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Bibliography

1. Gardiner, Mark Quentin, and Engler, Steven. 2010. "Charting the map metaphor in theories of religion." *Religion* no. 40:1–13.
Abstract: "The idea that scholars of religion produce ‘maps' that represent the ‘territories' of religion(s) is common and influential. This paper first discusses the

role of the metaphor, with special reference to the work of J.Z. Smith, and some of the problems raised by the map metaphor (above all, its implicit reliance on a naive correspondence view of truth). It then draws two important distinctions: between different levels of representation; and between the representing and guiding function of maps (truth and use). It ends by comparing issues in the philosophy of science and the theory of religion in order to highlight some promising directions for more defensible semantic and epistemological groundwork in theory of religion."

2. Geertz, Armin W. 1997. "Theory, Definition, and Typology: Reflections on Generalities and Unrepresentative Realism." *Temenos* no. 33:29–47.
"At the 1990 IAHR congress in Rome I suggested in a paper on the definition of religion that "the problem of the definition of religion is nothing less than the problem of method and the scope of theory in the study of religion" (Geertz 1994c: 661).
(...)
But in this paper, I expressly circumvent these matters and focus on issues that are, perhaps, even more important. In this paper I propose that we are obliged to define the object of our study if we wish to be known as scientists and not just a group of nice people engaged in interesting conversation. In this respect, I must dissociate myself from that group of scholars Russell McCutcheon mentions in his recent book *Manufacturing Religion* who wish to do away with the term "religion". McCutcheon argues that I introduced the term "ethnohermeneutics" as an alternative to the term "religion" (McCutcheon 1997: 129). But this is not the case. The term "ethnohermeneutics" is meant to indicate the complexities of our interpretive endeavors in terms other than hegemonic discourse.(4) My argument is briefly that in order for us to deal in comparisons, typologies, generalities, and universals, we need to define the object of all these interesting and challenging scholarly activities." (pp. 29-30, two notes omitted)
(...)
"My whole argument can be briefly stated in the following manner.
The point of departure I take in the study of religion is a cognitive theory of human development that sees religious conceptions and systems as overlay in relation to mondane cognitive domains, social relations, and direct experience. This point of departure is obviously inspired by Tom Lawson, Robert McCauley, and Pascal Boyer, but also by developmental cognitivists among others (Lawson and McCauley 1990; Boyer 1992, 1994; Boyer 1993) By deduction, this point of departure allows a theory of religion that describes it as a socially imposed hermeneutical device that draws on the cultural competence of individuals with reference to conceived transempirical powers or beings. Thus, a definition of religion must, in my opinion, be founded on a cultural and cognitive theory as well as a social interaction theory. This leads me to the type of definition once used by the Scholastics, namely, a definition *per genus proximum et differentiam specificam* , whereby the definition must include references to the nearest superordinal genus as well as to the specific species in question. Consequently, my definition of religion is, at the moment anyway: "Religion is a cultural system and a social institution that governs and promotes ideal interpretations of existence and ideal praxis with reference to transempirical powers or beings"." (p. 39, a note omitted)
(4) This' is not to be construed as a critique of McCutcheon's book, which I enjoyed very much. I hope to finish my publication on this approach in the near future.
References
Boyer, Pascal 1992 Explaining Religious Ideas: Elements of a Cognitive Approach. *Numen. International Review for the History of Religions* 39: 27-57.
1994 *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* . Berkeley: University of California Press.
Boyer, Pascal (ed.)
1993 *Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Geertz Armin W. 1994c On Dendrolatry and Definitions: Perspectives from the Study of Oral Traditions. In: Ugo Bianchi (ed.), The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Proceedings of the XVIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome 3rd-8th September, 1990; pp. 661-665. Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider.
Lawson E. Thomas and Robert N. McCauley 1990 *Rethinking religion. Connecting cognition and culture* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3. ———. 1999. "Definition as Analytical Strategy in the Study of Religion." *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* no. 25:445–475.
"Conclusion
My purpose with this paper has not been to deliver the ultimate definition but to illustrate how intimately our a priori influence the chain of deductions (implicit or explicit) that lead to definitions and typological categories. Thus, analytical theorizing encourages reflection on the chain of assumptions as a strategy for introducing precision in terms and coherence in conceptual interrelations. I argue that the point of departure for a humanistic study of religion must be an anthropological theory, i.e., a theory about the constitution of human beings, rather than a theological theory, i.e., a theory about the constitution of divinity. In order to ensure that the anthropological theory is reasonable, attention has been paid in this paper to recent advances in cognitive studies. Philosophical reflection is not sufficient. Cognitive studies have advanced so radically that philosophers no longer can reflect on the human mind without knowledge of these insights.(57)
Further work needs to be done on cultural and social universals seen within the analytical framework presented in this article. A combination of the insights of cultural scientists such as Donald Brown, social scientists such as Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, Paul Connerton, and cognitive scientists such as Dan Sperber, Pascal Boyer, Thomas Lawson and Robert McCauley should place us on firm ground. This would provide the possibility of leaving superfluous speculation aside, or at least of determining which invariant properties we reasonably can identify in the social universe as well as the relations and operations that characterize them. Some colleagues might question the purpose of this pursuit. The answer to this, in my opinion, is simple: scientific claims are scientific because they are theoretically informed claims. Anything less is just casual conversation." (pp- 474-475, a note omitted)
(57) See Alvin I. Goldman, *Liaisons: Philosophy Meets the Cognitive and Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA, 1992) and George Lakaff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York, 1999).

4. Goetz, Joseph. 2003. "Religion." In *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Second Edition. Volume 12 Ref-Sep* , edited by Marthaler, Berard L., 56–63.
"This article is concerned with the basic nature of religion as such and with the common elements found in the various religions of mankind." (p. 56)
(...)
"Problems of Definition
A precise but comprehensive definition is difficult.
The problem can be examined best by considering religion from several different points of view or under several distinct aspects.
Nominal Definition and the Universal Fact of Religion.
The etymology of the Latin word *religio* is disputed.
Some have tried to connect *religio* with other Latin terms (*relegere, religare, reeligere, relinquere*), but each scholar has been influenced by his personal ideas, and no accord has been reached. Philological investigation of the use of the word has revealed some interesting aspects of Roman religiosity, which was characterized by a scrupulous attention to all signs or manifestations of invisible powers or forces. But the problem becomes much more complicated when one wishes to examine the phenomenon of religion in cultures that do not use the Latin word.

The languages that have an equivalent general term are rare, and the terms selected for comparison have turned out, ordinarily, to be descriptions merely of one of the duties considered essential by the respective civilization. In fact, there are very few cultures in which the question of the essence of religion has been formally raised; as a general rule, each takes its own religion as an obvious norm.
Furthermore, the same thing happened in the development of the science of religions itself. In the 19th century some scholars maintained that there were peoples without religion, until it was recognized that such investigators had simply failed to find religion, as they themselves conceived religion, among certain primitive tribes." (p. 56)

5. Goldenberg, Naomi. 2013. "Theorizing Religions as Vestigial States in Relation to Gender and Law: Three Cases." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* no. 29:39–52.
Abstract: "Goldenberg argues that religions can be productively thought of as vestigial states in order to clarify their history and function in relation to contemporary forms of statecraft. The following topics pertaining to this hypothesis are briefly mentioned: defining a state in international law, control of violence, and states' anxiety about Islam, Wicca, Jewish history, Greek mythology, and women's political status. Particular emphasis is then placed on how theorizing religions as vestigial states relativizes supposed major differences between "secular" and "religious" law. Three examples focused on gender to illustrate this contention: changes to Jewish divorce law in Quebec, debates about sharia in Ontario, and a German judge's interpretation of Islamic legal tradition in a divorce case."

