work of Koenig, Pargament, and Neil on a scale to assess the relationship between one's relationship with God and religious resources and how they function has made available the tool RCOPE: "a comprehensive measure of religious/spiritual coping" (Pargament et al. 1999). This measure, based on a theistic world view, draws out whether a responder views God as primarily benevolent or punishing and, drawing on Pargament's 1988 research, sees three different patterns of religious problem solving emerging. These are a:

- Collaborative style
- Deferring style
- Self-directive style

"In the deferring style, control is sought from God; the individual places the responsibility for coping on God. In the collaborative style, control is sought with God; the individual and God share the responsibility for coping. In the self-directing style, control rests within the individual; the individual takes the responsibility for coping him/herself" (Pargament et al. 1999). Pargament and his collaborators consistently found that a collaborative style of coping was associated with a greater sense of spiritual well-being and decreased depression and anxiety. Results for the other styles were more mixed, depending on whether God was seen as benevolent, punitive, or abandoning (Phillips et al. 2004) or whether the situation was seen as beyond one's own control (Pargament et al. 1990). Later researchers Ana Wong-McDonald and Richard Gorsuch (2000) suggest surrender as an additional coping style. Pargament also adds Pleading to the list of approaches such as in the study on the use of religious coping in the hospital waiting room (Pargament et al. 1999).

There are manifold quantitative articles on religious coping in medical and mental health situations which support the association between the use of religious resources and quality of life and adjustment to serious illness (e.g., Brady et al. 1999; Koenig 1998; Koenig et al. 1988, 1991; Johnson and Spilka 1991; VandeCreek et al. 1997, 1999) and decreased length of hospital stays or readiness to return home (e.g., Iler et al. 2001; VandeCreek et al. 1997). Of note are the studies that explore coping after a disaster, such as that of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, in the United States. Abu-Raiya et al. examined the "stressful interpersonal events experienced by Muslims living in the United States following the 9/11 attacks" (Abu-Raiya et al. 2011). Swain examined the experience of the chaplains who worked at the Temporary Mortuary at Ground Zero (Swain 2011). Ninety percent of a "nationally representative sample" of the general population reported "turning to religion" to cope after the

terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Schuster et al. 2001). These studies occasion the question of whether persons use current religious practices and resources to hold them up in times of disaster or whether persons take up religious practices in times of acute threat that may then lose meaning or cease to be followed in long-term recovery.

Current Research

The growing edge in research on coping is that focusing on multicultural and cross-cultural coping in a global context and that explore the non- or polytheistic religions such as Nalini Tarakeshwar's "Initial Development of a Measure of Religious Coping Among Hindus" (Tarakeshwar et al. 2003) and Yu His Chen's "Coping with Suffering: A Buddhist Perspective" (Wong and Wong 2006).

See Also

- Anxiety
- Compassion
- Delusion
- Depression
- Grace
- Locus of Control
- Providence
- Psychospiritual
- Transitional Object

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Coping with Death

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What is Death? Yes, it is cessation of life and of the physical body but it can manifest itself in ways more than these. It can have a disabling effect on the bereaved after losing a loved one or it can create an overarching anxiety or fear about one's own death or of a significant other. In both the scenarios, when a real death has happened or when there is a discomforting anxiety related with death, coping becomes inevitable. This essay explains how religion and other religious aspects help individuals cope with death anxiety as well as death of a loved one. It presents how religion interacts with the human psyche in order to create a balance and synergy.

Death Anxiety and Religion

There have been different theories explaining what death anxiety is. The most significant view amongst these perspectives is considered to be of Freud's. For Sigmund Freud (1953), *thanatophobia* is a remnant of the unresolved conflict in the unconscious. Moving away from the psychoanalytic view, Belsky (1999) simply defined death anxiety as "the thoughts, fears, and emotions about the final event of living that we experience under more normal conditions of life." While death anxiety at a collective level works at preserving the human species and nurtures creativity by finding expression in different art forms ranging from drama to poetry, at an individual level it might prove to be debilitating if not coped with efficiently. It might lead to avoidance of conversations around death and dying and on certain occasions might also lead to panic attacks.

Anxiety which is characteristic of humans as proposed by Langs (1997) is the "Existential Death Anxiety" which essentially is a product of humans' ability to be aware of the inevitability of death and to anticipate future. This death anxiety is dealt with by humans through *"denial of death"* which is the primary coping strategy through which they defend themselves against it. The denial of death might manifest itself in different mental mechanisms or physical actions. This denial could be adaptive if used in limits or disruptive and emotionally burdening if used excessively.

What has been understood as the "great anxiety reliever" (Malinowski 1965) is "Religion." Religion is said to have a calming and stabilizing effect on humans helping them cope with death anxiety. It is because death and religion share an interdependent relationship. Death is believed to have led to the creation of religion. For Tylor (1958), religion originated from the dreams that "primitives" had of their dead. He asserted that dead was not entirely dead and came back to people in their dreams. Religion is almost never talked about without mentioning death.

To understand the connect between religion and death anxiety, it is important to understand how these two are different. Religion, on one hand, is about the connection with a higher power whereas death separates the loved ones. By surrendering themselves to religion, people feel a sense of control ensued with a sense of

hope. While religion provides them with a sense of security, death puts them through unpredictable phases of emotional discomfort. For religions like Hinduism, life and death have been segregated into the categories of the sacred and the profane, respectively. Religion thus establishes itself as the propagator of the power of life. For Lifton (1979), religion is "life-power and power over death." Religion, thus, helps the followers concentrate on life more than death which provides them with the resources to cope with death anxiety.

It is also "religiosity" or the extent to which the individual believes in God that affects one's coping. Religiosity could either be *Intrinsic* or *Extrinsic* as was suggested by Allport and Ross (1967). Intrinsic religiosity is about internalizing the faith and living it with commitment without any selfish motives while Extrinsic religiosity is characterized by using religion to meet certain personal and social needs like security or social status. It has been found that there is a negative correlation between intrinsic religiosity and death anxiety which means that individuals with high intrinsic religiosity tend to experience lower death anxiety (Powell and Thorson 1991; Maltby and Day 2000).

Also, what has been found to be effective in dealing with death anxiety is belief in afterlife which is the belief that life will continue even after death. Many mythological scriptures of different faith groups talk about it. For some people, belief in afterlife helps maintain the continuity of life which the idea of death disrupts. Langner (2002) noted that one of the main functions of religion is to reduce the fear of death in its followers through a belief in rebirth, afterlife, and the spirit world. Research findings, however, around the relationship between belief in afterlife and death anxiety have been equivocal, some suggesting that belief in afterlife reduces the discomfort and lowers the death anxiety while others have found no relationship. It is mainly because the idea of afterlife is not uniform across different faith groups. For some faith groups, it is based on the deeds or *karma* in one's life and, for others, afterlife is about resurrection. Thus, afterlife is not always perceived as a comfortable space because it is also associated with punishments and judgement and thus might not help the individual cope with the death-related anxiety.

Death Rituals and Coping with Death

Grief and sorrow, pain and loss are experiences associated with Death. Funeral customs remind the living that Death and suffering are integral parts of nature. Death creates an environment of confusion and disbelief. Death rituals play a significant role in helping the bereaved cope with death of a loved one. First and the foremost, it brings the family together in these difficult times. Everyone comes together and works at sharing the emotional pain which promotes solidarity of the group and the much-needed social support. These rituals have a psychological effect on the bereaved that deceased has been given a proper farewell. It creates a feeling of completeness and satisfaction that they have done what they could do. Death rituals offer the space to the bereaved to cope with the loss and readjust into their lives. Death does disturb the order and creates emotional chaos but death rituals provide closure and time to slowly go back and move on with life.

See Also

▶ Death Anxiety

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Cosmic Egg

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The cosmic egg motif is a major symbol in creation myths, occurring in all parts of the world.

Ancient Egyptians saw the cosmic egg as the soul of the primeval waters out of which creation arose. In one story the sun god emerged from the primeval mound, itself a version of the cosmic egg resting in the original sea.

One Chinese creation myth describes a huge primordial egg containing the primal being, the giant Pangu. The egg broke and Pangu then separated chaos into the many opposites of the *yin* and the *yang*, that is, into creation itself.

The Satapatha *Brahmana* of India contains the story of the desire of the original maternal waters' desire to reproduce. Through a series of prolonged rituals, the waters became so hot that they gave birth to a golden egg. Eventually, after about the time it takes for a woman or a cow to give birth, the creator, Prajapati, emerged from the egg, and creation took place.

The Pelasgians of ancient Greece explained that it was the original being – the goddess Eurynome (a version of the Greek Gaia) – who laid the world egg and ordered the cosmic snake Ophion to encircle it until it hatched the world itself.

The later Orphic cult in Greece preached that in the beginning there was a silver cosmic egg, created by time that hatched the androgynous being who contained the seeds of creation.

In Africa, a Dogon myth says that in the beginning, a world egg divided into two birth sacs, containing sets of twins fathered by the creator god, Amma, on the maternal egg. Some say that Amma was the cosmic egg and fertilized himself.

The Polynesian Tahitians have a myth in which the god Taaroa began existence in an egg and eventually broke out to make part of the egg the sky. Taaroa, himself, became the earth.

The practitioners of the Bon religion in Tibet sing of three cosmic eggs, which led to creation.

As an object prone to fertilization, the egg is an appropriate symbol and metaphor for the idea of potentiality. It is pre-creation chaos waiting to become cosmos. In psychological terms, it is the preconsciousness of the given culture – the collective being waiting to be made conscious of itself. To quote psychologist Marie Louise von Franz, "we can easily recognize in it the motif of preconscious totality. It is psychic wholeness conceived as the thing which came before the rise of ego consciousness, or any kind of dividing consciousness" (von Franz 1972, p. 229). In short, the egg is a symbol of pre-differentiation, differentiation being the essence of the creation of anything. The egg contains within itself male and female, light and dark, all opposites in a state of union. It is perfect entropy and signals the existence of creative power from the very beginning. By extension, the cosmic egg is a symbol of the individual's preconscious state before the process of individuation allows for the hatching of Self.

See Also

▶ Consciousness
▶ Creation
▶ Individuation
▶ Myth
▶ Primordial Waters
▶ Self

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Counseling and Islam

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Counseling and Islam

Islam provides a distinct cultural narrative that is based upon Islamic doctrine, but is also influenced by the cultures, languages, and countries in which the practice of Islam exists. Islam provides a foundation for those who identify as Muslim, and may play a strong role in influencing attitudes and behaviors, but is not a monolith. Variations in levels of belief and practice make it impossible to group Muslims as a homogenous group. Given this diversity within practitioners of Islam, counseling practices are also diverse and rely on an assessment of an individual's religiosity, as well as their cultural, socioeconomic, and educational background (Kobeisy 2004).

There is also a great deal of variability in conceptions of mental illness within both Islamic theology and in the Muslim population (Husain 1998). Varying conceptions of mental illness (see also ▶ "Mental Illness and Religion"), combined with continued stigma regarding mental illness, make it difficult to assess perceptions of both Islamic counseling and psychotherapy, as well as Western-derived counseling techniques within Muslim populations. Within Sufi tradition (the mystical branch of Islam), some contemporary psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression closely correspond to the idea of "diseases of the heart" which have a psycho-spiritual root. Disobedience to God, or giving in to one's *nafs* (ego) and engaging in sinful behavior can also lead to symptoms that mirror contemporary ideas of mental illness. Beliefs regarding the supernatural origin of mental illness including *jinn* possession, the evil eye, and black magic, all have roots within Islamic theology and can influence an individual's beliefs regarding the effectiveness of counseling. Individuals with strong inclinations toward psycho-spiritual or supernatural causation of mental illness may be more likely to accept Islamically integrated psychotherapy options (Abu-Raiya 2015). The practice of counseling in both modalities continues to increase among Muslims, with a growth in the number of Muslim clinical psychologists and counselors over the past few decades. Additionally, Muslim counselors have formed their own clinics and professional organizations in acknowledgment of the increase in the practice of counseling that is designed to meet the needs and worldviews of practitioners of Islam. The intersection of Islam and counseling is widely accepted today (Abdullah 2007) (see entry on ▶ "Islamic Care and Counseling").

Islamic Counseling

Islamic-based counseling, and Islamically integrated psychotherapy (York Al-Karam 2018), reflects the growing revival of the application of Islamic psychology and traditional Islamic concepts of mental illness. The Islamic conception of mental illness is that all mental and behavioral dysfunction has a psycho-spiritual root and can be directly tied to an individual's higher spiritual awareness of his or her Creator. Traditional Islamic therapies that may be incorporated into contemporary counseling services include Quran recitation (*al-Ruqyah*), Prophetic medicine (*Unani Tibb*), prayer, and *dhikr* (invocation) (Husain 2006; Athar 1993; Haque 2004). Attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of incorporating Islamic forms of worship and religious based coping into counseling with

practitioners of Islam demonstrate the positive impact in many therapeutic settings (Khalid 2007; Hanin Hamjah et al. 2017; Zakaria and Mat Akhir 2017).

The contemporary use of religiously based therapy for treatment of mental illness for Muslim clients has been documented in Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries (Ally and Laher 2008; Al-Issa 2000; Campion and Bhugra 1998). Numerous researchers have proposed a method of religiously integrated psychotherapy for use with Muslim clients (Abu-Raiya and Pargament 2010; Abu-Raiya 2015; Keshavarzi and Haque 2013). This approach to the treatment of mental illness directly addresses dimensions of Islam that are relevant to the mental health concepts of Muslims, including Islamic methods of coping. Religious psychotherapy has been found to produce significant improvement in patients in Malaysia (Azhar and Varma 2000) and has been introduced, to varying results, in other Muslim societies (Al-Issa 2000).

Traditional Islamic forms of therapy are therefore dynamic and encompass multiple interpretations of the origin of illness and acknowledge the effectiveness of multimodal approaches to therapy that include assessment, diagnosis, talking therapy, and specific actions (see entry on ▶ "Islamic Psychology"). These practices are tied to evidence that is drawn from religious tradition and perceptions of mental illness within unique cultural contexts. The majority of research and testing of Islamic forms of counseling is occurring in the United States, the Middle East, and most prominently in Malaysia. Further research will determine the effectiveness of these varied techniques and their application to different Muslim communities.

Culturally Competent Counseling

Culturally competent counseling addresses the use of Western forms of counseling with specific cultural or religious groups. In regards to Islam, there has been a growing effort to address cultural competence in counseling Muslim clients, especially in Western societies, among asylum seekers, and refugee populations (Rassool 2015; Ahmed and Amer 2012; Kobeisy 2004). Inayat (2001) addresses the differences between Islamic counseling and Integrative counseling. Integrative counseling, which corresponds closely to culturally competent counseling, looks at the client from within their social framework. In essence, it takes into account the person's Muslim-ness without utilizing Islamic tenets in the counseling relationship. Islamic counseling, on the other hand, views the person and their symptoms through the lens of Islamic doctrine. Culturally competent counseling seeks to understand and integrate a client's beliefs without the client's worldview superseding core counseling tenets. Common elements of culturally competent counseling include conducting cultural and spiritual assessments in order to assess language, cultural worldviews, spirituality, and acculturation level within an individual client (Ibrahim and Dykeman 2011). Culturally competent counseling acknowledges the stigma that exists within Muslim communities in relation to mental health issues, and has to address the stigma and other myths regarding the counseling process. Negative attitudes toward counseling tend to be a result of perceptions that are colored by religious and cultural beliefs, according to Kobeisy (2004). These perceptions include the attribution that seeking counseling is a sign of a lack of family support. Kobeisy (2004) also found a connection between negative attitudes and a lack of knowledge regarding the purposes and outcomes associated with therapy.

Conclusion

Even with growing acceptance of Westerns forms of counseling within Muslim populations, and an increasing incorporation of Islamic tenets into psychotherapy, there continues to be stigma toward counseling and other forms of psychological therapy. Understanding the origins of this stigma and distrust is an important part of increasing utilization of mental health care services among followers of Islam. Beliefs regarding the cause of mental illness are also key to the various approaches to counseling. Counseling

and other forms of talking therapies have a long history within Islamic cultures, dating back to practitioners of Sufism as well as medieval Islamic medical practices. The intersection of counseling and Islam is therefore a continuation of a long history of indigenous practice and influence from both Western and Eastern forms of psychology.

See Also

- ▶ Islamic Care and Counseling
- ▶ Islamic Psychology
- ▶ Mental Illness and Religion

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Counseling Asians in the West

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Over the past 50 years, the Asian population has been one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in

the West. Within the Asian population, there is a wide variety of countries of origin, ethnicities, languages, cultural values, religions, socioeconomic status, and acculturation levels. Counseling Asian clients in the West is a multicultural process (Schoen 2005). This entry discusses some of the most important attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed in culturally sensitive and competent counseling services.

Be Aware of the Basic Traditional Cultural Values

Counselors should treat every Asian student on an individual basis and avoid stereotyping, generalizing, and overemphasizing cultural similarities among Asian clients. On the other hand, an awareness of the Asian traditions helps to lay an essential foundation for the mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation in counseling Asian clients (Kim et al. 2001; Maki and Kitano 2002; Sue and Sue 1999). Basic traditional cultural values can include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) Collectivism: Group welfare is prioritized over individual interests. There is a strong moral obligation to serve others, to reciprocate, and to maintain harmony by reconciling, compromising, and accommodating. (2) Filial Piety: Children are expected to respect parents, obey the norms established by the family, support and nurse aging parents, and mind the impact of one's own behavior on one's family. (3) Self-Control: Appropriateness, modesty, and self-criticism in social interactions are highly valued, as is the maintenance of dignity, calmness, and rationality in the face of suffering and highly emotional situations. A pursuit of achievement is also paramount to the individual. (4) Shame: "Knowing shame" is regarded as a virtue, which serves as a dynamic to deter inappropriate thoughts and behaviors that might violate collectivist interests, disdain the family's reputation, or weaken the individual's self-discipline.

In addition to the knowledge of these cultural values, counselors also need to be aware of the impact that these values may have on the counseling process. Many Western-born Asian clients and most recent immigrants from Asia attempt to rely on the self, family, and friends in dealing with their psychological problems, rather than seeking professional services. This may be because seeking counseling services not only implies a failure in self-control but may also tarnish the public image of the individual, his/her family, and other larger identity groups, any of which can cause intense shame. As a result, the rate of use of psychological counseling services among Asian clients is disproportionately low to their level of need (Kim and Omizo 2003).

Fortunately, however, the use of other values in the Asian cultures can enhance an Asian client's benefit from counseling services. With the cultural emphasis on achievement, for example, Asian clients are willing to seek help for academic difficulties and challenges. Starting with an academic performance-oriented topic may open the door for the exploration of more psychological- or personal-oriented issues (Kim et al. 2001). Emphasis on education means Asian clients also tend to respond positively to psycho-education, offered to understand and better deal with mental health problems. Usually, psycho-education helps to destigmatize the mental health problems and diminish barriers to treatment. Asian clients also tend to respond better to directive than nondirective approaches compared to their Western counterparts, due to the cultural value of deference to authority figures (Kim et al. 2001).

There are other impacts of cultural values on counseling Asian clients. Asians have been taught to employ indirect styles of communicating, especially when it comes to disagreement and confrontation. They are also cautious and reserved in public display of emotion, with negative emotions in particular often expressed in an oblique and understated way. Counselors working with Asian clients, especially those who grew up in Asia, may need to read between the lines to grasp the major distress and its degree of severity. As the alliance develops and the client becomes more open and ready, the counselor may work toward more direct expressions.

Be Aware of the Common Mental Health Problems Among Asian Clients

The most common mental health problems among Asian clients are depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, somatization, and adjustment disorder. It is worth noting that the high somatization may be related to internalized stress due to the repression of public display of emotion (Chun et al. 1996). Common somatization includes complaints of sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and stomach pains (Yagi and Oh 1995). International students or recent immigrants may also exhibit culture-bound syndromes such as *amok* (sudden mass assault), which need culturally sensitive interpretation, diagnosis, and treatment.

