The Contribution of the Study of "Spirituality" to the Psychology of Religion: Conclusions and Future Prospects

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Abstract

This concluding chapter places our study in context by linking it not only to our first book on deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009), but by suggesting how this text is a second in a trilogy that compliments this cross-sectional etic and emic study of the semantics of spirituality with a longitudinal study of faith development forthcoming. We begin with philosophical support for our stand of methodological agnosticism which sustains our use of ultimate concern and transcendence (vertical and horizontal) to map individuals and groups in a two-dimensional space, the religious field. In addition, for empirical reasons we create an additional two dimensional space to map individuals and groups in our study in terms of Hood's M-scale as a measure of spirituality and the *openness to experience* scale. Finally, we address criticisms of cross-cultural psychology applied to universalizing measures such as mysticism. We claim that mysticism and the religious styles perspective are appropriate for investigating—and mapping—commonalities and differences between Germany and the USA on the semantics of "spirituality."

We have covered much ground in the preceding chapters and it would be foolish to summarize in brief what we have detailed in individual chapters, especially those focused upon emic descriptions. In this concluding chapter we will place our work in the larger context of what contribution we believe it makes to the psychology of religion as a focused area of study and in the process also situate this book within what amounts to a trilogy. However, first we ought to note that this research is a cooperative project not simply between two universities, one German and the other American, but also between two multidisciplinary teams that combine unique talents with training in theology,

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sociology, psychology, and psychoanalysis. Our team includes some with training in two disciplines. For instance, Barbara Keller holds the doctorate in psychology and also is a licensed psychoanalyst with a practice in Köln, Germany, while Constantin Klein holds a doctorate in theology and works toward a doctorate in psychology. Others could be noted but the point is simply that our research team is truly interdisciplinary and is able to bring to our project a broadened understanding of the breadth of psychology of religion and the place of spirituality within it.

Furthermore, our team combines two major theoretical orientations: one, faith development theory, long associated with Fowler and Emory University in Atlanta, but now clearly linked to the University of Bielefeld and Streib's research; the other, the study of mysticism, linked to the phenomenological common core thesis first proposed by Stace and developed empirically by Hood. As our work developed we found it useful to locate much of our data in a two-dimensional space defined by mysticism and degree of *openness to experience*. This combination was not uninformed by previous research on both faith development and religious styles as well as by previous research on mysticism and its relationship to *openness*. However, before we explore some of the implications of this for the psychology of religion, we will find it helpful to note some of the broader methodological and theological/philosophical assumptions that frame our research. They are not unrelated to the fact that both within faith development theory and mysticism unifying factors are explicit that are neither naively accepted nor ontologically denied. Elsewhere we have identified this stance as one of methodological agnosticism and a brief review is warranted here.

Methodological Agnosticism

Our efforts in this second volume advance more than just the spirit of Emmons and Paloutzian's call for "a new *multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm*" first announced in (2003, p. 395, emphasis in original) and echoed again in Park and

Paloutzian (2005), Paloutzian and Park (2014). However, our theoretical and methodological orientations, including the use of both faith development theory as advanced by Streib and mysticism as advanced by Hood, address the almost ignored call for this paradigm in sociology of religion. Our efforts expand upon Porpora's (2006) critical analysis of the sociology of religion whose overarching assumption is the methodological atheism most forcefully championed by Berger (1967, p. 100) and best summarized by the claim that "every inquiry that limits itself to the empirically available must necessarily be based upon 'methodological atheism.'" While Berger speaks to sociologists, he echoes a sentiment of over a hundred years ago by the psychologist Flournoy (1903) who argued for the methodical exclusion of the transcendent in the then emerging empirical psychology of religion. Our efforts instead call for a methodological agnosticism, addressed more fully elsewhere (Hood, 2012). Here we will simply indicate how our theoretical orientation and methodological triangulation allows for advancing the field by a reconsideration of classic theorists, especially Troeltsch and Weber and placing the contemporary study of spirituality within the religious field as we have argued in Chaps. 1 and 2 of this volume.

