Extending the Psychology of Religion: A Call for Exploration of Psychological Universals, More Inclusive Approaches, and Comprehensive Models

K. Helmut Reich

School of Consciousness Studies and Sacred Values, Rutherford University and
School of Education, Fribourg University, Fribourg, Switzerland
helmut.reich@tele2.ch

Summary

Extensions of ongoing research identified in the introduction to this special issue (Reich & Hill, this issue) are discussed here with farther reaching objectives: researching more intensely psychological universals thought to underlie religion, taking a more inclusive approach to psychology of religion, and constructing more comprehensive models. All three involve conscious experience, to which some observations are devoted. Remarks about the relationships between these research areas conclude the article.

In this article, I wish to further explain some of the issues and trends facing the psychology of religion that were first presented in the introduction to this special section of the *Archive* (Reich & Hill, this issue). The focus here will be on three primary issues in the psychology of religion: psychological universals, inclusiveness, and the need for more comprehensive models.

Psychological Universals

One way to extend research is to explore more intensely what I would call *psychological universals* relating to religion. According to Norenzayan and

Heine (2005), human psychological universals are "core mental attributes that are shared at some conceptual level by all or nearly all non brain damaged adult human beings across cultures" (p. 753). Such universals include, for instance, attention, memory, self-concepts, mental health, cognitive strategies, decision rules, emotional programs, perceptions, motives, personality structures, language acquisition, causal theories, and other mental representations of the world (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). Hence, psychological universals are not to be confounded with the Universals of the Middle Ages, which referred to overarching abstract concepts or ideas that were—depending on the philosophical school concerned—considered as fully real by themselves (following Plato), human inventions or irrelevant unreal imaginations.

All human beings share certain characteristics. However, human beings have evolved differently, at least partly in response to vastly different environmental conditions (compare for example, Inuit and Bushmen—although both are traditionally hunter-gatherers—, not to mention farmers and industrial workers). Also, in-group social arrangements are of various kinds (from strict hierarchy to egalitarian structures). With regard to psychological aspects of religion, a first glance would therefore suggest that perhaps some universals do exist (e.g., Saroglou, 2003) but not at the level of the *content* of human religious activity (e.g., Bucher, Oser, & Reich, 2007).

In fact, one must discriminate between the culturally determined level of description and the universal underlying level. Otherwise, cultural diversity and universality cannot each be recognized clearly. For instance, take marriage at the cultural level. We have various types of monogamy, polygeny, fraternal polyandry, endogamy, and exogamy. Yet despite these marked cultural differences, at the universal underlying level, all share at least the aim of providing a long-term social structure ensuring care for offspring (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005).

Is there something to be learned from earlier research on universals (e.g., Belzen, 2005; Heine, 2005)? Wilhelm Wundt (1900-1909, 1912) worked from 1900 onward on his *Völkerpsychologie*. His aim was notably to elucidate complex psychic functions worldwide, and to describe the social dimension of the psyche. He especially pioneered research of collective phenomena such as taboo behavior. Unfortunately, such studies have not blossomed since those days. This raises a question for psychology of religion as a whole: is psychological research about religiousness or spirituality yet fully valued (e.g., Walach & Reich, 2005)?

Why do I consider this an unfortunate state of affairs? Because, contrary to a number of "prophets of doom" who predict(ed) a decline—if not the disap-

pearance—of religion, in most geographical areas religion is very much alive, but its effects are not necessarily always beneficial. Therefore a better understanding of these particular psychological universals might be not just of academic interest but of practical value as well, specifically if features that unite humankind could be brought out (e.g., Mikulas, 2007; Saroglou, 2006).

How so? The current societal situation is notably characterized by globalization, migration, and cultural diversity. A major issue is to preserve one's own identity yet stay open to the *other* in order to find a mutually acceptable, peaceful *modus vivendi*. This involves necessarily a serious discussion about diverging, perhaps even contradictory worldviews, values, and social arrangements. As many historical and current examples show, it is very hard to admit that on one's own side anything might be amiss or in need of correction. An emphasis on people's shared characteristics, and a mutual recognition of their respective achievements and values, can likely help build consensus and lead to agreement between them, and thus create space for a respectful plurality, rather than focusing too hastily on potentially divisive divergences and contested points (e.g., Bretherton, 2006). However, it should also be noted that cultural comparisons often face special difficulties such as to decide whether phenomenologically similar events are the same although described differently, and whether behind similar descriptions differing events are hidden.

