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The Classification of Religions

A domain-analytic examination of the history and epistemology of the classification of religions within the Religious Studies discipline

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Abstract

While religion is a part of every culture and is entangled in many facets of the lives of those who are religious, the scientific study of religion and the Religious Studies discipline are fairly new, only developing in the mid to late nineteenth century. One of the contributions that the scientific study of religions has made is the development of different approaches for classifying religions. As a multidisciplinary field, Religious Studies and the classification of religions has been influenced by philosophy, psychology, history, sociology and anthropology.

This study, using the domain-analytic paradigm, traces the development of the Religious Studies discipline and the classification of religions, analyzes the epistemological assumptions behind the prominent approaches used to classify religions and briefly examines their relation to the Library of Congress, Dewey Decimal and Universal Decimal classifications.

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Introduction, Aims and Objectives

While Philosophy of Religion and Theology have existed for millennia, the Religious Studies discipline is fairly new. Religious Studies, developed in the nineteenth century and solidified as a discipline in the mid-twentieth century, is a secular approach to studying religion and religious belief which borrows methods from many disciplines including sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, and economics. The purpose of this study is to apply techniques from Hjørland's (2002a) Domain Analysis in order to examine the development of the Religious Studies discipline, its methodologies of classifying religions and briefly compare the assumptions made in those methodologies to assumptions behind the religion classes in the Library of Congress Classification, Dewey Decimal Classification and Universal Decimal Classification.

While Hjørland (2002a) lists eleven different approaches for the study of the domain, this study will only use the following three:

- historical studies
- epistemological studies
- classification research (derived from 'constructing special classifications and thesauri')

The strength of Domain Analysis lies in its combination of approaches. However, using all eleven of these approaches would not only be unfeasible for a master's dissertation, but would not likely produce helpful research as the approaches would not get deserved treatment.

The historical analysis will primarily examine classification of religions within the context of Religious Studies, spanning around the past one hundred and fifty years. In addition, while there may be dozens of classification schemes produced by many scholars in Religious Studies, this project will only examine major ones which have had significant influence on the field.

The aims of this project are to apply techniques from Domain Analysis in order to discover how classifications of religions within the Religious Studies discipline have

developed, the epistemological underpinnings of those classifications and their relationship with the religion classes in current library classification schemes. The 'historical studies' approach will be the primary technique for the first aim, while the 'epistemological studies' and 'classification research' approaches will apply to the latter aims.

The first objective is to use the 'historical studies' approach to examine how Religious Studies has developed. The historical analysis will seek to track the development of religious classification and discover different epistemological views within certain facets of Religious Studies and scholars who have made assumptions about how religions should be categorized. The second objective is to use the 'epistemological studies' and 'classification research' approaches to determine how the religion classes in certain library classification schemes differ or complement the classification of religions in Religious Studies.

Chapter 1. Literature Review and Background

The motivation for this study is to investigate the classification of religions within the context of Hjørland's Domain Analysis. While there hasn't been a study of the classification of religions within the domain-analytic framework, there are still many insightful resources available which are relevant to different aspects of this study. This section will discuss studies and papers that involve domain analysis and the approaches used in this study.

Domain Analysis

While many of the approaches within the domain-analytic paradigm have been used in the past, and some with the same assumptions, Hjørland and Albrechtsen (1995) were the first to explicitly define and lay the framework for domain analysis. According to Hjørland and Albrechtsen, the domain-analytic paradigm states 'the best way to understand information in IS [Information Science] is to study the knowledge-domains as thought or discourse communities, which are parts of society's division of labor.' They propose, as opposed to the cognitive view which studies information as it relates to an individual, information should be studied within the context of a specific discipline or domain.

Hjørland (2002a) further posits that not all domains can be treated as if they were 'fundamentally similar;' therefore, research in library and information science should 'consider different discourse communities,' although there is likely to be some overlap. This is especially true for studying multidisciplinary domains such as Religious Studies, as they often have several epistemological assumptions, many of which have been influenced by other disciplines. However, Hjørland writes that studying library and information science within the context of a domain is problematic without merely just learning subject knowledge. As a solution, he proposes a combination of the eleven approaches presented within the domain analysis framework. This study will use a

combination of 'historical studies,' 'epistemological and critical studies,' and 'constructing classifications and special thesauri.'