Porpora's criticism of methodological atheism is based on the fact that insofar as one raises social constructionism to a methodological absolute, reality as empirically investigated is necessarily incapable of referring to anything outside of social constructs that may contribute to experience. Porpora argues for a more epistemologically adequate methodological agnosticism. Part of Porpora's reasoning is based upon the philosophical limits of social constructionism which become self-negated if reflexively applied to the discipline that champions such views. Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 13) recognized that if the principle was reflexively applied to sociology, it would be like trying to push the bus from the inside. Likewise, Collins and Yearly (1992) refuse to apply social constructionism to sociology in what has not so playfully been identified as the epistemological chicken and egg

debate. Bhaskar (1994, pp. 10, 30) suggests his own neologism, in what is a vain effort at ending philosophical reflection of the overarching assumption, "TINA" (there is no alternative). Our project rejects this absolutist claim and provides an alternative.

If we return now to the call for a new paradigm noted above, an interdisciplinary paradigm offers possibilities that, while not denying the relevance of social constructionism, are not bound by its philosophically self-imposed limits (Coleman & Hood, 2015). If we focus upon psychology, one of the earliest reviews of the social psychology of religion by Dittes (1969) identified four conceptual options available to those who study the psychology of religion.

Two of Dittes' options are reductionist and implicitly subscribed to methodological atheism. The first two options are that variables operating in the study of the religious field are the same as in other fields or, perhaps in the case of religion, simply more salient. Both of these options are consistent with methodological naturalism which is inherently atheistic.

The other two of Dittes' conceptual options suggest that something is unique about religion and thus it may need methods that mainstream social science ignores. They are implicitly methodologically agnostic. The least controversial of these is that established variables uniquely interact with specific variables in the religious field. This is consistent with Porpora's claim that transcendent realities may contribute to the totality of what is religiously experienced. Dittes' fourth option is that there are unique variables operating in religion that either do not operate in other contexts or are ignored by mainstream scientists. Insofar as both of these options can give credence to ontological claims associated with religion, they can be identified as supporting a methodological agnosticism.

Hood, Hill, and Spilka (2009) has used Dittes' four options to suggest ways of studying religion and spirituality that are not limited by social constructionist assumptions. Options three and four noted above transcend social constructionist assumptions by noting that, with respect to religious and spiritual experiences, the claim that

something is an object or source of the experience moves from a purely social constructionistic assumption to a social expressionism in which social and psychological mediators are efforts to express an experience that transcends its mere social construction (Hood, 2006). Note that agnosticism here simply affirms that for the believer the object of experience has an ontological status that must enter into assessing relative interpretations offered by theories based upon methodological atheism or agnosticism. Porpora (2006, p. 23) refers to this in general terms as "super-mundane objects of experience." Elsewhere in this volume (Chap. 1) we have noted that by placing the study of spirituality within the religious field, variations in ontological considerations of not only the "search for" but the "response to" ultimacy can be located along the dimensions of transcendence, conceived as vertical or horizontal.

Thus, it is scientifically legitimate to explore the possibility that part of the experience of God comes from God (Bowker, 1973; Hood, 1989). Porpora does not provide a description of the kind of science that is open to the ontological possibilities associated with taking reports of religious and spiritual experiences seriously. However, he suggests that psychology is ahead of sociology in acknowledging a transcendence that does not, in Berger's own explicit concern, provide anything more than a "quasi-scientific legitimation of a secularized worldly view" (1974, p. 128). By briefly reviewing our own alternative to the dilemma of a methodological atheism we can place the relevance of our major findings in perspective.

Mediators of Transcendence

In Chap. 1 (see especially, pp. 1–4; also, Streib & Hood, 2011) we took care to return the study of spirituality to what we think is its proper home, the social scientific study of religion. In reviewing both the theoretical and conceptual literature on "spirituality" we argued that the overlap is so substantial that we do not need two concepts

('religion' and 'spirituality') nor do we need to subscribe to the fact that such terms must be polar opposites. Our solution to such conceptual and empirical dead ends was to return to classic theorists (James; Troeltsch; Weber) and to create an ideal type in which under the *genus proximum* 'religion' are the three *differentiae specificae,* noted by Troeltsch with reference to Weber: privatized, experience-oriented (mysticism), charismatic, prophecy/protest-oriented (sect) and organized, tradition-oriented (church). Further, we argued that this ideal typology organizes Bourdieu's religious field in empirically explorable ways by allowing the identification of mediators within the perspective of a methodological agnosticism. We need not explicitly refer to God nor support any religious apologetics if we but seek to identify mediators of both transcendence and ultimate concern. Transcendence is further specified as either vertical (suggestive of two of Dittes' non-reductive options) or horizontal (suggestive of Dittes' two reductive options). Thus, by focusing upon ultimate concern and transcendence we return spirituality to the study of religion, its classic home.

