

Vignette à analyser pour les séances 1 à 5 pour le cours

« Introduction à la psychologie de la religion : approche psychologique du champ religieux » - 2026 -

À partir de la matière dispensée durant le cours, commentez la vignette proposée pour la séance concernée. Mettez en évidence les aspects pouvant être rattachés à la dimension religieuse ainsi que les éclairages psychologiques que vous pouvez apporter, en lien avec la thématique traitée durant le cours. Pour chaque élément du cours que vous mobilisez, citez les extraits sur lesquels vous vous appuyez (quelques mots ou mention des lignes concernées).

Le travail, d'une page maximum (recto-verso), doit être déposé sur Moodle dans le répertoire prévu à cet effet. Utilisez le document de mise en page disponible dans la section « Ressources » sur Moodle et intitulez votre fichier :
6DPS_NomDeFamille_Prenom.doc

1 Femi is a 29-year-old man who was born in a West African country. He has been living with his
2 father in the United Kingdom for the past 15 years. Two years before this episode, his mother left
3 the family and returned to Africa, an incident that he insisted had no negative bearing on him.
4 Before coming to the attention of mental health services, he was reportedly in good health and had
5 no past medical or psychiatric history. His circumstances are no different from many other people
6 of his age and social standing: after completing high school, he did a number of jobs until he finally
7 settled in the sales section of a department store. He has several close friends and recently had been
8 in a relationship. According to both Femi and his father, he has always been religious. He attended
9 weekly sermons at a Pentecostal church in London, his father's church, and seemed inclined to
10 adjust his life to Christian teaching.
11 Two months before admission, he began missing the weekly sermons and instead would spend long
12 hours reading the Bible. He became disillusioned with his church, describing their sermons as
13 "empty" and "uninspiring." Around that time, he got in touch with another church in his native
14 country, one that emphasized a personal understanding of God through experience. He began a
15 gradual process of isolating himself, engrossed in reading and listening to recorded sermons. He
16 got rid of many of his possessions, justifying that by saying he wants to purify himself of material
17 needs. He stopped going to work and made a habit of daily extended walks. He avoided going to
18 his father's church, claiming that there is no point or value in going there anymore. Four weeks
19 before admission, he began to have intense experiences where he would hear God talking to him,
20 consoling, advising, and at times ordering him to get rid of his possessions. He began having a
21 direct experience of the 'Spirit' in his body, to the point—at times—of feeling "taken over." He
22 surrendered to these experiences and did not doubt their authenticity at any moment. His father was
23 hugely concerned by these experiences and by what he described as an unexplainable and sudden
24 change in behavior. He tried to dissuade him from pursuing these new-found practices and appealed
25 for support from the London-based church. His father and the church pastor considered Femi's
26 behavior to be harmful, excessive, and not endorsed by the church. A few days before admission,
27 he began a prolonged fasting episode to "further cleanse his soul." He was physically challenged
28 by the fasting and was found confused and disoriented in a public place, upon which—after police
29 intervention—an ambulance was called and a mental health act assessment arranged.
30 When he was assessed by the psychiatrist and social worker, he said that for the past 4 weeks, he
31 had been in direct communion with God, that God had spoken to him, telling him to get rid of his
32 belongings, give up his job, fast, and change his life as a way of getting closer to 'Divine truth.'

33 When the clinicians challenged the authenticity of the voice, he responded that he has no doubts it
34 is from God, that he hears it in the space around him, and that it is entirely separate from himself.
35 He also reported, upon direct questioning, that he sometimes experiences his actions as directly
36 controlled by God, that occasionally his actual movements cease to be under his volitional control
37 and are 'imbued with the Spirit.' This was particularly so on his extended walks: he would suddenly
38 find himself embarking on a walk and would literally feel the 'Spirit' moving his body. He said
39 that he finally understands what God is and felt on to something significant in his life. He was
40 considered to present with second-person auditory hallucinations, command hallucinations,
41 volitional passivity, and significant risk to self in the context of recent social/occupational
42 deterioration and in the absence of validation by his father and the church and was consequently
43 placed under section '2' of the mental health act.
44 After admission, he continued to resist all forms of treatment. He was unable to grasp the reason
45 for his incarceration and considered the whole process to be a test from God. One week into the
46 admission and after mental state assessments and nursing observations confirmed the persistence
47 of the previously mentioned psychotic symptoms, the clinicians were convinced that a diagnosis of
48 an 'acute psychotic episode' was justified, upon which treatment was enforced on him. A number
49 of days later, he finally accepted treatment, and 2 weeks after that he acknowledged, for the first
50 time, that he might have been ill. In terms of his symptoms, he no longer heard the voice of God,
51 no longer felt the expectancy of a major change in his life, and was transformed to an unsure young
52 man: unmotivated and apathetic. »