Candidates for Research

What possible candidates are there for religiously significant psychological universals? One candidate might well concern *religious rituals*, specifically those to do with birth, baptism or their equivalent; passage into (young) religious adulthood; marriage; death and burial—presented in a number of dioramas, by occasion and by religion, at *The Gallery of Religious Life* of the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow, Scotland (http://www.glasgowmuseums.com/venue/index.cfm?venueid=13)—but also religious rituals concerning agriculture; animal husbandry; hunting; preparing and eating food, etc. There is an issue of interest here: What are the inferred, common, core 'religious' mental and emotional attributes on which these behaviours are based?

Another candidate worth studying is dealing communally with *contingent events* (illness, natural disasters, etc.) by invoking religious elements. At the personal level, *religious coping* with various stressful situations could be a related candidate (e.g., Sudsuang, Chentanez, & Veluvan, 1991), looking again for (inferred) common 'religious' mental and emotional attributes. Similarly,

religion and fear, especially fear of death could be a theme, which might involve a pertinent psychological universal (Bucher et al., 2007, cf. Savage & Liht, this issue). Once more, *spiritual awareness* (Clarke, 2005; Hardy, 1979; Hay & Socha, 2005) and *spiritual transformation* (Koss-Chioinu & Hefner, 2006; Loder, 1981) may be psychological universals linking the intense religious/spiritual experiences that are reported the world over (e.g., Brandt & Fournier, 2007; Bucher, 2007; Hood, 2005; Hunt, 2003; Studstill, 2005).

A further example of possible universals in psychology of religion could be *value priorities* as a function of the centrality and the characteristics of religiousness (Gennerich & Huber, 2006; Saroglou, Delpierre & Dernelle, 2004; Saraglou & Dupuis, 2006). From a developmental perspective, *structural stages* may be yet another candidate (Oser, Scarlett & Bucher, 2006).

Casting the net wider, the very nature of religion could be one of the universals we are looking for. Religion can be understood in terms of three connected aspects: the metaphysical, the ethical, and the inspirational. The inspirational aspect translates the conviction that one's actions are not meaningless: If one is in some way connected to the universe and the transcendent, one's actions have *meaning* in the greater world, and that is an inspiring truth.

Paloutzian, Swenson, and McNamara (2006) suggest common neurobiological and psychological processes that mediate artistic creativity and religious insight, and construction of *meaning* in art and *meaning* found in religious conversion. Given the basic similarity of human brains and their functioning, chances are that in *meaning making* (e.g., Hefner, 1997) we have a psychological universal, yet more research is needed to establish robust empirical evidence. Bruner (1998) claimed this even for cognitive psychology (before it turned into information processing).

Intellectual honesty might wish to consider a universal (or universals) pertaining to Religion-Gone-Bad. Why are the elements of sick, dangerous, and unhealthy religion so similar? As an extreme, one could study religiously induced, or at least religiously supported, *violence* as a further universal. Examples would be Christian crusaders, Islamic assassins of the 11th century and later times, or Shinto divine winds (kamikazes) of the 20th century. Can we fully explain them simply as power plays or are they driven by the unshakable conviction that their respective religion is the only right one, whose teachings need to be followed at all costs? Are the actors drawn to the eternal life in paradise (or at least to the avoidance of hell) by this violence, is indoctrination from childhood a common feature (e.g., the purported children's crusade of 1212)? What is shared, psychologically speaking, by these comparable phenomena?

The research we are discussing is not facilitated by the complexity of religion/religiosity/spirituality: The specifics of the world-view held, the acceptance/rejection of particular knowledge elements, certain behaviors, accepted/rejected ethical norms, and the consequences of being a religious/spiritual person are among the aspects to be studied when inferring the underlying religious mental and emotional attributes, not forgetting that religions function in imagistic and doctrinal modes.