Thus mediation and vertical/horizontal transcendence serve as coordinates for the religious field. Mediation results from conceptual clarification with reference to the sociology of religion of Weber, Troeltsch and Bourdieu, and is helpful in opening the perspective and understanding the variety of religions and their various forms of organization; but, with mysticism, the perspective is open for forms of more or less radical forms of religious individualization. The distinction between vertical and horizontal transcendence is rooted in another tradition of the sociology of religion: the social-phenomenological tradition of Schütz, Luckmann and Knoblauch. And also here, as Knoblauch's work demonstrates, the perspective opens up for understanding new developments in the religious field that are outside organized religion—and thus called "invisible" or perhaps "implicit" forms of religion. Taken together, these two streams in the sociology of religion provide a framework for understanding "spirituality." And in fact, we conclude from our study of self-attributed "spirituality" that

is detailed in the chapters of this volume that the scientific study of religion in general and the psychology of religion in particular are well advised to consider these two coordinates for outlining the religious field in a way that is open for and responsive to new developments such as self-attributed "spirituality."

Here we might note that also others, working from different theoretical perspectives, have arrived at similar conclusions. For instance, Wiseman (2006), who is also careful to place spirituality within its proper "religious" home, appeals to the work of Schneider (1989) in which her definition of spirituality as "the ultimate value one perceives" (p. 678) parallels our own view summarized above in this book and elsewhere (see e.g. Chap. 1; Hood, 2006; Streib & Hood, 2011). Wiseman (2006) notes that Schneider argues that transcendence is a fundamental dimension of human existence, and while her focus is upon what we identify as vertical transcendence within the Christian tradition, it need not be confused with a subtle Christian apologetics, a concern that some have with "spirituality" as implicit religion. As Wiseman (2006, pp. 4–5) notes:

> Schneider's [1989, p. 678] broad definition of spirituality in terms of transcendence "toward the ultimate value one perceives" makes it quite legitimate to speak, for example, of Hindu spirituality or Jewish spirituality. Indeed, since the ultimate value need not be perceived as a personal God … one could just as properly speak of Buddhist or Daoist spirituality, where there are clearly transcendent horizon of ultimate value (the Buddha, nirvana, the Dao) even though none of these is understood as a personal God.

Wiseman's summary of Schneider's position on spirituality nicely meshes with our own arguments on spirituality as implicit or invisible religion (Chap. 1, Streib & Hood, 2011).

Acknowledging the significant overlap between the semantics of "religion" and "spirituality" (Chaps. 7 and 8) and our review of measures of spirituality in Chaps. 10 and 11, we decided that, given our commitment to exploring the religious field empirically, it would be useful to use an existing measure that might be related to participants' understanding of the semantics of

both "religion" and "spirituality" and to empirically test whether they are associated with the binaries. Our decision was to use Hood's M-Scale as a measure of spirituality. The basis for this decision was partly justified in Chap. 11. However, here we can point to some additional considerations relative to the use of the M-Scale as a measure of spirituality that are empirically justified and consistent with our concern that social scientists ought not to attempt to study spirituality as if it were independent of religion.

Mysticism as a Measure of Spirituality

First, the M-Scale (Hood, 1975) was developed to operationalize and measure Stace's (1960) common core thesis, developed independent of and before the concern with the "religion/spirituality" binary. The scale quickly became and continues to be the most widely used measure of reported mystical experience (Hood & Francis, 2013 Lukoff & Lu, 1988).

Second, as noted in Chap. 11, in both Germany and the USA the self-identified binary "more spiritual than religious" has higher mysticism scores than other groups, but importantly "equally religious and spiritual" people also have high mysticism scores. While some refinements and qualifications have been noted in Chap. 11 relative to gender and to minor differences between Germany and the USA, here it is important to note that the M-Scale is appropriate for use with all cells in the binary, including our selected focus groups in which the binaries are utilized with those who self-identify as "atheist/non theist" and those who self-identify as "not atheist or not non-theist" (see Chap. 4, Table 4.7).