6. ———. 2015. "The Category of Religion in the Technology of Governance: An Argument for Understanding Religions as Vestigial States." In *Religion as a Category of Governance and Sovereignty* , edited by Strack, Trevor, Goldenberg, Naomi R. and Fitzgerald, Timothy, 280–292. Leiden: Brill.
"In order to push theory in what I consider to be salutary directions, I want to focus on how the concept of religion functions as a key component in the technology of contemporary statecraft. As an initial step along this trajectory, I suggest that we begin to think about religions as vestigial states—that is, as the institutional and cultural remainders of former sovereignties surviving within the jurisdictions of contemporary governments. I am aware that if the term vestigial state has any resonance, it will be as a provisional notion that might lead to more precise concepts in critical religion. Scholars who are expert in particular periods of history in varied regions of the globe would have to evaluate the idea to judge its use as a hermeneutic in specific contexts.
I also want to clarify that I consider the terms "religion" and "state" as concepts that do not denote a singular or consistent meaning throughout their linguistic and political history. The significance of both words shifts considerably through time and continues to change. Nevertheless, in current usage, religion and state, however they are defined, are generally imagined to refer to separate or separable institutions and/or spheres of human ideation and activity.
(...)
Two promising trajectories are: one, to analyze particular histories in which religions develop or are solidified in distinction to states; and two, to foreground how current governments use these classifications as management techniques." (pp. 280-281)

7. ———. 2018. "Forget about Defining "It": Reflections on Thinking Differently in Religious Studies." In *Method Today: Redescribing Approaches to the Study of Religion* , edited by Stoddard, Brad, 79–95. Sheffield: Equinox.
"In this chapter, at the invitation of NAASR [North American Association for the Study of Religion], I want to try to push the project of deconstruction in the field of religious studies further by framing the following methodological suggestions for improving academic practice and building more adventurous and consequential theory:

1 Explore the politics of representing "religion" in popular culture
2 Analyze "religion" in relation to governance.
3 Keep gender in mind.
4 Argue against "redescription" and the slippery use of "it" as a pronoun for an abstract and mystified "religion."
5 Use more specific vocabulary in the practice of religious studies scholarship.
I offer these proposals in the hope of generating discussion and debate that will render passé descriptions of "religious studies" characterized by reification and mystification." (p. 80)
(...)
"How could scholars working in departments of religious studies and related disciplines cease surrendering to "religion," "secular" and attendant vocabulary, if they are at all convinced that our field ought to be mindful of the type of arguments to which I have referred and presented in this chapter? One practice I have adopted is to avoid the uncritical and rote use of the terms on which I am commenting. For example, instead of citing "religions" as if the word named a distinct genre of phenomena, I identify the traditions and ideologies that pertain to the particular issue I am discussing. I refer to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism even though I realize that these are also problematic generalizations. Whenever I can, I attempt to be even more precise: Lutherans, Evangelicals, Catholic, Baptist, Hasidic, Lubavitch, Sunni, Shiite, Theravada, Hindutva, etc. Perfection is impossible. I acknowledge that all words are to some degree ambiguous - as those who want to surrender to our field's usual vocabulary tirelessly explain to me. Yes, of course. The practice I am advocating does not aim to completely dispel the nebulae which surround all meanings. By naming groups more specifically as Jews, Catholics, and Hindus, rather than as "religions;' I momentarily stop propagating the idea that "religion" exists as an abstraction of which there are only examples. The more specific the name of the group, the greater will be the gesture toward particular histories, behaviors and polities." (p. 92)

8. ———. 2019. "“Religion” and Its Limits: Reflections on Discursive Borders and Boundaries." *Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions* no. 21:1–15.
Abstract: "The keynote contributes to critical analysis of religion and attendant categories by proposing that religions be understood as vestigial states. According to this hypothesis, religion is a modern discursive product that is not present in the Bible. The category evolves as a management strategy, a technology of statecraft to contain and control conquered, colonized and/or marginalized populations as an alternative to genocide. Examples are drawn from Greek mythology, Jewish and Druid history and recent Buddhist politics. The author uses texts pertaining to international law and political philosophy to argue that viewing religion as synonymous with displaced, uneasy, former government opposes male hegemony by revealing the political structure of mystified nostalgia for male leadership. She also maintains that understanding religions as restive governments promotes clarity in regard to contemporary conflicts between religious freedom and equality rights. Psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein and Wilfrid Bion are cited to support the disassembling of foundational terms of Religious Studies."

9. ———. 2020. "Timothy Fitzgerald and the Revival of Religious Studies." *Implicit Religion* no. 22:309–318.
Abstract: "The *Ideology of Religious Studies* is described as foundational for the developing sub-field of "critical religion." Central tenets of Fitzgerald's work are highlighted as challenges to conventional assumptions and oft-repeated bromides that characterize religious studies as a discipline. Fitzgerald's current work that aims beyond "religion" to deconstruct other terms and paradigms of Western thought is gently critiqued - especially in regard to his rejection of politics as a meaningful category. In fact, it is suggested that Fitzgerald enlarges religious studies and shows its relevance to other fields by uncovering political contingencies behind the reification of "religion" and its attendant vocabulary."

10. Goldstein, Warren S., Boer, Roland, King, Rebecca, and Boyarin, Jonathan. 2015. "How can mainstream approaches become more critical?" *Critical Research on Religion* no. 3 3–12.
"Conclusion
There is a twofold path for the study of religion to become more critical. The first path is for the study of the religion to become more interdisciplinary; some of the possible steps in that direction are indicated in this editorial. Only when we understand each other's disciplines and subdisciplines can we arrive at a better understanding not only of the field of religion but its subject matter. To understand necessitates for us to reach across departmental boundaries, for us to communicate with each other, listen to each other, and learn from each other.
The second path is to continue to denaturalize, and eventually to overcome, the secular/religious divide in religious studies. While we acknowledge that the religious/secular binary is a useful heuristic tool, the polar ends of it are ideal typical and rather there is a spectrum, a gradient, running from the religious to the secular. Individuals, collectivities and society are in constant flux alternating between the religious and the secular. Militant secularists can be the most dogmatic, while zealots are really reacting to life in this world. Rather than pitting the secular against the religious, we seek a more synthetic approach. In each religious tradition, there is an invaluable content, which through criticism calls for redemption. Likewise, in every secular ideology, there are religious aspects, which need to be discerned." (p. 11)

11. Goldstein, Warren S., King, Rebecca, and Boyarin, Jonathan. 2016. "Critical theory of religion vs. critical religion." *Critical Research on Religion* no. 3 3–7.
"Last year's editorial, ''How can mainstream approaches become more critical?'' (Goldstein, Boer, King and Boyarin, 2015) provoked some strong responses. Initially, these occurred in social media—a place which one might think unlikely for intellectual discussion but in some ways has become its vanguard. There a debate ensued (mostly between Russell McCutcheon, Craig Martin, and CRR [Critical Research on Religion] Editor Warren S. Goldstein), which was published subsequently in Religion Bulletin under the title ''On the Nature and Ends of Critique in the Study of Religion.'' After that, we received two submissions, one by Craig Martin and the other by Timothy Fitzgerald, which were largely responses to the editorial. Both were published in the December 2015 issue of CRR (see Fitzgerald, 2015 and Martin, 2015). They focused on a line of inquiry we had neglected in our editorial, centering on the problems with the category of religion, which Fitzgerald has coined ''critical religion.''
Here, we want to engage critical religion as articulated by McCutcheon, Fitzgerald, and Martin, recognizing that they do not stand as a cohesive unit and that there may be as much disagreement between them as there is agreement. While we appreciate the many insights that critical religion has contributed to our understanding of religion as a category, we also find limitations in the debate over the category and the ensuing assumptions concerning the methods of scholarly analysis of religion. In juxtaposition to critical religion, we shall offer a critical theory of religion more narrowly defined (a position with which we closely identify)." (p. 3)

12. Goodchild, Philip. 2005. "On 'Religion': Speeches to its Cultural Despisers." In *Writing History, Constructing Religion* , edited by Crossley, James G. and Karner, Christian, 49–63. Aldershot: Ashgate.
"It is increasingly acknowledged that the use of 'religion' as a genus containing several species arose in the early modern period. As Talal Asad reminds us, the reformers' representation of the Christian God as being situated quite apart from the world, as 'supernatural', signalled the construction of a secular space (Asad, 2003, p. 27). It is only from this secular space that one can attempt to determine the 'true religion', or to make 'religion' into an object of study as such. With the emergence of modern reason in opposition to 'superstition', and the order of nature in opposition to the supernatural, 'religion' is posited as that which contrasts with reason, and perhaps as that from which one must be liberated in order to attain truth.