Historical studies

While there have been a number of studies dealing with the history of library and information science and people and places within library and information science, there are a surprisingly low amount of studies that have dealt with the development of library and information science topics (classification, terminology, etc) within a domain. Hjørland (2002a) regards historical studies emphasizing the development of classification, terminology or other LIS topics within a domain as an approach in domain analysis, as opposed to historical studies of subject domains. He stresses the value of historical studies within LIS research by arguing that 'a historical perspective and historical methods are often able to provide a much deeper and more coherent and ecological perspective compared to non-historical kinds of research of a mechanist nature.'

One such study that examines the development of an information-related topic within a domain is Weisgerber's (1997) 'Chemical Abstracts Service Chemical Registry System: History, Scope, and Impacts' which traces the development of the CAS Chemical Registry System, a computer-based registry used to quickly identify unique chemical substances. He begins with the motivation for CAS to develop such a registry and then proceeds with the creation of the algorithms and advancements made to the system. Although a history of an information system, Weisgerber's paper is still a relevant example of the history of an information-related topic studied within a specific domain.

Especially relevant to this study is Bowker's (1996) 'The History of Information Infrastructures.' Bowker investigates the development of information infrastructures within the development of the International Classification of Diseases. He provides a thorough yet concise historical treatment of medical classification, beginning with its necessary development from statistics through the many influences and changes that have resulted in the modern International Classification of Diseases. Through his study,

Bowker was able to identify the influence of government interests and new technology on medical classification.

Another study of interest is Bella Weinberg's (1997) 'Predecessors of Scientific Indexing Structures in the Domain of Religion.' Weinberg investigates the history of indexing within religion and corrects the misconception that many scientific indexing structures were invented during the computer age. Rather, they were developed about a millennium ago in the domain of religion. She studied the work of the Masoretes, a group of Jewish scribes and scholars, who, beginning in the tenth century CE, compiled a precursor to the Latin concordances of the thirteenth century. In addition to this particular study, Weinberg has produced several other studies into the history of indexing, with particular attention to the domain of religion.

Ørom's (2003) 'Knowledge organization in the domain of art studies' is not only an historical analysis, but is done in the domain-analytic paradigm with reference to Hjørland. Ørom's argument is that historical discourses pervade three levels of knowledge organization in art: exhibitions, primary and tertiary documents, and classification systems, bibliographies, and thesauri. His analysis reviews three paradigms in art scholarship, 'the iconographic, the stylistic and the materialist,' and, similarly to this study, compares them to three universal classification systems (DDC, UDC and the Soviet BBK). Ørom includes the historical studies, discourse analysis, document and genre studies, and 'some indexing' approaches of domain analysis to his examination.

Epistemological and critical studies

Epistemological and critical studies, on the other hand, have been on the rise in library and information science. A quick (and unscientific) keyword search on the Web of Knowledge database reveals a rising trend in papers published relating to epistemology in LIS, particularly since 2006. Hjørland (2002a) likens the epistemological studies approach to Saracevic's (1975) 'subject knowledge view' regarding relevance in information science. According to Hjørland, the most fundament theories of relevance are theories of epistemology. Like the 'subject

knowledge view,' Hjørland states that the epistemological studies approach is the 'most basic approach and that all other approaches tend to become superficial if this perspective is not included.' He has classified epistemological assumptions into five broad categories:

- empiricism
- rationalism
- historicism
- pragmatism
- eclecticism, postmodernism and skepticism

These categories encompass epistemologies that will be examined later in this paper.