Third, it is our concern that social scientists need not create a new domain of study identified as "spirituality," since both empirically and conceptually the phenomena associated with spirituality have classically been under the umbrella of religion. One need but note that Paulist Press is in the process of producing a proposed twenty-five volume set titled, "*World spirituality: An encyclopedic history of the religious quest*" (Wiseman, 2006, p. 1) to realize that the recent effort of social scientists to divorce spirituality from religion is, at best, historically naïve. Likewise, Paulist Press has extended its initially limited series titled "*The Classic of Western Spirituality*" to a continuing open ended series. Currently one can purchase 126 volumes published between 1977 and 2013, containing 45,391 pages and involving 163 authors. Only one volume deals with the emergence of the "spiritual but not religious" binary that some social scientists are trying to divorce from a religious context. Its editor, Van Ness (1996), notes that for many Americans being religious is not a necessary condition for being spiritual and explores various means by which individuals in this cell of the binary express their ultimacy and horizontal transcendence in such areas as ecological activism, 12-step programs, and various psychological systems. That this is but one volume (vol. 22) in a series that now exceeds 130 volumes and clearly supports our contention that "spiritual but not religious" is best placed within an implicit or invisible religious context, not an independent domain social scientist have only recently uncovered.

Fourth, in their own review of eight traditions across both history and cultures that can be identified with totalizing world views of interest to what Americans identify as positive psychology, Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) noted that of seven virtues identified across eight traditions transcendence of self (mysticism) is explicitly mentioned in the three Abrahamic faith traditions of the West (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) and in the two explicit faith traditions of the East, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) argue that transcendence is also implicit in the two indigenous faith traditions of China, Confucianism and Taoism, traditions not associated with claims to the existence of God or gods. While we know of no studies to date that have used the M-Scale with either Confucians or Taoists, this is a fruitful area for research given that anthologies have explored Taoism in light of Stace's universal core claim which is the basis of Hood's operationalization in

the M-Scale (Van Owen, 1973). However, based upon methodological agnosticism the distinction that is useful here is to remember that transcendence can be vertical (and hence explicitly religious) or horizontal (and hence implicitly religious). As we noted previously, horizontal transcendence, associated with the spiritual but not religious binary, involves individuals who are not ontologically or epistemologically bound by any theological limits (Chap. 10, p. 24), but this does not make them any less embedded in religion, albeit implicitly so (Anthony, Hermans, & Sterkens, 2010; Hood et al., 2009, p. 282, 286; Streib & Hood, 2011). Furthermore, the M-Scale's validity as a measure of spirituality is attested to by the fact that it has been validated in each of the three Abrahamic faiths—among Muslims in Iran (Hood et al., 2001), among Jews in Israel (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005), and among Christians in America (Hood & Williamson, 2000). It has also been validated in cultures expressing the two Eastern spiritual traditions where Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) assert transcendence is also an explicit value, namely among Buddhists in Tibet (Chen, Yang, Hood, & Watson, 2011; Chen, Zhang, Qi, & Hood, 2011) and Hindus in India (Anthony et al., 2010). Validation refers to the similarity of factor structure across the traditions for which M-Scale studies exist and support for a common core to mysticism across cultures (Hood, 2006).

Here, our claim is more limited to the usefulness of the M-Scale to assess spirituality in both Germany and the USA and to test explicit hypotheses as noted in Chap. 11. Here we simply note that the use of the M-Scale in this second volume of what will be a trilogy was partly predicated on the fact that, in our first volume on deconversion, in both Germany and the USA high rates of "more spiritual than religious" were reported among deconverts and this was associated with high rates of mysticism supporting early findings by Zinnbauer et al., (1997) and Hood (2003).

However, more nuanced analyses in this volume using structure equation modelling (SEM) take account of the fact of the intercorrelations between the three mysticism factors and of the influence of the partial covariances represented in regression weights in the report of introvertive and extrovertive mystical states of consciousness. This reveals that neither extrovertive nor introvertive mysticism is associated with self-rated "spirituality," unless associated with interpretation that includes positive affect, sacredness and noetic quality. The take-away point here is simply that those who see themselves as "spiritual" are likely to have high M-Scale scores. This suggests that the M-Scale as a measure of "spirituality" has greater content validity than other measures we reviewed in Chap. 11, even though the M-Scale was created to measure mysticism, not "spirituality." This suggests further that, as argued elsewhere (Streib & Hood, 2011; Hood et al., 2009, pp. 372–378), some versions of "spirituality" are best seen as implicit religion, especially in America where they are associated with vertical (religious and spiritual) or horizontal transcendence (spiritual but not religious) or simply with the self-identification as "religious" (Hood, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Chap. 11 this volume).