'Religion' and the 'secular' have a common origin, and the concept of 'religion' is essentially secular. Moreover, according to Asad, secular modernity is a project, a way of living-in-the-world, and what is distinctive about it is its political-economic project (Asad, 2003, p. 14).
Modern reason develops, in opposition to religion, as part of a new way of living-inthe-world, a new way of knowing.
In the discussion that follows, modern understandings of religion will be situated in relation to a wider modern project. That modern project is a strategy of universalizing and transcending the given that we shall term 'capitalization'. The identification of the 'religious' with the 'sacred' or 'transcendent', with what is set apart from the secular sphere, is deployed by secular modernity to distance itself from 'religion' as its fantastic other. This orientalizing gesture of positing of religion as a source of fear and fascination, enthusiasm and enchantment, ecstasy and esotericism, superstition and subordination, contagion and corruption, is in continuity with monotheistic denunciations of idol-worship and demon-possession.
In short, the sacred is the creation of the study of religion: it is an essential component of the secularizing strategy that renders the modern political-economic project possible (see Peterson and Walhof, 2002)." (p. 49)
References
Asad, Talal (2003), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* , Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Peterson, Derek and Darren Walhof (eds) (2002), *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief in Politics and History,* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

13. Greil, Arthur L. 2009. "Defining Religion." In *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations* , edited by Clarke, Peter and Beyer, Peter, 135–149. New York: Routledge.
"Why has the definition of religion been so elusive and controversial? There are two distinct but related intellectual challenges to defining religion. One challenge has to do with the diversity of phenomena
to which the term "religion" has been applied." (p. 136)
(...)
"Historically, the scholarly study of religion has explicitly or implicitly started from the perspective of the western folk concept of religion. When one examines the western folk concept closely, it is not hard to see that the prototype for this conception is Protestant Christianity.
Scholars have thus had to contend with the question of how to conceptualize the beliefs and practices of cultures which don't conform to the Christian model.
As we have seen above, the western folk concept assumes that religion constitutes a distinct institutional sphere of activity. But for most non-western societies the notion of religion as a separate institutional sphere, distinguishable from other aspects of social life, is absent. Until their contact with the west, most world societies had no term for "religion." As Peter Beyer describes the encounter between the Japanese and Europeans, the Japanese were quick to adopt a word, *shukyo* , to express the western concept of religion but they did not see this term as applying to Shinto, which they saw as a way of life inextricably connected to the rest of Japanese culture and not as an institutionally distinct *shukyo* .
Another aspect of the western folk conception of religion that is relevant to the attempt to construct a universally valid definition of religion is the notion of transcendence. The western folk definition assumes the existence of a culturally sanctioned dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, between the supernatural and the natural, or between the super-empirical and the empirical. In this view "religion" has to do with communication between the world of everyday life and the unseen world of ultimate reality. There are, however, cultures which do not make a distinction between natural and supernatural. In such cultures — like the Nupe, the Nuer, and the Ojibwa — gods, spirits, and other non-material forces are assumed to be intimately connected with everyday life.

In some Asian traditions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, we find monism instead of dualism and immanence instead of transcendence. Reality, in these formulations, is essentially one; what appears to be “natural” is in fact an illusion. One’s goal should be not to communicate with the supernatural but to learn to see past the illusion of a mundane, material, reality. In Confucianism, the goal is not to propitiate “supernatural” forces but to preserve order through the practice of *li* (ritual propriety) and *fe* (virtue)." (p. 137(

14. Greil, Arthur L., and Bromley, David G. 2003. "Introduction." In *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and the Secular* , edited by Greil, Arthur and Bromley, David G., 3–17. Oxford: Elsevier Science.
"The academic debate over the proper definition of religion has traditionally pitted “exclusivists” against “inclusivists.” Exclusivists wish to limit the subject matter of the social scientific study of religion to beliefs, institutions, and practices traditionally thought of as religious. Exclusivists frequently espouse substantive definitions that posit the defining characteristic of religion to be its reference to the supernatural or “superempirical” realm. Inclusivists argue for the expansion of religious definitions to embrace activities, ideologies, and structures that seem to share features in common with religion although they are not always designated as such. Inclusivists often argue for functional definitions of religion, which hold that the essential feature of religion is, not its reference to the supernatural, but its ability to provide an overarching structure of meaning or grounding for the self.
Recently, Benson Saler (1993) has classified both the substantive approach and the functional approach as “monothetic approaches.” According to Saler, both approaches seek the one essential characteristic that divides religion from nonreligion.
Against monothetic approaches, Saler proposes a “family resemblance” approach, which argues that, to qualify as a religion, a phenomenon must have several, but not necessarily all, of the characteristics usually associated with the religious “family"." (p. 4)
References
Saler, B. (1993). *Conceptualizing religion: Immanent anthropologists, transcendent natives, and unbounded categories* . Leiden: E. J. Brill.

15. Griffiths, Paul J. 2000. "The Very Idea of Religion." *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* no. 103:1–15.
"The Latin word *religio* , from which we get “religion,” was not an especially important term for pre-Christian thinkers who used that language; and there is no single Greek word for which it is the obvious translation. This lack of importance is reflected, too, in early Christian literature evident, too, in the decisions made by early translators of the Bible into English. The King James Version (1611), for instance, uses “religion” or “religious” only five times in its rendering of the New Testament from Greek, and for three different Greek terms (not always the same ones that Jerome chose to render with *religio*)." (pp. 3-4)
(...)
"Modern (post-Reformation) understandings of religion differ from these premodern uses most dramatically in that they see religion exactly as a genus of which there are many species. One influence upon the acceptance of this idea was the pressing necessity in the seventeenth century of creating political forms of life in Europe that could peacefully accommodate a wide variety of Christian groups with incompatible understandings of what it is to be a Christian, and often with a deep hatred of one another. After the Thirty Years’ War in Europe (1618-1648) and the Civil War in England (1642-1648), in which such differences showed themselves clearly in large scale and long lived violence, it was clear that the political forms which had served Europe fairly well for the preceding millennium would no longer do, and that any new ones would have to find a way of dealing with the violent splintering of Christendom brought about by the Reformation." (pp. 5-6)

16. ———. 2006. "On the Future of the Study of Religion in the Academy." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* no. 74:66–74.
Abstract: "I argue first that 'religion' is either a natural-kind sortal or an artifactual kind sortal. Second, that whichever view is taken by practitioners of the academic study of religion, some normative understandings are implied.
Third, that the constitutive desire of those who practice the academic study of religion - to do not theology- therefore cannot be realized.
And fourth, that the future of the academic study of religion is unlikely to be long or rosy."

17. Guthrie, Stewart. 1996. "Religion: What Is It?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* no. 35:412–419.
Abstract: "Scholars broadly agree that no persuasive general theory of religion exists. Recently, however, new efforts at producing one have appeared. These range from wishful-thinking theories to rationalist and linguistic ones, but they increasingly emphasize cognition. This paper reviews several current approaches and summarizes my own cognitive theory: that religion is a form of anthropomorphism.
Earlier writers who have seen anthropomorphism as basic to religion have disagreed about its nature and causes. Most explain it as comforting or as extending what we know to what we do not. Neither explanation is sound. Instead, anthropomorphism stems from a necessary perceptual strategy: facing an uncertain world, we interpret ambiguous phenomena as what concerns us most. That usually is living things, especially humans. Thus we see the world as more humanlike than it is. Religions, this paper holds, are systems of thought and action building in large measure upon this powerful, pervasive, and involuntary tendency."

18. ———. 1999. "How Is Religion Causal—and What Is It, Exactly?" *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* no. 25:405–412.
"Sessions at the 1996 and 1997 meetings of the SSSR [Society for the Scientific Study of Religion] presented daunting double questions: how are we to define religion and how is it that religion can be causal in human affairs? I propose to answer both with variations on a single theme. l maintain (with predecessors from Spinoza and Hume to Melford Spiro and Robin Horton) that we can best define religion as a form of anthropomorphism.(1) I maintain further that the latter, with its cousin animism, is both an intuitive feature of thought and a potent cause of action. Last, I maintain that the cause of anthropomorphism and animism, and in turn of religion, is a perceptual strategy stemming from certain perceptual needs and interests. (2)" (p. 405)
(1) Benedict de Spinoza, *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza: On the Improvement of the Understanding; The Ethics; Correspondence* , trans. with an Introduction by R.H. M. Elwes (New York, 1955); David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* , ed. H.E. Root (Stanford, 195 [1757]); Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation" in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* , ed. Michael Banton (London, 1966), pp. 85-126; Robin Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West* (New York, 1994).
(2) For a fuller argument that religion is a form of anthropomorphism and that the latter stems from a perceptual strategy, see Stewart E. Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion* (New York and Oxford, 1993, paperback 1995).

19. Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 1999. "Defining religion in spite of history." In *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contests* , edited by Platvoet, Jan G. and Molendijk, Arie L., 337–378. Leiden: Brill.
"A satisfactory solution requires, however, that the definition take a threefold form: a general inclusive definition of 'religion', followed by a double subdivision. In addition to 'religion', we must define 'religions' (sing. 'a religion'), as well as a third category which I propose to refer to as 'spiritualities (sing. 'a spirituality')." (p. 371)
(...)
"With direct reference to Geertz's argument, then, I propose the following:

Religion = any symbolic system which influences human action by providing possibilities for ritually maintaining contact between the everyday world and a more general meta-empirical framework of meaning." (p. 371)
In short, this definition does two things: not only does it cover precisely everything that anyone might intuitively wish to refer to as 'religion', but it manages at the same time to do so without becoming vague and trivial. On the contrary: in line with Geertz's explicit intention(133) it contains, in a nutshell, a complete agenda for research.
The second part of my definition concerns 'religions'. A religion (plur.: religions) can be defined by adding a few extra words:
A religion = any symbolic system, embodied in a social institution, which influences human action by providing possibilities for ritually maintaining contact between the everyday world and a more general metaempirical framework of meaning.
And finally, I propose to demarcate a second subdivision within 'religion'.
A spirituality can be defined by way of the following reformulation:
A spirituality = any human practice which maintains contact between the everyday world and a more general meta-empirical framework of meaning by way of the individual manipulation of symbolic systems." (p. 372)
(133) Geertz 1966: 4.
References
Banton, M., (ed.) 1966, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (ASA Monographs 3). repr. London: Tavistock 1985.
Geertz, C., 1966, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in Banton 1966: 1-46.

20. ———. 2016. "Reconstructing "Religion" from the Bottom Up." *Numen* no. 63:576–605.
Abstract: "This article claims to uncover the core problematics that have made the debate on defining and conceptualizing “religion” so difficult and argues that this makes it possible to move beyond radical deconstruction towards reconstructing the concept for scholarly purposes. The argument has four main steps. Step 1 consists of establishing the nature of the entity “religion” as a reified imaginative formation. Step 2 consists of identifying the basic dilemma with which scholars have been struggling: the fact that, on the one hand, definitions and conceptualizations do not seem to work unless they stay sufficiently close to commonly held prototypes, while yet, on the other hand, those prototypes are grounded in monotheistic, more specifically Christian, even more specifically Protestant, theological biases about “true” religion. The first line of argument leads to crypto-theological definitions and conceptualizations, the second to a radical deconstruction of the very concept of “religion.” Step 3 resolves the dilemma by identifying an unexamined assumption, or problematic “blind spot,” that the two lines of argument have in common: they both think that “religion” stands against “the secular.”
However, the historical record shows that these two defined themselves not just against one another but, simultaneously, against a third domain (referred to by such terms as “magic” or “superstition”). The structure is therefore not dualistic but triadic.
Step 4 consists of replacing common assumptions about how “religion” emerged in the early modern period by an interpretation that explains not just its emergence but its logical necessity, at that time, for dealing with the crisis of comparison caused by colonialist expansion. “Religion” emerged as the *tertium comparationis* — or, in technically more precise language, the “pre-comparative *tertium* ” — that enabled comparison between familiar (monotheist, Christian, Protestant) forms of belief and modes of worship and unfamiliar ones (associated with “pagan” superstition or magic). If we restore the term to its original function, this allows us to reconstruct “religion” as a scholarly concept that not just avoids but prevents any slippage back to Christian theology or ethnocentric bias."

21. Harrison, Peter. 1990. *Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

"That there exist in the world such entities as 'the religions' is an uncontroversial claim. There may be discussion about whether the beliefs and practices which are said to constitute the various religions are legitimate or 'true', but few would deny that these systems exist. So too, the term 'religion', as a generic description of what the plural 'religions' are about, is part of everyday discourse and is used with some precision by scholars. However, it was not always so. The concepts 'religion' and 'the religions', as we presently understand them, emerged quite late in Western thought, during the Enlightenment. Between them, these two notions provided a new framework for classifying particular aspects of human life. The task of this study is a twofold one: first, to examine the emergence of the twin concepts 'religion' and 'the religions'; and second, to give an account of the new science of religion which they made possible." (p. 1)
(...)
"It remains only to indicate something of the plan of this book. After a brief examination of the backgrounds of Enlightenment ideas of religion, we shall move, in the second chapter, to a consideration of the rise of the idea of religion in theological controversy. Two countervailing tendencies will be examined: Calvinism, in which 'genuine religion' is construed as 'saving knowledge', and Platonism, in which 'religion' is deemed to be 'natural'.
In the third chapter we shall see how in a creative combination these two tendencies, the so-called deists modified 'religion' to make it a natural object constituted primarily by propositional knowledge. These two chapters thus describe how religious ideas of religion were secularised. In the final two chapters, we see how the history of 'religion', once thought to be exhausted in biblical accounts of idolatry and apostacy, came to be credited with its own, non-sacred or natural history. Thus, just as the theology of 'religion' was secularised, so the sacred history of 'religion', became simply the history of 'the religions'.
We turn now to antecedents - the reformers, Renaissance Platonists, and classical atheists who were important precursors of, respectively, the seventeenth-century Calvinists, the English Platonists, and the 'deists'." (p. 4)

22. Harrison, Victoria S. 2006. "The pragmatics of defining religion in a multi-cultural world." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* no. 59:133–152.
Abstract: "Few seem to have difficulty in distinguishing between religious and secular institutions, yet there is widespread disagreement regarding what “religion” actually means. Indeed, some go so far as to question whether there is anything at all distinctive about religions. Hence, formulating a definition of “religion” that can command wide assent has proven to be an extremely difficult task. In this article, I consider the most prominent of the many rival definitions that have been proposed, the majority falling within three basic types: intellectual, affective and functional definitions. I conclude that there are pragmatic reasons for favouring the formerly popular view that essentialist definitions of “religions” are inadequate, and that religions should be construed, instead, as possessing a number of “family resemblances.” In so arguing, I provide a response to the view that there is nothing distinctive about religions, as well as to the recent claim that religions do not exist."

23. Harrod, James B. 2011. "A Trans-Species Definition of Religion." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* no. 5:327–353.
Abstract: "To advance knowledge of the evolution and prehistory of religions over the past two million years of human evolution, it would be useful to know whether other species, including great apes and extinct species of Australopithecines and Homo prior to Homo sapiens sapiens, exhibit behaviors that might be categorized as 'religious' or 'spiritual'. To determine this we need a precise and robust definition of religious behavior suitable for cross-species comparison. I develop a non-anthropocentric and non-anthropomorphic prototype definition of human religious behavior and then deconstruct it into a trans-species definition, which can be used to predict and identify religious behavior in other species."

24. Hedges, Paul. 2010. "Can We Still Teach 'Religions'?: Towards an Understanding of Religion as Culture and Orientation in Contemporary Pedagogy and Metatheory." In *International Handbook of Inter-religious Education: Part One* , edited by Engebretson, Kath, de Souza, Marian, Durka, Gloria and Gearon, Liam, 291–311. Dordrecht: Springer.
"Famously, J.Z. Smith has stated that 'there is no data for religion. . . . Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy' (1982, p. xi). If we take this claim seriously, and I believe that we should, then the whole enterprise of teaching about religions, especially introductory courses on 'World Religions' is called into question.
(...)
Moreover, I would contend that metatheory and pedagogy need not, indeed should not, be poles apart. While embedded within metatheory, the typology presented came directly out of a pedagogical context, that of teaching a 'World Religions' course. In the first sessions, I asked students to think about these two very problematic terms ('world' and 'religion'), especially the latter, considering various definitions, their failings and reasons why a definition was considered impossible, while, as a theme, it ran throughout two semesters of study. Further reflection on this led me to disputes on metatheory, where the work of such theorists as J.Z. Smith, McCutcheon, Asad and Fitzgerald has led some to suppose that the term 'religion' is unviable. However, I believe a workable definition is possible, in what Fiorenza has termed this 'contested site' (2000). Therefore, I will begin by presenting various pedagogical and metatheoretical issues, before outlining and explicating a typology for the definition of religion, which I have previously advanced elsewhere (Hedges, 2006a, 2006b, 2007).1 I will conclude with some reflections arising from the debates and issues encountered." (pp. 291-292)
References
Fiorenza, F.S. (2000). Religion: A contested site in theology and the study of religion. The Harvard Theological Review, 93(1), 7–34.
Hedges, P. (2006a). Defining religion: A religious orientation typology (part I). *Interreligious Insight,* 4(3), 9–15.
Hedges, P. (2006b). Defining Religion: A religious orientation typology (part II). *Interreligious Insight,* 4(4), 34–42.
Hedges, P. (2007). *Defining religion: A religious orientation typology* . Paper presented at the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religion annual conference, Queenstown, New Zealand.
Smith, J.Z. (1982). *Imagining religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

