

SUMMARIES

Peter la Cour: »By the fruits you shall know it – not by the roots«. Short on the history of psychology of religion.

The article is a brief introduction to the history of the psychology of religion, divided into the history in USA, in Europe, and specifically in Denmark.

Ole Vedfelt: Religious peak-experiences in transpersonal psychodynamic and cybernetic perspective

The paper gives an overview of the endeavours during the latest hundred years to outline a psychology of mystical religious peak-experiences. It describes the phenomenologies of William James and Rudolf Otto, the depth psychology of C.G. Jung, Abraham Maslow's peak-experiences and the establishing of a transpersonal psychology. The phenomenologies and epistemologies of the transpersonal psychology are described and discussed in relation to the »chakra system« of the Eastern contemplative traditions, as well as from central works of Charles Tart and Ken Wilber and from A.H. Almaas's synthesis of sufi-mysticism and object relations theory. The author suggests an explanatory model based on cybernetics and information theory for the psychodynamics of religious peak experiences. Central concepts in the cybernetic model are states and levels of consciousness, unconscious intelligence, supramodal perception, and stages of personal development. Pathological aspects of the peak-experiences are described, and a social psychological background for a the transpersonal psychology is suggested. Finally mystical experiences and transpersonal psychological strategies are discussed in relation to the concept of maturity.

Jan Tønnesvang & Karsten Bidstrup Skipper: Integrative psychology of religion

The article presents and discusses central aspects of the American philosopher Ken Wilbers integral position as framework for an integrative and non-reductionistic psychology of religion. It is discussed how such an agenda challenges the researchers capacity to identify and integrate the crucial core of knowledge in various religious-spiritual and scientific approaches across the involved (historical) differences of paradigms. The process of integrative work is partly illustrated through discussions of how subtle reductionism in neuroscience can contribute to the conceptualization of the inside view of the exterior (individual) dimension in a non-reductionistic psychology of religion, and how selfobject theory and 'spiral dynamics' in combination can contribute to the conceptualization of the relation between individual and plural outside views of the interior dimensions in such a psychology of religion.

Kenneth I. Pargament & Hisham Abu Raiya: A decade of research on the psychology of religion and coping: Things we assumed and lessons we learned

Recently, the field of psychology has begun to display a growing interest in religious coping methods and their implications for health and well-being. Empirical studies have yielded an interesting picture of the relationship between religious coping and physical and mental health. In this paper, we review some of the foundational assumptions on which the theory of religion and coping rests. Then, we summarize recent advances in research in the area of religion and coping. We conclude by highlighting some of the exciting new directions for research in the psychology of religion and coping.

Bart Duriez, Jessie Dezutter, Bart Neyrinck & Dirk Hutsebaut: An introduction to the Post-Critical Belief Scale: Internal structure and external relationships

Recently, Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten and Hutsebaut (2003) have shown that the Post-Critical Belief Scale (PCBS; Duriez, Fontaine & Hutsebaut, 2000) captures the two orthogonal bipolar dimensions of Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic along which Wulff (1991, 1997) organized the various possible approaches to religion. This chapter outlines the original and valuable contribution of the PCBS to the field of the psychology of religion by showing how the PCBS sheds a new light on several hotly debated topics within the psychology of religion.

Robert A. Emmons: Purposeful Action and the Striving for the Sacred

Religion invests human existence with meaning by establishing goals and value systems that potentially pertain to all aspects of a persons' life. A goals approach rooted in personal strivings provides a general unifying framework to capture the dynamic aspect of religion in people's lives. Empirical research on the measurement of spirituality and religion through personal strivings is described. The origins of spiritual strivings in motivational needs theory and in an evolutionary psychology rooted in solutions to adaptive problems faced by our ancestors are discussed.

Arne Austad & Gry Stålsett: Clinical Psychology of Religion and Psychotherapy: The Vita project

Presentation of the Vita Project, a new treatment program for patients focusing on religious and/or existential issues as an important part of their presented psychological distress. The treatment model applies knowledge from clinical psychology of religion and is based on a theory of formation of God representation in the course of human development, interdependent with the formation of inner representations of self and parents (Rizzuto 1979). A central hypothesis in the Vita-project is that therapy focused on fixed inner representations can be crucial for emotional and existential maturation and lead to better health.