The Special Usefulness of Openness and Mysticism for Perceiving and Understanding New Developments in the Religious Field

The failure of personality (as measured by the "Big Five") to be very useful in predicting either "religion" or "spirituality" (Chap. 12) is not surprising given that it also fails to predict fundamental personality changes following conversion (Paloutzian, Richardson, & Rambo, 1999) or to have a strong effect size in predicting deconversion (Streib et al., 2009)—which appears in line with other empirical studies indicating rather limited power for personality to predict religion (Saroglou, 2002). Thus, much of this volume is devoted to a focus upon emic study of persons, with the clear recognition that the semantics of spirituality must emerge from the interactive effect of method, context, and personal biography. As summarized in Chap. 23, the

focus upon lived experience of persons as revealed by their narrative construction of faith development in terms of individual biographies reveals a depth of understanding that etic explorations of personality as measured by the "Big Five" fail to uncover. Thus, the qualitative and emic data is a necessary complement to our more quantitative explorations.

With respect to the personality profiles of our focus groups and their deviation from established normative values (Chap. 12, Table 12.3), the main findings are that "spirituality" is strongly associated with *openness to experience* in both countries. The strong effect size for the "more spiritual than religious" and also for the "neither spiritual nor religious" in both Germany and the USA is suggesting that both the rejection of orthodoxy as associated with explicit religion and a positive secularity that denies *both* implicit and explicit religion are associated with *openness to experience*.

Thus the NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience* has emerged as clear predictor and as coordinate for "spirituality." However, the major finding of usefulness in this study was combining *openness to experience* and mysticism to predict self-rating as "religious" or "spiritual." Both coordinates are particularly helpful in understanding "spirituality"—and the variety of sematic versions of "spirituality," as demonstrated for example in Figs. 14.8 and 14.9, where the ten components which are derived from factor analysis of the free entries "spirituality" are mapped on the two-dimensional space with *openness to experience* and *mysticism* as coordinates. Thus it is our conclusion that these coordinates should be considered, when the aim is understanding and mapping the variety of new developments and future migrations of individual cases in the religious field such as self-attributed "spirituality" (see e.g. Fig. 17.2).

As the SEM (Chap. 13, Fig. 13.7) demonstrates, *mysticism* positively predicts "spirituality," while *openness* negatively predicts "religion." In a more complex SEM model employing the *Religious Schema Scale*, its subscales are mediators for predicting self-ratings as "religious" and "spiritual;" the most significant mediators are *xenos* for self-rated "spirituality" and *ttt* for self-rated "religion" (Chap. 13, Fig. 13.8). This compliments what is a consistent theme throughout our study: that "religion" is associated with ontological and epistemological claims that, while meaningful for some, are rejected by many of those who self-identify as "spiritual." However, in terms of implicit or invisible religion, "spiritual" as secular or horizontal transcendence is not without its own epistemological and ontological claims.

Without repeating the mapping of the results of the subjective definitions of "spirituality" of the Religious Schema groups on the two dimensional space of *openness to experience* and *mysticism*, here we merely want to re-emphasize the conceptual usefulness of not divorcing "spirituality" from "religion." Accepting the M-Scale as a measure of spirituality links those who are spiritual but not religious to those who are equally spiritual and religious, as a considerable body of empirical work demonstrates (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 375–379). Both groups report spiritual experiences. However, our mapping in this book considerably extends the spiritual, not religious grouping and includes the "spirituality" of the self-identified atheists and non-theists who need not be divorced from religion. While we note that individuals may not explicitly use the term "religious," this does not mean that such persons do not identify as "spiritual" and while respecting their own choice of terms, as scholars we need not adopt lay terms for theoretical guidance that, as we have noted previously, is deeply rooted in classic and contemporary theories of implicit or invisible religion. While this does not exhaust the semantics of spirituality mapped by our two-dimensional space, it does suggest "spirituality" among the "spiritual, not religious" has ideological dimensions as a symbol system in conscious opposition to "religion" (hence, the "spiritually but not religious"). However, as we have emphasized throughout this book, self-identifications that stand in opposition to "religion" need not be divorced from "spirituality." Mapping our results in the two-dimensional space created by *mysticism* and *openness to experience* show both

overlaps and differences in shared feelings with those who are explicitly committed to self-identification as "religious and spiritual." To emphasize again, our point is that secularity is not in opposition to religion. Insofar as "spirituality" is seen as implicit religion, we can reasonably speak of "secular religion" or even "secular faith" (Bailety, 2010, p. 271).