25. ———. 2018. "The Deconstruction of Religion: So What Next in the Debate?" *Implicit Religion* no. 20:385–396.
"Introduction
The emergence of this special issue, from the maelstrom of responses to views on the Religious Studies Project website,(2) makes it clear that the various points of view around how we use the term and define religion generate a lot of heat, steam, and hot air. This in some ways is quite understandable, because at stake is not simply differing views on the nature and status of religion, but whole worldviews, conceptions of what the very study of religion is and should entail, and not to mention that very tricky subject: academic egos.
This paper will be, primarily, a restatement of some of the core issues and arguments of my original response in the "So What" paper,(3) more or less repeating what was there. However, I will find it useful to expand a few points for clarity (the response was written to a very tight word count that meant some arguments were abbreviated), while I would also like to provide a new introduction and conclusion that locates this in relation to the various responses and the issues that came up." (p. 385)
(2) The original post was: Teemu Taira, "Categorising Religion: From Case Studies to Methodology, Religious Studies Project, Podcast, 19 September 2016

https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/categorising-religion-from-case-studies-to-methodology/ (accessed 27 February 2017).Extended or reprinted versions are of course in this special issue.
(3) Paul Hedges, "Deconstructing Religion: So What?, Religious Studies Project, 22 September 2016, https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/2016/09/22/the-deconstruction-of-religion-so-what/.

26. Helmut, Deibl. Jakob. 2023. "The Concept of Religion in the Context of Aesthetics." In *Transformation of Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* , edited by Danz, Christian and Deibl, Jakob Helmut, 133–161. Paderborn: Brill Schöningh.
Abstract: "This article presupposes that a clarification of the concept of religion must also direct its attention towards aesthetics. The questioning line starts from aesthetics and seeks to contribute to an explanation of religion. However, it is not only the sought-after concept of religion that is unclear; aesthetics also offers no secure terrain from which we can start. We first ask whether their connection is merely a sub-discipline of other fields or, as the discipline of *Religionsästhetik* claims for itself, whether it also touches on fundamental reflections. With Kant and Hölderlin, we examine whether religion and aesthetics refer directly to each other or can only be related to each other via a third moment. We then ask with Vattimo whether the interrelatedness of religion and aesthetics can be considered ahistorically or whether it provokes philosophical-historical questions. Concluding, we ask with Hegel about the permeability of the categories of religion and aesthetics."

27. Henley, Alexander. 2020. "Islam as a Challenge to The Ideology of Religious Studies: Failures of Religious Studies in the Middle East." *Implicit Religion* no. 22:373–390.
Abstract: "Why has Religious Studies failed to gain ground in Middle Eastern universities? This article aims to move beyond a lens of underdevelopment to think about the significance of Muslim opposition to the discipline. When we suppose that studying religion and religions is an obvious thing to do, we risk casting those who deliberately avoid it as somehow irrationally refusing to see what is in front of them. But what if their objections reveal something troubling about the received terms through which we talk about cultures around the world? By taking seriously a certain Islamic perspective on the terms of Western scholarship, this article highlights ways in which it supports Timothy Fitzgerald's critique in *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (2000). It poses a challenge to the idea of value-free study of religion, religions and the religious as conducted through any discipline. This author's hope is that a focus on Muslim voices may bring these concerns home in particular to the fields of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, where the terms of comparative Religious Studies have been embraced as an escape from Orientalism."

28. Hermann, Adrian. 2016. "Distinctions of Religion: The Search for Equivalents of 'Religion' and the Challenge of Theorizing a 'Global Discourse of Religion'." In *Making Religion: Theory and Practice in the Discursive Study of Religion* , edited by Wijsen, Frans and von Stuckrad, Kocku, 97–124. Leiden: Brill.
"Conclusion
This chapter has attempted to address a key question in the development of a discourse theoretical study of religion: How can we theorize a 'global discourse of religion' and advance the current debate about equivalents of 'religion' in non-Western languages and cultures, while avoiding the pitfalls and circular reasoning often displayed in the existing literature? As I have argued above, this especially concerns the basic question of how to conceptualize the unity of a 'global discourse'. An answer to this question is necessary if we want to continue to meaningfully speak of 'religion' as a 'global category', as well as of a 'global discourse of religion', thereby indicating that there is something that connects discourses of religion (including its variants in European languages—for example, *religione* or *religião*) and discourses of (for example) *zongjiao, shūkyō, bad* a, and

āgama, beyond the mere fact that they are the products and producers of 'discursive entanglements'.
The first step towards such an answer lies in fundamentally reconfiguring current approaches that focus on proving the existence (or lack) of non-Western or premodern 'equivalents of religion'. Drawing on Lydia H. Liu's notion of "translingual practice," I have suggested that we reconceptualize this search for 'non-Western equivalents' as an investigation of the historical process of the making of hypothetical equivalences. Accompanying this change in perspective, and by returning to Michel Foucault's central notion of a discourse's "rules of formation," I have argued that the unity of the 'global discourse of religion' can be found in three contested distinctions of religion as this discourse's 'rules of formation'. These three distinctions—between one 'religion' and another, between 'religion' and its doppelgangers, and between 'religion' and other societal spheres—are at work in the emergence of a 'global discourse of religion' through comparison, purification, and differentiation. If we look for these characteristics, we can see how, in processes of translingual practice, equivalents of 'religion' have been established in Asian contexts and also transformed as novel terms for 'Buddhism' have emerged, as I have shown in regard to discursive transformations in China, Japan, Burma, and Ceylon since the nineteenth century." (p. 119)
(...)"
References
Liu, Lydia H. 1995. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity; China, 1900–1937* , Stanford: Stanford University Press.

29. Hermans, Chris A.M., and Sterkens, Varl. 2014. "Comparison in Religion. A Methodological Contribution." *Journal of Empirical Theology* no. 27:130–153. Reprinted in H. Schildeman (ed.). The Concept of Religion: Defining and Measuring Contemporary Beliefs and Practices, Leiden: Brill 2014, pp. 130-153.
Abstract: "How do we build theory on religion in cross-religious research? This article deals with four methodological issues in answering this question. What are the goals of cross-religious comparison? What is the object of cross-religious research? What kind of definition of religion is used in cross-religious comparison? And finally, how can we asses similar phenomena across different religious traditions? The last question is specified by the distinction of levels of equivalence in quantitative cross-religious survey research."

30. Hjelm, Titus. 2024. "Mapping the Discursive Study of Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* no. 20:1–24.
Abstract: "Discursive Study of Religion (DSR) has emerged as a recognized field of study in the last twenty years or so, especially due to the efforts of Kocku von Stuckrad and some others. On the one hand, however, a discursive understanding of religion goes farther back in the academic study of religion.
On the other, the field has developed in multiple directions, not always anticipated by the pioneers. This article provides tools for mapping the increasingly diverse approach. It presents a model for positioning discursive studies of religion on three axes: (a) the World in Discourse – Discourse in the World axis, which examines the ontological assumptions of discursive approaches; (b) the Metatheoretical–Empirical axis, which maps the level of abstraction in discursive approaches; (c) and the Analytical–Critical axis, which situates discursive approaches based on their engagement with issues of power. The maps that emerge enable both proponents and detractors to critically asses the internal consistency of particular DSR approaches, and their applicability for particular research interests. The article uses Critical Discursive Study of Religion (CDSR) as an example of the mapping process."
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von Stuckrad, Kocku. 2003. "Discursive Study of Religion: From States of the Mind to Communication and Action." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 15 (3): 255–71.