Cognitive Sciences

The discussion of religiously important psychological universals cannot be closed without referring to the current cognitive sciences, especially the work of Boyer (2001, 2003) and colleagues. Briefly, their claim is that, from the perspective of the cognitive sciences, there is no fundamental difference between religion and other cultural expressions. For instance, every member of the species *homo sapiens* has to make do with the limits of human perception and a working memory span of 7 ± 2 items. In all cases the corresponding activity is deemed to be a matter of everyday mental and neural brain processes, of memory, perception, attribution, etc. Given those constraints and similarities of human lives everywhere, the solutions allegedly also resemble each other. Hence cognitive scientists assert that there exist psychological universals, but not specifically religious ones. What can one say to that? For one, is this not too restricted a view of religion and spirituality, a confusion of religious beliefs with lived religious faith? Also, Robert Glasman (1996) draws attention to the recent tendency of psychotherapy to enrich pathogen presentations and perspectives with salutogen (i.e., fostering health and wellness) elements. Another way to look at this issue is from the perspective of the brain hemispheres. Cognitive rationality has primarily to do with the left hemisphere, but religion/spirituality engages both hemispheres. Concomitantly, religion/spirituality is not simply limited to cognitive beliefs but expresses itself as a particular way of living conducted by faith (for an extended analysis cf. Barrett, 2007; Bulkeley, 2006; Nynäs, this issue, Ozorak, 2005; Reich, in press).

Methodological Considerations

Since what we identify is not independent from *how* we study it, we now turn to methodology. First, we consider the difference between *emic* and *etic* approaches (e.g., Lett, undated). *Emic* accounts, descriptions, and analyses proceed from conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate

by the members of the culture under study (the inside view). They are in accord with the perceptions and understandings deemed appropriate by the insider's culture. In contrast, *etic* accounts, descriptions, and analyses are formulated in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of scientific observers (i.e. precise, comprehensive, replicable, falsifiable, and observer-independent—the outside view). Both emic and etic knowledge is essential for in-depth understanding of religiously significant psychological universals. Emic knowledge is needed for an intuitive and empathic understanding of a culture, and for conducting effective fieldwork. Etic knowledge is essential for cross-cultural comparison, because such comparison necessarily demands standard units and categories. This does not mean, however, that everybody agrees with this, certainly not in consciousness research. For some, *introspection* is unscientific, for others it is a cornerstone (Reich, 2000). Note that it takes a sophisticated ontology to situate and deal with these various positions (e.g., Ellis, 2007).

What about actually *researching* religiously significant psychological universals (e.g., Berry, 1980; Bucher, et al., 2007)? Only comparatively few data are available so far. Most psychological research is as yet done in Western countries and then not infrequently with students as subjects (yet research in Islamic countries such as Iran, Malaysia or the Phillipines is on an upswing). However, we need worldwide research results for all age groups, an immense task. Also, the meaning of any questions put to the participants and the experimental settings must be the same across cultures (e.g., Ji & Ibrahim, 2007; Maiello, 2007; Underwood, 2006).

Given the heavy work and financial load of a genuine cross-cultural study, a study across *two cultures* would be a more realistic objective (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). The greater the difference between the two cultures, the more powerful is the proof of universality if the same psychological process or phenomenon is observed in both cultures. For instance, Watson et al. (2002) compared *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* religious motivation in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in the USA. They found that those Allportian concepts supplied a productive conceptual framework for understanding Iranian Muslim as well as American Christian religious commitments. In the opposite case, when no common psychological process or phenomenon is found, a comparison with a third culture (which shares one feature with one of the other two cultures, such as strong family ties, but is different in another major aspect, such as presence/absence of a person-like God) might lead to a better understanding, especially if commonalities now appear. Comparing the *three* cultures (e.g., Western, Near-Eastern, and Far-Eastern culture) ideally may make clear what

impeded commonalities in the comparison of two cultures. A methodically impeccable *cross-cultural* study clearly delivers the most convincing results (e.g., concerning the gender ratios for homicide: in all cultures studied, more men than women commit murder [Daly & Wilson, 1988]). Not to be overlooked, experience (remember Wundt) and data, especially from cross-cultural studies in cultural psychology (e.g., Belzen, 2001a, 2001b, 2005) and evolutionary psychology (e.g., Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Wilson, 2002), could potentially be helpful for planning investigation of religiously significant psychological universals.