Be Sensitive to the Challenges that Asian Clients Face

As people of color, Asians historically have been subjected to many forms of racist oppression and discrimination in the West. Despite significant advancement in civil right movements, many Asian clients, including not only international students and recent immigrants but also Western-born Asians, still encounter overt discrimination and/or micro-aggression in schools and communities. A culturally responsive counselor should be comfortable facing the topic of racism, encouraging the clients to talk about their experiences as people of color in their society, emphasizing with their reported feelings, and understanding the clients' individual distress in the context of the impacts that sociopolitical factors have on the Asian population.

Research shows that the greater the cultural dissimilarity across two cultures, the greater the acculturation stress (Berry 1990). Given the prominent differences between the Asian and Western cultures, Asian clients inevitably face remarkable stress in establishing an individual identity and stance between the two cultures. The extent to which an individual assimilates the Western culture to his or her values, attitudes, and behaviors is *acculturation*. By contrast, the degree she/he retains and identifies with the Asian culture is enculturation (Maki and Kitano 2002). Asian clients fall in a wide range of acculturation and enculturation.

Clients who are high in acculturation and low in enculturation identify with the Western culture. To interact effectively with them, counselors need to be highly acculturated. However, counselors should also be attentive to whether or not such clients are at risk of denying their Asian ethnicity, abandoning the culture of origin, losing traditional support, and internalizing racism in the form of self-hatred.

Clients who are high in both acculturation and enculturation are able to integrate both cultures with the best possible compromise. To meet such clients where they are, counselors must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in multicultural practice. In addition, counselors may want to assess whether they have high levels of anxiety while trying to comply with expectations of both cultures.

Clients low in acculturation and high in enculturation identify with their culture of origin. They are likely to be international students and recent immigrants with limited exposure to the mainstream culture and limited language skills. To help such clients, counselors need to be open-minded, empathic, and respectful. It is essential for the clinician to encourage the Asian clients to openly discuss their cultural and religious viewpoints on the cause of their problems, the cultural conceptualization of their problems, their past coping styles, their health-seeking behaviors, and their treatment expectation (Lee 1997). Interventions should be structured to be compatible with the Asian cultures (e.g., the directive approach) and to match the clients' language skills (e.g., action-oriented activities). In addition, counselors should be aware that their clients may withdraw to the old culture as an escape dynamic.

Lastly, clients low in both acculturation and enculturation reject both cultures. Counselors may need to explore their alienation, frustration, and possible past experiences of failing to satisfy both cultures simultaneously.

When working with second-generation immigrants, counselors should understand and empathize with the cultural conflict between the culture

in their family and the culture of their peers. Internalized racism and struggles with identity (e.g., denial, confusion, self-hatred) are typical challenges. If the Asian clients have issues with autonomy and individualization, counselors may want to empower and facilitate their development in a way that is respectful, sensitive, and compatible to their cultural values in order to avoid unnecessary confusion or guilt.

Art therapy and action-oriented activities may be helpful when working with recent immigrants or international students, especially if they have language difficulties. For example, sand play allows for the exploration and expression of intrapsychic world and interpersonal patterns (Enns and Kasai 2003), without a language requirement. Be cautious with the use of a translator, as it can interfere in the establishment of a therapeutic alliance and can cause complications in therapy. If a translator is absolutely needed, be sure to choose a translator who is able to stay unbiased and assure the client of confidentiality.

The myth of the "model minority," which implies that the Asians adapt well to their environment and have few educational or psychological problems, causes additional challenges for Asian clients (Serafica 1997, 1999). It fuels the unrealistic expectations that Asian clients set for themselves and their reluctance to seek counseling services. It also influences how the community and other ethnicity groups perceive and react to the Asians, which contributes to the fact that troubled Asian populations often go unnoticed (Yagi and Oh 1995).

Be Mindful About Religion

Religion and spirituality should not be overlooked when establishing counseling relationships. Asians in the West come from a variety of religious and spiritual backgrounds (e.g., Buddhist, Hinduism, Islam, Shintoism, Christianity, ancestor worship). In most Asian cultures, religious beliefs and practices are rooted in tradition and integrated into daily life. When coping with physical illnesses, mental disturbances, or family crises, Asian people traditionally go to religious organizations and consult monks or ministers to obtain comfort, support, and advice.

Acknowledging and respecting the role of religion in their culture and lives help to establish rapport with other Asian clients. The counselor may inquire whether or not the student is devoted to a certain religious tradition and to what degree. If the answer is yes, the counselor may assess the availability of emotional support or counseling from the particular organization of the student's religion. The counselor may also make use of certain beliefs or practices in the student's religion to facilitate the counseling outcome, for example, encouraging practicing the meditation techniques described in the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* to Hindu clients or discussing the Four Noble Truths to reduce stress and anxiety for Buddhist clients.

Showing knowledge of Asian religion and spirituality can be a powerful invitation to trust the counselor (Hanna and Green 2004). The knowledge is not merely about understanding a religion; more importantly, it is understanding a religion in the cultural context of how it is actually practiced and who is practicing it. One religion varies from culture to culture. Buddhism, for example, is practiced differently in China than in Burma.

Although the knowledge can help, being culturally sensitive and competent involves a genuine respect for other cultures, an eagerness to learn about other cultures, and an appreciation of the particular heritage of the client (O'Sullivan 1994). As a matter of fact, Asian clients tend to show a considerable amount of respect and appreciation for the counselor who has taken the time to learn about their cultures and religions and who demonstrates understanding, interest, and empathy towards their tradition.

Be Aware of Countertransference

The difference between an effective counselor and a mediocre one is the ability to manage countertransference feelings (Van Wagoner et al. 1991). If the counselors are highly religious themselves and/or they find Asian religions strange or misguided, it is important that the counselors restrain

from imposing their own religious or spiritual points of view on clients, be empathic, and use the understanding of the clients' religion (together with other information) to better understand both the context and nature of the clients' distress, challenges, and strengths. For Western-born Asian counselors who still have their own identity issues (denial or rejection of one's racial identity), working with Asian clients may evoke unresolved pain and emotions. Counselors should explore their own stereotypes, both positive and negative, about Asian clients. Supervision or consultation on countertransference issues will be needed.

Take an Integrative Perspective

Western psychotherapeutic approaches are traditionally based on the assumptions of individuation, independence, self-disclosure, and verbal expression of feelings. Asian values, on the other hand, focus on collectivism, interdependence, self-control, and repression of feelings. Being culturally responsive, counselors need to be able to recognize the strengths and protective factors inherent in the individual as well as in his/her cultural heritage. For example, Asian clients may be used to the health traditions of holistic treatment, herbal medicine, and acupuncture. If they find these health practices helpful, they need to explore and recognize the strengths inherent in the individual and his/her cultural heritage, such as the Confucian teaching of the "middle way," the Buddhist teaching of compassion, the emphasis on family/interpersonal harmony, and the high value of education and achievement. Be open-minded and creative about the potentially therapeutic integration of Western and Eastern healing practices.

See Also

- ▶ Asian American Pastoral Counseling
- ▶ Chinese Popular Religions
- ▶ Cultural Psychology
- ▶ Meditation
- ▶ Mindfulness
- ▶ Psychotherapy and Religion
- ▶ Reincarnation
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Religious Coping
- ▶ Women in Chinese Religions

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Counseling Men

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Men as Gendered Beings

One of the greatest shifts in the practice of mental healthcare has been the increased sensitivity to and awareness of cultural diversity issues, including the influence of gender identity and roles (Sue and Sue 2013). Among other identity factors, gender is now recognized as a salient organizing variable of clients' lives and experiences. In social sciences, critical men's studies emerged as a result of the challenge of feminist movement and scholarship, rejected the recapitulation of traditional male-biased scholarship that excluded women, and generalized men's experience as generic. It investigated masculinities and male experiences as "specific and varying social-historical-cultural formations" (Brod 1987). The shift to viewing men as gendered beings rather than generic persons has had far-reaching implications for practices, research, and theory related to the experiences of men, counseling procedures used with men, and effective counseling models for men.

Three Critical Foci for Counseling with Men

Men develop within contexts that are diverse and multidimensional; therefore, men's needs, capacities, vulnerability, and expectations of power and relationships vary. For this reason, some counseling psychologists indicate understanding the gendered nature of men as an important cultural competency (Levant and Silverstein 2005; Liu 2005). It is important for professional counselors to work from paradigms that take into consideration the diversity of men's experiences and contexts. To map out various approaches to counseling with men, this article draws on three conceptual themes or foci, which American sociologist Michael Messner used to analyze the complex terrain of masculinity politics in the USA: (1) costs of masculinity, (2) male institutionalized privileges, and (3) differences and inequality among men (Messner 2000).

First, the costs of masculinity address the negative consequences that arise from men's conformity (or disconformity) to the narrow cultural definitions of masculinity. Terms such as crisis, confusion, vulnerabilities, and losses have often been associated with the costs of masculinity. Some of the problems, such as men's emotional distance and longing for power and success, are taken seriously and critically. The issues under this theme include men's poor physical and mental health, the reluctance to seek professional psychological help, shorter mortality, and emotionally shallow relationships. Scholars in men's studies who brought up the notion of "crisis for men" or "crisis in masculinity" identified broadly three major areas in which men as a social group are not doing well: (1) male violence, (2) higher education, and (3) health concerns (Kahn 2009). A vast majority of violence is perpetrated by boys and men. Men's aggressiveness and violent behaviors are part of the traditional, narrow definition of what it means to be "real" men in many cultures. Many boys and men still believe that being violent makes one more of a man, continuing to commit violence against women and children, other men, and themselves. Men's mental health has been a major concern for counseling professionals and religious leaders and communities, given that such health issues tend to translate into problematic outcomes in children and family. Research shows that suicide rates have been

increasing for men to the point that these rates have quadrupled in the past 25 years (Gunnell et al. 2000). The problem is that men often do not express what they experience and are less likely to seek professional help. Even when they do, men often do not report symptomology, and this makes the assessment difficult and inappropriate. Mental illnesses such as depression undermine the dominant expectations of masculinity, generating in men with depression a sense of inadequacy and powerlessness. For this reason, men tend to develop the so-called masked depression with masculine norm-congruent symptoms such as somatic pain, anger, hypertension, and violent behaviors (Cochran and Rabinowitz 2000).

Some men enter counseling voluntarily for seeking help with personal concerns, relationship issues, family dynamics, career situations, and various developmental, transitional, and, at times, debilitating crises (Mahalik et al. 2003). Other men do so in response to partner or family urging, or they are mandated by courts or human resource departments to attend counseling. Although the number of men receiving mental health services and counseling has been increasing in the last 10 years according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2012), men tend to be reluctant to seek help when experiencing distress, and they are more likely to experience isolation, which may result in greater mortality and lower quality of life (Bonhomme 2007). Societal expectations of masculine self-sufficiency can complicate matters for some men, making support seeking and sharing of personal experiences challenging. At the same time, making oneself amenable to support and appropriate self-disclosure is an important aspect of deepened intimacy and increasing well-being (Uysal et al. 2012). Therefore, developing these capacities is an important relational skill to explore in the counseling setting.

Secondly, the theme of male institutionalized privilege focuses on how gender power, patriarchy, and male hegemony shape our understanding of and approach to counseling with men. It is grounded on the idea that "men, as a group, enjoy institutional privileges at the expense of women, as a group" (Messner 2000, p. 5). Though it does not refer to the totalizing and unchanging nature of men's power and privileges, the theme concerns the institutionalized male power over women in political, economic, and religious realms. Men experience the problem in quite different ways, depending on their positions of power. As sociologist Michael Kimmel (1995) notes, "men's pain is caused by men's power," but men are not often aware that they receive both benefits and pain from patriarchy.

The critical voices of family therapy have made theoretical and clinical contributions to address the issues of male power and privilege in family and marital relationships, particularly in the context of abuse and violence (Mirkin 1990; Goodrich 1991). Feminist therapy treats power as a continuous variable in one's life and places "the empowerment of clients and the creation of feminist consciousness" as its main therapeutic goal (Brown 2009). In terms of general treatment goals, the counselor is expected to name power differential and inequality between spouses and stop the abusive behaviors in the offender, as well as in the whole family. While the counselor holds the offender accountable for modeling a different mode of power and caring, he or she should also be prepared "to support the offender's mourning for the loss of his abusive power" (Goodrich 1991, p. 149). Feminist family therapists such as Michele Bograd (1991) translate feminist therapeutic practices into formulating effective clinical model for men. She argues that critical consideration of men is necessary for the family therapy to "be truly systemic" and to treat men as a significant agent for making changes in the family beyond the role of abusers and perpetrators of violence. She provides new ways of conceptualizing male development with attention to sensitivity to power issues and the social context and shifting cultural definitions of masculinity, femininity, and the nature of marriage. In this way,

feminist therapy takes a new look at roles and positions of men, as a way of reconfiguring the power relations within families and empowering women. With their own distinctive focuses, pastoral and practical theologians have also engaged the issue of how power relations and structures within the family can be reformulated and reconfigured (Miller-McLemore 1994; Neuger and Poling 1997; Browning and Miller-McLemore 2000; Wimberly 1997; Anderson 2004). To explore men's control and power needs can potentially interfere with the counseling process in combination with restricted emotionality. Thus, counselors are to exercise a great deal of skills and sensitivity with male clients as the counseling relationship may contain elements that challenge power or control-oriented males. At the same time, counselors themselves should consider their own needs for power, control, and competition in their therapeutic relationship with male clients.

Finally, the theme of differences and inequality among men addresses men's disproportionate share in power and privileges based on race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, age, and immigrant status, specifically black, gay, immigrant, and working-class masculinities. This theme is premised on the recognition of hegemonic forms of masculinities, which are constructed in relation to femininities and to various marginalized and subordinated masculinities. In addition, the within-group diversity among men is vast; therefore, to increase their awareness of culturally and masculine-sensitive interventions, counselors need to become aware of the therapeutic and contextual variables that influence men's experiences. For example, in contemporary society the father comes in various forms; therefore, counselors should be open to and inclusive of fathers in diverse life circumstances and social locations. Today's father can no longer be understood exclusively as a traditional married breadwinner and disciplinarian. He can be single or married, externally employed or stay-at-home, gay or straight, and an adoptive or stepparent.

Pastoral theologians have raised a concern about men's struggle with changing expectations in various contexts of life. In their edited volume *the Care of Men*, Christie Neuger and James Poling (1997) take into consideration men who are located differently due to their social locations by introducing a womanist reflection on African American men along with an African American male theologian's perspective on men's movements, a feminist approach to pastoral care with working-class men, and a discussion of issues around pastoral care of gay men. It thus brings a corrective to the predominance of the white middle-class and heteronormative perspectives in this research trajectory. As a response to a lack of organized help and support for church leaders and congregations, they integrate womanist and feminist critiques of gender inequality into its inquiry into men and masculinity and explore theologically the possibility of creative cross-gender partnership and openness toward God's future. The muteness and invisibility of African American men in the broader society has been problematized (Wimberly 1993; Ellison Jr 2013). While acknowledging the complexity of geographic, socioeconomic, and educational diversity among African American men, Ellison Jr. (2013) examines how the reality of being unheard and unseen impacts their education, employment, and incarceration and how dehumanizing stereotypes and stigmatization of African American men could become a potential obstacle to meeting their basic human needs for "control, self-esteem, a sense of meaningful existence, and belonging."

Given multiple, intersecting factors that influence men's life, counselors are to take differences and inequalities among men into serious consideration in their therapeutic process because failure to do so homogenizes male experiences and loses sight of the reality that patriarchal dividends are not shared equally among all men but proportionally based on their social location. In considering counseling strategies and program efforts with men in a racially and economically marginalized status, counselors should be aware of cultural and

lifestyle factors that affect men as well as the diverse intersections of race, gender, social class, and age. Some of the problems, challenges, and needs of men originate from their individual lifestyles and manhood identity, while others arise from sociological and historical factors such as unemployment, racism, prejudice, and societal dehumanization.

See Also

- ▶ Father
- ▶ Femininity
- ▶ Gender Roles
- ▶ LGBTQI Counseling
- ▶ Masculinity
- ▶ Pastoral Counseling to Men
- ▶ Pastoral Psychotherapy and Pastoral Counseling
- ▶ Power
- ▶ Religion, Sexuality, and Violence
- ▶ Rites of Passage for Boys
- ▶ Sexuality and Religion: Feminist Views

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Counseling Middle Eastern Arab-Americans

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Introduction

People from Arabic and Middle Eastern background are as diverse as their countries of origin. They have been living and working in North America for many generations. Actually, some of them migrated to South and North Americas over a century ago. Currently, they represent a mosaic community of various groups, ages, educations, mentalities, customs, affiliations, values, and social classes.

Basically, the terms *Arab-Americans* and *Middle Eastern-Americans* refer to persons who consider themselves having an Arabic heritage at some level and who trace their roots to one or more regions of the Middle East and North Africa, known as *MENA*. Some consider themselves Americans with a distant Arabic lineage (among other nationalities) due to their mixed family background and cultural ancestry (Arab American Institute 2009–2015).

The term *Arab-Americans* is prevalent in the literature, yet it can be too broad or confusing at times, as there is no defined single *Arab world* or one unified and homogeneous Arabic people located in a well-confined geographical area. Actually, the Middle East is a vast region and has a rich history, many cultures, and abundant traditions. It contains multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural diversities. It is the birthplace of three major religions – *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* – and the crossroad of numerous great civilizations (cf. Barakat 1993).

The word *Arab* has *Semitic* roots. *Arabian* refers to the original people who inhabited the Gulf Peninsula, way before Islam came to the scene! Presently, Arabic-speaking countries spread wide from the East Mediterranean to the North African shore and, at times, reaching deep within the African continent (Sudan, Somalia). Currently, the Middle East and North Africa societies accommodate a wide range of mentalities and social norms – from the highly urban, complex, and progressive lifestyles to the highly rural, tribal, and traditional lifestyles (and everything in between) (cf. Abi-Hashem 2011a, 2012, 2014; Nydell 2012).

Arabic Speaking Nations

Officially, there are 22 nations that consider Arabic as its main language. They are distributed geographically into five distant regions, known as Maghrib, Northeastern Africa, East Mediterranean, Arabian Peninsula, and Arabic-Persian Gulf (Nydell 2012). The nations, as listed alphabetically, are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. These nations are part of the *Arab League*, or the *League of Arabic Nations*, which is a loose organization connecting these countries together without any major authority or governing power. Classical Arabic is the formally written language and is spoken and can be understood across the region. French and English are common second languages, but other dialects exist as well. Besides some shared values, cultural norms, and basic religious practices, along with perhaps a collective memory of their place in history and rootedness in the land, there are actually not too many common factors among these countries and communities. Some of them enjoy a beautiful landscape along the seashore of the Mediterranean; others have mountains or flat lands and deserts. However, each local community has its own way of life, spoken accent and dress code, mood and temperament, and local habits and customs (Abi-Hashem 2011a, 2012).

Waves of Immigrations

There were two major waves of immigrations from the East Mediterranean to North America: the first wave was around the last part of the nineteenth century, and the second wave was at the end of World War II. Early immigrants were descendent of the Christian communities mostly from Lebanon and Syria. Presently, about four million Americans trace their origin to one or more Arabic country. However, those from Muslim background are almost double this figure, about eight million, known as *American-Muslims*. It is important to remember that although the majority of the Arabic Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are religiously and culturally Muslims, the largest concentrations of Muslim communities exist outside the MENA area, namely Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and other Southeast Asian countries.