In addition, Hjørland has written on the subject of understanding epistemologies in information science. In 'Epistemology and the Socio-Cognitive View in Information Science,' Hjørland, arguing for a view in information science and retrieval that takes into account an historical and cultural perspective, writes '…epistemological knowledge form an interdisciplinary foundation for general theories about knowledge organization, information retrieval, and other basic issues in IS. *This may be the only general foundation that it is possible to establish!* If this analysis is correct, epistemology and science studies become the most important field related to information science' [emphasis in original] (Hjørland, 2002b). Epistemological studies are certainly essential in understanding classification schemes within the religious studies domain.

An excellent investigation into epistemological assumptions behind the domain of music is Abrahamsen's 'Indexing of musical genres: An epistemological perspective.' Abrahamsen analyzes the field of musicology and discusses the effect of the two main paradigms persistent in the discipline: the traditional view and the culture historic/new musicology view. He also discusses the influence of certain actors over others in indexing music and the shortcomings of library classifications (in particular, DK5) for indexing music (Abrahamsen, 2003).

One article of interest on epistemological assumptions in library classification is Rafferty's (2001) 'The representation of knowledge in library classification schemes.'

Rafferty analyzes the philosophical framework for universal classification systems, particularly Dewey Decimal Classification, Bliss Bibliographic Classification, Universal Bibliographic Classification and Colon Classification. She notes that universal classifications schemes were devised with the assumptions that they 'were constructed within a philosophical framework which viewed man as the central focus in the universe, which believed in progress through science and research, and which privileged written documentation over other forms.' She gives special interest to main classes and notational language in her study.

Classification studies

The main goal of this study is to compare the classification of religions within the religious studies discipline to classification of religions within universal bibliographic classification schemes. As such, one of the principle motivations behind this study is Hjørland's remarks on classification. While explaining classification as an approach in domain analysis, he writes about the neglect of principles of scientific classification upon research in bibliographic classification in LIS. This neglect is reflected between subject specialists and classification researchers in LIS. Hjørland writes that an example of this is 'that classification schemes and thesauri seldom are reviewed in journals from the domains they cover. Another example is that when subject specialists get jobs in schools of library and information science, they often express skeptical views on how their fields of knowledge are treated in universal classification systems' (Hjørland, 2002a).

In addition, Hjørland also contributes to classification research in LIS by analyzing classification in the psychology discipline. In 'The Classification of Psychology: A Case Study in the Classification of a Knowledge Field,' Hjørland analyzes classifications within psychology from an historical and epistemological view. He breaks down classification into four epistemological assumptions—empiricism, rationalism, historicism, and pragmatism—and lists how research objects and documents would be classified in relation to each paradigm. Through the study, Hjørland has made the assumptions that 'classifications are not neutral tools but reflect a view of the subject domain to be classified. Different views, paradigms or approaches exist in every

subject domain, and these views have at the deepest level a strong connection to basic theories in ontology and epistemology' (Hjørland, 1998).

One particular comparison between bibliographic and scientific classification is Beghtol's 'Classification for Information Retrieval and Classification for Knowledge Discovery: Relationships between "Professional" and "Naïve" Classifications.' She distinguishes bibliographic classification as 'professional' and done for the purpose of information retrieval and scientific classification as 'naïve' and done for the purpose of knowledge discovery. She uses Dazey's classification of religions to demonstrate that the purpose of this particular 'naïve' classification was 'to fill in gaps in knowledge about the development of one kind of religious practice that had not been explained previously' (Beghtol, 2003).

However, Hjørland and Nicolaisen (2004) take issue with Beghtol's division of 'professional' and 'naïve' classifications. They argue that scientific classifications are not naïve and, in fact, it is more likely the other way around. They argue that theories behind scientific classification influence bibliographic classification and a lack of subject knowledge will 'often lead to poor quality in information retrieval classifications.' The author agrees with Hjørland and Nicolaisen's conclusions regarding the importance of scientific classification and its influence on bibliographic classification.

Conclusion

Domain analysis has been applied to many domains and disciplines with varied research goals. The ones mentioned above include approaches related to this study. The flexibility and thoroughness of the domain-analytic paradigm has been proven through these studies and many others not mentioned. Rather than just an historical study or comparative analysis, domain analysis is a thorough and appropriate approach for this topic.