## A More Inclusive Approach to the Psychology of Religion

The second item on my agenda would be a drive toward *a more inclusive approach to the psychology of religion*. This would notably involve multilevel framing. Elsewhere, I have suggested the obvious but as yet not generally practiced combination of the research levels *biology, psychology of religion,* and *religious studies/theology* (Reich, 2000). The relation between these levels is not one of classical (Newtonian) causal relationships (from cause to effect). Rather, we probably have to discuss this approach in terms of emergence (e.g., Clayton, 2004). The relations between the levels may be of various kinds: upward-causality/downward-causality, mutual enabling/restricting, two-way information transfer, increase/decrease of complexity, etc. Such a model can also be a base for a mutual, hospitable critique and challenge across disciplines. The hoped-for result is not only an enriched and more complete psychology of religion but also one that has been partially transformed through this exercise. Kirkpatrick (2006) made a step in this direction by combining an evolutionary approach and attachment theory. Hampson and Boyd-MacMillan (this issue) discuss conceivably fruitful interactions between psychology of religion and theology.

Emmons and Paloutzian (2003) advocate dialogue and collaboration of psychologists of religion with researchers in evolutionary biology neuroscience, philosophy, anthropology, and cognitive science. They argue, "a single disciplinary approach is incapable of yielding comprehensive knowledge of phenomena as complex and multifaceted as spirituality" (p. 395). They suggest calling this approach a *multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm*. The paradigm "recognizes the value of data at multiple levels of analysis while making non-reductive assumptions concerning the value of spiritual and religious phenomena" (p. 395). An example would be the volume on spiritual transformation and healing edited by Koss-Chioino and Hefner (2006), another the volume

edited by Brandt and Fournier (2007). These edited volumes represent a growing number of interdisciplinary efforts to provide multiple perspectives on the issues at hand.

A promising approach to dealing with multilevel interdisciplinary issues is by way of relational and contextual reasoning (RCR), and specifically by applying the RCR heuristic (Reich, 2002). As seen in Figure 1, RCR most notably involves a logic that includes noncompatibility (as distinct from incompatibility); that is, all levels and disciplines are needed for a complete explanation (even if they first appear to be incompatible) but their respective explanatory potential depends on the context. In one context, one level or discipline may contribute more; in another context, a different level or discipline, or perhaps a different combination of levels and disciplines, may be more productive. For instance, when studying the role of attachment theory for explaining the nature of the relation with God, evolutionary biology has more explanatory potential than, say, contemporaneous anthropology. When

Figure 1. Binary Logic and Trivalent RCR Logic
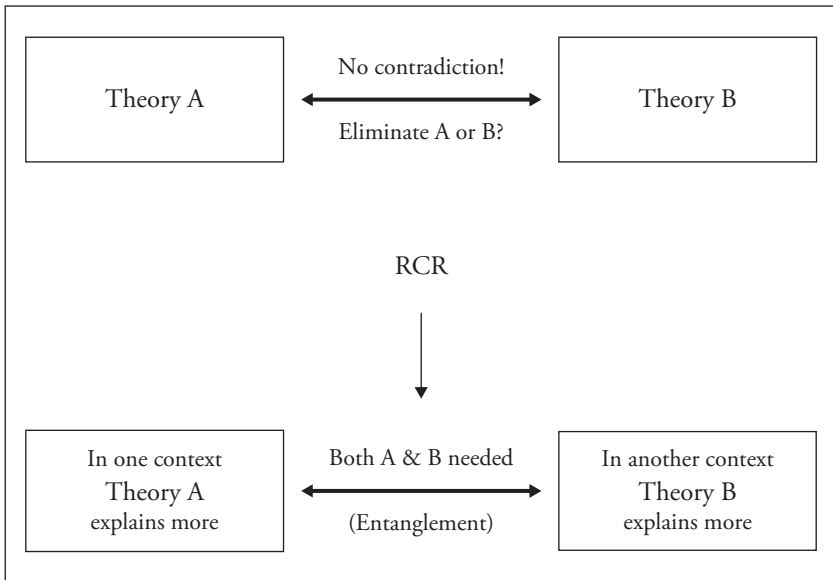
Upper part: Using binary logic, contradiction between Theory A and Theory B is not admitted and that may lead to exclude A or B. Lower part: In appropriate cases, applying the trivalent RCR logic resolves this problem.

the issue is to elucidate value priorities as a function of the centrality and the characteristics of religiousness, religious studies/theology have more explanatory potential than, say, cognitive science. When one wants to understand the respective roles of cognition and emotion in religious experiences, neuroscience has a more explanatory potential than, say, philosophy. In each new case, the RCR heuristic permits one to systematically elucidate the respective explanatory potentials. Nevertheless, to repeat, all are taken as needed for complete understanding. RCR also helps to explore potential candidates of universals, and notably to understand what it takes in terms of values and narratives to keep alive a feeling of communalities in opposing groups, an important ingredient for solving conflicts durably.

