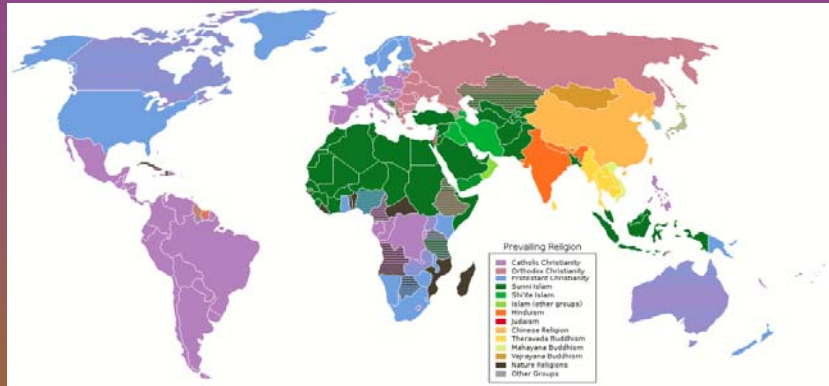


Approaches to Religion

- **Empirical**
 - **Historical**
 - **Anthropological**
 - **Psychological**
 - **Biological**
- **Humanistic**
 - **Historical**
 - **Philosophical**
 - **Theological**
- **Why these all blend into each other**

Prevailing Religion



Religion and Culture

- Clear cultural dimension
- Religion as an activity
- Functionalism in anthropology and sociology
- Function of religion
 - Marx's theory
 - Freud's theory
 - Explanatory
 - Objectify cultural norms
 - Geertz's theory
- What about depicting the truth?

Definition of Religion

- **Paul Tillich (1886-1965)**
 - Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned
- **William James (1842-1910)**
 - Were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.
- **Clifford Geertz (1926-2006)**
 - (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic

A Working Characterization

- **Too broad?**
 - Environmentalism
 - Feminism
 - Capitalism
- **Supreme Court**
- **Semantically relevant characteristics**
 - Supernatural
 - Normative
 - Symbolic history
 - Ritual

Hick's Definition of Religion

An understanding of the universe, together with an appropriate way of living within it, which involves reference beyond the natural world to God or gods or to the Absolute or to a transcendent order or process.

Preliminary Evidence

- e₁. Religious belief is ubiquitous in every culture and historical epic.**
- e₂. There are many theistic and non-theistic belief systems.**
- e₃. These systems correlate along cultural and geographic lines.**
- e₄. Most people's belief is a direct result of their personal family and childhood history.**

Three Possible Explanations

- **Religious exclusivism**
 - For our examination – western theism
- **Religious pluralism**
- **Secular naturalism**

Religious Exclusivism

- **Realism**
 - Scientific
 - Moral
 - Religious
- **Theistic realism**
- **Christian realism**
- **Is it morally unacceptable?**
- **Is it unreasonable?**
- **Plantinga's defense**

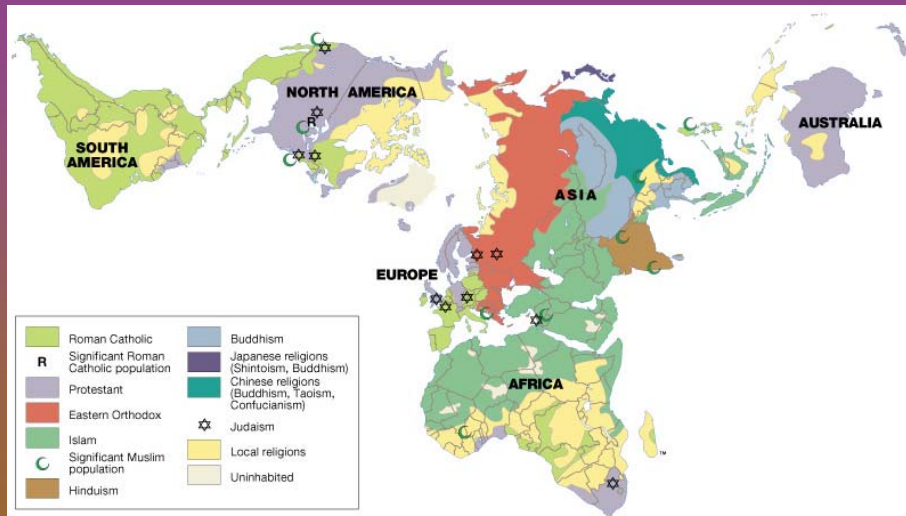
Theism

- **Theistic religions**
 - Judaism
 - Christianity
 - Islam
- **Divine attributes**
- **God**
 - Omnipotent
 - Omniscient
 - Morally perfect
 - Personal

Secular Naturalism

- **Naturalistic metaphysics**
 - Materialism
 - Awe of science
- **Secular perspective**
 - Agnosticism
 - Atheism
 - Aggressive anti-religion
- **Psychological and sociological accounts of religious beliefs**
- **Rival explanations to theistic explanations**

The World's Religions



Social Construction of Reality

- What is cool
- What is sexy
- What is beautiful
- Conventional reality
- Is all reality, conventional reality?
- Epistemological relativism

“They Saw a Game”

Question: "Which team do you feel started the rough play?"

	Percent Dartmouth Students	Percent Princeton Students
Princeton started it	2	0
Both started it	53	11
Dartmouth started it	36	86
Neither/no answer	9	3

“They Saw a Game”

Question: "Do you believe the game was clean and fairly played or that it was unnecessarily rough and dirty?"

	Percent Dartmouth Students	Percent Princeton Students
Clean & Fair	13	0
Rough & Fair	39	3
Rough & Dirty	42	93
Don't know	6	4

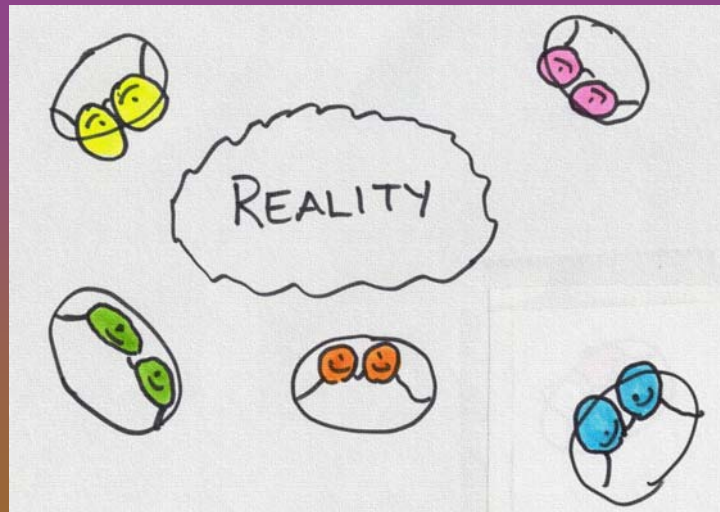
Hastorf & Cantril

- **Students shown game film**
- **Sophisticated statistical analysis**
- **"In brief, the data here indicate that there is no such 'thing' as a 'game' existing 'out there' in its own right which people merely 'observe.' The game 'exists' for a person and is experienced by him only insofar as certain happenings have significances in terms of his purpose."**

Rose Colored Glasses

- **The metaphor**
- **Explaining the metaphor**
- **The optics of rose colored glasses**

Rose Colored Glasses



Religious Pluralism

“[T]he different encounters with the transcendent within different religious traditions may all be encounters with one infinite reality; though with partially overlapping aspects of that reality.”