Chapter 2. The Development of the Classification of Religions within the Religious Studies Discipline

Before defining religious studies, treatment should be given to the definition of religion itself. Religion has always been a troublesome concept to define. One of the earliest definitions within a religious studies framework is one given by the nineteenth century anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who defined religion as 'belief in spiritual beings.' By using a minimalist definition, Tylor hoped to prevent categorization of primitive religions into 'spiritualism' (Tylor, 1871). While Tylor focused on religion as an individual belief, Durkheim's (2001) definition views religion as a collective, social practice. He writes a 'religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden--beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.' More will be discussed on the various ways prominent scholars of religion perceive religion in the next chapter.

The Religious Studies discipline developed during the nineteenth century from the millennia-old disciplines of theology and the philosophy of religion. Defining religious studies can be as troublesome as defining religion; however, a basic definition is the secular and scientific study of religions and religious adherents. Religious Studies is multidisciplinary and borrows methods used in history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics. This chapter will trace the development of the Religious Studies discipline and those who have attempted to classify it.

A Multidisciplinary Approach

As theology flourished throughout the Middle Ages, the first resemblance of a scientific analysis (or at least an exploration based within the natural world) of religion began following the Renaissance with the development of modern western philosophy. René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza and Immanual Kant analyzed religion, not presupposing the existence of God, through reasoning and observation within the natural world. While these (and other) philosophers have contributed to the field of

Religious Studies, most scholars consider Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) to be the 'father' of the Religious Studies discipline.

Müller began his academic life as a student at the University of Leipzig in 1841, where he studied Greek, Latin and Philosophy. He was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree after completing his dissertation on Spinoza's *Ethics*. Afterward, Müller went to study in Berlin under Friedrich Schilling and began work translating Vedic literature. In 1845, he moved to Paris to continue his studies in Sanskrit and began work on translating the *Rig Veda*, one of the four canonical texts in Hinduism and one of the oldest religious texts in continued use. His work on the *Rig Veda* continued as he moved to London and eventually the Oxford University Press published his translation. Although he had no intention of staying in England, he remained in the country the rest of his life, became a full professor at the University of Oxford and was awarded the newly created post of Chair of Comparative Philology (Müller, 1901; Bosch, 2002).

While at Oxford, Müller continued work on the *Rig Veda*, but his interests changed slightly to that of comparative mythology and religion. In this shift is seen his interest in studying the 'science of religion.' In the preface of *Chips from a German Workshop*, Müller (1867) writes:

> He must be a man of little faith, who would fear to subject his own religion to the same critical tests to which the historian subjects all other religions. We need not surely crave a tender or merciful treatment for that faith which we hold to be the only true one. We should rather challenge for it the severest tests and trials, as the sailor would for the good ship to which he entrusts his own life, and the lives of those who are most dear to him. In the Science of Religion, we can decline no comparisons, nor claim any immunities for Christianity, as little as the missionary can, when wrestling with the subtle Brahman, or the fanatical Mussulman, or the plain speaking Zulu.

His study of comparative religions is especially important to the development of the Religious Studies discipline. Like philology, he came to the conclusion that religions too can be studied comparatively. Müller urged his contemporaries that, since many texts of the world's religions are now available to the western world, it is not only possible but desirable to study them. He argues that, as much has been gained by comparing languages of the world, so too can great insight be gained by comparing religions of the world (Müller, 1899). However, Müller was still a product of his time, and despite his rhetoric about treating all religions in the same manner, he made it abundantly

clear his preference for Christianity. Nonetheless, his advocacy of comparative religions was integral to the formation of Religious Studies.

Joachim Wach (1898-1955) contributed to the Religious Studies discipline by studying religion within the context of history and sociology. Like Müller, Wach enrolled at the University of Leipzig. He completed his studies in the history and philosophy of religion in 1922 and gained a Doctorate of Theology from the University of Heidelberg in 1930. In 1935, he moved to the United States where he taught history of religions at Brown University and was later appointed Professor of History of Religions at the University of Chicago (Waardenburg, 1999).

