

SUBSTANTIVISM

Substantivist

FUNCTIONALISM

Functionalist

REDUCTIONISM

Reductionist

SUBSTANTIVISM

Focus is on the **CONTENT** of the religion and ITS beliefs

Classic substantivist: Eliade, James

FUNCTIONALISM

Focus is on how the religion
FUNCTIONS in a person's life

Classic functionalist: Durkheim

REDUCTIONISM

- Focus is on what the religion or religious practice actually "boils down to"
- Religion is *not* what it appears to be and religious beliefs and activities are not what they appear to be

Classic reductionist: Freud

Substantivist:

- James typically reports on the *actual religious activities* of the adherents as they describe those activities. James acknowledges these activities *AS* religious activities.
- Theologians are *substantivists*. They study and discuss religious beliefs *as* religious beliefs.

- Durkheim, on the other hand, may describe what the "natives" are doing and may report that the natives *CLAIM* they are doing something genuinely religious, but in Durkheim's view what's *REALLY* going on is a society's attempt at fostering *social cohesion*. Period. Durkheim interprets the activities in terms of how the activities function in a human life.

Functionalist

- Along with Durkheim, Freud, too, might be considered a functionalist of sorts. Religion plays a certain (clinical) role in a person's life. Religion provides a certain "release" for people. But Freud is best viewed as a "reductionist".
- Most functionalists have reductionistic tendencies.

Reductionist

- Freud is the exemplar.
- Religion is *nothing else but* _____.
- There's nothing *religious* about religious experience.
- A reductionist "reduces" the topic under consideration down to *some other* thing. So religion is no longer understood as something having to deal with *religion*. Instead, it has to deal with _____ (fill in the blank: neurosis, security, society, etc.)

Fundamental distinction:

The important distinction is between substantivists, on the one side, and functionalists/reductionists on the other.

If you're a substantivist,
you're not going to be a reductionist.

If you're a functionalist,
you're not going to be a substantivist.