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—. 2014. *The Scientification of Religion: An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800–2000* . Berlin & New York: De Gruyter

31. Hock, Klaus. 2002. "What is Religion?" In *Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft* , 1–10. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
English translation of Chapter 2.
"Enquiring about the concept of religion leads us directly into the heart of religious studies and at the same time into one of its most relevant internal debates, which will hardly be resolved in the foreseeable future – and probably cannot be resolved at all. Almost every introduction makes reference to psychologist James Leuba, noted for his contributions to the psychology of religion, who, at the beginning of the last century, compiled nearly 50 different definitions of the term “religion.” Of course, he discarded them all and offered his own definition as an alternative instead. In the meantime, the attempts to define “religion” have grown to a vast number, and just to list them all would go beyond the scope of this small volume. Moreover, it would not be very helpful to add yet another definition of the term “religion” to the many existing ones and to present a detailed and long-winded justification for the choice of this concept. In the following, we will merely address some of the fundamental questions concerning the usage of the term “religion” in order to offer guidance in the maze of definitions of “religion”.
One of the problems with defining the concept of religion lies in the fact that the concept itself emerged in a very specific cultural and historical environment – it belongs predominantly to the occidental history of ideas. It is when we try to apply the concept of religion as a universal concept to phenomena in other historical and cultural contexts, if not before, that we meet with unexpected difficulties." (p. 1)

32. Hödl, Hans Gerald. 2012. "Is an Unbiased Science of Religion Impossible?" *Religio: Revue pro religionistiku* no. 20:19–26.
Summary: "In this paper I present a critical discussion of the essay “Religious Studies as a Scientific Discipline: The Persistence of a Delusion” by Luther H. Martin and Donald Wiebe (*Religio: Revue pro religionistiku* 20/1, 2012, 9-18). The focus of the argumentation lies on the assumptions the authors adopt. The authors’ understanding of the nature of science, concerning both methodology and the theory of science, is taken into consideration, and their definition of religion is discussed on the background of other definitions available. As an outcome, four questions are formulated that should be taken into account in further discussions of the topic. Finally, some remarks concerning the nature of religions are added. I think that the “Tylorian” definition of religion used by the authors is too narrow and I opt for an understanding of religion as based on the central questions facing human beings about the meaning of life that religions purport to give answers to. The persistence of religion is better explained by the ability of the human being to ask such questions than by the evolutionarily acquired proclivity towards “agent causality”. I try to show that this can be achieved at the level of meta-language that is clearly delineated from religious object language."

33. ———. 2023. "The Dimensional Model of Religion: Its Use in History of Religions, Comparative Religion, and in Defining Religion." In *Transformation of Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* , edited by Danz, Christian and Deibl, Jakob Helmut, 1–18. Paderborn: Brill Schöningh.
Abstract: "This essay discusses the use of the dimensional model of religion in Religious Studies.
First, an overview of the division of Religious Studies into History of Religions, Comparative Religion and further disciplines is given and the debate between a diachronic historical approach to Religious Studies and a synchronic, “phenomenological” approach is addressed. In chapter 2, essentialist, functional, and descriptive definitions of religion are compared. Chapter 3 describes the dimensional model of religion, and its uses. In chapter 4 this is summed up and the

author opts for the division of Religious Studies proper into History of Religions and Comparative Religion, supplemented by approaches from disciplines like Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology of Religion. Furthermore, the use of the dimensional model in the historical research into religions as well as in Comparative Religion is proposed."

34. Horii, Mitsutoshi. 2020. "“Religion” and “Politics”: A Japanese Case." *Implicit Religion* no. 22:413–428.
Abstract: "Timothy Fitzgerald’s *The Ideology of Religious Studies* should not be read as something just about “religion,” but about the modern Euro-American “secularity,” which functions to mystify the colonial matrix of power of Euro-American modernity. Fitzgerald’s later work focuses on two mutually parasitic categories of “religion” and “politics.” As a case study of the Fitzgeraldian perspective, this article examines the construction of the religion-politics distinction in Japan since the late nineteenth century. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the aggression of Euro-American colonial power motivated Japan’s elites to institutionalize the nation based upon the Euro-American concepts of “politics” and “religion.” After Japan’s defeat in the Second World War in 1945, the US-led Allied Occupation redefined prewar Japanese state orthodoxy and institutions as “religion,” in order to eliminate them from the post-war Japanese statecraft."

35. Hosseini, Sayyed Hossein. 2023. "Defining Religion: Methodology." *The International Journal of Humanities* no. 30:32–49.
Abstract: "One of the most challenging issues raised in the theology and philosophy of religion is to define the concept of religion and its main components. This study aims to criticize and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a definition of religion presented in "Reason and Religious Belief". The results show that the main strength of this definition is that it considers "beliefs", "actions", and "emotions", which are among the existential needs and abilities of humans. However, some weaknesses of this definition are as follows: 1- Difficulty in achieving common points between religions, 2- Ambiguous explanation of the main elements of the definition, 3- Inclusion beyond the definition, and 4- Inattention to specific and individual features in the definition of religion. It is noteworthy that one of the main challenges in defining the concept of religion is the necessity of a systemic approach. In addition, such an approach should be viewed based on methodological conditions."
References
Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, David Basinger, *Reason & Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* , Fifth Edition, New York: Oxford University Press 2013.

36. Hoyt, Sarah F. 1912. "The Etymology of Religion." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* no. 32:126–129.
"The Oxford Dictionary says, The connection of the word religion with *religare,* to bind, has usually been favored by modern writers.
This etymology, given by the Roman grammarian (end of 4th cent. A. D.) Servius (*Religio, id est metus ab eo quod mentem religet, dicta religio*)(1) was supported by the Christian philosopher Lactantius (about 313 A. D.) who quotes the expression of the celebrated Roman philosophical poet Lucretius (c. 96 to 55 B. C.):(2) *religionum animum nodis exsolvere* , in proof that he considered *ligare* , to bind, to be the root of *religio* . (3)" (p. 126)
(...)
"But in *De Natura Deorum* , 2, 28, 72, Cicero derives *religio* from *relegere* , as meaning to go through or over again in reading,
speech or thought. Cicero says, *Qui omnia quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent diligenter pertractarent, et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo* .
In the *Noctes Atticae* (4, 9, 1) of the Roman grammarian Aulus Gellius (2d cent. A. D.) is preserved an old verse which supportst his derivation, *Religentem esse oportet, religiosum nefas* ." (p. 127)

37. Hudosn, Wayne. 2005. "The Enlightenment Critique of 'Religion'." *Australian eJournal of Theology* no. 5:1–12.
Abstract: "This paper offers a more positive interpretation of the Enlightenment critique of religion. By rereading the contributions of individual thinkers such as Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, and Marx, it suggests respects in which the Enlightenment critique of religion may be relevant to future organisations of human spirituality."

38. Hughes, Aaron W., and McCutcheom, Russell T., eds. 2021. *What Is Religion? Debating the Academic Study of Religion* . New York: Oxford University Press.
"Because we also both lament the silos in which our specializations as well as a variety of structures within the field place us (i.e., the way our publishing, grant applications, and conferences are organized, let alone our teaching and hiring decisions), we reasoned that a novel project would invite people who, because of their differing specializations, do not normally converse with one another, asking them to do just that for a change. And given our shared concern for the identity and future of the field, it seemed that proposing they each complete a sentence that simply began "Religion is . . ." might be an interesting place to start— a beginning that provided an opening for someone else in the group to write a critical response, which, in turn, offered the original author a chance to say something in reply.
And so, you now have in front of you the result: a diverse selection of seventeen leading scholars of religion, all of whom work in very different subspecialties, working with each other's attempts to say what they think religion is— or is not.
(...)
We thus offer readers a sampling of the field, something to be read akin to how one reads a culture or an ethnography, and then invite them to draw conclusions of their own about the state of the field today. We hope that readers will consider these statements and the responses / replies on not just what religion is but also on what the study of religion is, what scholars of religion do when they carry out their work, and the limits of this field (if, that is, readers conclude that it has any)." (*Preface* . pp. XI-XII)
Appendix: *Definitions of Religion and Critical Comments* , pp. 297-355.
"The introduction to this volume opened by mentioning James H. Leuba's (1868–1946) still often- cited 1912 volume, *A Psychological Study of Religion: Its Origin, Function, and Future* ; it is the volume's appendix that we mainly remember today, where forty-eight different scholars' definitions of religion were each quoted and commented upon." (p. 297, a note omitted)
(...)
"The following list of thirty- two scholars is by no means exhaustive, and it is not quite as lengthy as Leuba's own. Yet we hope that readers see it as opening even wider the debates begun in the preceding chapters, by inviting some so-called classic definitions not contained in his earlier list (given that they were either contemporary to his book's publication date or, of course, came long after it, not to mention coming from fields not affiliated with what he then took psychology to be) while also including a sampling of more recent definitions—or, in some cases, thoughts on the challenges of definition— that guide the work of scholars who are now active in the field." (p. 298)

39. Hughes, Aaron W., and McCutcheon, Russell T. 2022. *Religion in 50 Words: A Critical Vocabulary* . New York: Routledge.
41. Religion, pp. 247-254.
"While the term's precise origins are a matter of continued debate, scholars are agreed that the noun "religion," spelled in various ways over time (e.g., *relygyun* in Middle English or *ralegioun* before the seventeenth century), entered English from French sometime around the twelfth century.
It derives originally from one or more ancient Latin terms, and thus we find a version of it in other Latin-based languages, e.g., Italian, German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, etc. Modern usage is anchored in the notion of a private belief that is only later expressed in practice, but its earliest English uses are linked with public behavioral situations, e.g., devotion, reverence, and conduct such as being pious