At Chicago, Wach established the study of comparative religions. In addition, Wach was also a pioneer in the field of sociology of religion and concerned himself with how religion ought to be studied and the methodologies used, particularly hermeneutics. He wanted to establish 'a systematic typological understanding of religious phenomena and took as its basis religious experience and the three ways in which this expresses itself: in thought, action and fellowship' (Waardenburg, 1999). However, Wach also claimed that religion should not be separated into different fields of study, but should be studied as a whole: 'figuratively speaking, religion is not a branch but the trunk of the tree' (Wach, 1944).

Other pioneers of the Sociology of Religion, and Sociology itself, are Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920), both of whom influenced Wach. Durkheim's (2001) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* was very influential on the development of the Sociology of Religion and Religious Studies. Durkheim claimed that religion developed out of a desire for humans to seek out security through living with one another. Early humans often felt emotional attachment, not only to each other, but with inanimate objects in nature. These animate objects were often ascribed human sentiments and magical powers which in turn led to Totemism.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (1930) examines religion from an economic point of view. He examined statistics from countries which possessed a mixed religious composition and found that business leaders and highly-skilled workers were predominantly Protestant. He spends significant amount of time

theorizing why this is the case. Weber realized the impact that religion has on a society and advocates its study beyond mere theology.

In addition to Sociology, History was another discipline that entered into the realm of Religious Studies. One great contributor to the History of Religion was Romanian historian and philosopher Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). Eliade studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest. After briefly studying in India, Eliade returned to Bucharest and was awarded a doctorate in 1933. After World War II, he lived in Paris where he studied comparative religion at the Sorbonne. In 1958, he became the chair of the History of Religions department at the University of Chicago, where he remained until his death (Rennie, 1998).

While primarily an historian of religion, Eliade's roots in philosophy reveal themselves in his interpretation of religion, which has often criticized by other scholars. In *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Eliade (1971) provides an interpretation of religion based upon space-time. He claims that religious and non-religious people are divided into how they perceive time. Those who are non-religious see time as linear, while those who are religious perceive time as both linear and cyclical. Linear time is the normal time in which all humanity is subjected. Cyclical time, on the other hand, is time which is revealed by myth and religious practice. It is the religious person's attempt to escape the existential anxiety of the 'terror of history' (Rennie, 1998). While Eliade has been influential in the study of history of religions and Religious Studies, he has often been criticized for his phenomenological approach. Allen (1988) writes that he has often been criticized for being anti-historical, not providing a falsifiable argument and therefore not contributing to the science of religion.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, psychologists also took interest in the scientific study of religion. Prominent psychologists who have contributed to Religious Studies include Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and William James (1842-1910). Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, investigated the roots of religion in *Totem and Taboo*. Freud (1918) examined data collected by anthropologists on primitive societies and speculated on the roots of early humanity and its relationship with Totemism. Although he is careful to not claim he has found the definitive source of religion, he offers a theory through the framework of psychoanalysis. After

explaining theories of Totemism, Freud postulates that if early human societies consisted of an alpha male surround by females, and if other males who were expelled later murdered the alpha male (the father figure), then the base of all religious belief could stem from a collective guilt and attempted method of coping with the murder of the father figure. While Totemism has largely been abandoned and replaced with newer religions, he believes the rituals and taboos associated with it still exist.

In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud (1928) elaborates on his ideas set forth in *Totem and Taboo*, while suggesting that religion can be found as part of an individual's wish-fulfillment desire. He suggests that, whether true or false, religion is an illusion, a sort of crutch that humanity has relied on to overcome existential desires, such as eternal life. While those who disagree with Freud's psychoanalysis methodology will find little value in his work on religion, his contributions are still significant to Religious Studies.