An American person or a group with an Arabic and Middle Eastern background is someone who is connected to the Arabic language and culture. This relationship can be as distant as a 3rd- or 4th-generation, US-born to a multinational and multicultural family, or as fresh as in a newly arrived immigrant. Many Americans who have a little trace to the Middle East may not relate well to other Arab-Americans because they do not feel they have many things in common in terms of backgrounds, social experiences, worldviews, and lifestyles, similar to how a 4th- or 5th-generation Italian, German, Irish, Hispanic, or Greek feels and acts toward their traditional roots or countries of origin. Although Middle Eastern Arab-Americans have been living and working in the United States for generations, they are not considered as a separate minority yet, but generically classified among the white (non-Europeans) ethnic groups. The majority of this population is young, thriving, educated, and entrepreneurial in orientation (El-Badry 2010). Some of them are accomplished professionals and academicians in many fields and have made significant contributions toward the American society through the years (see Arab American Institute 2009–2015).

Adjustment and Adaptation

However, like any other migrant and minority groups, the more recent settlers and refugees, as well as the older generations, face hard times in acculturating and assimilating within the new hosting culture. Expanding identities, balancing nationalities, integrating worldviews, and reconciling differences are not easy tasks, especially when the cultural gap is large and the adapting skills are minimum and few. At times, children and teenagers become torn between the home-family subculture and the peer-society subculture; therefore, they tend to live a life of mental-emotional splitting and function in two psychological modes (cf. Abi-Hashem 2013a; Abi-Hashem and Brown 2013; Adida et al. 2016; Al-Hazza and Bucher 2010; Paterson and Hakim-Larson 2012).

According to the Arab American Institute (2009–2015), the percentage of the religious affiliation of Americans from Arabic and Middle Eastern descent is roughly distributed as follows: 25% Muslims – Sunnis and Shiites, 35% Roman and Eastern Catholics, 18% Eastern Orthodox, 10% Protestant, and 12% with other affiliations or no religious faith affiliation at all. Other sources, however, reflect a more equal percentage of population between Muslims and Christians (50%) in the greater North American continent. That is more probably the case since more people are migrating recently from Muslim communities around the Middle East and North Africa, for various reasons. They also tend to have a higher birth rate and belong to larger immediate and extended families, compared to the average Western household (cf. Dhami and Sheikh 2000).

Confusion and Anxiety

Although there is some awareness and understanding in the West about the various cultures and religions in the Arabic Near East geographical area, still yet there is a lot of uncertainty and confusion about who are the Arabs, the Muslims, and the Middle Easterners. Therefore, it is important to correct any misconceptions or generalizations and to clarify the similarities and differences

among these labels: (a) not all Arabs are Muslims, since there are significant minorities like the Christians, Jews, Druze, and Alawites who are spread out in the region and have been there for many long centuries; (b) not all Middle Easterners are Arabic-speaking people although they deal with Arabic neighbors very closely, e.g., Turkey, Iran, Cyprus, and Israel; (c) not all Arabic people are Middle Easterners, as is the case of the vast North African countries from Egypt to Morocco; and (d) not all Muslims are Arabic or Middle Easterners either, since the largest concentration of Muslim population is found in Southeast Asia, in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and other nations around the world, e.g., the former Soviet Union regions of Asia (cf. Abi-Hashem 2008, 2011a, 2014; American Psychological Association 2008; Jackson 1997; Zogby 2010).

Similar to other people of faith, Muslims can be practicing, devoted, and faithful or simply nominal, cultural, and even secular. There are also various branches and denominations within Islam, which provides room for diversity as well as for division among its population. Since the start of the War on Terror many people in the West, especially those from Arabic and Muslim descent, became real nervous and anxious, so they tried to keep a low profile. Some of them changed their first or last names to avoid sounding more Arabic or Islamic in kind. However, others never felt any negative impact from such polarization, and they kept their lives and activities as normal. Virtually, when counselors and caregivers work with people from Arabic Middle Eastern heritage, it is important to find out about their cultural backgrounds and religious identities, as well as the degree of easiness versus awkwardness they may feel while living and functioning in the hosting society.

Multi-identity and Values

In the Middle East, the religious identity of people is part of their social identity. Unlike in the majority of the West, the relationship between what is religious-spiritual and what is communal-social is complimentary and intimate. A total division or complete separation between the two spheres is not the norm and rather unnatural. However, people in urban settings function professionally and effectively in their field of specialty yet do not lose track of their sociocultural heritages and religious traditions, as they move in and out of that mode quite easily. They can readily incorporate and celebrate their traditions within short notice. Mentioning God and using religious generic blessings are routine ingredients of any social greetings, common responses, and personal exchanges, regardless of the person's religious background, affiliation, or commitment, e.g., *Inshallah* (God willing), *El-Hamdellah* (thanks be to God), and *Allah Maak* (God be with you). For Arabic Middle Eastern people, the term *religion* has many connotations, dimensions, and roles. It could mean or refer to religious *faith* and personal *spirituality*, to religious *tradition* and *customs*, to religious *affiliation* and *association*, to religious *doctrine* and *theology*, to religious *values* and *morality*, to religious *practices* and *rituals*, to religious *culture* and *community*, etc., or a combination of some or all the above (cf. Abi-Hashem 2011a, 2013b, 2014; Pew Research Center 2013).

Variation and Diversity

Americans of Arabic and Middle Eastern descent are quite different from each other. Some are outgoing, competent, and fully integrated, and then less distinguishable from their average American counterparts, while others are reserved, unconfident, very traditional, and reluctant to merge within the hosting culture. Usually fresh immigrants, refugees, and older adults struggle more with emotional regulation and cultural adjustment. The challenges they face are huge – learning a new language, functioning within a new system, navigating a new environment, and maneuvering new sets of freedom and responsibility – all the while keeping their uniqueness and staying loyal to their foundational values, cultural traditions, and religious faiths. Many of them have

arrived from regions torn by wars, famine, persecution, sociopolitical turmoil, armed conflict, and violence. Their painful memories and emotional scars are still fresh, which make them highly vulnerable and prone to severe anxiety, grief reaction, traumatic stress, and marked depression. They certainly need special care and attention in the forms of cultural coaching, therapeutic presence, and clinical counseling (Abi-Hashem 2011a, b, 2014; Abi-Hashem and Barbuto 2013; Amer and Hovey 2005; Hakim-Larson and Nassar-McMillan 2008; Zogby 2010).

Counseling Approaches and Guidelines

There are some great resources available for the helping professionals who are working with individuals and families of various types and different ages from Arabic Middle Eastern backgrounds. The following guidelines are samples of the many insights, tools, and approaches that providers, counselors, educators, and caregivers will find in the existing literature to help them gain better understanding, acquire better awareness of the others and of themselves while in the process, and achieve better cultural intervention so they may increase their competency skills and counseling effectiveness (cf. Abi-Hashem 2008, 2011a, 2013a, c, 2014, 2015; American Psychological Association 2008; Dwairy 2006; Erickson and Al-Timimi 2001; Jackson 1997; Kobeisy 2004; Nassar-McMillan et al. 2010; Robinson-Wood 2016; Soheilian and Inman 2015).

Inquire gently and take time to build trust and warmth in the therapeutic visit. The majority of Middle Easterners expect friendly encounters and do not respond well to mechanical, business-like relationships, or to quick diagnoses and interrogative-type of evaluations.

Be faithful to what you learn from them as they expect you to honor that personal information entrusted to you.

Discover what generation they are (e.g., 1st, 2nd or 3rd) and help especially the newcomers to adjust and function well within the hosting society.

Do not interpret some of their silence or aloofness as resistance. Many are not familiar or comfortable with counseling or the therapeutic professions.

Find out the nature of their cultural identity and degree of religious affiliation or commitment, and how these factors presently impact and inform their coping and adaptation.

Guide immigrants to deal with any emotional residuals or unresolved issues they may carry with them from their homelands and acknowledge the hardship of acculturation they may face as well as the pleasant aspects and adventures they are experiencing in their adopted world.

Assist them to sort through their beliefs and lifestyles and then integrate some of their values, religious traditions, and heritage with the demands of the new hosting society, and what do they need to really modify or begin to phase out gradually.

Most elderly and traditional people look up to the educator, therapist, or caregiver as an expert and as a person of authority. They expect direct involvement, structure, guidance, and lively interaction (include assignments, homework, and practical exercises).

Facilitate the resolution of any inter- and intra-cultural tensions or stresses that they may be experiencing on the intra-psychical, inter-personal, and inter-cultural levels.

Guide them to formulate a sound cultural self, expand to a multi-dimentionall identity, and utilize any communal and religious resources available in their personal life and ethnic-group circle.

Assist them to maintain healthy family connections and intergenerational continuity but not to the extent of isolating themselves from the larger hosting society. Some tend to either alienate themselves or immerse themselves fully to the degree of total fusion (two extremes).

Help them navigate smoothly through the cultural intricacies and nuances of the many American lifestyles and mentalities. Thus, they can function and relate to others well, be productive members in society, and achieve a better inner-and-outer harmony.

See Also

- Cultural Psychology
- Family Therapy and Pastoral Counseling
- Grief Counseling
- Islam
- Migration and Religion
- Pastoral Counseling
- Psychospiritual
- Religious Coping
- Religious Identity
- Self
- Sharia
- Traditionalism
- Trauma
- Worldview, The Concept of

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Countertransference

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Countertransference is the response, mostly unconscious, of a therapist, counselor, or other helper toward his or her patient, client, or helpee. In classic psychoanalytic theory, it is understood to manifest as distortions in the helper's perceptions of the helpee and at times irrational responses and behaviors toward him or her. In contemporary psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theory and practice, it encompasses all the thoughts, feelings, fantasies, reactions, dreams, bodily sensations, enactments, and other responses of the helper toward the helpee.

The term originates in relation to the complementary concept of the transference. Transference, first defined by Sigmund Freud (1912/1958a), is the unconscious mental activity in which the patient unconsciously ascribes – or transfers – thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors from his or her own inner world, usually based on repressed experiences of one's parents from earliest childhood, onto the therapist or helper. Transference and countertransference form a complex dynamic between helper and helpee, in which interlocking projections, mutual identifications, and counterreactions can increasingly create a multi-textured unconscious relationship that has immediate (but often unrecognized) impact on the conscious relationship.

Traditionally, in Freud's formulation, the countertransference was considered to be hindrance to treatment, which depended on rational, clear-eyed, and reality-based diagnosis of the patient's irrational difficulties (1905/1953, 1910/1957, 1915/1958b). A therapist who had undergone his or her own thorough analysis was thought to be able to set aside irrational thoughts, feelings, and impulses and to maintain a calm, ego-controlled view of both him/herself and the patient – even (although Freud honored this mainly in the breach) "the emotional coldness of a surgeon" (Freud 1915/1958b). Countertransference in such a schema was considered to be a contaminant of rational diagnosis and a hazard to treatment. It had its origins in the therapist's own unresolved inner conflicts and repressed wishes, which required further analysis to "manage" the countertransference. Freud was strongly invested in this definition of countertransference, because it came to his awareness primarily through colleagues' giving in to sexual temptations in the face of patients' erotic transferences toward themselves – most notably C. G. Jung's intense relationship with his patient Sabina Spielrein (Carotenuto 1982). Freud's technical papers on transference and countertransference were written in response to the fear that the reputation of psychoanalysis – already under siege – could be permanently damaged if such sexual scandals and exploitation of patients became widespread.

As the concept was developed, it came to be understood as containing the influence of the patient's unconscious. Melanie Klein (1946/1975, 1952/1975), an analyst in Freud's circle and eventual founder of an offshoot of psychoanalysis called "object relations theory," noted that the patient could invoke or implant intolerable affects, fantasies, or other unconscious material in the therapist, who then would identify with it – a complex mechanism termed "projective

identification." Another later analyst Heinrich Racker (1968) considered the countertransference to be a kind of mirror reaction to the transference of the patient, which could manifest as either "concordant" (aligned empathically with the patient's transference) or "complementary" (discordant with the patient's transference).

In these theories, like Freud's, the countertransference was still largely viewed as a distorting element that could impede the therapist's view of the patient and therefore interfere with the treatment. However, more positive or expansive views were also being developed alongside Freud's orthodoxy. As Jung developed his own mode of "analytical psychology" after the break with Freud, he also examined transference phenomena, viewing the countertransference (a term he seldom used per se) not only as the analyst's internal conflicts and neurotic distortions at the level of the ego but as a well of access, via the transpersonal self, both to the patient's archetypal material – even with the danger of becoming possessed by it – and the collective unconscious, an archetypal layer of shared human memory that could be tapped by both analyst and patient alike (Kraemer 1989). Jung's writings on the unconscious and the subjectivity of the analyst (e.g., 1916/1928/1966c, pp. 286–290; 1916/1967, p. 87), on the therapeutic relationship as a dialectical process (1951/1966a, p. 116), and his image of the transference relationship as an alchemical bath in which both therapist and patient were immersed (1946/1966b) anticipated the more expansive contemporary view of countertransference by several decades. Freud also split with his Hungarian follower Sandor Ferenczi primarily over Ferenczi's (1933/1955) insistence on "active technique," in which close scrutiny of the analyst's countertransference could yield important emotional data about the patient and might also be disclosed to the patient.

In the 1950s, a more positive, or at least useful, understanding of countertransference began to be accepted. Paula Heimann, a patient and student of Klein's, was the first to fully formulate a definition of countertransference as not only containing neurotic traces of the therapist's own unresolved internal conflicts but receiving unconscious affective material from the patient via projective identification (Heimann 1950, 1960). This view was echoed in D. W. Winnicott's (1949/1992) somewhat controversial essay "Hate in the Countertransference." This view was taken up and became commonplace among British analysts from the mid-twentieth century onward, although it was primarily used as such only among Kleinian and object relations analysts (e.g., Bollas 1989; Casement 1986, 1992; and the American Kleinian Thomas Ogden 1994, 1997).

During mid-twentieth-century debates within classical and object relations schools of psychoanalysis, Otto Kernberg (1965) offered a summary of the two definitions within American psychoanalysis, distinguishing between the classical Freudian definition and his term "totalist countertransference," i.e., countertransference as the sum total of the therapist's reactions, conscious and unconscious, to the patient. However, the expanded definition did not come into common usage nor was countertransference a heavily investigated research topic in other branches of psychoanalysis until later in the twentieth century. Meanwhile, interest in the therapist's subjectivity continued to grow, especially through Heinz Kohut (founder of Self Psychology, a significant offshoot of classical psychoanalysis in the latter half of the twentieth century) and his investigations into empathy as a form of "vicarious introspection" into the patient's psyche and illuminating the patient's self structure (e.g., Kohut 1971, 1982).

In contemporary psychoanalysis, countertransference came once again to the forefront of theory and technique through a new interest in intersubjectivity and postmodern paradigms of the permeability of self and other. Recent attention to the treatment of post-traumatic stress also heightened clinicians' awareness of countertransference as a two-edged sword – both dangerous and also empathically informative – as split-off traumatic material is experienced by the therapist himself or herself, sometimes in the form of "vicarious traumatization" (Dalenberg 2000; Davies and Frawley 1994; Pearlman and Saakvitne 1995). Countertransference is now increasingly understood in its more comprehensive and positive

definition. In current usage in most schools of psychoanalytic thought, countertransference and transference are generally understood as a continuum of conscious and mostly unconscious relationship, in which thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and impulses exist in a shared unconscious pool of intersubjective relationship. This view has been examined through extensive theoretical writing and case studies by writers in the relational psychoanalytic school (with its beginnings in New York, e.g., Davies 1994, 1996; Mitchell 2000), the intersubjective theorists emerging from Self Psychology (e.g., Stolorow et al. 1995, 2001), other Euro-American theorists (e.g., Loewald 1986), and some modern Jungians (e.g., Samuels 2003; Sedgwick 1994). This usage has spilled over into virtually all psychoanalytic and psychodynamic practice to date (e.g., Gabbard 1995; Gabbard and Wilkinson 2000; McWilliams 2004; Stevens 1986). In consideration of therapeutic ethics, enactments are considered inevitable in this understanding, not entirely preventable, but the therapist's maintenance of safe boundaries is still critical – not for the sake of neutrality per se, but because unanalyzed enactments can become collusive, harmful, and out of control. The asymmetry of roles and responsibilities between helper and helpee requires continued introspection and interpretation.

The relevance of countertransference for the psychology of religion is perhaps most closely seen in its fairly recent appropriation into pastoral psychotherapy and pastoral counseling (e.g., Collins 1982; Cooper-White 2004, 2007; Stengl 1996; Wagner 1973). As interest has shifted back toward psychodynamic and psychoanalytic paradigms, especially in their more contemporary iterations, the concepts of countertransference and intersubjectivity have been reintroduced to the practice of pastoral care, counseling, and psychotherapy (Cooper-White 2004, 2007). Countertransference is also of interest in consideration of treatments in which therapist and patient have differing or even conflicting religions, theologies, and/or God-imagoes (Cataldo 2008). Ana-Maria Rizzuto's (1981) work on the significance of individuals' God-imagoes for understanding their inner object relations is as relevant in the countertransference as in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The work of Henry Corbin, a French philosopher, theologian, and scholar of Sufism, has been read by Jungian analysts to connect themes of countertransference, the analyst's subjectivity, and Corbin's mundus imaginalis that underlies the spiritual imagination across cultures and religious traditions worldwide (Samuels 2003). Investigations into the countertransference as a central dimension of intersubjectivity have perhaps begun to open new avenues for the exploration of psychology and religion in a more phenomenological or Jamesian vein – i.e., the study of the variety of unconscious and intersubjective religious experiences among contested and multiple subjects and their g/Gods.

See Also

- ▶ Analytical Psychology
- ▶ Freud, Sigmund
- ▶ Intersubjectivity
- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Klein, Melanie
- ▶ Kohut, Heinz
- ▶ Object Relations Theory
- ▶ Post-Jungians
- ▶ Projection
- ▶ Psychoanalysis
- ▶ Relational Psychoanalysis
- ▶ Self Psychology
- ▶ Transference
- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Unconscious
- ▶ Winnicott, Donald Woods

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Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling

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The typical problems patients bring in for couples, marriage, and family counseling can be broken down into eleven primary categories: (1) sexual problems related to lack of intimacy; lack of desire and attraction; feelings of rejection, hurt, betrayal by a partner; traumatic histories of abuse and trauma causing dysfunction; internet pornography addictions, extra-marital affairs, polyamory; etc.; (2) intimacy and communication issues; partner is not expressive of emotions or feelings; (3) financial problems related to economic stress about the purchase or selling of a home; moving to a different location; travel, school, and career issues; (4) domestic violence, including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse; (5) substance abuse; alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs; (6) religious conflicts in multicultural marriages; (7) how are the children to be raised, schooled, and disciplined; (8) parent–child relational problems; children's school-related issues; problems with drugs, disrespectful attitude towards adult authority, and peer group problems; (9) lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender counseling (LGBT); (10) premarital counseling; and (11) assessment of emotional disturbances such as anxiety and depression.

All of the above can be addressed through modeling of healthy communication skills, mirroring, and vocational assessment, as problems in relationship are often related to developmental issues, spiritual growth, in preparation for mid-life and old age, search for meaning, and the final acceptance of the reality of death. Most of the above symptoms or complaints can be fit into criteria of neurotic conflicts; at bottom, they center on questions of purpose in life. The solution of problems for each individual member of a couple, marriage, or family can relieve neurotic suffering and symptomatology in the working relationship if the self-esteem of each person is valued and nourished. Absence of playfulness and lack of

affect-attunement and insecure attachments are often at the roots of such problems; their roots go deep into childhood patterns, emotional injuries, isolation, loneliness, or loss of connection to Eros. The yearning for delight, happiness, and expansion, which couples and family members often do not get enough of, is sometimes sought in meaningless diversions, noise, and unsatisfying TV shows, rather than finding ways to enhance pleasure and peace in the partnership, or family connections, via quality time together in sports, camping, hiking, going to the city, or enjoying recreation in Nature.