Steen Peter Nielsen & Helle Møller Jensen: Can psychologists and theologians work together?

The articles point of departure is a joint work between a psychologist and a chaplain which has been carried out at Bispebjerg Hospital's palliative unit in Copenhagen. We have chosen to work closely together and to conduct therapy and pastoral care with our patients and relatives in the same meeting. The experiences we share in this article are also based on a counseling group for mourning relatives we have conducted together. The method we have used has been inspired by Søren Kierkegaard and his usage of bodily grounded metaphors, that we find offer themselves as useful alternatives to a dogmatic and a psychological vocabulary and we have made use of croquis dolls in order to be able to work with a visual fixation of feeling and God-image. Also we have been inspired by G.Lakoff's and M. Johnson's descriptions of different physical pressures as a foundation for language. With these varied descriptions we work in a phenomenological manner both when it comes to psychological and theological subject matters.

Christina G. Pedersen, Heidi Frølund Pedersen & Bobby Zachariae: Faith and spiritual well-being among cancer patients.

A cancer diagnosis often has negative influence on the psychological and social functioning of patients. Religiosity/spirituality may represent a way of coping with cancer, and spiritual well-being has been positively associated with increased psychological, social, and physiological well-being as well as with global quality of life. Research

indicates unmet religious and spiritual needs among cancer patients both internationally and in Denmark. While some studies suggest that religiosity/spirituality may influence physiological processes of relevance to cancer, it remains unclear whether religious/spiritual factors influence survival and/or progression of cancer disease. Further research is needed to clarify under what conditions spiritual/religious coping has beneficial effects for cancer patients, not least in secular societies like the Danish.

Peter Elsass, Jessica Carlsson, Kristian Jespersen & Kalsang Phuntsok: Tibetan buddhism as coping mechanism. Interviews.

The Western fascination with Buddhism does consider Buddhist psychology a means for building up a resilience towards mental disorder and for creating building stones for »the art of happiness«. This study has the purpose of giving evidence for the Tibetan torturesurvivors degree of traumatisation and their use of spirituality to overcome their difficult situation. But we also wanted to question the use of Western methods in an Asian context.

102 Tibetan torture survivors were interviewed about their coping mechanism in overcoming trauma. 36 of these survivors were receiving counselling and both the clients and their 16 professionals were interviewed after the treatment with open-ended questions about what was helpful and not helpful. The design and the results of our study were discussed with 10 Tibetan spiritual leaders.

In a formalised needs assessment including neuropsychological and psychological measures of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist – 25 (HSCL-25) the torture survivors had symptoms of severe traumatisation. Our results from both the assessment and the counselling study support that the Tibetan torture survivors use their political engagement and Tibetan Buddhism as an important coping mechanism. All clients expressed satisfaction with the counselling even if it did not favour the political and spiritual coping. However no one mentioned counselling in an open-ended interview, but only when directly asked.

But Tibetan lamas questioned the validity of our western rating scales, saying that the results might be influenced by the Tibetan culture, which can be characterized by being mid-point seeking and having an attitude of suffering much more complex than the units of our study's rating scales.

Line Tviis Bjerrisgaard & Armin W. Geertz: Prayer May Be Dangerous to Your Health: On Intercessory Prayer, Spirituality and Bad Science

It is well known that religion can be dangerous to your health. The fact that prayer may also be dangerous to your health is news. Doctor Herbert Benson at Harvard University conducted a large-scale scientific study of intercessory prayer at six different American hospitals. The study showed – contrary to Benson's personal hopes – that intercessory prayer not only had no positive effect on cardiac patients but that patients who were told that someone would be praying for them actually experienced negative effects.