For those further interested, an illustrative example for *noncompatibility* is provided by the "two-slit experiment" in quantum physics. When one directs a laser light beam or a beam of electrons onto an image-producing target plate through a *single* slit in a shielding screen positioned between the source and the target plate, the pattern observed on that plate indicates a *particle*-like behaviour of the beam. However, if the intermediate screen features *two* appropriately spaced slits, a *wave*-like behaviour of the very same beam is deduced from the observed pattern. In our Internet era we can simply go to the Web URL http://www.colorado.edu/physics/2000/applets/twoslitsa.html, a virtual laboratory, which gives us full control over the (simulated) experiment. The outcome can be interpreted as RCR logic at work. Figure 2 illustrates a more debatable way to experience RCR logic.

Figure 2. Illustration of Noncompatibility
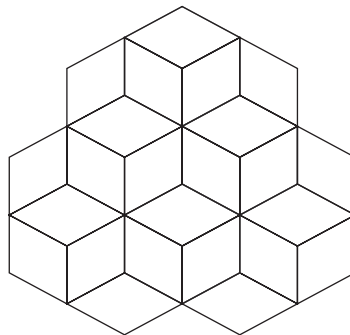
Different numbers of 3D cubes are perceived in upside and upside-down views. Binary logic would require the same context free number.

Construction of More Comprehensive Models

My third suggestion for extending the psychology of religion deals with the *construction of more comprehensive models*. Psychology of religion is not only characterised by the existence of many schools (e.g., Utsch, 1998) but also by the concomitant absence of an overarching model. Certainly, as pointed out by Hill and Gibson (this issue), there are attempts at modeling certain aspects of religiosity, such as the role of *attachment* (e.g., Granqvist & Hagekull, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2006) or of religious *coping* (Pargament, 1997). Helpful and admirable as these ongoing efforts are, they leave untapped the potential utility of a genuinely overarching model, both for improving the psychological understanding of religiousness and for assessing a given person's religiousness, for instance, in clinical cases. Clearly, to construct such a model is a major task. For illustration, let me refer to my own tentative model, first presented at the 2000 Sigtuna conference and further developed and published since (Reich, 2003). Conceived as action-based, this model incorporates the feedback loops between self and environment as well as various loops inside the self. The simplified schema is shown in Figure 3. The *self*, a psychological construct, is understood as being of *one* piece; the subdivisions shown serve mainly to make it easier to implement the model fully (in the present state it serves for *describing* dynamic changes involving religion/religiosity/ spirituality, not yet for *simulating* them). Changes can be triggered either by outside events (deep religious experience, birth of a child, personal loss, etc.) or from the inside of the self (growing up, dreams, deep meditation, etc.). An outside trigger (the bold faced T in Figure 3) affects directly the *central self* (human body including the brain, cognition, emotions, volition/ motivation, memory, subconscious) which then interacts with the *striving self* (short-term objectives, long-term life-aims, worldview), the *social self* (significant others, culture = socio-cultural symbolic environment) and the *religious self* (relationship with what is considered the Transcendent, the Ultimate, and its consequences for one's life). The interaction between these multiple partial selves produces a reaction toward the triggering event. In turn this provides a feedback to the self: If the cycle is beneficial, the religious worldview and attitude is reinforced; in the opposite case, changes may occur.

To fully implement the model as a self-contained simulator of dynamic changes, different sub-disciplines need to be involved such as depth psychology, personality psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology etc., and presumably neurobiology (e.g., Austin, 2006; Fine, 2006; Rockwell, 2005).