The aim of the Counselor is to help heal emotional wounds, redirect conversation towards family system cohesion, set limits, and enhance laughter and meaning. Increasing appreciation for the gifts that couples can celebrate and feel gratitude for together is a primary part of the work. Also, chief amongst counseling goals is breaking down defenses that have hardened into anger, resentment, or patterns of withholding, so that the creative freedom to live life more fully can be made readily available. This requires a considerable period of discharge of toxic emotions, expressing and verbalizing negative feelings, and learning how to fight fairly or agreeing to disagree, settling for differences, or, if need be, divorce. This is why premarital counseling is so important, with a divorce rate above 50%, to avoid the anguish and tragedy of separation and the excruciating pain of divorce. Premarital therapy can help prevent such a possibility by allowing the couple to work out conflicts *before marriage* and carefully assess the relative healthiness or sickness of the partnership.

By letting go of the ego in the larger interests of the Self in the relationship between couple, married partners, or family members, patients may be reconditioned to come to see Love and connection as the main matter in the quest for spiritual fulfillment.

Amongst the most popular forms of counseling techniques to deal with couples issues today is Imago therapy created by Harville Hendrix (1988). The basic notion of this therapy is that we were all born whole, but became wounded during early development by primary caretakers. More, such injuries created a composite of pain in the personal or family unconscious that forms an Imago. Through the analytic dialogue, the Imago may be examined to help the couple work through unfinished issues from the family of origin that are standing in the way of completeness. This is one way of approaching such issues. But the theoretical foundation, on which the Imago is based, although often left unstated, is *Jungian*.

Jung (1953–1979) began his exploration into the empirical nature of affect-images (complexes) in Switzerland, and his ideas have had a large impact on the shaping of the analytical field. Complexes (affect-*images*) are formed through developmental trauma that splits off bits of the personality, which then forms an emotional core surrounded by affect that cannot be integrated into consciousness and creates an affect-image that may proliferate into mental disorders, dysfunctional behaviors, or enactments in individuals, families, or groups. This is what Harville Hendrix calls an Imago. To be depleted of their negative emotional charges, complexes (affect-*images*) need to be transformed through the reductive (regression to early childhood) and constructive (creative and future oriented) methods of analysis, fantasy-thinking, and symbolic language, sometimes employing methods of the expressive arts and sandplay. Typically complexes are experienced in the analytical matrix through projected *relational images*, and the task of the psychotherapist is to take them in and work with them in the analytic dyad, the therapist-patient relationship. Interpretations are based on what is being felt and experienced in the *attunement/misattunement patterns* between dyads or triangular arrangements. Once the complexes are stripped bare to the bone – to their causal origins in each person's adolescence, childhood, and early infancy – if all goes well, a natural outgrowth of personality for each individual member in the treatment may happen.

The Jungian Marriage and Family Counseling method is a clinical practice that is used by many practitioners worldwide who utilize Jungian/post-Jungian concepts to guide their psychotherapy practices. "Post-Jungian" services are rendered according to clinical education, training, and experience requirements that include various

counseling fields of clinical licensure or other educational certification tracks.

What do Marriage and Family Counselors have to offer the field of empirical psychology that other mental health practitioners typically do not provide in their wide range of clinical services? The main difference is the focus placed not on an Imago but on many *imagoes* in the personal, cultural, and transpersonal psyche; on a full assessment and evaluation of the regulative functioning or malfunctioning of myriad affect-complexes (or affect-images) and fantasy systems, coupled with an examination of future oriented dreams, as central channels for the Self's emergence, in the family/couple/marital matrix. The Self, as the central archetype, or blueprint of wholeness in the human personality is Jung's master concept for the main image (or Imago) of organization in the personality operating in marriages, partnerships, or families. Self-representations may be recognized and interpreted in the analytical container and allowed to unfold in known and mysterious ways over time. It is also by working with interpretation of psychological types in each individual that post-Jungians tend to excel as clinicians. The main instrument for assessing psychological types is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (finding your blend of extravert, introvert, sensing, intuitive, thinking, feeling, judging, and perceptive types) and other relevant instruments.

Post-Jungians have an ear for *affect-attunement* and *affect-misattunements* and the aim of the therapist is to listen to and identify emotional tones in the verbal and relational communication patterns between the couple, married pair, or family members and trace the health or illness of these styles of communication back to their emotional sources in the family of origin, extending back several generations. Once couples, dyads, or triads can see how they are attempting either to master or perpetuate old systemic conflicts arising from the families of origin, sometimes going back beyond the parents to the grandparents and great grandparents, they can begin to let go of dysfunctional styles of interacting and begin to sacrifice their ego-driven ways of relating to one another, in the interests of the larger needs for dyadic or group transformation. Post-Jungian Marriage and Family Counselors *listen* to currents of emotion and image that pass freely back and forth in communication patterns and form the chief sources of information for consciousness-creating narratives, used by the clinician in psychotherapeutic treatment.

The methods of complex analysis, dream interpretation, art, and active visioning techniques, not typically used in mental health institutions, may be utilized. It is also useful to explore creatively the personal and collective myths of the family members or couple. But by far the most commonly used technique in couples work is the teaching of active listening and the therapist's use of himself or herself as a witness to change cognitive, behavioral, and emotional patterns. Often this requires a painful stripping away of defenses and a painful sacrifice of the ego through the therapist's confrontation of neurotic styles. By returning patients in treatment to childhood through regressive work, patients may be enabled to allow personal complexes to surface along with creative patterns of destiny, which have been neglected or split off from the Self's total functioning, and this may happen through the therapist's directing the patients to keep a careful record of their dreams.

Dreams of a prospective nature may then emerge. Such dreams (or daydreams) tend towards a center, the Self, and their purpose is goal directed. The fundamental basis of such rational work, whether with children, adolescents, adults, couples, or family, is linguistic and poetic at its foundation. Reflecting on the meaning of symbols is one way the emotionally toned complexes may be made self-conscious. (In the language of psychodynamic, or family of origin systems theory, such complexes are referred to as introjects.) Whatever the language used by the practitioner, image-based therapy is a primary vehicle for understanding a dream's, misunderstandings', or the symptom's meanings.

As the reader can see from the foregoing statements, the importance of the analysis of complexes or affect-images stemming from early childhood is of the utmost importance for the

success of a couple, marriage, and stability of a family. The skilled practitioner is equally skilled at working on separation and divorce issues, which includes helping couples deal with grief, loss, anger, or a visitation plan that may involve the following of a court order in conjunction with guidance from a mediator.

Premarital counseling serves to address *potential* problems before they arise in a marriage and is highly recommended today in work with all partnerships, including same-sex arrangements. Agreements need to be made between couples regarding difficult issues, and in order to arrive at agreements, compromises often need to be struck. By shining a light on areas of difference before contractual arrangements become legally binding, couples are in a better position to assess the capacity of the partnership for change.

Finally, I will briefly cover the field of family therapy. Family therapy, as indicated above, involves an analysis of the total relational matrix. This means taking the focus off the identified patient and looking at the entire system, including, if relevant, the sibling dynamics of each individual in treatment and birth order. One of the Family Counselor's chief tasks in this work is to establish an immediate connection to the child or children in treatment so as to build trust and an open line of communication to the unconscious of the child centered on their emotional conflicts. Behavior problems and academic problems in children often have to do with a problem of improper mirroring by the parents and alliances need to be made to form an attitude of equality in the room, while supporting the parent's role as authorities. Teaching parenting skills is a part of this work. Another task is to assess the stability of the child within the family matrix and to open up lines of communication between the child and the adults involved in the child's treatment. When working with an adolescent, such an assessment sometimes requires working with both parents in a divorced family, where the aim of the clinician is to try and establish as best as possible a collaborative relationship between the couple and to push the parents who sometimes are in disagreement about such concerns as discipline and where the child should live or what kinds of privileges will be assigned to agree on the treatment goals of the family.

The Couples and Marriage Counselor is faced with the unenviable task of having to make the family darkness (evil) conscious, which places not only the child but also the parents on the hot seat. This is a true act of modesty on the therapist's part that requires that she remain open to her wounds. This modality of healing is structured by the wounded-healer archetype. The MFT has chosen her profession from a fateful predisposition that calls her to this work. This lessened hierarchal approach brings a compassionate and respectful attitude to the treatment and a safe container for difficult issues to be confronted and for transformation and change to occur.

See Also

- ▶ Healing
- ▶ Interfaith Dialog
- ▶ Psychological Types
- ▶ Shadow

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Covenant

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Historically, the word "covenant" has both political and religious antecedents. Its earlier usage has been linked more to the ancient Near Eastern treaty traditions which go back to the Hittites and remained central in neo-Assyrian imperial

politics (Schaper 2015). Such treaties, especially the vassal treaties, have been shown and/or argued in contemporary literature to have deeply influenced the Israelite concept of berith (Schaper 2015; Douglas and Tenney 1987). The biblical word *berith* often translated covenant which formed large part of the book of Deuteronomy "oscillates between the notion of the contractual and that of obligation or self-obligation" (Schaper 2015, p. 365). In the Hebrew Bible, there are four kinds of covenants, namely: the Noahic, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Davidic (Gn 8–9, 12:1–3, 17:1–14; Ex 19:5–6; 2 Sm 7:12–16). As argued by Schaper (2015, p. 365) "The notion of covenant is central to the Hebrew Bible and became the focus of the Jewish conceptualization of relations between the Jewish people and its God; it entered the bloodstream of Christian theology in the times of the early Church and became even more important in pre-Reformation and Reformation period" through the vernacularization of the Bible leading to its wider audience and impact on public imagination. Essentially, the meaning of the word covenant in whatever context it has been used denotes an idea of contractual relationship between two or more people, usually agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. It is quite commonly used in legal, social (marriage), and religious and theological contexts. In political circles, the word treaty is preferably used rather than covenant.

Covenant and Psychology

In terms of its psychological imploration, covenant is predicated on habit: a sense of obligation to consider the interest of others in decision-making and a commitment to do so that is not easily or unilaterally broken. In that regard, understanding the meaning of covenant and its associated expectant behavior on the part of parties involved as well as the transformation derived from it is a goal central to the heart of the discipline of psychology. This is because at the heart of the discipline of psychology is studying how human beings change, develop, or relate to their environments and social relations. Behavior in the context of human subjects has been explained to mean a "conscious and purposeful activity that can be evaluated in terms of efficacy, morality and responsibility" (Carpintero 2015a, 158). Behavior has been shown to be an integral part of the discipline of psychology. Thus behavior is "the defining object of scientific psychology" (Carpintero 2015b, p. 162). Covenant has the proclivities to reinforce and induce social and moral behavior. In simple terms, covenant has a linkage in constituting the order and shaping the moral psychology of parties involved in any agreement whether religious, economic, or political (Malik 2017). For instance, Rothman (1980) has examined the relationship between covenant and contract theories and the implication of this nexus for American constitutional theory.

In the lives of the Jewish people, for example, denouncing God and not obeying His rules meant a broken of a contractual agreement between the people and their God that always had a consequential effect, with example of going into exile. In the context of social relationship, for example marriage, the binding agreement of remaining to but one wife means that any promiscuous lifestyle on the part of any of the party involved in the marriage could lead to breakdown of the relationship. Hence, such binding agreement provides a context in living out a conscious lifestyle that does not negate such agreement. In legal and political treaties or agreement, parties involved in the agreement are required to adhere to certain regulations and practices that do not flout the lay down rules and regulations. These regulations and agreements produce inherent character traits that subvert any negative effect on the social lives of the parties involved (Polischuk 2016). Thus covenantal relations can be viewed from meta-cognitive fashion. Individuals in any form of agreement engage in meaningful and mindful behavior to actualize their goals and capacities in a covenantal mode.

In sum, the discipline of psychology is intertwined with the examination of human behavior. In the psychology of religion, the idea of covenant relates to the understanding of the

value and importance of utilizing religious resources to instill and ensure behavioral patterns.

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Creation

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In a religious context, the word "creation" refers to the cosmogonic moment or cosmogonic process or else, as a noun, to the manifest world. In modern terminology, we might speak of the former as the formation of the world or universe (usually in scientific terms from the "Big Bang" or some similar cosmic event) and the latter as the "environment." In prescientific worldviews, it was usual to hold that life, humankind, the Earth, and the heavens were created in their original form by the action of a deity or deities, and the world at large was referred to as "the Creation," the product of that Divine act.

The modern scientific worldview, and especially the theory of evolution, has undermined the simplest versions of these traditional beliefs, but religious people still understand the origins of the world and humanity in mythic terms, often along with rather than as antithetical to the scientific worldview. However, among some people these matters are still controversial and they insist upon a literal understanding of religious creation myths along with the outright denial of scientific theories. This view is usually styled "creationism." Conversely, believers in the scientific accounts of the origins of man and the universe often regard these as a conclusive refutation of traditional religion and the existence of God. This controversy has been especially acute in the United States where proponents of creationism have challenged the teaching of evolution as an unquestioned truth in schools. Such proponents are usually guided by a literal reading of the account of the creation of the world in the Bible's Book of Genesis.

Leaving aside literalist creationism, traditional religious and spiritual cultures use myths and symbols to explain the great mysteries of life. Mythic and symbolic accounts of creation abound. The creation may be a deliberate act by the gods or it may be the result of an accident or miscalculation. It may occur in stages, as in the Genesis account of creation over 6 days, or it may take place in a single act, as in the Islamic account where God (Allah) merely makes a decree (kun = the verb "to be") and it comes to pass. The creation may stem from nothing (creatio ex nihilo) or it may be presented as order being brought to preexisting, chaotic materials. It may be regarded as a gratuitous act by the Divine in which case the creation is said to be utterly other than the deity or it may be regarded as an act of Divine self-disclosure or self-externalization (emanationism). Very often in mythological forms found throughout the world, the creation is the result of a sexual, generative act such as the copulation of a sky god with an Earth Mother or sometimes by an autoerotic (masturbatory) act by a single deity or else instantaneous parthenogenesis. In other cases, analogies are taken from the

animal realm, such as the primordial "world egg" of the Orphic cults of ancient Greece. In some traditions, a primordial god vomits up the creation or it results from some other bodily elimination.

In more philosophical cosmogonies, the root of creation might be sound or it might be light, it might be auditory or it might be visual. In the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist religions, the creation extends from the sacred, primordial syllable AUM (Om) which, like a seed, contains all things within it. Similarly, in Christianity, the Gospel of John proposes that "in the beginning was the (Divine) Word." Alternatively, in many myths, there is first darkness and the creation comes about when a light (or fire) is kindled in the darkness; the darkness is dispelled and the forms of the world appear. The idea that light is the creative stuff of the cosmos is very ancient.

There are, in any case, countless variations and often diverse accounts within the same tradition. In the ancient Egyptian tradition, for instance, there were numerous creation myths existing side by side and it would be wrong to suppose that the Egyptians favored any one more than the others; each reveals different understandings that are complementary to each other and presents different aspects of a total theology. Even in the Bible's Book of Genesis, textual scholars identify two accounts of creation taken from two earlier sources. In fact, the familiar account of creation over 6 days with which the Book of Genesis begins (called the Priestly account) is the latter of the two. The older account, now embedded in the second chapter of Genesis, is the story of the creation of the garden of Eden and of Adam and Eve. Some reckon the story of the Flood as another type of creation myth taken from Mesopotamian sources now found woven into the Biblical narrative. Many creation myths have water as the creative element; life and the world emerge out of the creative waters. According to some interpretations, such myths are related to human genesis from the waters of the womb. More generally, many creation myths depend upon parallels between human and cosmic birth.

Commonly, in many traditions, the deity who creates the world is presented as a lesser deity or a lesser aspect of the Supreme and transcendent deity, in which case he is usually called the "demiurge," a divine craftsman who crafts the world from raw materials according to a celestial model. In dualistic systems, this demiurge is often portrayed as evil since he brings into being the world of suffering and decay. In more positive accounts, he is said to be perfectly generous and the creation is a result of his overflowing generosity and beautiful handiwork.

In psychological terms, the point of creation represents the moment of ultimate potential and unlimited creativity. There are some modes of therapy – such as Arthur Janov's "primal therapy" – that propose a psychological return to the moment of birth or even conception. In the arts, artists will often seek an experience in which they feel connected to the moment of cosmic creation. A famous instance of this can be found in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's celebrated visionary poem Kubla Khan where the poet – under the influence of opium – is transported to a "fountain of creation" that is the source of creativity.

See Also

- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Christianity
- ▶ Genesis
- ▶ God
- ▶ Om

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Creation and Creativity

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Creation Myth and the Creative Process

Creation myth contains narrative accounts of how one or more deities created the world. Because they are divine beings, creator goddesses and gods represent sacred, iconic images of creativity and the creative process. These myths might seem to have little to do with human creativity, because humans create on much smaller scales and because humans do not possess the magical powers of manifestation that goddesses and gods demonstrate. Interpreted metaphorically, however, cosmogonic tales of origin present imagery of archetypal creativity that can elucidate the day-to-day creative process as understood by research psychologists. Creation myths imagine creativity mythopoetically, conveying the subject through images and correspondences. Cosmogonic narrative presents imaginal case studies of the psychology of divine creativity.

Research psychologists define creativity as the ability to produce new and useful products. On the archetypal scale, creative products include the cosmos, the world, and the great powers therein such as earth, sea, sky, and wind. On the human scale, creative products include tools, scientific breakthroughs, art, and creation myths themselves. All creation myths were new at some point and have proven themselves spiritually and psychologically useful through their explanatory power, their ability to connect individuals with the greater cosmos through the imagination, and perhaps their ability to inspire further creativity. The creative people who make creation myth might even consciously or unconsciously include aspects of their own creativity in stories of divine origin. Creation myths represent examples of creative products and images of the creative process, as imagined by many different tellers from different cultures in different times.

Creativity researchers study creativity from a wide range of approaches. Some study the contributions of different styles of thought, such as wide-ranging divergent thinking versus the more focused style of convergent thinking. Some study the personality traits of creative people, such as the influences of motivation and different affective states on the production of creative work. Some study the creative process, which can include stages such as knowledge gathering, incubation, impasse, illumination, and verification. Some bring cross-cultural viewpoints to bear on the study of creativity. These and other areas of creativity research appear metaphorically in creation myths.

For example, androgynous creators such as the goddess Neith in ancient Egyptian myth display stereotypically masculine and feminine attributes, thereby demonstrating the personality complexity of creative people (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). The Hindu god Brahmā meditates before creating, in consonance with research findings that meditation increases creativity (Chaudhary and Pillai 2016). The collaborative creator gods in the Mayan Quiché creation epic *Popol Vuh* offer an image of the group creativity that can surpass the creativity of individuals (Sawyer 2012). The West African Yorùbán god Olódùmarè creates by means of an archetypal chain that connects heaven and earth, a polyvalent image of strength, coldness, captivity, reliability, divinity, and earthiness that well represents the ability to embrace ambiguity, which is a personality trait vital for creativity (Dacey and Lennon 1998). And the God of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible emphasizes the initial appearance of light, in an apt image of the illumination stage of the creative process, where new and useful ideas break through a state of impasse and fill the creative person with a feeling of metaphorical light (Russ 1993).

The diversity of creation myths reflects the diversity of approaches to and expressions of creativity. Each myth and each deity represent unique imagery of and perspectives on creativity, and no single myth or deity captures the entirety of the subject. Creativity researchers and creative people share a similar range of approaches and

expressions. In myth and in research, creativity resists generalizations.

Three commonalities of most creation myths are instructive, however. First, creation myths afford creativity a sacred dimension through their divine creative agents. Human creativity can participate in this same sacredness. Second, creator goddesses and gods set the example of showing up to their creative work unburdened by the human habits of procrastinating, complaining, or worrying. Third, creation myths convey their insights by means of the imagination, a style of thought which is essential to creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Individuals must imagine creator goddesses and gods in order to observe their attributes and actions, in effect exercising their faculties of imagination. These imaginal calisthenics also teach on a deeper, more psychological level than nameless, faceless statistics and research results. Imagining creator deities and their creative processes allows the individual to connect with them in the way of encounter, affection, empathy, and relationship.

