

functional explanations, and his representation of Hempel is incomplete. Hempel's critique is certainly not concerned with the origin of cultural traits. Burhenn's attempt at revising functionalism from answering a "why" question into a "how-possibly" question seems to entail that he agrees with Hempel that functional explanations fail to answer "why" a cultural trait persists. What he seems to have overlooked is the argument that explanations similar to Dray's "how-possibly" presuppose an answer to the "why" question. Burhenn concludes his essay by stating that he has tried to show that functional explanations have "the possibility of being helpful in understanding religious phenomena...." They may indeed be helpful, heuristic devices. I know of no one who would want to argue the contrary. Once this is admitted, however, it seems clear that we have given up the central claims of functionalism as an explanation in the human sciences. And given the logical problems of this kind of explanation, I think it is only proper to ponder just how "helpful" such an approach really is for studying religion. See Herbert Burhenn, "Functionalism and the Explanation of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19 (1980): 350-60. The quote is taken from page 359.

11. One of the best critiques I have found is Frederick Suppe, ed., *The Structure of Scientific Theories*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1977). Scholars in the study of religion who have become fascinated with Kuhn and Feyerabend will also find, to their dismay, a thorough critique of their positions in this volume. I have also found Peter Achinstein, *Concepts of Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1968) helpful in reflecting on the complexity of theoretical construction. See also Peter Achinstein and Stephen F. Barker, eds., *The Legacy of Logical Positivism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1969). I think that the question which must be answered by those who are attracted by the notion of heuristic and imaginative devices in scientific discovery is where do hypotheses come from?

12. See I. C. Jarvie, *Functionalism* (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1973). See also I. C. Jarvie, "Limits to Functionalism and Alternatives to it in Anthropology," *Theory in Anthropology*, eds. Robert A. Manners and David Kaplan (Chicago: Aldine, 1968) 196-203 and Piotr Sztompka, *System and Function: Toward a Theory of Society* (New York: Academic, 1974). Sztompka's book is typical of much that has

been written about functional explanations; he mentions Hempel but curiously omits any analysis or criticism of Hempel's description of the logic of functional explanations. This cannot be said about G. A. Cohen's brilliant book *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978) esp. chaps. IX and X. I shall turn to the debate Cohen has generated later in this chapter. His thesis is that historical materialism stands or falls with the validity of functionalism as an explanation of history. His criticism of functional explanations in the social sciences and in Marxist writings is excellent. However, I do not believe that he succeeds in overcoming Hempel's basic arguments against the logic of such explanations. For a refutation of Cohen's thesis that "functional explanations in the social sciences can be successful," see Peter Halfpenny, "A refutation of historical materialism?" *Social Science Information* 22 (1983): 61-87.

13. I am indebted to my colleague Merrie Bergmann for this insight as well as other criticisms and suggestions on an earlier draft of the argument.

14. See Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. and enl. ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free, 1957); E. Nagel, "A Formalization of Functionalism," *Logic Without Metaphysics* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free, 1957); Hempel, "The Logic of Functional Analysis"; and Jarvie, *Functionalism*. For a critique of the argument that religion is a necessary unit for the satisfactions of a need, see also Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation" 117-121.

15. Melford E. Spiro, "Religion and the Irrational," *Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Meeting of the American Ethnological Society, ed. June Helm (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1964) 112-113.

16. Spiro, "Religion and the Irrational" 113. See also Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society*, 2nd, expanded ed. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982).

17. Spiro, "Religion and the Irrational" 112.

18. Spiro, "Religion and the Irrational" 114.