Cross-Cultural Versus Cultural (Indigenous) Psychology

For the first time two areas of research, long separated are brought together. Each of these is predicated on the assumption that there may be universal patterns in which particular cases are embedded and that for many the universal follows a developmental trajectory. For faith development/religious styles research, exclusivist and limited perspectives, however meaningful and effective they may be for the believer, such as mythical-literal faith, are linked to more literal interpretation of sacred texts (measured by the RSS subscale *truth of texts and teachings*), while higher or more advanced stages/styles are associated with universalizing tendencies that allow for more inclusiveness, even if limited to exploration of other perspectives or traditions (measured by the RSS subscale *xenosophia/ inter-religious dialog*).

Interestingly there is a relation between faith stages/religious styles and mysticism. This relationship, as presented in Figs. 14.10 and 14.11 is not unexpected, since mysticism is perhaps the single best exemplar of a universalizing or inclusive experience. Here we need not endorse any ontological claim but simply note that the loss of self and its possible absorption into a lager self that diminishes the empirical ego leaves little room for exclusive distinctions between individuals. Hence we are not surprised to find that those who are more advanced in religious styles/on higher stages of faith are more likely to have spiritual but not religious identifications and to have reasonably high overall *mysticism* scores. Uniting what we might call two

universalizing traditions, one faith development and the other mysticism, seems to present additional reasons for accepting that those who are spiritual but not religious remain within the religious field as we have defined it, even when their own spirituality distances itself from organized religion in church and sect.

Of course, we have two cautionary notes with respect to criticism that apply to both faith development research and mysticism—each addressed to the issue of cross-cultural generalizations that some purely cultural psychologists find suspect. Here we will focus upon how the criticism has been directly applied to mysticism using Hood's measure as we have been explicitly able to respond to criticism that tends to blur the distinction between indigenous cultural psychologies and cross-cultural psychologies. Our research is an example of the latter and cannot be challenged by criticism that applies to the former.

In a specific criticism of Hood, Belzen, a cultural psychologist of religion, noted that the apparent success of Hood's M-Scale cross-culturally was essentially a magician's trick. Hood's scale is derived from Stace's (1960) phenomenological universal core theory of mysticism. However, as Belzen notes:

> He [Hood] designed an instrument to answer the question, tested it out, and lo and behold, a common core shows up – *but* the instrument was based on a conceptualization of mysticism, by Stace (1960), that *presupposes* a common core. So: Hood got a common core out of the empiricist's hat (the M-scale), so to speak, but only after he put it (Stace's theory of a common core) in there before (Belzen, 2010 pp. 217–218, emphasis in original).

Here Belzen's basic criticism of Hood's study of mysticism is the general criticism he applies to all cross-cultural studies of religion. The basic critique is that, ironically, they are not cultural or, if so, hegemonic. We have simply put mysticism along-side religion to illustrate the generality of Belzen's (2010, pp. 50–51) critique:

> … a cultural psychology approach takes into account the specific forms of life (Wittgenstein) in which subjects are involved. I must grant that in so doing the results obtained are not valid for every person and/or group in every religion [mystical

tradition], but it is exactly this sort of aspiration that should be abolished from psychology (not just in psychology of religion!) the results obtained are not valid for every person and/or group in every religion [mystical tradition]. As there is no such thing as religion [mysticism] – in – general, but only specific forms of life going by the label "religion," ["mysticism"] and …the psychology of religion [mysticism] should try to detect how a specific religious form of life constitutes, involves and regulates the psychic functioning of its adherents.

Belzen's specific critique of universalist tendencies in light of his general criticism of cross-cultural psychology of religion echoes Parsons who worries that contemporary psychoanalysts sympathetic not to religion but to mysticism may in fact harbor a more "insidious form of Orientalism" (Parsons, 1999, p. 131) than classical Freudian analysts who view all mysticism as pathological from what can be viewed as a hegemonic Western individualist tradition (Hood, 1976).