Creator gods can be mentors, guides, and exemplars. They can lead by inspiration. No single deity's image applies perfectly to any individual's creative work, however, and many creator deities display maladaptive and even dangerous traits. Therefore, creative individuals would do well to emulate creator gods with great care and consciousness.

Creation myth offers a mythopoetics of creativity, imagining creative beings with whom the listener or reader can relate and adding meaning, beauty, and depth to the data of creativity research. Together, research and creation myth reveal a more fully developed, multidimensional view of the complex subject of creativity.

See Also

- ▶ Cosmic Egg
- ▶ Creation
- ▶ Deity Concept
- ▶ Primordial Waters

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Creation Spirituality

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I begin my essay with an overview of Matthew Fox's autobiography *Confessions: The Making of a Post-Denominational Priest* to provide the reader with a sense of where Creation Spirituality had its roots: in Matthew's childhood experiences, experiences in Nature, readings, Dominican studies, relationships with Native Americans, dreams, vision quest, and his encounter with the California poet, William Everson. As the reader will see, *Confessions* is not only a personal memoir but a cultural memoir, a memoir of the world's coming to consciousness in an age of Transformation. First, let us begin with a brief definition. By "Creation Spirituality" Fox means a *fourfold path*:

1. *Via Positiva*, delight, awe, wonder, and revelry
2. *Via Negativa*, darkness, silence, suffering, and letting go
3. *Via Creativa*, birthing and creativity
4. *Via Transformativia*, compassion, justice, healing, and celebration

(Fox 1996, p. 283).

All four of these paths suggest ways to human wholeness. Fox brings an early awareness into *Confessions* to the body. He links awareness of the body to cosmic history, in the supernova explosion that astrophysicists say occurred billions of years hence: an explosion of a star "that birthed the elements in our and other creatures' bodies" during the big bang of Creation. This birthing became the starting point for his book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ.* Yet, it was in Madison, Wisconsin, that Fox first sensed an "awareness of the Native American presence" and growing up in the Green State, he says he "often felt a spirit presence in the outdoors" (Fox 1996, p. 21).

This is a significant statement, for something of the Native American presence in the land spoke to Fox and continues to do so today, as it does so many Americans. Fox directs us all to look for our spiritual roots in an earth-based wisdom. It is this rootlike aspect of the archetype of Spirit and its ability to *embed* itself in the earth, Nature, and the world that to my mind can help make comprehensible Fox's discovery of his own personal mythic vocation of cosmic spirituality.

This earth or cosmic Spirit he refers to is, I believe, shamanistic in its Native Ground. If I am right in my hypothesis, Fox's narration of his subjective myth may be read as a story of our culture's attempts to recover its religious roots in the indigenous traditions of primal peoples of the earth and in facts of modern science. Indeed, Fox sunk the roots of the creation-centered spirituality tradition (of Europe) into the very depths of the American earth, and it is in this sinking, of an intellectual notion into the earth, into what Meister Eckhart calls the "Godhead" that Fox achieved his vision of Creation Spirituality for the current era.

The roots of his quest may be found in Fox's coming of age in the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest, Illinois, just outside Chicago (Fox 1996, p. 23). In an ironic twist of fate, Fox tells us he boarded the "Empire Builder" that took him on a ride to the Far West, to a hermit colony on Vancouver Island (Fox 1996, p. 29), and it was there that Fox's journey, from outer preoccupations with his Christian base, was traced to the source of all Cosmic Light: what ancient Hindus called the Self.

One cannot read *Confessions* without sensing connections between Fox's vocation as a Dominican and his call as a post-denominational priest to bring Light to the world out of creation spirituality traditions, in a way that transcends the divide between Eastern and Western spiritualities. The journey to the hermitage and his contemplations of the Nature and Cosmic being are a quest to find his religious vision in Western-Eastern spiritualities. He found a bridge in the writings of the most transcendental Dominican preacher of Europe, Meister Eckhart, who Fox judges as "the West's greatest mystic" (Fox 1996, p. 39).

It was not in America, however, that Fox came upon Eckhart's works – but, rather, through his summons in the East and his calling to Paris, France, which came by way of a personal letter from Thomas Merton (Fox 1996, p. 41). It was in Paris, at the age of 26, that Fox met his mentor, Père Chenu, who lit his mind on fire and helped him understand the origins of Creation Spirituality, a term Father Chenu coined. Yet Fox's tracing of his vocation to the spirits of Nature sound shamanistic to me, and it is clear that William Everson played a pivotal part in his process of self-discovery.

Since the Christ myth is only 2,000 or 3,000 years old, we must look deeper, I believe, to the shamanic traditions of the globe, for the precursors of Christ. Perhaps it was the shamans in whom the first cosmic visions of the Self were first incarnated that carved the deepest channels to the Cosmic Selfhood in the World Soul (Herrmann 2010)? Whatever the indigenous forces are that have shaped creation-centered spirituality in America, Matthew Fox has been aware of them, often to a marked degree.

Yet Fox, a theologian, not a shaman or medicine man, recognizes that healing is a natural part of the *Via Transformativia* and that it is really a priestly function to contribute, through compassion and social justice, to the healing of the

collectivity. And his "dream" of Creation Spirituality and the conscious extension of it offer a *cure* for what is ailing the West. It is my hypothesis that Fox was called by the "shamanic archetype" (Herrmann 2009, 2010) to administer medicine – the *Via Transformativia* – to his Dominican colleagues, an Institution of inspired and uninspired thinkers that had become disturbed in its collective functioning, since it had denounced the teachings of its greatest Christian mystics. Fox's cultural call, vocation, was to bring the sacred mystical teachings back into the vestibule of the Church and to show, through his rereading of Eckhart, Aquinas, Hildegard, and other Christian mystics, how all religions are essentially related, how they all connect, at their roots, and where the future direction of religion might be tending. Fox has tirelessly demonstrated how all churches must eventually become ecumenical if they are to survive and how creation-centered spirituality is really our myth, a myth in which we, as a species, are currently living out our Fate or Destiny. Its roots, I believe, can be found in shamanism.

Fox's time spent at the *Institut Catholique de Paris* was a time of cultural turmoil and revolution, and during this occasion of transformation, Fox was to play an instrumental role in attempting to alter the very structures upon which Christianity had been built. But Fox had no doubts that his work was in America. Although he happened upon the term Creation Spirituality in France, under Chenu's tutelage, his calling was to discover the source of it, and this involved a re-rooting of his mind in the indigenous ground of North America, where his original experience of the numinous was, on our own continent: in lakes, trees, and woods, first awakened during his childhood and adolescent sojourns. Fox tells us he was actually visited by Meister Eckhart himself in a dream. He views this dream as the "most transcendent dream" of his life (Fox 1996, p. 105). What came out of the dream and his shamanic suffering of his Christian heritage is the creative birthing of the Institute for Creation Centered Spirituality (ICCS), in Chicago.

Fox informs us that at Meister Eckhart's famous trial for heresy, the Rhineland preacher told the people present that we are all meant to "soar like eagles" (Fox 1980, p. 123). In Eckhart's mystical tradition, Fox found his foothold, his fourfold path, as well as a beginning of his troubles with Rome (Fox 1996, p. 127). The source of this controversy really began to heat up with a talk he gave to "Dignity," an organization of gay and lesbian lay Catholics in Seattle. This spirited talk planted the seeds for something ominous in the outworking of his career that he could not foresee, and it marks the major moment of inception of a vision that was to become central to the four paths of Creation Spirituality.

Little did Fox know, in giving this talk, what the reverberations would be in Rome and how these rumblings would send shock waves to Chicago, to California, and would eventually be felt in his life and in the lives of his faculty and students at ICCS. Like many of the big decisions that have come to him, the move of ICCS from Chicago to Holy Names College, in Oakland, California, was presaged by a dream that involved his quest for an indigenous "aboriginal mother love" that reveals his unconscious draw towards native regions (Fox 1996, p. 131). His dream depicts a descent to ancient pre-patriarchal religious sites. What Fox was seeking, at this time, is a personal and cultural healing of the lost connection between Western religion and science, a reconnection to the Goddess, and shamanism. During his journey West, he was seeking not only a cure for his personal wounds but also a cultural medicine (the *Via Transformativia*) for Western and Eastern religion as a whole.

During his mentorship under Chenu in Paris, Fox learned that our religions were not only troubled – they are sick; and in California, he found some of the medicine he was seeking to doctor at least some of the ills of Western civilization. Creation-centered spirituality aims to put us in accord with Nature and, as such, with the wisdom of the mother religions, the animals of the soul, and the lifeways of shamanic cultures. Fox tells us that the cure for the ailment of Western religion can be found in a "*spiritual encounter*," what William Everson referred to as "the essential genius of American spirituality" (Fox 1996, p. 133) as it was embodied and ennobled in the valiant fights of John Muir over the damming of

the Hetch Hetchy. Everson saw Muir's struggle to defend the American earth, its lakes, trees, and rivers, as "perhaps the chief turning point in the spiritual life of the nation." Reading Everson's seminal book, *Archetype West*, helped Fox understand his Christian vocation, as an American, like never before. "Nature *is* divine, the American soul was saying" (Fox 1996, p. 134), and the shamans of all nations had seen this to be true, thousands of years before Christianity.

Following the tracks of the shamanic archetype, at ICCS, Fox became deeply inspired by the Lakota spiritual teacher, Buck Ghost Horse, who was on the faculty there and bestowed upon him a sacred pipe (Fox 1996, p. 139). Following Cardinal Ratzinger's letters of complaint to the Magesterium over his book *Original Blessing*, Fox was then forced to take a year of silence, and during this dark time, he let go and followed the natural flow of the path of the Via *Negativa*. This does not mean that he was inactive. For during this year of silence, he published *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ.*

It was then that another chance occurrence filled him with an inner light of meaning. Fox was given a "medicine feather" of a vulture from New Mexico from a Lutheran pastor in a midwestern city, whose spiritual directors had been Native American shamans. Fox saw in the synchronicity of this event that his work had been to take what was dead in Christianity and recycle it, like a vulture (Fox 1996, p. 177). What gave Fox the fortitude to endure his trial of strength over his silencing was something inherent in the American earth itself, a fighting spirit ennobled in our American Bill of Rights: the Freedom of Religion.

Fox knew that the basic Christ principle is compassion and holding his Light to be a self-evident truth in the Bible, and with its knowledge, he set forth, courageously, to chart out his own vision, outside the Catholic Church, towards a path to a greater completeness. As a creative response to the year of silencing, Fox was led by the Native American spiritual elder, Buck Ghost Horse, on a vision quest, where his vocation to combine Native American spirituality with Western mystical traditions reached an apotheosis point in his inner evolution. It was during a visionary experience, atop a lonely mountaintop, during his questing, that the shamanic archetype penetrated his psyche with the brute force of a revelation, and his vision of creation was enlarged by an embrace with the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America, Aztec, and Inca (Fox 1996, p. 189). During his vision quest, Fox was given by Ghost Horse an "eagle-defense prayer stick" to protect him from the negative inquisitional forces of the Vatican (Fox 1996, p. 192).

Following his illuminating and dark ordeal of the vision quest (most of the entire forest was illuminated), Fox was eventually led to Nicaragua, where he visited Ernesto Cardenal, a former student of Thomas Merton and an avid reader of Walt Whitman. Like the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, and Jorge Borges of Argentina, Cardenal was deeply inspired by Whitman's long-line technique of free verse in the writing of his 600 page *El Cántico Cósmico*. As he was working on his book *The Reinvention of Work* on March 3, 1993, where the subject of vocation was elevated to a universal principle, across all religious traditions, Fox received the infamous letter of expulsion from the Vatican, which is as much a tragedy for the Catholic Order of Dominicans as for Fox himself: they lost their most ecumenical theologian! Yet, the Dominicans were also amongst his best of friends. In a letter of appreciation for his book on Aquinas, sent from William Everson, Fox was consoled and celebrated for his many achievements, in the following compassionate words: "May God sustain you in this moment of triumph of your vocation" (Fox 1996, p. 216).

Part of Fox's vocation, following his ordination as an Episcopal priest, has been to restore into Creation Spirituality the erotic mysticism that the Church has been lacking, including a warm embrace of feminism and homosexuality. For surely, a central part of the evolution of Western spirituality, Fox asserts, has been not only to make it more ecumenical but also to make final "peace" with our sexuality (Fox 1996, p. 237). Fox is far ahead of his times in this regard – for the good news is that the revelations of the Holy Spirit did not end with Scripture or with the Doctrines of the Church; and what better place to extend the myth

of Christ, and Christianity, than on the American continent, where the body was not divorced from Divinity (Herrmann 2010)!

What is needed, for our times, Fox feels, is the restoration of Christ's animal body and his sexuality for the future reinvention of priestly work in America, and Fox has been at the center of a revolution in the West to begin this effort of reinventing the priesthood by flinging the doors of Christianity wide open to all people, believers and nonbelievers alike. As a post-denominational priest, Fox has come to realize that his vocation outside the gilded gates of the Vatican has been to make Creation Spirituality known to the world (Fox 1996, p. 245).

During the writing of his memoirs, at 53, Fox said about Catholicism and Protestantism: "we must both draw from these two traditions *and move beyond them*" (Fox 1996, p. 256). The movement beyond Christian denominations and creeds is a transport of our culture *beyond* traditional images of Christ to a spirituality that is more earth-based and therefore extra *embodied*. Fox's fight to liberate sexuality, feminism, and deep ecology is what threatens the Church from its overly anthropomorphic views of the Bible (Fox 1996, p. 261).

When I read of the panentheism inherent in Eckhart's writings in Fox's book *Breakthrough*, I get a sense of the presence of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, Dickinson, Jeffers, or Muir, in the kind of mysticism Fox helps give birth to. What Fox has been seeking is a new priesthood, which can make room for *panentheism*: "New and ancient ways to midwife transcendence" (Fox 1996, p. 266). Coming full circle, from the cradle in Wisconsin, to France, to his spiritual return to his Native soil as an American, in California, following his encounter with Everson, Fox has come to see his role in society in the sacred lineage of religious teachers: "A time like ours – a transition time – is a time for old images of God to be buried and new ones to emerge" (Fox 1996, p. 272). The new images of God that will help to shape the future are just beginning to emerge on the horizon, during the world's crisis in faith in all three of monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

From 1996 to the present, Fox has continued to expand his thinking about this. From my personal conversations with the priest, it is apparent that he has been at the forefront of American spiritualists in moving towards a new spiritual paradigm that could help bring further evolution to the God-image to include a wider embrace and to bring forth and reclaim the emergence of the healing powers of shamanism for the global community. He challenges symbolically the patriarchal monotheistic judgments towards the feminine and nature in all three monotheisms, and his aim is to help liberate us from the shackles of patriarchy.

If a new birth of Spirit is to come to age, the world will need to let go of the fundamentalism and literalism of the Hebraic God, Christ, and Allah that are threatening the global village with more un-Holy Wars. New images of God that are emergent from the depths of the earth during this tragic moment of the death of the three patriarchal gods – their institutional track record of absolutism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and inquisitionalism – will have to make room for an emergent Spiritual Democracy (Herrmann 2010). This means that we will have to face the facts that there is plenty of sea room in the collective psyche for new images of the Spirit to emerge on a cross-cultural, transnational basis for each to find his or her place on a shimmering globe, spinning in endless Space. Such a vision of the transcendent unity of the human mind with the Ground of all Nature requires a descent into the earth, a movement "down" into the vast rivulets of the river of life.

This is a subject Fox takes up in *One River, Many Wells*, in what he calls "deep ecumenism," a notion structured by Meister Eckhart's metaphor of an Underground River, consisting in Fox's mind, of many wells of the world's religions all seeking their spiritual nourishment from its One matriarchal Source. Fox does not call the Underground River the Cosmic Christ. He leaves Eckhart's metaphor intact for what it is: River within the earth. In fact, he often uses terms such as "Buddha Nature" for the "Cosmic Christ," and of course he also talks about "the goddess," the Divine Mother, the Sacred Feminine, the Black Madonna, etc., in his many books and essays, and

especially in his newer book *The Hidden Spirituality of Men.* It is true that in the Cosmic Christ book, he uses the name ("Cosmic Christ") a lot, but that book is now 22 years old, and in it he proposes "Cosmic Wisdom" as an alternative title for those who carry too much baggage around the Christ movement. He also cites Thomas Aquinas on many occasions, who says "every creature is a name for God and no creature is a name for God" and Eckhart: "God is superessential darkness who has no name and will never be given a name." In this same tradition of the Apophatic Divinity, he also talks of the "Godhead," which is very different from God (as Being is from Action among other things). In Chapter 8 on the void and nothingness in *One River, Many Wells* and Chapter 5, on the multiple names for God, Aquinas and Eckhart and Fox suggest we simply can't understand the Divine with the mind. So, while some may feel that the Christ-image is not broad enough to include the spiritualities of the earth, Fox feels that the cosmic dimensions of Nature is large enough to contain us all, if we are open to further expansion of the Holy Spirit or the Buddha Mind in our lives.

It is perhaps his message of the cosmic Christ's and the Sacred Feminine coming into one's personal lives that might offer the brightest hope in the future direction of Christian religion, whether inside or outside the Church. For All religions have something important to teach us, Fox argues, and they are all still very *alive* today in the daily spiritual practices of billions of humans.

In Fox's California experience and his fortuitous encounter, through William Everson, with the writings of John Muir, an indelible mark was left on his spiritual inheritance that gave him a deeper appreciation of what the meaning of the Cosmic-Self archetype might be for the postmodern era. The reuniting of Christianity with Native American shamanism and the science of the Cosmos is at the center of Fox's efforts to instill creation-centered spirituality into the hearts and minds of people who are searching for answers to questions regarding their crises in faith. His basic belief is that there are many wells (religions) to God, but only One River. Whether to call this River the Godhead or the Buddha Mind, or the Black Madonna, or the scientific term Cosmos is the central question I am left with from a post-Jungian angle. The Underground River and Cosmos are, of course, two distinct archetypes of one marvelous unitary phenomenon within the vast diversity of Nature, and what is most remarkable about Mathew's celebration of Creation Spirituality is that he fuses the "upper" Cosmic Consciousness with the "lower" chthonic, instinctual dimensions of psyche, mind, and Earth.

As a follower of Eckhart and his metaphor of the One River, Fox may lift our spirits and deepen us down towards a more feminine earth-based wisdom still: Gaia as our Mother-wisdom. By moving us to listen to the ancient wisdom and voices of the Goddess and Native peoples of the earth (shamans and medicine people), we will hopefully open our ears to God's cosmic music of the spheres and learn how to dance together a human tribe, before it is too late.

Fox's vision of Creation Spirituality instills hope in the future direction of the Christian religion because it is ecumenical at its roots. Only through the transformation of religion, as we have come to known it, will a new birth in spirituality come about. Fox appears to be at the forefront of spiritual change. The changes in our soul concepts have the potential to inaugurate a shift in focus towards deep ecology that may reverse the axis of the world, hopefully turning our overly patriarchal religious institutions upside down. In *The Hidden Spirituality of Men* Fox writes: "Archetypes, like stories, make demands on us" (Fox 2008, pp. xxi, xxiv) and then adds this emphasis: "A rebirth of culture and self comes from one's soul and not from institutions" (Fox 2008, p. xxiv). Fox is getting at the heart of a current debate in our world regarding religious relativism. For Myths are, indeed, where changes in our soul concepts can be seen in their budding forms; Myths awaken us.

As I have indicated, Fox is at the cutting edge of spiritual transformation in American writing. His work is controversial, very much so. It challenges us! We may not agree with all of his ideas, but his books are essential reading, for anyone who wants to be informed about his myth of Creation Spirituality and what it has to offer to a

world on the verge of spiritual Transformation. Towards this effort, Matthew has played an important part in the cosmic drama of evolution.