After a brief introduction to the subject of religion and health, this article discusses three selected scientific studies. The first study is Krucoff's 2001 MANTRA study at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in the U.S. The second is Leibovici's 2001 study at the Rabin Medical Center in Israel. The third is the above-mentioned 2006 study by Benson. These and similar studies were introduced to the Danish public in an anthology entitled *Kan tro flytte bjerge?* (»Can Belief Move Mountains?«) (Copenhagen 2004) in a chapter on »Moderne fjernforbønsundersøgelser og de spørgsmål de rejser« (»Modern Studies of Intercessory Prayer and the Questions They Raise«), written by the volume editors Christoffer Johansen and Niels Christian Hvidt. This article subjects the three studies to substantial criticism, and the article concludes with a discussion

of their weaknesses in terms of methodology, the philosophy of science, the comparative study of religion, scientific ethics and science strategy.

Henrik Høgh-Olesen: The psychology of sacrifice – cognition, and religion from an evolutionary angle

The sacrifice is a ritualized central structure in religious practice worldwide, but what does it signify?

In this paper the phenomenon is viewed from an evolutionary psychological angle, and a number of claims are made. On the basis of cross-cultural, comparative, and experimental data, it is argued that the sacrifice is not first and foremost a religious concept, let alone a behavioural structure primarily related to the man-god relation, but rather a key factor in man's sociality as such and a general evolutionary interaction unit based on a hardwired cognitive reciprocity-programme well known in animal life, from sperm whales and vampire bats to higher primates and ourselves. Furthermore, it is suggested that in our species the religious sacrifice becomes a ritualized sacred action, because this act symbolically highlights the natural reciprocity relations that have to prevail among men, if a society is to exist at all. The relationship between religion and evolution is discussed, and it is claimed that religion, as a 'niche-construction' may have been a formative force in the evolution of human sociality. Partly by functioning as a 'social releaser' (tricking basic programmes), and partly as a selective environmental force in its own right.

Uffe Schjødt: The religious brain – An introduction to neuroscientific study of religion.

Experimental neuroscience is receiving growing attention by the scholars of religion. However, a neuroscientific study of religion is obstructed by a narrow understanding of religion among neuroscientists and a limited understanding of the field's methodological limitations among scholars of religion. This article introduces some of these limitations and presents some of the most important lines of research in the field. Critical for the future development of this promising discipline is to improve on its theoretical foundation, avoiding neurotheological notions of religious experience as a category of unique neural activity. Considering instead religious practice and experience to be concrete mental phenomena with neural correlates corresponding to its particular cognitive features, my project attempts to move this field in a less controversial direction. This turn could allow for a broader acceptance of the field among neuroscientists and scholars of religion and be a first step toward a proper neuroscientific study of religion.

Jørn Bjerre: Trying out Personalities. Emile Durkheim and the collective psychology of religious individualism.

The article presents an approach to the psychology of religion based on the collective psychology of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. After discussing the central definitions of religion in Durkheim's work, it is argued that the psychology of religion may profit from Durkheim's approach, when it comes to the question of understanding contemporary forms of religious individualism. This view is empirically tested by applying Durkheim's theories and definitions of religion to a case study of a program for personal development and leadership training. The article thus analyzes the collective psychology of religious individualism by focusing on how a social representation of individuality can be traced within a concrete empirical field, and by empirically investigating how such representations are transmitted from the collective to the individual mentality.

Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon: The intimization of working life

Particularly since the 1990s work life has been characterised by an intimization of governance, partly via inspiration from neo-spiritual, religious and other forms of micro-technological, »inside-out« Self-improvement. Transcendental concepts of Self-improvement and Self-evaluation have entered management theory and practice. The article presents examples of this tendency, focussing particularly on instances of neopuritan managerial thinking. The author discusses this phenomenon by analogy to classic millennial and revitalizing movements. She concludes that we are witnessing a substantial socio-cultural trend with consequences for subjectivation and for the formation of identity in employees – as well as their managers. Even in private spheres of life.

Erik Schultz: Religious and scientific icons

Icons have traditionally been used in Orthodox Christianity as depictions of Holy Figures, and thereby ontological entities have been transformed into epistemological ones. In many ways a comparable transformation from ontology to epistemology can be found in modern, advanced physics, when results from this science are propagated in popularized forms.

In the article it is shown that this similarity between religious and scientific icons may point to religiosity as an anthropological human trait, because humans generally need to confront ontological issues, traditionally conceived by the concept of God. Contemporary Natural Science therefore contains implicit religiosity.