Figure 3. Schematic Representation of a Specific Dynamic Change: Trigger T, Interaction, Reaction, and Feedback (cf. Reich, 2003)
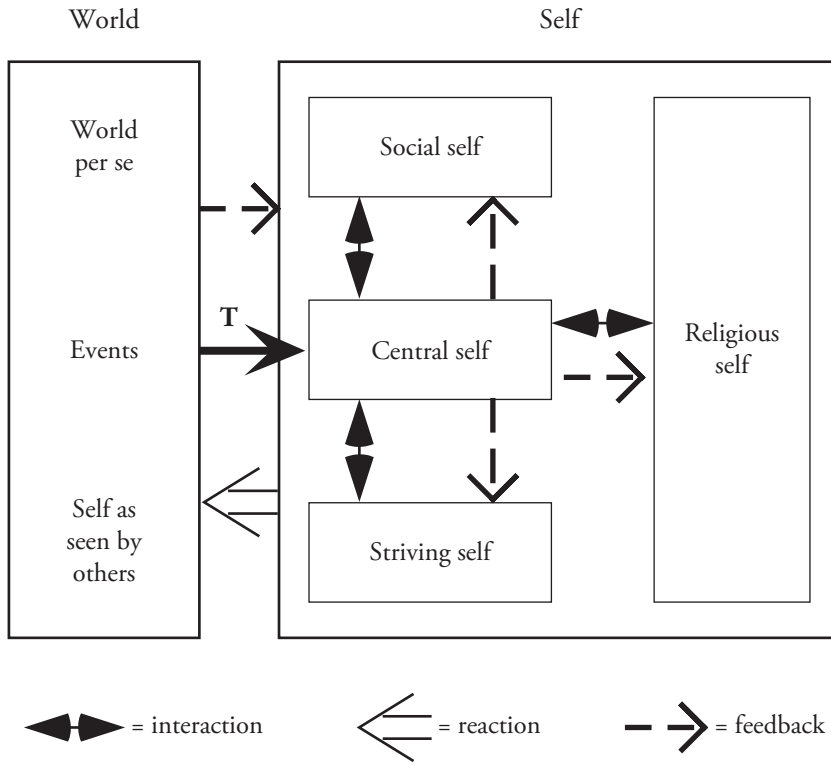
The detailed dynamics of each loop need to be determined. In actual use of the fully implemented model the given personal base values need to be fed in. Ideally, such a model should also permit one to deal with issues such as religious meaning making, struggle and doubt, religious awe and elevation (Haidt, 2006).

Conscious Experience

"What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind" (attributed to George Berkeley). Besides being a clever play on words, these questions and answers encapsulate one of the major long-standing mysteries philosophers

and scientists grapple with, so far with limited success: the mind/brain or body/soul problem. The reason to bring it up here is its importance for the psychology of religion (e.g., Reich, 2004). Significant psychological universals underlying the psychology of religion, a more comprehensive approach to it, and constructing more overarching models for it could all benefit, if conscious experience were better understood, specifically as regards the "truth value" of visions associated with meditative and mystical states (e.g., Hunt, 2006; Martin, 2005). A few related observations therefore seem in order.

The volume *Conscious Experience* edited by Thomas Metzinger (1995) provides an overview over the various issues: conceptual foundations, skeptical accounts, consciousness and the physical world, the knowledge argument, qualia, consciousness and higher states, information-processing and neurobiological approaches, and artificial consciousness. Despite remarkable progress with several of these issues, a satisfactory overall solution does not seem in sight (also not a decade or so after publication, e.g., Bennett, Dennett, Hacker, & Searle, with Robinson, 2007). According to Metzinger (1995),

> It is not at all clear what the puzzle of consciousness actually is, and what we would accept as a convincing solution.... The problem of consciousness is also a problem of self-knowledge.... [To solve it] may require a completely *new* type of intellectual revolution... [which] might have... greater social and cultural ramifications than any previous theoretical upheaval. This could be due to the consequences of a radically changed picture of ourselves, or to the impact of new technologies that might result, for instance, from progress in the neurosciences or in artificial intelligence research. (p. 3)

Going through the 500 pages of the text (and the 45 pages of additional references) *Conscious Experience*, one becomes aware of the complexity of the basic problems of understanding the term "consciously experiencing" (and the lack of a consensual solution)—and looks in vain for a discussion of mystical or religious experiences in this volume. The latter topic is dealt with notably in *Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* (Russell, Murphy, Meyering, & Arbib, 1999). Murphy (1999) in her introduction observes: "Perhaps we should not be surprised that there is a lack of theological consensus on the nature of the person when we consider the wide number of theological issues that need to be addressed if a physicalist account of the person is substituted for body-soul dualism" (p. viii).

However, there is some consensus that it is possible to conceive of mental states as supervenient on brain states, and in so doing maintain the integrity of causal explanation at the neurobiological level, and yet at the same time

maintain a distinctive causal role for the mental *qua* mental (as argued in several contributions to the volume edited by Russell et al., 1999). These conceptualizations are based on a complex systems model of differing explanatory (and causal) levels (dealt with, for instance, by physics, chemistry, biology, social science, culture, and theology)—a model already evoked here earlier on. One outcome is to conceive the person as *human-brain-in-the-body-in-social-relations*. Another heuristically valuable insight is that human knowing is *an active as well as a receptive process*. Both these insights will be taken up again.