See Also

- ▶ Fox, Matthew
- ▶ Whitman, Walt

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Criminality

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Criminality is the state of "being" a criminal, a designation generally accompanied by social stigma. A criminal is someone who commits a crime or, in other words, breaks or fails to comply with a law or rule. Implicitly then is the presence of a governing authority dictating law and enacting punishment for failure to adhere to it. The word crime originates from the Latin root cernō and Greek κρινω = "I judge."

How social criminality relates to breaches of divine law or covenant – sin in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or *pāpa* in Buddhism and Hinduism – has been complicated and contentious through the centuries. Roman Catholic canon, Puritan moral law, Islamic sharia, and Jewish halakah are examples of religious legal systems which claim absolute and all-encompassing jurisdiction over their adherents and yet must still navigate with political power structures and power-sharing with people from other or no faith. One has only to look as far as contemporary politics in the United States to see the line of demarcation between civil and moral laws, debatably able to be held as an abstraction, grow complicated, and even become erased in practical application as pathology, moral wrongdoing, and criminal activity become blurred: legal prohibitions against alcohol consumption, miscegenation, and homosexuality, being some historical and not-so-historical examples. Depth psychology complicates the matter even further, undermining the simplicity of legal and moral judgments by raising the possibility of motivations and impulses for criminal activity that lie outside the conscious self. What is one's culpability or moral responsibility for actions that result from forces outside one's conscious control, outside one's, in religious terms, free will? Despite his wisdom and incredible intellect, it was not his own decision making but a bigger fate – announced through a prophecy given by the Oracle at Delphi – that eventually dictated Oedipus's path and led to his tragic crimes.

A lot of energy has been put forth in psychological studies towards a new definition of criminality that incorporates the unconscious; the criminal and his/her unconscious has become a fascinating object of study. All of these accounts must take their place within the nexus of biological, psychological, and sociological factors. Cesare Lombroso, a fin de siècle criminologist, thought criminality could be detected as biological degeneracy, which would appear in particular physiognomic features. Others were more inclined to see criminality as housed within psychic reality. It was this view that made Wilhelm Stekel optimistic that criminality could be cured or even eradicated through psychoanalysis, stating, "Perhaps this change of the social order will go so far that in times to come criminals will be

analyzed instead of being punished; thus the ideal of a world without a prison does not appear as impossible to us as it did to a former generation" (1933).

Freud gave the famous and still clinically utilized depiction of the "pale criminal," who commits crime out of an unconscious sense of guilt that expresses itself as a "need for punishment" (1916, see also Reik (1925) and Fenichel (1928)). Anna Freud discusses criminality that results from defused aggression (1972), while others (Alexander and Staub 1956; Bromberg 1948; Steckel and London 1933) will talk about criminality as the opposite end on the scale as a neurosis - a too-lenient superego that cannot to control criminal tendencies from the id. Melanie Klein will directly contradict this: rather than weak or nonexistent, she says, the criminal's superego is overly strict, which causes the criminal to feel persecuted and seek to destroy others (1988/1934). Another tendency is to place criminality in an earlier, infantile stage of psychic development, whether in preoedipal rather than oedipal processing of guilt (Klein 1988/1927), a pregenital narcissism that is guided by wants and entitlement (Murray 1967) or a fixation in the anal-sadistic stage (Chasseguet-Smirgel 1978; Simmel 1920). Others, including Simmel, Westwick, and White, add an increased emphasis on the impact of physical and social environments, making room for an understanding of criminality as social protest. D. W. Winnicott links the criminal back to the deprived child, who once had and then lost something good enough from the environment (1984, 1987). Object-relations school will look at criminality in terms of the nexus of family and social relationships (Buckley 1985; L'Abate and Baggett 1997). Criminal acts have been speculated to both as transitional phenomena that attempt to create communication and dependency (Domash and Balter 1979) and as an impasse-creating defense against emotional contact and relationship (Ferro). According to Lacan (1966), the criminal is one who mistakes the symbolic for the real. Lastly, new understandings of shame (Gilligan 2003) and of trauma have also fed into criminological studies, and a more complex understanding of how victims become victimizers; Sue Grand discusses the "catastrophic loneliness" caused by "malignant trauma" that perpetuates evil (2000). A tangential piece of these studies has been the evolving studies on the criminality of women – back in interest these days in the USA due to rapidly increasing rates of female incarceration.

C

Analysis

These studies, while useful towards increasing understanding and implementation of the knowledge of the unconscious, are at their weakest when they profess a definitive characterization of the criminal; taken in their entirety, it seems obvious that the question of what we do with the bad in ourselves and how we contain or act on urges to hurt others are as unique and individual as (and connected to) Freud's Oedipal gateway or Jung's process of individuation. What is not unique, depth psychology and religion suggest, is that they are present. The earliest founding story of the Abrahamic traditions, which of the fall from the Garden of Eden, although interpreted differently by different traditions, is based in the concept of a primal crime, inherited by all people. (Freud too, in *Totem and* Taboo, narrates a creation myth in this vein.) According to most interpretations of these stories, who we are as people is born out of a criminal act, and in effect, in religious terms, our "fallenness," as well as the potential for further criminality, lies in every one of us. In the words of Ferenczi: "I must look for the cause of my own repressed criminality. To some extent I admire the man who dares to do the things I deny to myself" (qtd. by Costello 2002). Or Dostoevsky: "Nobody in the world can be the judge of the criminal before he has realized that he himself is as much a criminal as the one who confronts him" (1957). Or Jesus: "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?" (Luke 6:41–42, NRSV).

Seeing the criminal as an object of study, then, has the potential to reify him/her as a subjective other, separate and quantitatively different from

the investigator. It is important to ask what function morality is serving, who is doing the judging, and when do those human authorities benefit from remaining unquestioned or invisible or equated with the divine. Also, there is further thought to be done on the process of transformation from crime (action) to criminal (person) – when actions designated as "good" or "bad" designate people as inherently "good" or "bad." DeGrazia writes that society has a stake in maintaining the clear split between "good" and "bad," arguing that we need the preservation of order and of our ability to make decisions based on knowing who is bad and who is good (1952). Perhaps, yet we cannot pretend that we live in a world without principalities and powers. William A. White writes that "the criminal becomes the scapegoat upon which [man] can transfer his own tendency to sinfulness and thus by punishing the criminal be deludes himself into feeling a religious righteous indignation" (1966, see also Menninger on the desire for vengeance). Neil Altman lists criminality, along with exploitation, greed, unrestrained sexual passion as displaced by white people on to persons of color.

Lastly, studies focusing solely on the individual criminal can have the unhelpful consequence of obscuring the equally if not more relevant criminality of groups, societies, and nations. Jerome Miller criticizes psychologists and other social scientists for their complacency towards an emphasis on individual pathology, being willing to provide "the labels necessary to proceed with the most punitive recommendations available" (2001). Even some laws may in fact be criminal, as advocates against segregation, apartheid, systems of colonialism would historically attest, and as opponents of, for example, the Rockefeller Drug Laws in New York State would argue today.

Religion must answer to Freud's criticism of it as an agent of moral repression; it must decide how much of its function is indeed in reinforcing prohibitions or how much it also has a stake in providing a new space with which to evaluate the power structures, a separate authority that may trump improper usage of power and inequitable power structures. Historically, it has been the mechanism by which good and bad are kept far apart, and inequities are maintained, as well as the voice of conscience that, for example, led a few pastors to resist Nazi power, even by becoming criminals. Perhaps there is something to be said for breaking the rules. Jung took issue with religion aligning itself too much with the "good." Freud (1910) criticizes him for suffering from the "vice of virtue." He writes, "One must become a bad character, disregard the rules, sacrifice oneself, betray, behave like an artist who buys paints with his wife's household money or burns the furniture to heat the studio for his model. Without such a bit of criminality there is no real achievement."

See Also

- ▶ Evil
- ▶ Original Sin
- ▶ Sin
- ▶ Taboo

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Crises in Religious Movements (Failed Prophecy, Succession)

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New religious movements (NRMs) are, by definition, belief minorities often in confrontation with the majority. While marginal in terms of popularity, and involving no more than 1% of the population anywhere, they attract attention from media and scholars, and often produce dramatic events.

Three kinds of crises in new religious movements (NRMs) have been explored by researchers: failure of prophecy, leadership succession, and leader-initiated catastrophe. The type of crisis that has been investigated most often is the failure of prophecy, especially the phenomenon of stability in faith following the disconfirmation of major assertions and prophecies. Research has focused on groups which experienced a direct disproof of predictions made by leaders. Such was the case of the group described by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter, in *When Prophecy Fails* (1956). On a specified date, which the group announced to the world, all of humanity would perish, except for group members, who would be taken away in a spaceship. The date was announced (December 21, 1953), and group members expected the end of the world, and

their own salvation. After the prophecy failed, some of the group members maintained their faith. The group did not survive this crisis, but its disintegration was not immediate.

A popular notion, derived from Festinger et al. (1956), is that disconfirmation leads to increased proselytizing, as a way of reducing members' cognitive dissonance. This proselytizing hypothesis has not been confirmed in other studies. Still, the typical case remains that of a group which manages to cope well with what outsiders consider a major disconfirmation of faith.

There are cases where prophecy failures have not led to any visible crisis, possibly because the prophecies were only subject to disconfirmation in terms of timing. Thus, a prediction about the coming end of the world in 1984 may be reinterpreted as true in principle, and only temporarily delayed by other events. Under these conditions, a challenge to the group is met by an affirmation of ideological loyalty.

It has been suggested that researchers have underestimated the power of faith and commitment. One way of recovering from a loss is the refusal to fully register events. In most cases, groups have survived disconfirmation through some effort, but in other cases, a direct disconfirmation of claims leads to decline or disintegration.

To an outsider, it appears that prophetic or messianic failure will create a need to cope with shame and disgrace, and will be accompanied by loss of confidence and depression, but in many situations, individuals and groups are naturally capable of tolerating ambiguity and contradictions. Consistency is something that humans try to achieve only when reflective thinking is involved and some outside demand is felt. In some cases, the failure of several predictions about apocalyptic events was simply ignored by members. It was probably considered less important than other aspects of group membership.

Apparently, what counts is the framing of an event. A prophecy by a leader may be perceived from the outside as central and experienced from the inside as marginal. Some believers may frame an event as irrelevant to their commitment, which remains stable despite outsiders' judgment. Members will decide whether a disappointment is great or small. Identical processes may be observed in political groups, where loyalty is tested by repeated defeats.

A crisis that is more common than a failure of prophecy involves the loss of a leader, who in an NRM is often the founder. The International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), popularly known as "Hare Krishna," was founded in 1966 by Swami Prabhupada in New York City and became one of the best known NRMs of the period. Before his death in 1977, the founder decided to create a collective leadership and appointed eleven gurus from among the membership.

This has not stopped the group from going into what might be called a "postcharismatic decline." After 1977, the movement has suffered a series of serious leadership crises, schisms, and disputes. Eight of the eleven trusted disciples were expelled from ISKCON. There have been many confirmed reports of drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and of criminal behavior, including murder, involving members and leaders, which led to serious attempts at reform and revitalization. In 1998, ISKCON issued an official report detailing abuses in its boarding schools and paid about $10 million to victims.

A crisis of succession and leadership which involved also one of the most shocking cases of sexual exploitation by a leader, took place in 1988–1993. Vajradhatu, a Western Tibetan Buddhist group, which has changed its name to Shambhala International, was founded in 1971 by Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche (1939–1986). Contrary to the widely held image of the Buddhist monk, Trungpa was visibly non-celibate, having sex with women followers, drank alcohol quite heavily, enjoyed meat and smoked tobacco, but objected to the use of marijuana.

In 1976 Trungpa named a successor, Thomas Rich, who took the name Osel Tendzin. Tendzin became the leader, upon Trungpa's death in 1987. Appointing a non-Tibetan as the successor to

Trungpa set a highly unusual precedent, but the Vajra Regent, as he was known, was a man of charisma and ability. The movement seemed to be overcoming the succession crisis, but then came a predicament that no one had expected. It grew out of the leader's sexual practices. He was openly bisexual and had numerous sexual partners. This turned out to be a problem when the leader contracted AIDS and still continued to have sex with followers. The movement tried to hide the problem for a while.

In March 1989, Osel Tendzin was accused of having sexual relations with disciples and of knowingly transmitting the AIDS virus. At that point, he explained his behavior in public meetings and stated that it was his teacher, the movement's founder Trungpa, who had assured him that he had nothing to worry about regarding himself or his sex partners, thanks to "Vajrayana purification practices" and his enlightened state of being, which protected him from any effects of the HIV virus. He was eventually asked to resign from his position, and died in 1990.

It should be noted that despite the crisis and disillusionment with the leadership, most members remained completely loyal, and the movement survived, but its name was changed to Shambala. A visit to the Shambala International web page leads to the positive description of Osel Tendzin, described as "an inspiring teacher" and an "effective administrator."

After 1993, the group's leader has been Sakyong Jamgon Mipham (born Osel Rangdrol Mukpo on December 11, 1962), son of Chogyam Trongpa. In July 2018, it was revealed that Sakyong Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche was involved in sexual harassment and sexual relations with female followers. He also confessed to being an alcoholic. His leadership activities have been suspended, and the group is now again facing the same predicament that appeared in 1988. We can safely predict that whatever decision is made in terms of leadership, most members will maintain their loyalty, and the group, with its thousands of followers, will survive.

The third type of crisis faced by some NRMs has been a catastrophic mass murder choreographed by leaders. It leads to the death of most members, but not the end of the group.

Since the late 1970s, there have been several well-publicized NRM mass killings tragedies, including the Peoples Temple, the Branch Davidians, the Solar Temple, Heaven's Gate, the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God in Uganda, with 924 members killed in March 2000. The victims often included dependents of group members, and not just members. These groups turned out to be totalitarian organizations where exploitation and violence were inherent.

One well-publicized case was that of The Order of the Solar Temple (Ordre du Temple Solaire), which was an international Rosicrucian-Christian group. It was started in the 1980s by Luc Jouret (1948–1994), a Belgian practitioner of homeopathy, and Joseph Di Mambro (1924–1994), a Canadian. The group was active in France and in French-speaking areas of Canada, Switzerland, and Belgium. Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret had between them a wide repertoire of fraudulent practices, from bad checks to fake cures. The official belief system of the group, combining claims about "ancient Egypt," "energy fields," reincarnation, and the "Age of Aquarius," is so widely offered in hundreds of groups all over the world as to be banal and harmless. But this was a high-involvement group, not just a club built around a series of lectures.

This meant that members signed over their assets to the group, which according to some estimates had more than ninety million dollars. Luc Jouret preached a coming apocalypse, for which members had to prepare by arming themselves. At the same time, there were promises of a "transition to the future," an afterlife for members on another planet near Sirius, the brightest star in the firmament.

In 1993, the Solar Temple became the target of police attention (for illegal weapon charges) and sensational media reports in both Canada and Australia. In July 1993, Jouret and two associates received light sentences from a judge in Quebec for their attempts to buy pistols with silencers. The most sensational media reports,

calling the Solar Temple a "doomsday cult," turned out to be right on the mark. On October 4, 1994, 46 members and four children were found dead in two locations in Granges-sur-Salvan, in Cheiry, Switzerland, and in one location in Morin, Quebec. The victims were shot and then set on fire; the leaders, who did the shootings, committed suicide. Five days earlier two former members and their infant son were murdered in Quebec.

On December 16, 1995, in a repetition of the same horror, 13 more members and three children met their death, laid out in a star pattern in the Vercors region of eastern France. The ritual killings were explained on the basis of the group's beliefs in a new life after death on another planet. "We leave this earth to rediscover a Plane of Absolute Truth, far from the hypocrisy and oppression of this world," said a collective suicide note. The murders in Quebec were explained as the result of the victims' disobedience to the leaders in having a baby without permission. It is possible that Di Mambro, terminally ill, wanted to take as many with him as he could.

What is most significant psychologically but only rarely noted is that the catastrophic crisis, which eliminates most group members, is not the end of group identity and loyalty. Thus, the history of the Branch Davidians did not end in 1993. The group, which has always been small, survives, and believers in the United States and elsewhere still hold on to the teachings of David Koresh. In the Internet age, group identity lives on, as web sites maintain the beliefs and the loyalty to the dead leaders.

What we have observed is that in most cases, crises in NRMs are overcome because of the readiness on the part of members to put loyalty, solidarity, and commitment above other considerations, sometimes at high cost to themselves. We can speak of love and attachment to leaders, beliefs, and identity. At the social psychological and economic level, we can speak of investment in relationships and a lack of alternatives. Members have burned bridges to other groups and have close friends in the group. This can be compared to life in a political party or in an underground revolutionary cell.

Identification with the group and with peers could have unique evolutionary value to humans. Attachment to kin and clan has developed over millennia of hominid development and may lead to tragedy, but most often offers tangible and nontangible rewards.

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Crisis Pastoral Counseling

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Crises

A crisis is an acute emotional and/or spiritual state, which persons perceive as overwhelming despite the use of typical coping methods and resources. Extraordinary or even hazardous events are not crises in themselves; the self-appraisal of being unable to cope is essential. Individuals, families, or groups can experience crises. Due to the frequent spiritual or religious dimension, persons in crisis often approach pastors and pastoral counselors for assistance.

Crises last no more than a few weeks. Since the level of anxiety and pain is not sustainable for a long duration, individuals and systems will reestablish a homeostasis. The outcome can be adaptive: a return to a similar precrisis functioning. Following significant crises, it is more likely

that persons will either grow – as a result of learning new coping skills and/or developing new resources – or persons will function less effectively. Therefore, crises are frequently seen as danger and opportunity. Because persons in crisis are not coping well on their own, prompt, effective intervention is crucial for reducing the negative impact, maximizing the possibility of second-order change, and increasing resilience for future distressing events.

Assessment

The assessment process of a crisis is intrinsically connected to its resolution. In the initial session or contact, caregivers must evaluate the potential for harm. Direct, clear questions are used to appraise the threat of suicide, ongoing abuse, assault, or other victimizations. If the risk of injury or death is high, the threat needs to be reduced. In hazardous situations, pastors and pastoral counselors may face ethical choices regarding the limits of confidentiality and intervention. Utilizing a hierarchy of needs, other vulnerabilities should be evaluated to help persons in crisis prioritize their response. These assessments and immediate interventions to address risks serve to stabilize the situation.

Helping persons determine whether they are in crisis involves an examination of attempted methods of resolution and resources utilized. This review may produce new options. The counselor should also explore how persons have coped in previous predicaments, using a question like, "When you've been overwhelmed before, what has helped you?" Strengths and an understanding of what coping methods haven't been attempted this time may be identified.

Even if solutions don't arise, the evaluation process can produce a change in the construal of the situation, reducing or even suspending the crisis. Persons often feel less overwhelmed when they can view their situation from a new perspective. Research indicates that the most important factors for a positive outcome from a crisis are past resolution of crises or other significant challenges, perceived ability to resolve the current crisis, and strong social support (Hoff 2001). Therefore, reinforcement of self-efficacy and the identification of potential support systems are primary goals of crisis counseling.

There are several "*categories*" of crises, any of which of which can contribute to the perceived inability to cope. Although there is a tendency to label a crisis using a precipitating event – e.g., a midlife crisis – other factors frequently play a critical role, as was seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Assessing each of these dimensions produces a holistic understanding of the precipitating origins of the crisis.

Situational crises tend to be unanticipated. If choices contributed to the situation, a counselor may need to help the persons explore the resulting guilt and/or shame. Survivor guilt is another common component of situational crises when death occurs. Pastoral counselors are particularly suited for these troubling aspects (potentially present in all kinds of crises) because of the redemptive, hopeful, and forgiving dimensions of religion. Types and examples of situational crises include:

- Disasters and other environmental events, from both natural and human origins
- Personal – illness, injury, unemployment, failure, material loss
- Relational – death, divorce, rape, interpersonal conflict, change in support system

Developmental. Although ordinary transitions might be partially anticipated, persons may not have prepared for their impact. Particular characteristics of a developmental event often contribute to the likelihood of a crisis: timing, e.g., atypically early or late parenting; duration, e.g., longer menopause; and the level of expectation that the transition would be challenging. Pastoral counselors may want to utilize religious rituals, which are potent resources for crises that include developmental components. Religious communities are also valuable support systems, serving a preventative and ameliorative function of developmental crises.