Pioneering psychologist William James examined the psychology of religion from a pragmatic perspective. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James (1911) lays out his conclusions on religion. He begins the book, taken from his series of Gifford Lectures given at the University of Edinburgh, by stating that he will not be including religious texts and 'ordinary' religious believers in his examination, but rather intends to examine 'religious geniuses' such as the founder of Quakerism, George Fox. James shares Fox's account on his encounter with the city of Lichfield [quoting Fox]:

> Then I walked on about a mile, and as soon as I was got within the city, the word of the Lord came to me again, saying: Cry, 'Wo to the bloody city of Lichfield!' So I went up and down the streets, crying with a loud voice, Wo to the city of Lichfield!

James reveals that Fox learned of a mass persecution of Christians that had occurred in the city during Roman rule and Fox attributes the impulse to shout through the city as God wanting him to commemorate the event.

James' principle argument is that while scientists may dismiss 'religious geniuses' like Fox, they can't dismiss the actions that religious experiences lead people to take. While Fox may have been schizophrenic, he nonetheless founded Quakerism; while certain religious figures may be delusional, their actions reflect something that is real, or at least real to them. Therefore, James urges the scientific study of religion to emphasize

religious experiences and the actions people take rather than religious creeds and dogmas.

While religion had been studied from a secular viewpoint in different disciplines for nearly a century, cohesive Religious Studies programs didn't appear until the 1960s. In the United Kingdom, Ninian Smart (1927-2001), as chair of the newly formed Religious Studies department at Lancaster University, spearheaded the effort to make Religious Studies a credible discipline. Smart (2000) defines Religious Studies as the study of 'human existence in a cross-cultural way and from a polymethodic or multidisciplinary perspective.' He continues, 'though there had been the comparative study of religion in my youth, it was not yet really combined with the social or human sciences. It was only with the combination of the study of the histories of religions with the social sciences that you get what I call the modern "Religious Studies".'

Although merely a shallow survey, one can fathom the vast multi-disciplinary nature of Religious Studies. Borrowing methods from philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and more, Religious Studies is a complex and multi-faceted discipline. In the next section, the development of the classification of religions within Religious Studies will be examined, particularly with regard to the influence of other disciplines on Religious Studies.

Classifying Religion

The methods employed by those who classify religions have varied over the past century and a half, particularly as new disciplines took interest in religion. In order to study religions scientifically, a proper classification of religions is necessary. However, while classification schemes in any discipline are difficult to create, they are especially difficult for disciplines which are intricately tied to other disciplines. In addition, creating a classification scheme for religions is challenging due to 'the immensity of religious diversity that history exhibits.' As the following paragraphs will reveal, the goals of those who classify religions are either 'to establish groupings among historical religious communities having certain elements in common' or 'to categorize similar religious phenomena to reveal the structure of religious experience as a whole' (Adams, 2011).

Prior to the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the scientific study of religion, religions were typically divided into two categories by the Western world: Christian and non-Christian. This sort of classification is normative and breaks down religions into either true or false. This classification can be seen in other parts of the world as well. For instance, Islam divides religions into three categories: the true (Islam), the partially true (religions of the book: Judaism, Christianity), and false (everything else). While more scientific schemes have been developed, normative classifications are still used, particularly within theology and the philosophy of religion (Adams, 2011).

Not all in the nineteenth century were satisfied with a normative approach to the classification of religions. Philosophers began to undertake classifying religions based upon abstract concepts. One of the more prominent of these philosophers was G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel offered up a classification of religions based upon his own philosophy of 'history as a vast dialectical movement toward the realization of freedom.' Hegel classified religions based upon their dialectical progression with the lowest level being the 'Religions of nature' (magic; buddhism; early persian , syrian, egyptian religions), followed by the 'Religions of spritual individuality' (Judaism, Greek and Roman religions), and concluding with the 'Religion of completely spirituality' which he identified with Christianity (Adams, 2011).

As the study of religions began to become more scientific, so did its methods of classification. Pioneered by Max Müller, the Ethnographic-Linguistic scheme of classification links religions based upon ethnographic and linguistic similarities, e.g. names for deities, similar rituals, etc. Müller examined affinities among three historical races and linguistic groups, the Aryans, Semites and Turanians. His methodology was extremely influential, but not without flaw. As Faber (1879) noted, people with considerably different cultural developments share the same religion ('how is it possible that religions can be transplanted as Buddhism and Christianity have been, the first of Aryan origin finding acceptance and fuller development among Turanians, the other of Semitic birth among the Aryans?'). He provided great insight into the Semites, as their similarities are easily spotted, but not so much with Turanians (Adams, 2011).