Through history many hostile clashes between religious and scientifically minded people have occurred. Through a thorough definition of the concept of icons the article tries to show that these kinds of hostilities are due to misconceptions as to religion as well as science. As a precondition in order to be able to define the concept of icons the article constructs a viewpoint concerning the relation between epistemology and ontology, and this is done through a combination of certain points in the philosophies of Descartes and Husserl.

Christian Huitfeldt: The secular meditation and phenomenological understanding of consciousness

The article challenges the cognitive interpretation of mindfulness meditation, and links the more subtle secular meditative experiences and processes to a broadly founded phenomenological theoretical framework, based on Buddhist psychology, radical empiricism, and transcendental and existential phenomenology. This comparative study depicts numerous parallels of method, intent and experience. The radical meditative experiences imply various challenges for the psychological assumptions – concepts such as attention, state of consciousness, intentionality, and existentials are held to be relative understandings existing dependently of the attention of the observer. The scientific field of psychology of religion needs to incorporate a methodologically cultivated experiential perspective in order to thoroughly explore the psychological domain of meditation. Meditation must be positioned as an extension of the existential-phenomenological tradition, and should not be restricted to a therapeutic context, but must be validated for the implied existential and epistemological claims as well.

Jakob Skov Knudsen: The sacred is an answer from life itself to an appropriate enquiry

It is suggested that the question of the existence of the sacred and the question of how to come to terms with it is closely tied together, and a claim is made, that it is meaningless to try to describe the existence of the sacred without clarifying what the language can and cannot capture. The universe is described as a system of incomprehensible complexity, which has the ability to reflect upon itself thus »multiplying« this complexity innumerable times. Through a presentation of the thoughts of Gregory Bateson the sacred is

described as a phenomenon, where mutual independent parts become dependant of each other – momentarily or permanently. Finally it is suggested, that the sacred can be understood as potential responds to appropriate approaches – somewhat like seeds, that respond to the appropriate conditions when it sprouts. In this fashion the connection between the existence of the sacred and how we come to terms with even more fundamental, since the coming to terms might incarcerate or release the sacred. The sacred blooms when it is watered – like love.

Mina El Moutamid: The divine aesthetics

Two perspectives on the aesthetics are presented in an attempt to identify a relationship between the aesthetics and divinity. With a point of departure in a phenomenological description of the religious experience a striking resemblance to the aesthetic experience is demonstrated. Furthermore, a defining thematic and a reflectivity of the aesthetic experience reveal a potential connection to spirituality and religious subject matters. Behind the cultural context in which the philosophical ideas are formulated is a similar relationship between the aesthetics and the divine recognized. The conclusion of these comparative analyses leads to the assumption that human engagement in art and aesthetics has the potential for revealing divinity. A divinity that is equal to what is characterizing religion and religiosity.

Jens Grundahl: Current religious experiences

This article presents to kinds of current, spontaneous religious experiences and the scientific investigations so far: near-death experiences and the Marian apparitional experiences in Medjugorje since 1981. Through three decades both phenomena have attracted widely public attention and gradually also an increasing scientific interest. Discussions concerning the authority of these experiences concentrates on the clinical evaluations and on the physiological measurements that have been conducted during the time when these experiences of transcendent contact occurs. Despite situational differences between these two kinds of experiences perceptual and phenomenological similarities can be pointed out. The scientific investigations done so far points to the possibility that the prevailing scientific levels of descriptions (physiologically and psychologically) of the human existence are insufficient.

Ulla Böwadt: Parapsychology as religion?

Parapsychology is discussed respectively as a science, a popular science and biased story, as a personal experience and as a religion. Parapsychology is defined and the present state of the research field is described. Possibilities and problems in parapsychological research as well as possible scenarios are discussed. Particularly the link between parapsychology and quantum physics is examined. Also, the popularized presentation of results in parapsychology is discussed. Here, it is especially the tendentious and not the popularized presentation that is problematic. The article further discusses possible consequences of researchers' interest in parapsychology often stemming from personal experience. An additional subject of discussion are the possible problems relating to parapsychological researchers' tendency to over time taking a more extreme standpoint of either total conviction or total skepticism. A final discussion concerns whether parapsychology may be perceived as a »religion« that especially suits the post modern individual.