Sociocultural factors are often overlooked, particularly when the counselor is from a different social location. Discrimination, oppression, a systemic "Catch-22," and economic downturns are common examples. A systems analysis is a useful method for evaluating this dimension. Often persons, groups, or institutions who should be supportive are contributing to the crisis, due to the roles of the persons involved. Power dynamics also need to be examined to identity limitations to efficacy. In many cases, persons who have experienced a crisis find solace in addressing the injustice of the sociocultural dimension.

Religious/Spiritual. Those who are acutely distressed frequently look toward religious beliefs to make sense of their experience. Confronted with their finitude, they seek meaning and a sense of control over their circumstances. However, as Pargament (2001) has described, some styles of religious coping are more effective than others. For example, belief systems that have little internal locus of control are associated with poorer problem-solving skills. A crisis of faith may ensue in any theology when transcendent assistance or presence is not evident as expected. Questions of theodicy arise and may be the primary source of distress. Even for those who are less formally religious, existential threats to freedom, personal identity, and the meaning of life may be experienced as deeply spiritual conflicts. The pastoral counselor may need to help a person assess the level of congruity among one's worldview, practices, and embedded beliefs.

These four categories are not completely discrete and can be concurrent. For example, in addition to the apparent sociocultural and religious dimensions, the calamity of September 11, 2001, resulted in intrapsychic/systemic vulnerability that for many people raised profound spiritual questions.

Regardless of the precipitating events, people in crisis typically have experienced a loss, or the threat of loss, of something considered important. The crisis counselor will want to help them understand what has been lost, types of which include material, relational, intrapsychic, functional, role, and systemic (Mitchell and Anderson 1983).

Intervention

Establishing rapport with those who are overwhelmed requires a safe environment. Physical well-being, initiated via a risk assessment, is connected to the trust necessary for persons to feel emotionally secure enough to reflect up their distress. Reassurance that "everything will be ok" is ineffective and unadvisable. Even those in crisis usually recognize empty guarantees; in some circumstances, such assurances may lead to poorer decisions. Calm, clear communication increases the sense of safety and builds emotional attunement. Spiritual grounding is a particularly valuable resource for helping the crisis responder not overreact to anxiety. Recognizing and accounting for sociological and situational differences, including values and relational patterns, increases the effectiveness of communication.

Crises can be stressful for a caregiver, creating uncertainty as to what to do. However, respect and concern are relatively easily communicated; one need not fear saying the wrong thing even in hazardous situations like a suicide threat. Crisis counseling involves a more direct, interrogative style of engagement, particularly in assessing the nature and scope of the distress. Nevertheless, questions that can be answered with yes or no generally limit rapport. A caregiver also should steer clear of questions beginning with "why," which may unintentionally assign blame and create unnecessary defensiveness. Although the crisis counselor seeks to make a distressed person feel understood, use of the phrase, "I understand" might be perceived as denying the uniqueness of the person's situation.

The assessment process generally identifies concrete problems that contributed to the crisis. An intervention plan should be developed collaboratively to maximize the sense of self-efficacy. Doing something for persons that they could do for themselves is not empowering and may decrease the sense of being able to cope effectively.

Reinforcing personal and social strengths increases resilience, thus serving a preventative function. The pastoral counselor may sensitively encourage the use of religious and spiritual

resources, which not only provide comfort and strength but also help persons make sense of what has happened. One must work with the particularity of embedded beliefs, symbol systems, and relationality (Doehring 2006). As a distressed person reflects about the meaning of what has happened, it is important to listen for destructive narratives, which unnecessarily blame oneself (associated with shame) or others (scapegoating). Ameliorative and life-giving practices such as reconnecting with others and with one's core values are a critical goal. Religious communities also can model such a deliberative theology, by engaging difficult issues before crises arise.

A primary goal of the counselor is to limit the extent to which a crisis is experienced as a trauma. Persons react instinctively to traumatic events, which are severe threats to their well-being, identity, or spirit. The stress of the flight, fight, or freeze mechanisms can have long-term physiological, emotional, and spiritual effects (Yoder 2005). These potential consequences include radical suffering in which a person's own sense of humanity is diminished (Farley 1990). The report of unbearable distress for long periods is a sign of traumatization. The mere establishment of new coping mechanisms or resources will not return them to precrisis functioning and may not prevent destructive acting out or acting in. Even empathy, problem-solving, lamentation, and eschatological hope may not be sufficient for healing; justice is often required, especially for traumatized communities. Crisis counselors also must be aware of potential secondary trauma, especially when dealing with victims of violence or events that may resonate with the counselor.

See Also

- ▶ Dissociation
- ▶ Evil
- ▶ Existential Psychotherapy
- ▶ Family Therapy and Pastoral Counseling
- ▶ Grief Counseling
- ▶ Hospice
- ▶ Liminality
- ▶ Meaning of Human Existence
- ▶ Religious Coping
- ▶ Rites of Passage
- ▶ Solution-Focused Counseling
- ▶ Spiritual Emergence
- ▶ Theodicy
- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Vicarious Traumatization

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Crucifixion

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Crucifixion (from Latin *crux*, cross) is a method of execution in which the condemned is tied or nailed to a cross, pole, or tree and left to hang until dead. It was employed in ancient Rome until Christianity became the state religion in the fourth century and has been used, less commonly, in various places around the world to the present day.

Christ's crucifixion is described in all four gospels and is pivotal to the Christian understanding of redemption. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). In Christian faith, Christ overcame sin and death on the cross; hence the cross becomes for Christians the symbol of life and hope.

Psychologically understood, crucifixion can be seen as the acceptance of personal suffering and the consequent realization of one's own individuation, when the ego becomes a part of the self. When Jesus on the cross cries out in the words of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he portrays, in psychological terms, a crucial phase of individuation. Jung wrote, "Since 'the soul is by nature Christian' this result is bound to come as infallibly as it did in the life of Jesus: we all have to be 'crucified with Christ', i.e., suspended in a moral suffering equivalent to crucifixion" (Jung 1953).

See Also

▶ Christ
▶ Christianity
▶ Individuation
▶ Jesus
▶ Jung, Carl Gustav

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Cultural Psychology

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Cultural psychology represents a middle stage of psychological reflection between cross-cultural and indigenous psychology. All of them to various degrees take into account the fact that the cultural context in which an individual operates makes a difference for their perception of the surrounding world.

Migration and Acculturation Strategies

The cultural diversity of the world represents an obvious fact for any observer. This fact becomes even more salient when people of different backgrounds meet through both voluntary and involuntary migrations. Migration implicates acculturation changes that result from the fact that people of different cultural background come into face-to-face contact. These changes pertain to both groups. Different theoretical approaches stress the fact that cultural groups involved in acculturation might display different level of agency, as well as the fact that the acculturation process might be unidirectional or bidirectional (Rudmin 2003; Sam 2006). There are four general strategies of acculturation: *assimilation* when individuals adopt a new culture and simultaneously abandon the

original cultural identity, *integration* when individuals opt for maintaining the original culture and also adopting the new culture at the same time, *separation* when individuals maintain the original culture without seeking contacts with the new culture, and *marginalization* when no contact with the original culture is maintained and when contact with the new culture is possible. No matter what acculturation strategy is selected or possible, individuals involved in the process experience both shared similarities and marked differences between themselves and others.

The newest model of acculturation strategies *Relative Acculturation Extended Model* (*RAEM*) has been developed by group of Spanish scholars (Navas et al. 2005, 2007) who were researching acculturation of both African immigrants and local population in the south of Spain. Research results permit to specify seven separated domains in which different acculturation strategies might be adopted. They are the following domains: first, *political and government system* which represents social structure and hierarchies in the society; second, *labor and work* which is organization of the professional activities; third, *economic* representing earning and spending activities; fourth, *family* which described both strategies of reproduction but also system of raising children; fifth, *social* which is network of relations outside family bonds; sixth, *ideological* formed from philosophical or religious representation of the surrounding world; and, seventh, *religious* beliefs and values. Major value and novelty of the model stays with the fact that it creates space for analysis of simultaneously existing acculturation strategies (in both hosts and guest population) which are domain specific rather than universal. *RAEM* provides also a tool for better understanding why changes in some domains proceed at different pace, for example, why migrants relatively quickly adapt to political and economic realities of the new country, while family and religious conviction remain pretty untouched by changes in their living environment.

Reasons of Bias in Academic Psychology

In spite of this reality, psychology as an academic discipline is mostly pursued from one specific perspective, i.e., that of western scholars. Such a situation leads inevitably to ethnocentric attitude towards encountered diversity. The concept *ethnocentric* has been introduced by William G. Sumner in 1906 (Berry et al. 2002). It describes the tendency for using norms of one's own group as the model for perceiving other groups. The behavior of others gets evaluated and judged via one's own system of standards for what is deemed correct and proper. The assumption is supported by what is sometimes referred to as the principle of "psychic unity" of humankind, i.e., the conviction that there is a central processing mechanism inherent in all human beings and therefore that perceived diversity between people is inconsequential. The central processor remains context and content independent. Such a perception of human nature is supported by the reality of who and where the majority of psychological research takes place.

A recent content analysis study of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* has clearly pointed to the fact that 99% of the articles were written in the West, with 92% of the articles coming from the United States and Canada (Quinones-Vidal et al. 2004). Theories, data, and research methods are also rooted in Western tradition. One might say that research is conducted on samples drawn from a population which is nontypical for the majority of the world's population, or even more so it can be considered as anomalous because of the differences related to wealth, individualism, and secularism. Analysis of articles in leading psychological journals in the 1994–2002 period in which culture appears as one of the keywords demonstrates that in journals devoted to experimental and cognitive psychology, this is the case for 1, 2% of the articles, in journals for clinical psychology 4, 3%, for developmental psychology −4, 3%, and in journals for social psychology 4, 8% (Norenzayan and Heine 2005).

Psychologists became concerned about the underestimated role of culture in their discipline in the 1960s. Concept of culture "usually refers to a particular group of people and includes their values, or guiding principles, and behaviors, or typical activities. Those values and behaviors are symbolized in the things that the group of people produces, such as art, music, food, and language. All those things are passed down from generation to generation" (Mio et al. 2006, p. 6).

Approach from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Psychology

The beginning of a new field of psychology, cross-cultural psychology, which started to take seriously the cultural diversity of humanity, can be linked to the first journals in the field: *The International Journal of Psychology* in 1966 in Paris and *The Journal of* Cross-Cultural Psychology in 1970 in the United States. The main questions raised by psychologists representing this field pertain to the problem of to what degree western psychological theories describe accurately experiences and behaviors of people who are born and raised in other cultures and whether there are any culture-specific psychological constructs.

Cross-cultural psychology conducts research on the similarities and differences of people coming from different cultural and ethno-cultural groups. It also analyzes relationships between psychological, sociocultural, and biological factors, as well as changes in these factors (Berry et al. 2002). Research conducted from the perspective of cross-cultural psychology is comparative. It is conducted in two or more national, ethic, or cultural groups. Differences found in these groups are explained by cultural characteristics of the groups. Cross-cultural psychology uses two kinds of concepts: *etic* (universal) and *emic* (local). *Etic* represents concepts which are universal in all cultures (all cultures have some kind of language, art, family structure, mythology, rituals), while *emic* represents elements which are unique to a given culture. For cross-cultural psychologists, culture serves as an explanatory tool for encountered differences. A major concern of cross-cultural psychology is to find research methods that allow for the "psychic unity" of humanity to be revealed in spite of cultural differences between people living in different contexts. Lots of efforts are placed in finding test materials and research tasks that can be used across cultures.

Approach from the Perspective of Cultural Psychology

Cultural psychology represents an attempt to take culture more deeply into account. In contrast to cross-cultural psychology, it does not presume the premise of "psychic unity" that to some extend permeates approaches of cross-cultural psychology. According to Richard A. Shweder (1991), "Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotions" (p. 1). For cultural psychology humans are constructing meanings in a sociocultural environment. This environment becomes an intentional world. Objects existing in the world are receiving meaning through human involvement with them and reactions to them by members of given culture. "Cultural psychology is a study of intentional worlds. It is a study of personal functioning in particular intentional worlds" (Shweder 1991, p. 3) An individual can be understood correctly only in the surrounding of her environments. The role of the psychologist is to discover both the meaning which gets attributed by an individual to her environment and the influence of this environment on the individual. What cultural psychology shares with its predecessor cross-cultural psychology is the fact that the majority of the research has been conducted by western scholars, applying western-based psychological concepts and theories assuming a universal character (Gregg 2005).

Approach from the Perspective of Indigenous Psychology

Criticism of universality in psychological theories came from psychologists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, who had been trained in the West. Upon returning to their countries of origin, they faced problems and numerous difficulties when attempting to apply supposedly universal theories in their home setting. These difficulties have stimulated a desire to create more adequate means and methods based on the understanding "that each culture should be understood from its own frame of reference, including its own ecological, historical, philosophical, and religious context" (Kim et al. 2006, p. 5). A review of various definitions of indigenous psychology points to the fact that "the definitions all express the same basic goal of developing scientific knowledge system that effectively reflects, describes, explains, or understands the psychological and behavioral activities in their native contexts in terms of culturally relevant frame of reference and culturally derived categories and theories" (Yang 2000, pp. 245–246). Indigenous psychology advocates a descriptive approach according to which it is necessary to first understand how people function in their natural context. The need for such an approach comes from the fact that some of the cultural facts present in a specific cultural context cannot be understood correctly unless analyzed from the perspective of that cultural context. An example of massive decline of church attendance of Polish immigrants after their arrival to Great Britain (statistics provided by the Polish Catholic Mission in Great Britain claim that only 8% of Polish immigrants practice their religion while in Britain, with the remaining 92% loosening their ties with Catholicism) cannot be correctly understood without analyzing the cultural differences in which religious practices are taking place in Poland and in the United Kingdom. The important aspects here of being in a new cultural context are multiculturalism and religious heterogeneity in Britain as contrasted with cultural and religious homogeneity in Poland, flexible and private patterns of religious practice amongst the native British population in contrast to the strong pressure in Poland to attend religious services because of a feeling of national identity based on religious affiliation (Poles-Catholic) and boredom and lack of understanding for Poles when experiencing English-language church services in Britain, instead of services conducted in the mother tongue in Poland. In conclusion, for both research on and psychological clinical services that address human religiosity taking place in different contexts, both cultural psychology and indigenous psychology seem to offer a much more promising ground than cross-cultural psychology.

See Also

- ▶ Migration and Religion
- ▶ Religious Coping
- ▶ Ritual
- ▶ Syncretism

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Culture Heroes

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Most cultures have culture heroes. Typically, the culture hero assists the creator by living with the newly created humans in the world and teaching them religious rules and ceremonies and ways of survival. In short, the culture hero, unlike the warrior hero or the questing hero, establishes the community's institutions and traditions; he literally establishes "culture." This is not to say that the culture hero cannot also become a warrior or a questor. The culture hero sometimes takes the side of the people against the creator. In the interest of his people and their survival, he can, for instance, steal fire, as Prometheus does from Zeus. Or he can be a trickster who sometimes introduces unpleasant aspects of human life. Coyote, in a Maidu Indian myth, brings death. In matrilineal cultures the culture hero can be female, as in the case of the sisters "Life Bringer" and "Full Basket," who teach the Acoma Indians how to live.

Often the culture hero's powers can be attributed to divine origins. He can be conceived miraculously through divine intervention in the human world. This is the case with Jesus and the Buddha, both in a sense culture heroes, as they teach the people new ways of survival, albeit spiritual rather than material survival. Culture heroes make their societies safe by struggling against monsters and can even die for their people, sometimes transforming themselves into food that will ensure survival, as in the case of Jesus, who becomes spiritual food, or the many Native American versions of Corn Mother or Father, who become sustenance for the body.

The culture hero, then, nurtures the given culture and, metaphorically, *is* the culture, the ultimate embodiment of what the culture is. It is this fact that leads to the psychological meaning of the culture hero. The culture hero embodies the very soul of a culture. He represents much more than the ego, the central reference point of the collective consciousness of the culture. Rather, he is the embodiment of the culture's Self, i.e., the collective totality of the culture's unconscious and conscious psyches, fighting the monsters that live within us all and establishing the balance and reason we need to survive in the world. To give an example, Carl Jung wrote of the Christ as the symbol of Self, and insofar as Jesus can be seen as a culture hero, he becomes for Christians the Self, the wholeness which individuals and the culture as a whole strive to discover within. The same could be said of Muhammad for Muslims or Manabozho for several Native American groups or the Buddha for Buddhists. Ultimately, the culture hero is who we are or who we could be. The culture hero is Self-knowledge.

See Also

▶ Hero
▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
▶ Myth
▶ Self

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Cupid and Psyche

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Myth of Cupid and Psyche

The myth of Cupid and Psyche (Cupid is sometimes known by his Greek name, Eros, and is sometimes called Amor, meaning "love") is a story within the longer story of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. This longer story is a witty, obscene, and ultimately religious tale of bodily and spiritual transformation. Within it, the story of Cupid and Psyche ends with the transformation of the human princess Psyche to goddess. Psyche was the youngest daughter of a king and queen who offended Venus, goddess of beauty and sexuality, by claiming that she is no more beautiful than their child. Venus sent her son, Cupid, to make Psyche fall in love with the worst of men, but he fell in love with her instead. Apollo's oracle prophesied that she would marry a monster and when her parents left her on a mountaintop to meet her fate, Cupid had her brought to his palace where they lived blissfully. Psyche never saw her husband and only met him at night in bed. If she had been able to endure this condition until she gave birth to their daughter, it would have been lifted and she would have become a goddess. Psyche's two jealous elder sisters visited her and persuaded her that she was married to a monstrous snake, which she must kill. Psyche took a lamp and knife, but when she saw the glorious god asleep in bed, she fell deeply in love with him, wounding herself on his arrow. She burned his shoulder with a drop of oil from the lamp and Cupid left, reproaching her for her disobedience. Psyche sought the aid of the gods to find her beloved Cupid, but in vain, until the angry Venus set her the task of sorting a heap of seeds, an impossible task for a human that was achieved for Psyche by some helpful ants. Then Venus ordered her to fetch some wool from her lethally aggressive golden sheep. A reed of the stream advised Psyche to wait until evening when the sheep were calm, and then she picked up the wool that the sheep had lost in the field. The next task was to bring water back from the source of the Styx, fatal river of death, and here Psyche was helped by Jupiter's eagle. Finally Venus sent her to the underworld to bring back a box of beauty from Persephone. This time Psyche was helped by a tower which told her how to enter the underworld and leave it safely, taking coins for the ferryman and bread for the guardian dog, Cerberus, and instructed her not to aid the dead who would plead for her help from the waters of the Styx. Following this advice, Psyche gained the box but opened it along the way and fell unconscious. She was brought back to life by Cupid, and Jupiter raised her to goddess. Their child was Voluptas ("pleasure").

Neoplatonic Interpretation

Apuleius, who wrote this story in the second century CE, was educated in Platonic philosophy at Athens and deeply interested in the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris; the main story ends with initiation into these mysteries. Apuleius' tale of Cupid and Psyche has long been understood as a Neoplatonic allegory of the ascent of human consciousness from earthly to divine love. In another of his works, the *Apologia*, Apuleius speaks of two Venuses, one the goddess of carnal love and the other of a higher form of love. "Psyche" is a Greek word which had by Apuleius' time become roughly equivalent to the Christian term, "soul." Classical representations of Psyche show her with butterfly wings, alluding to her transformation to goddess. To interpret the whole myth of Cupid and Psyche in terms of the Neoplatonist ascent of human consciousness, however, divests it of *The Golden Ass*'s sexual urgency. His Cupid is a splendidly embodied deity who bears the

weapons that inflict compelling sexual desire as they wound, and there is little evidence that Psyche gains enlightenment or moves from her earlier state of sexual desire to a spiritual form of love at the end of her story. In fact she commits more than one act of disobedience to the gods and is ultimately rescued by Cupid rather than gaining him as the ultimate prize in a hero-quest.