(Latin *pietās*), a word once naming the quality ascribed to a person who is seen to properly defer to an authority (whether a god or a social superior)." (p. 248)
(...)
"Regardless of who uses it or to what purposes it can be put, perhaps we may be less interested in studying religion than in shifting the ground and, instead, studying the act of calling something religion. The latter would involve understanding the discourse on religion and thus the practical conditions that create the impression of this now widely understood social fact. For while scholars are, of course, free to define the term explicitly in any number of ways, and then to use it as the basis for their studies of human communities, the common view that there are such things in the world to study as religions becomes, for some, a new object of study." (p. 250)

40. Hultkrantz, Ake. 1994. "The Notion of Religion in the Research of North American Indian Religions." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990* , edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 207–214. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"The gap between the western view of religion and the American Indian must not be exaggerated. The methods of the history of religions have been successfully applied to African, Asiatic and Oceanian religions with a tribal social structure; it is difficult to see why North American religions could not also be handled with the same types of method. Furthermore, Roger Keesing considers that the magnitude in difference between other people's experienced and cognized worlds and our own is·a question that remains open. The anthropological researcher is, due to his or her tendency to focus upon the most exotic cultural materials and theoretical dispositions, ready "to produce, and reinforce, a view of other people's worlds as more radically different from one another and our own than they are"(25). At the same time it must be conceded that American Indian scholars, ·who realize their religion more in ritual behaviour than in theoretical doctrines, feel that there is a distance behveen this religion and, for instance, the Protestant creed."
(...)
"\Ve may conclude that, as a rule, scholars of religion are more anxious to preserve the concept of religion in one form or another(27). It is at the same time clear that they recognize that in the Indian conceptual world religion cannot be separated from other aspects of culture, although it holds its own quality.
It is my contention that only a concept of religion that refers to the supernatural world - or a reality of another dimension - is worthwhile. There is among Indians certainly no conceptual unity of religious phenomena, but their common supernatural quality distinguishes them for the observer. Such an understanding of religion may be a convenient starting-point for religio-historical work in the North American Indian field." (pp. 212-213)
(25) Roger M. Keesing, *Exotic Readings of Cultural Texts* , Current Anthropology 30 (4),1989, 459-479, here 469.
(27) There are exceptions of course as the Islamist Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

41. Hussig, Hans-Michael. 1994. "Some Observations on the Idea "Religion" in Varıous "Religions"." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 797–802. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"Islam seems to be the only religion which from its very beginning had a self-definition which can be seen as comparable to other religious traditions. The term 'islām alreadyoccurs in the Qur'an. It is derived from the verb 'aslama, which means "to submit" or "to surrender" (to God). A muslim is someone who surrends to God. Islam is understood as *din*, which is the common term for "religion" in Arabic, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith had already shown.(15) The classical dictionaries give the term *wara*' "piety" as an equivalent. According to Smith the word *wara*' never has a systematic or a community meaning and it cannot have a plural. However *din* also carries the sense of a particular religious system, one "religion" as distinct from

another and in thismeaning it also has the already mentioned plural '*adyiān*.
According to the Qur'an (5,3)
God has chosen '*islām* as the religion for his followers. However '*isliim* did not start with Muhammad but was preached already by earlier prophets. Abraham for example is said to have admonished his sons to die as *muslimŭn* (2,132). Sometimes the term *muslim* even refers to contemporary Jews or Christians (29,46), who in general are called '*ahl al-kitāb* - 'people of the book'.
(...)
What I want to prove here is that the various religious traditions have different comprehensions of themselves as well as in comparison to other "religious" traditions.
Further research into other religious traditions, for example, the Chinese or tribal religions, may be much more colourful than the traditions described by myself. The language of our scientific research does not always fit these various definitions. Our science, the history of religions, should at least take this into consideration. Perhaps the consciousness about the differences of the language of our research and the comprehension of the various traditions may lead to a better definition of the object of our study." (p. 802)
(15) Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, New York 1%3, p. 81.

42. Idinopulos, Thomas A. , and Wilson, Brian C., eds. 1998. *What is Religion? Origins, Definitions and Explanations* . Leiden: Brill.
"This volume continues the series in the methodology of religious studies. The series began with the earlier publication of two books: *Religion and Reductionism* (E. J. Brill, 1994) and *The Sacred and Its Scholars*
(E. J. Brill, 1996).
We have prepared the new volume in response to a professional concern. Today, increasingly, professors of religious studies are in a quandary not only as to how to approach their subject matter, but even as to what is or should be their subject matter. It is our hope that this anthology of essays will work to ease the quandary. Like the earlier publications, our aim is to raise fundamental questions about how best to study religion. We invited our contributors to respond to any of a number of questions: What is the origin or origins of religion? How does one explain religion? How does one explain its appearance, meaning, purpose, duration, future? Some scholars contend that religion is woven into the fabric of human culture. How does one identity the religious strand as contrasted with economics, politics, and other strands? Finally, can religion be defined? What is a proper definition of religion?" (*Preface* . p. IX)

43. Jeldtoft, Nadia, and Schepelern Johansen, Brigitte. 2012. "Negotiating The Object. Nearness, Distance and The Category ‘Religion’ in Academic Practices." *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* no. 25:183–196.
Abstract "This article critically reflects on the presuppositions of the scholarly study of religion. It does so, by demonstrating the inadequacy of a spatial discourse that is frequently used to demarcate the scholarly study of religion from its object. This spatial discourse is based on the upholding of a sharp demarcation between religion and the academic study of religion, and between object and researcher. This boundary work implies the upholding of a self-evident (and perceived necessary) distance between researcher and object, and between religion and the academic study of religion. We argue that this spatial discourse produces an oversimplification of the researchers' relationship towards the object of study, which potentially becomes problematic in practical research situations later on. Thus, we urge, not for a rejection of distinction and distance between researcher and object all together, but rather for a heightened awareness of the contingent and negotiated character of this distinction."

44. Jensen, Jeppe Sinding. 1999. "Universals and the Study of Religion." *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* no. 25:423–443.

"As scholars in the study religion we must theorize about generalization and comparisons if we are to have theory at all: generalizations and comparisons of forms, functions, structures and "meaning"-still in the sense of semantic content. When doing so I think we shall find that religions, as modalities of our theoretical object "religion," contain universals that are functions of universals of cognition, sociality and semantics. I am primarily occupied with the latter, but since religion is an "impure subject" comprising so many aspects, there is no need for monopolization. Universals often come with an associated powergame - not so here. The only point I must insist on is that if we want to have theories about religion and religions, then we cannot bypass the issue of universals. No theory can be about particulars only. Although it has often been assumed that the issue of universals in religion was a theological or ideological affair, I hope to have indicated with some measure of persuasion that this need not be so. Talking about universals is a methodologically and theoretically legitimate business-indeed, it is the prerequisite for doing theory." (p. 443)

45. ———. 1999. "On a Semantic Definition of Religion." In *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contests* , edited by Platvoet, Jan G. and Molendijk, Arie L., 409–431. Leiden: Brill.
"A semantic definition of religion is nominalist in that it defines our usage of the term religion as referring to many particular things.
It is also stipulative because we define how we want to use the word 'religion', and it is a definition 'per genus proximum' when we define religion as special case of semantics. That, however, can only be done by pointing to certain particular differentia specifica and there we run into the problem that our supposedly nominalist definition slides towards a realist one that informs us about the essence of religion as communication. What makes religion a particular case of communicative semantic universes are certain *differentiae specificae* : the close relationship between the symbolic universe and complexes of actions and related forms of institutions.
(...)
Many things suggest that it is better to have a loose definition in the form of a generalized interpretation which is related to strong theory, than it is to have a rigid definition with weak theory.
The semantic theory is a strong theory, it is explicitly etic and analytic, universalist and productive. It is also possible to deduce from it, in that what the theory holds applies to all instances of religion.
Its apparent circularity stems from the fact that it applies to one specific emergent level of semantic properties of human constructs.
That does not impair, however, its rationality or validity, because it is not intended as a causally explanatory theory. It does not tell us what caused religion, but it does tell us what it is made of. And that suffices for now. (pp. 428-429)

46. ———. 2017. "Religion Is the Word, but, What Is the Thing — If There Is One? On Generalized Interpretations and Epistemic Placeholders in the Study of Religion l, 17-28." *Historia Religionum: An International Journal* no. 1:17–28.
Abstract: "A long debate among scholars in several disciplines demonstrates how the term religion refers to a fuzzy concept. The claim here is that the term remains a useful one although the concept does not have any particular essence. In fact, it is no more complicated to talk about “religion” than it is to talk about any other theoretical object in the human and social sciences. Such objects are necessarily made; they are the constructions by which scholars and scientists make sense of the flow of events. In the case of religion, the object studied is the making of social worlds of a special kind. What makes religion special refers to the making of sacred matters and all that comes with that: beliefs, representations, behaviours and institutions. In order to capture such processes, scholars and researchers make generalized interpretations. In contrasts to the ontological claims inherent in definitions (about ‘What there is’), generalized interpretations are epistemic (about ‘What we can know’) as building blocks in academic knowledge production.