We think such criticism is wane in the face of the reality of how both mysticism and faith development/religious styles researchers have developed. Neither was simply created out of thin air or ad hoc maneuvering. The universalizing claims of each are rooted first in inductive generalizations from cross-cultural consideration of either faith or mysticism and both then have a long tradition of refinements in their measures. For instance, we need not belabor the point that the M-Scale items were in fact derived from Stace's universal core thesis, by a "Catholicity of evidence" (1960, p. 38). Stace culled descriptions of mystical experiences from the three Abrahamic faiths as well as various Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist mystical traditions. He sought texts that were expression of mystical experience and from these he created his universal core. Thus, Belzen is inaccurate when he claims that items were presupposed. Like James and others, Stace simply recognized a commonality of self-loss common across numerous traditions, including among atheists unattached to any tradition. Hood then simply took Stace's common core and created a scale in which individuals can indicate the extent to which they have had an experience

associated with eight different core elements or facets Stace identified. Stace's work expanded upon Otto's (1926/1932) mysticism of introspection and of unifying vision. The former Stace identified as introvertive mysticism, the latter as exrtrovertive mysticism. Introvertive mysticism is a unitary experience of pure consciousness that transcends both space and time. In the extrovertive mysticism, the unity includes a sense of the inner subjectivity that characterizes the unity perceived amid diversity. Clustered to the experience of unity are less central core criteria or facets of sacredness, positive affect, ineffability, and a noetic sense. We anticipate and empirical studies confirm that these facets can vary within a context of family resemblances (Stace, 1960 pp. 45–47). For instance, among Israeli Jews (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005) and Iranian Muslims (Hood et al., 2001) ineffability is linked with interpretation while among American Christians (Hood & Williamson, 2000; Hood et al., 2001) ineffability is linked with introvertive mysticism. The shifting of facets is expected within Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances, a position some have challenged (King, 1988) but one that we accept for both conceptual (Hood & Williamson, 2000) and empirical reasons (Chen et al., 2012).

The use of the M-Scale cross-culturally has been noted above. Our use of the M-Scale is not to engage in a positivist methodology suggesting that experiences are empirically verified as identical in other than a measurement identification that demands further exploration. Consider our response to Belzen's critique (Hood, 2010): (1) Stace did *not* presuppose a common core. He claimed to identify it empirically from a Catholicity of cross-culturally derived phenomenological descriptions of mystical experiences; hence Stace used the term 'universal core'; (2) Hood created a scale that reliably measures Stace's 'universal core' and referred to it empirically as a 'common core'; (3) in a variety of cultures individuals are presented with Belzen's "hat" containing Hood's items assessing Hood's operationalization of Stace's 'universal core.' If the items were adequately indicative of

indigenous mystical traditions they should be identifiable; (4) the 32 items measuring the common core are "pulled out of the hat" *not* by Hood but by individuals in the various cultures; (5) the pattern or clustering of these items are consistent across cultures. This is cross-cultural psychology and firmly grounds the research reported in this book on a legitimate comparative basis, both between Germany and the USA and with our specific focus groups in each country. Similar defenses of stages or styles of faith can be made and have been through this text.

Finally, the concern that we do not over-generalize from our etic data has been repeatedly noted and is balanced by our emic data. Many of the psychological correlates are illuminated by specific case studies chosen precisely to illustrate the "flesh and blood" and "lived" specific forms of life. Here not only faith development/religious styles, but personal narratives and biographical trajectories of participants placed within the context of our etic data reveal in ways that cannot be easily summarized here that neither faith development research nor the empirical study of mysticism fail to acknowledge the reality of lived religion, implicit or explicit.

If there is a take-away conclusion from the massive amount of data, both qualitative and quantitative, in both our previous deconversion text and this text, it is that, as we noted in Chap. 24, we can say little directly about true developmental changes as our data remains cross-sectional. Still, the data are suggestive. For instance, it appears that deconverts occupy a significant and increasing amount of space in the religious field, perhaps more so in America than Germany. Furthermore, many of these, at least in the USA, self-identify as "more spiritual than religious," but with relative small tendencies to claim atheism. It is this persona who also appears to be mystical and at higher levels of faith development, and in our own theoretical framing, exploring the multiple options available to those whose religion remains implicit. To explore these possibilities in a truly developmental study, using both etic and emic data is our next study, already underway, and will complete the trilogy that began with out book on deconversion.

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