Christian Interpretation

The Neoplatonic interpretation of Apuleius' tale proved easy to adapt into a Christian framework where Psyche was equated with the soul. Again the tale had to be desexualized in order to fit the Neoplatonic preference for the ideal and spiritual over the material and bodily. Psyche's malicious revenge on her sisters (whom she sends to their deaths, telling them that Cupid is in love with them) is censored from this kind of interpretation, as is the birth of Voluptas. Instead, Neoplatonic Christian interpretations focus on the ordeals and Psyche's close encounters with death and identify Cupid with Christ as the God of love. This process of desexualizing the myth is comparable to the allegorizing of the Old Testament's equally sexual Song of Songs as a celebration of Christ's love for the Church.

Jungian Interpretation

Apuleius' story has drawn the attention of two eminent Jungians, Marie-Louise von Franz and Erich Neumann, both of whom interpret it as depicting the development of consciousness. For Neumann, Venus is the archetypal Great Mother; Psyche must differentiate her consciousness and take responsibility for her own actions. Psyche's true act of heroism is to disobey Cupid and look at him by lamplight. Von Franz speaks of Psyche as an anima figure within a man's unconscious: in this interpretation, it is the man who must differentiate his consciousness. As Betsy Hearne points out, both of these Jungian interpretations run into trouble when Psyche achieves apotheosis, joining what for Jungians would be the collective unconscious of the Olympian pantheon. As with the Neoplatonic interpretation, there is also the issue that Psyche does not display very much wisdom along her path of ordeals. Instead, she despairs and disobeys, ultimately sending herself into a sleep of death from which the god must awaken her rather than achieving an enlightened state of consciousness.

Freudian Interpretation

Apuleius' myth is a forerunner to the fairytale, Beauty and the Beast. As a Freudian interpreter of fairytales, Bruno Bettelheim pays close attention to the sexual implications of Beauty and the Beast in his *The Uses of Enchantment*. In his reading, this fairy tale alludes to the pubescent girl's anxious fantasies of sex with a man, which she imagines as bestial. Such a reading of Cupid and Psyche would give full weight to the birth of Voluptas and also to the jealous sisters' fabrication that Psyche has inadvertently married a monstrous (phallic) snake. Bettelheim's discussion of Apuleius' myth, however, accords surprisingly well with those of the Jungians, understanding it as an allegory of the gaining of higher consciousness. Bettelheim sums up the story as dealing with "the difficulties man encounters when the highest psychic qualities (Psyche) are to be wedded to sexuality (Eros)" (Bettelheim 1976, p. 293). This reading runs into exactly the same problems as before, that Apuleius' Psyche exhibits suicidal despair and disobedience but can hardly be seen as a model of the enlightened consciousness.

See Also

- ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav
- ▶ Myth
- ▶ Psyche
- ▶ Unconscious

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Curanderismo

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Origins

Curanderismo is a healing system that is prevalent throughout Latin America. Although reliance on this system of care by individuals of various Latino heritages in the United States has been documented, the prevalence of its use is unclear. This approach to healing has often been referred to somewhat disparagingly as "folk medicine" or "folk healing."

Healing activities within the tradition of curanderismo are performed by (male) curanderos and (female) *curanderas*; all three terms derive from the Spanish verb *curar*, meaning to heal. (The remainder of this discussion will utilize the term curandero to refer to both male and female healers in this tradition.) Curanderos are to be distinguished from *parteras*, women who serve as midwives, although they are most frequently not registered as such; *yerberos*, who heal exclusively through the use of herbs; *sobadores*, practitioners who devote their attention to sprains and muscle aches; and *hueseros*, or bone-setters. Individuals who practice any of these traditions are believed to be endowed with a *don*, or gift, of healing; adherents believe that the don is bestowed on the individual by God, while opponents of the tradition believe it is conferred by Satan.

Scholars have asserted that, as practiced by some believers, curanderismo often reflects six major influences: Judeo-Christian traditions, early Arabic medicine, beliefs associated with European witchcraft, Native American healing practices, current beliefs relating to spiritualism, and modern medicine. Mexican curanderismo is said to derive specifically from the influences of Spanish, indigenous Mexican, and African healing practices. The resulting system of healing is premised on religious beliefs relating to the maintenance of harmony between nature, the self, and spirit. Disease or illness is viewed as the result of a lack of harmony between the individual and his or her environment; the curandero is charged with the task of removing this imbalance and restoring harmony.

Illness Causation and Healing Practices

The lack of harmony between the individual and his or her environment may result from physical, psychological, social, and/or spiritual causes. Illnesses are recognized as originating through the action of natural agents, as is the case with tuberculosis disease, or through the action of a supernatural agent (e.g., a *bruja*, or witch), as may be the case with unemployment, marital difficulties, and alcohol dependence. Curanderos can address the presenting problems and effectuate healing using any of three levels, or avenues, of treatment: the material, or physical, level; the spiritual level; and the mental level. Frequently, treatment efforts

are implemented at all three levels, consistent with the view that health and illness are manifestations of interactive processes at each of these levels.

Healing targeting physical illness at the material level often relies on rituals involving the use of herbs, fruits, eggs, and oils. Treatment may also include massage or prayer; a minority of curanderos will provide vitamin injections. As one example of available treatments, efforts to detoxify clients who are suffering from alcoholism may include the use of passion flower, linden flower, wormwood, rose petals, evening primrose, and various additional flowers and herbs. In situations in which the illness is believed to have resulted from an imbalance of hot and cold properties, the curandero may attempt to restore balance by prescribing a treatment that will eliminate the excess or augment the deficiency. The "hot" or "cold" nature of a condition or treatment is an inherent property. Family members and individuals within the client's social network are often enlisted to aid in the healing process.

Healing at the spiritual level requires that the curandero enter into a trance in order to establish a connection between the material and spiritual domains. The curandero essentially functions as a medium through which the spirits can work to effectuate the requested healing. The spiritual forces are able to cause, diagnose, and cure illness on the spiritual level. Clients may participate in cleansing rituals to address the need for healing at a spiritual level.

Less commonly, the curandero may effectuate healing on the mental level. This requires that the curandero channel mental energy from his or her mind directly to that part of the client in need of treatment. It is believed that through this focused mental energy, the curandero is able to halt the growth of the illness-affected cells in the client's body and promote the healing process.

Common illnesses for which individuals may seek treatment from a curandero include *empacho*, a digestive blockage that is often treated with teas made from specified herbs; *bilis*, an ailment thought to be caused by excessive bile resulting from extreme anger that can be cured through the use of prescribed laxatives; and *mal ojo*, or "evil eye," for which treatment may be effectuated through a ritual involving a raw egg.

Several illnesses for which curanderos may be consulted are clearly psychological or emotional in origin. These include *susto*, or "fright," and *nervios*, literally translated as "nerves." Susto is believed to result from a single specific incident, such as witnessing a death or accident, being involved in an accident, or being suddenly surprised or frightened. Crying, trembling, and insomnia are common symptoms, but susto may also present as a lack of appetite or vomiting. Prayer, herbs, and massage are thought to be beneficial.

Depending upon the particular Latino subgroup, nervios may refer to the disease nervios or to specific symptoms of an illness. Women, sensitive individuals, and older adults are believed to be particularly susceptible to the disorder. Nervios can be brought about by family problems, worry, stress, and anger and may be manifested by headache, depression, yelling, worry, pacing, high blood pressure, insomnia, and loss of control. Treatment may consist of counseling, pills, prescribed teas, speaking to another person, and/or calming oneself. Illnesses such as susto or nervios may or may not be indicative of symptoms that would constitute a mental illness as delineated by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* used by Western-trained mental health care providers for the diagnosis of a mental illness or disorder. Research suggests that some individuals reporting nervios or ataques de nervios, for example, may be suffering from an anxiety disorder.

Benefits

Individuals with serious medical problems are often referred by the curandero to Western medical providers. Depending upon the nature of the illness, however, patients may also consult with curanderos as well. Clients may rely on both approaches for various reasons. First, clients may be unable to afford the cost of a medical doctor and will delay or avoid such care unless

the illness is perceived to be a serious one necessitating such attention. Second, because curanderismo views the mind and body as inseparable and illness is to be addressed by examining the total context in which it occurs, a curandero may focus on elements of an illness that may not be attended to by medical doctors, such as the underlying stress that is giving rise to the client's headaches. Third, the curandero's reliance on rituals to address the supernatural origins of a situation may help to restore the client's hope, such as in the case of unemployment or marital disruption.

Consultation with a curandero brings other advantages as well. The attribution of the illness to an external source, whether natural or supernatural, relieves the individual of blame for his or her condition. The curandero's enlistment of the client's family and friends to assist in the implementation of the treatment helps to create a loving and supportive environment through which the client can progress towards healing. In situations in which the illness does result from the client's own actions, the curandero can invoke the aid of spiritual forces, thereby providing the client with an additional source of strength, support, and hope.

Various similarities have been noted between curanderismo and Western psychotherapy. These include the provision to the client of opportunities to identify symbols that have great meaning to him or her and to experience change through the manipulation of those symbols. Each modality also offers the client the opportunity to explore and reevaluate the perceived expectations of his or her support system.

See Also

- ▶ Healing
- ▶ Shamanic Healing

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Cybele and Attis

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Cybele was a goddess who originated around 1200 BCE in Pessinus, Phrygia, near Mount Agdistis, in central Asia Minor, now Turkey. This mountain was personified as the Great Mother Goddess Cybele of Asia Minor, Mother Earth. She had dominion over wild beasts – in art her throne was flanked by lions or she drove a chariot pulled by lions. She was a goddess of caves and was worshiped on mountain tops (Vermaseren). Known as "The Mother of All Gods," her religion spread around the Black Sea, and to Greece by the sixth century BCE, where she was celebrated by a Homeric Hymn to "The Mother of the Gods":

> Sing to me O Muse, clear voiced daughter of great Zeus, Of the mother of all gods and of all men. In the din of rattles and drums and in the sound of pipes she delights. In the howl of wolves and the roar of glaring lions, in resounding mountains and wooded glands she finds her joy. (Homeric Hymn 14)

Cybele and Attis, Fig. 1 Cibeles con Palacio de "Cybele in Madrid.". (Photograph owner: Miguel-Ángel Monjas. This figure is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 unported license. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cibeles_con_Palacio_de_Linares_closeup.jpg)

Cybele's religion spread west during the Hellenistic era. Statues of her were found along the west coast of Asia Minor, in the ruins of Pergamon, and in Greece. She reached Rome during the early Empire. She was given a temple on the Palatine in 191 BCE, where her ceremonies were held, and where a great number of statuettes of her son Attis were later found (Roller 2005). From Rome the cult spread around the Empire (Fig. 1).

The archaic dimension of Cybele and Attis is the mythic enactment of belief in the death of a fertility god, Attis, symbolizing the onset of winter and the apparent death of plants. Then his resurrection in the spring brings life to plants needed for food and the ongoing reproduction of animals. The goddess Cybele symbolizes the background metaphysical power to keep life going through reproduction. It was told in many religions of the dying and rising gods, such as Ishtar and Tammuz in Babylon.

Later Cybele and Attis were notable among what came to be called the "Mystery Religions" from the East, such as Mithras, Isis, Demeter, Dionysus, and Orpheus (Godwin 1981). Their ceremonies were secret, but apparently offered immoral life to believers, which was a new, appealing element in religion at the time.

During the Hellenistic age, Cybele was increasingly associated with the myth of Attis. Legend says that he was a son of the Cybele's earthly incarnation Nana, who miraculously conceived him by eating a pomegranate, a fertility image. So he was a child of a virgin, and born on December 25th. When the handsome young Attis was about to be married to the princess of Pessinus, the jealous Agdistis (Cybele) appeared in her power. Attis went mad and castrated himself (Pausanias 1935, Vol. 7, p. 19). Attis became a fertility god, the mythic consort and son of Cybele, a castrated, dying, and rising god of the Great Mother (*Magna Mater*) Goddess. But his castration was unique and controversial. Cybele and Attis remained prominent until the fourth century CE. In Rome, the priests were called *Galli.* In Greece, they were called the *Corybantes.* Today a stone statue of Cybele in Madrid in a chariot pulled by lions is in the *Plaza de Cibeles*. A statue of Attis with bronze light rays on his head is in the Vatican Museum.

Cybele and Attis' feverish 5-day celebration in the Roman Empire was in March. First was a day of mourning, when a pine or fir tree was cut, following the sacrifice of a ram at its base. It was carried through the streets by her priests and followers, wrapped with woolen bands, and buried, representing Attis' death. The second day was full

of agitated music, dance, and worked up to a passionate intensity with flutes, tambourines, and cymbals. Some flagellated themselves with whips. The third day, the vehement enthusiasm continued until some zealous males committed bloody self-castrations. The severed genitals were thrown on Cybele's statue to offer their blood and reproductive energy to the goddess. Severed genitals of bulls or rams were also cast at her feet, and all were later buried in a cave devoted to her. The fourth day was one of joyful music and dancing *("Hilaria Matris Deum")* to celebrate Attis' resurrection. People waved reeds, perhaps to symbolize phallic and vegetative fertility, seen as resurrection. Finally came a day of rest (Vermaseren 1977, pp. 113–16).

Another bloody Attis rite, similar to that in Mithraism, was the *taurobolium*, where a pit was dug and covered by a strong grate. A priest stood under the grate and a bull was sacrificed so that the bull's blood ran down on him. He drank the blood and was respectfully saluted from afar, for "A bull's inferior blood has washed him clean" (Vermaseren 1977, pp. 102–103). Poorer people used a ram in a *criobolium*, to be "washed in the blood of the lamb." Some washed in the bull's blood were priestesses of Cybele (Vermaseren 1977, p. 109). They were seen as "born again." This was seen as the sacrificial blood of the god Attis, giving the priest the strong life-power of the bull and conferring on him, and, as in the mystery religions, both a glimpse of the divine and assurance of eternal life (Godwin 1981, pp. 34, 111).

Attis and his priests were notable among cults of the dying and rising gods for being eunuchs. Making men into castrated eunuchs involuntarily was surprisingly common in history worldwide. Most were involuntary, often war prisoners, slaves, or guards for a king's harem. Some were boys castrated to be falsetto singers called "castrati." Often in a king's palace eunuchs were servants who would not have a family that he could gather into a rebellious faction or for whom he might seek positions and wealth. The last surviving imperial eunuch of China died in 1996

Cybele and Attis, Fig. 2 Statue of a reclining Attis at the Shrine of Attis, "Campus of Magna Mater in Ostia, near Rome". (This figure is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statue_of_a_reclining_Attis_at_the_Shrine_of_Attis_2.jpg))

(Eunuch). Castration is tied up with power and pleasure and their denial, perhaps sadism and masochism, but not as clearly as one might think. If a eunuch lost his testicles only, he lost sperm that causes pregnancy, but could still have sex, because prostate gland inside body still produces semen ejaculated through an erect penis, now without sperm. In the ancient world some women preferred to have sex with a eunuch, for it made pregnancy impossible. But some eunuchs lost both testicles and penis. One explicit sculpture of Attis shows the loss of both (Vermaseren 1977, p. 44). Religious castration is intended to take the man away from fleshly desires and toward a more transcendent spiritual divinity. Circumcision has been seen by some as a sublimated castration (Fig. 2).

Psychologically the question arises why the male militarist Romans imported and honored the more feminine Cybele and Attis, and why Emperor Augustus granted her the title of Supreme Mother of Rome, a national goddess. Perhaps Roman imperialist and macho culture was so aggressive and domineering that they needed a feminine balance for the Roman collective unconscious. The powerful empire's masculine tone seems to have needed more feminine *anima*, so perhaps this is why Cybele, along with Isis and other goddesses, were brought to Rome, on the advice of the revered Greek Delphic Oracle. Godwin says that "their act had a psychological rightness, involving an acceptance of irrational and uncontrollable forces" or unconscious needs not met by the strong ego-dominated male warrior Roman society (Godwin 1981, p. 110). To include her self-castrating son implies deep collective feelings, perhaps for a non-macho Roman subpopulation. The priests of Attis were known for their effeminate dress, white face makeup, bleached hair, earrings, and behavior that attracted mockery and scorn in Rome (Vermaseren 1977, p. 97). Although this psychological balance may have been needed unconsciously, many Romans laughed at the effeminate Attis priests. The Roman Senate at one point prohibited the participation of Roman citizens in certain Cybele rituals (Roller 2005, p. 2110). But it seems that the old patriotic religions of the state's divine Emperor were losing their emotional grasp, and the mystery religions offered more spiritual depth. Attis' priests taught the spiritual view that they were freed of lust, and thus became Wise Ones' (*Sophoi*), Pure Ones (*Purissimi*), or Holy Ones (*Agnoi*) (Vermaseren 1977, p. 97). They offered not just political loyalty, but ego orientation to the immortal, mysterious self.

But psychologically, it is apparent that the Attis practice is another version of what became Freud's Oedipal complex. In these Dying and Rising Gods religions, the goddess was the dominant figure and her beloved was the subordinate victim who died and was resurrected. Attis was born from Cybele with no father involvement. He is her son, and when he is about to marry another woman, his mother Cybele is furiously jealous and releases all her powers that shock him into castrating himself. The self-castration becomes a sign of his willingness to avoid becoming a man and father, and remain a devotee of his Great Mother – or even become a transvestite, identifying with his mother's gender. This keeps him passively devoted to her. The ancient ritual was a remarkable acting out of this archetypal pattern of mother and son bonding. Crude and violent as it was, perhaps this was an extreme psychological reaction against the brutal militarism of many Roman men, cheering at the lions ripping up human victims in the Coliseum.

This collective aggressive – passive dynamic may have well triggered a spiritual reaction among Christians who adopted Plato's Greek metaphysical split between mind, flesh, and spirit. This would have been part of the Christian rejection of the "pagan" belief in fertility gods and goddesses that became so bloody with sacrifices. Though Christians rejected the violence and raised spirituality above bodily desires, they still were so immersed in the old mystery religions that the Gospel authors apparently adopted the ancient archetypal elements of the older traditions of virgin birth, sacrificial death, and resurrection. This theology would fit Jesus into the beliefs about transcendent deities of the time, but also stopped the literal blood sacrifices, turning them into eating the body and drinking the blood of the savior deity symbolically as bread and wine. The question of the extent to which Christianity borrowed images from earlier religions is debated by those who see Christianity as unique. But it is clear, as world religion scholars know that religions commonly borrow archetypal images and synthesize, blending borrowed elements with unique features. Christianity borrowed Jewish themes such as the prophet and messiah, and added the new element of welcoming believers of all ethnic groups and social classes. Surrounded by religions that told of virgin birth and resurrection, such as Cybele and Attis, it is not surprising that they appear in Christianity, though spiritualized and detached from the goddess fertility rites of the past.

But monotheistic religions are intolerant of polytheism, and maintain the patriarchal social pattern based on a Father God, repressing

women whom the goddess religions had honored. Roman Catholic priests are required to be male and celibate, which is intended to raise them above the reproductive life and see themselves as more pure. Cybele and Attis suggest themes from mystery religions in the background.

See Also

- Anima and Animus
- Ashtoreth
- Castration
- Christianity and Sexuality
- Circumcision
- Dying and Rising Gods
- Female God Images
- Freud, Sigmund
- Gender Roles
- Goddess Spirituality
- Homosexuality
- Inanna/Ishtar
- Isis
- Oedipus Complex
- Puer Aeternus
- Religion, Sexuality, and Psychoanalysis
- Repression
- Transgender and Gender Identity

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