The importance of appropriate subjects and methods should also be noted. While this requirement is important in any social science research, it is decisive, yet rarely met to a sufficient degree, in the research under discussion (e.g., Reich, 2006).

It would be preposterous, arrogant, and quite unjust to undervalue the wealth of information, insights, and reports on the interdisciplinary studies contained in these two volumes (Metzinger, 1995; Russell et al., 1999) and many more works along similar lines. Nevertheless, Metzinger's call for a completely *new* type of intellectual revolution still stands. In the remainder of this section tentative pointers to such a revolution are intimated.

Why is this revolution not already with us? For one, the issues are so complex that one may rightly ask whether humans are really capable of addressing them entirely successfully (see also Ikäheimo & Laitinen, 2007). Moreover, progress is not helped by the unsolved confrontation between on the one side radical reductionists for whom *only* the natural sciences can get at the truth, and on the other side researchers who grant the same capacity also to social sciences, theology, etc. (e.g., Azari & Slors, 2007). In a way one is reminded of the situation when some of Galileo's opponents refused to look at the satellites of Jupiter through his telescope, but now reversed: some scientists refuse to have an (unbiased) good look at "spiritual" evidence. (If another example is wanted: the case of anthropologists and economists who practically negate the influence of culture in their domains of study, e.g., Harrison & Huntington, 2000).

How can one get out of such a situation? A proven way is by enlarging the mental horizon, coming at the problem from a different direction, including new material, using a more appropriate method, and above all by reflecting on epistemology (e.g. Clarke, 2005). Also, nothing can be done without a sense of adventure and daring. A model case of what this could mean in detail is the study by Wildman and Brothers (1999). By the way, as many historical examples show (e.g., Christopher Columbus' model of the Earth, Niels Bohr's

atomic shell model) the heuristic value of a new approach is not necessarily determined by the *model's* congruence with reality.

Taking a different tack, Hunt (2006) researches the truth-value of mystical experiences. He basically follows Gibson's (1979) information pickup theory of perception and makes this a source for Lakoff's (1987) and Johnson's (1987) core metaphors. Similarities between metaphors underlying unitive mystical experience and cosmological physics are tentatively explained in that they are all abstracted from an ecological array resonant with multiple levels of physical reality. In other words, the basic idea consists in positing that the mechanism producing consciousness is not limited to what occurs in human brains but is also linked to outside affordances, conducive properties, fields of some kind, etc. that provoke mental processes differing from the sequence of passive perception, autonomous information processing, assessment, and action (if called for) in that action is more spontaneous and immediate. Extending such thinking into quantum mechanics leads to the daring attempts to locate consciousness in the universe (Zygon, 2006). Lucadou, Römer, and Walach (2007) explore the possibility that synchronicity, not causal relationships, are instrumental in parapsychological and other consciousness-related phenomena.

This general line of thought is explored further by Hondrich (2006), Sheldrake (2005), and others (Intersubjectivity, 2006). Holland (2007) introduces Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* into the cognitive theory of the extended mind by Clark and Chalmers (1998). Theirs are again tentative explorations; however, hopefully they may make contributions to the revolution we are looking for.

Another, possibly revolutionary approach is to locate consciousness (at least partially) in the body (e.g., Gallagher, 2005; Louchakova & Warner, 2003,). However, exploring this avenue exceeds my competence; this emphasizes the need to approach the issues concerned in an interdisciplinary manner (e.g., Lorimer, 2004). Nevertheless, in my view such attempts deserve a chance to be evaluated with an open mind and improved if potentially fruitful.

Concluding Remarks

I advocate three themes as desirable future developments: researching the nature and the plausibility of religiously significant psychological universals, taking a more inclusive approach to the psychology of religion, and constructing overarching models. As readers may have already perceived, these three themes are not independent of each other: Universals might only be properly identified through a wider, interdisciplinary approach, leading in turn to the

construction of improved, more overarching models. I also indicate how we might get to a better understanding of consciousness, which in turn could be useful for progress with the three issues under discussion. The considerations presented here should be seen as contributing to an enlarged framework that includes the other suggestions of this special section.

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