The article thus demonstrates how the contested concept of "religion" may function as a useful epistemic placeholder for generalized interpretations."

47. ———. 2020. *What Is Religion?* Nerw York: Routledge.
Second edition; first edition Stocksfield: Acumen 2014.
"The term *religion* is used here to indicate that religions (in the plural) have so much in common, in spite of all apparent differences, that it is meaningful to talk about religion in general and use the term as the label of an abstract category that covers a wide range of human behaviours. In this sense, the term 'religion' and its associated categorising functions — analogously to 'sport', 'art', 'language' or 'economy' — other abstract terms used to broadly classify modes of human behaviour.
Like those other modes, religion consists in recognisable forms of human social behaviour and that alone should be reason enough to venture a general and comparative study of religion in 'its' many variations, and of the components and phenomena that make up actual religious traditions. Each of these can be said to exemplify various aspects or dimensions of the total 'universe' or 'world' of religion.
Not that all religions share all the same features, but typically they include ideas about superhuman agents, ritual purity, human fate after death, morality, ideas about the order of nature and the cosmos, conceptions of an 'other world' and — not least — how humans are to behave and think in this world. It is a book about those phenomena in the lives of humans which we characterise as religious. In that sense, more closely explained below, it is a *phenomenology* of religion — that is, an '-ology' about religious phenomena. Given the breadth of the motley assortment of such phenomena, the concept of religion applied in this book is *intentionally* extensive, for reasons to be explained. When I use the term 'it' about religion. it really is against my own best judgement. We should be aware that human language and human thought tend to make us believe that when there is a word, there must also be a corresponding object, a 'thing' that the word refers to.
But we should not talk about consciousness in the same way as we talk about tomatoes, In consequence, when used about religion, the 'it' is at most a pragmatic label, a handy term (Jensen 2017)." (*Preface* , pp. VII-VIII)
References
Jensen, J. S. (2017) '"'"Religion Is the Word, but, What Is the Thing — If There Is One?' On Generalized Interpretations and Epistemic Placeholders in the Study of Religion', *Historia Religionum: An International Journal,* 17-28.

48. ———. 2021. "A Point by Point Response to Donald Wiebe: A Manifesto for the Scientific Study of Religion." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* no. 33:1–4.
Abstract: "A point by point response to Wiebe's 'Manifesto', mostly in support of the 'methodological naturalism'—with added precautions on the current use of the term 'science'.
A philosophy for the study of religion is called for, with an epistemological range that caters for collective methodologies and social ontologies; respects the analytic distinction between 'subject matter' and 'theoretical object'—and, ultimately, the theory-ladenness of all talk about 'religion'. Naturalism is not about givens in the study of meaningful human behavior."
References
Donals Wiebe, A Manifesto for the Scientific Study of Religions or Setting the Parameters for a Scientific Study of Religions In the Modern University, same Journal,. 2019.

49. Josephson, Jason Ānanda Storm. 2021. *Metamodernism: The Future of Theory* . Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
"This is my most personal and most abstract monograph. If Freud and Nietzsche are right, there are probably reasons these go together. This monograph emerges from a particular impasse in religious studies—an impasse to which I have myself contributed. Over the last few decades, many scholars in religious studies have

come to reject the analytical utility of the category religion. My first book [*] contributed to this movement by shifting the focus away from Euro-American scholars and revealing how Japanese officials, under extreme international pressure, came to terms with the Western concept of religion by "inventing religion" in Japan. The problem with this kind of genealogical research is that it inadvertently forecloses the possibility of generalizations, leaving viable mainly two kinds of scholarship: that which endlessly repeats and valorizes the act of deconstruction, and that which narrowly focuses on irrelevant and microscopic case studies. I have increasingly come to feel that both modes are dead ends. So how do we find our way out of this impasse and into a brighter future of theory? This is a question I am compelled to try to address; this monograph is my attempt.
What is metamodernism? It aspires to be a theoretical revolution. It charts a number of things: a process social ontology, a new multispecies semiotics, a revaluation of the place of values in the human sciences, and an alternative to the sterile opposition between realisms and anti-realisms.
It seeks to establish a new model for producing humble knowledge that is capable of tracing the unfolding of de-essentialized master categories in their full complexity. It is about the future of the disciplines—not just my home disciplines, but the whole of the human sciences." (*Preface* , p. IX)
[*] *The Invention of Religion in Japan* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2012.

50. Judge, Edwin A. 1989. "The Beginning of Religious History." *The Journal of Religious History* no. 15:394–412.
Reprinted as Chapter 1 in E. A. Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity. Essays Selected and Edited by Alanna Nobbs* , Tübinge; Mohr Siebeck 2010, pp. 11-31.
"In his Foreword to the opening number of *The Journal of Religious History* , Bruce Mansfield did not attempt to define 'religion'.
(...)
"It is hardly an accident that the *Journal* has settled down to cater for the modern West more than for Antiquity or the Orient. The phenomenon of 'religion', and therefore of "religious history", as we must understand it from the modern point of view, is not something universal in human experience.
Rather it is one of the distinctive marks of the history of the West, and only then of the whole modern world in its westernising mode. When we ordinarily speak of 'religion' now – for example when asked to identify ourselves on a census form – we refer to an institutionalised set of beliefs and practices, supporting a general framework of life, which may mark us off in a social sense from those involved in other sets. Religious identity, whether inherited or acquired, residual or even rejected, implies an alternative commitment to that of others living in the same community." (pp. 11-12 of the reprint)
(...)
"The general *supplicatio* of Decius in AD 250 [*} represents a clear-cut pivot in the historic transformation of 'religion'. Far from supplying an unquestioned, comfortable endorsement of the established order any more, the old Roman *religio* was being drawn into a political battleground by the new counter-culture, which was to usurp its name. In the following century, and most conspicuously under champions such as Porphyry and Julian, the classical 'religious' and philosophical traditions were themselves drawn together to form a new 'religion' of the modern type – the personal life commitment of those who still hoped to save the old order from dismantling by the churches. Porphyry and Julian had both had close personal contact with the Christianity they rejected, and understood well the intellectual sources of its disturbing social activism.(66)" (p. 30)
[*] The edict by the Roman emperor Decius mandating that everyone in the empire wa offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving (*supplicatio*) to the gods.
(66) E. A. Judge, 'Christian Innovation and its Contemporary Observers', in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (eds B. F. Croke and Alanna Emmett (now Nobbs), Sydney 1983) 13–29, now ch. 17 below. The idea of a shift in the meaning of the

term ‘religion’ in the third century is well discussed by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York 1962).

51. Kim, Sung-Hae. 1994. "The Concept of Religion from the Perspective of the Basic Structure of Chinese Religious Tradition." In *The Notion of “Religion” in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990* , edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 247–260. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider.
"Conclusion
We began our discussion with the fact that the term *tsung-chiao* carries a western connotation of religion which brings out either reaction against it or a tendency of limiting its area into a marginalized zone of Chinese tradition. However, I am not proposing here to change this term into another one. As I mentioned before, the literal meaning of *tsung-chiao* as "the primary teaching" is acceptable. Moreover, this term has one hundred years of history and by now is firmly established in ordinary vocabulary. What I am appealing here is that we have to enlarge our concept of religion in the light of Chinese vision of the ultimate which is to a large extent East-Asian reality as well." (p. 257)
(...)
"When we enlarge the concept of religion as encompassing human life as a whole in connection with its ultimate reference, value, or concern, we do not have to search religion only from folk tradition or marginalized areas of Chinese culture. Concretely this means that when a historian of religion wants to teach or write on Chinese religion, he/she should attain a balanced understanding of Chinese tradition as a whole, including both intellectual and popular traditions and their interpenetration. Whether one approaches periodically or thematically he/she should introduce the people's world view, its development, and their religious practices with the final focus on how all these are connected and evaluated by the ultimate reference in their culture and period." (pp. 258-259)