Duren J.H. Ward (1851-1942) developed Müller's classification further in *The Classification of Religions* (1909). He accepts Müller's premise of a connection between race and religion, but 'appealed to a much more detailed scheme of ethnological relationship.' Ward writes that 'religion gets its character from the people or race who develop or adopt it' and further states that 'the same influences, forces, and isolated circumstances which developed a special race developed at the same time a special religion, which is a necessary constituent element or part of a race.' Ward claims the ethnographic element must have adequate treatment. Therefore, he devised his own classification, the 'Ethnographic-historical Classification of the Human Races to facilitate the Study of Religions—in five divisions.' The divisions which comprise his classification are: the Oceanic races, the African races, the American races, the Mongolian races, and the Mediterranean race (Adams, 2011).

As the field of sociology developed, classifications of religion were built based upon sociological models. One of the most prominent and influential of these is the Church-Sect theory. The Church-Sect division is attributed to Max Weber, who created the conceptualization in order 'to enable two or more religious organizations to be compared with each other.' One variable in which Weber used the Church-Sect division was the typical method of recruitment in a religious organization. If someone is usually born into a religious organization, it is a church. If it is usually the case that someone makes a decision to join a religious organization, it is a sect (Swatos, 1998).

The theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) followed Weber's Church-Sect division, but departed from Weber on two points. First, instead of emphasizing a religious organization, Troeltsch focused on religious behavior. Second, when differentiating between different religious styles, he 'stressed the notion of "accommodation" or "compromise".' Within his first departure, Troeltsch divided behavior into 'churchly, sectarian, and mystical' (Swatos, 1998). The Church-Sect theory, while undergoing constant modification, is still influential in the fields of Sociology and Sociology of Religion.

Another prominent contributor to the classification of religion within the field of Sociology is Robert Bellah (1927-present). Writing in the 1960s, Bellah's contribution is a sophisticated evolutionary classification scheme that takes into consideration the

progress made in the Sociology of Religions. Bellah posits that religion has passed through five progressive stages: the primitive, the archaic, the historical, the early modern and the modern. He further differentiates by characteristics within each stage, which he has categorized as symbol systems, religious actions, religious organizations, and social implications. Adams notes that there are two concepts that 'run through Bellah's classification, providing the instruments for the division of religions along the evolutionary scale.' One of which is 'the increasing complexity of symbolization as one moves from the bottom to the top of the scale.' The other is the 'increasing freedom of personality and society from their environing circumstances' (Adams, 2011; Bellah, 1964).

As the fields of History of Religion and Comparative Religion formed, it was evident that a classification scheme based upon geography would be convenient. The classification of religions based upon geography has also been influential and is widely used. The categories are most often broken down into: Middle Eastern religions, Far Eastern religions, Indian religions, African religions, American religions, Oceanic religions, classical religions of Greece and Rome and their descendents. This type of classification scheme is limited by the classifiers knowledge of geography. Crude systems distinguishing Western (e.g. Christianity, Judaism) and Eastern religions are common. Like the Ethnographic-Linguistic classification, the geographic classification suffers the same flaw by not accounting for religions that have been transplanted to other regions. In addition, classifying religions based upon geography doesn't reveal much about the religious life of a group, nor does it reveal the inner components of religion (Adams, 2011).

Similar to Hegel's dialectic classification is the classification of religions based on Morphology. A Morphological classification views religion as always evolving. It is a scientific and prominent form of classification and is quite influential. Within its early years, morphological classifications often created a subjective division of religion into primitive and higher religions, but religious scholars have since subjected this division to scrutiny and have also rejected a unitary evolution of religion (Adams, 2011).

E.B. Tylor (1832-1917) was a pioneer of this form of classification. In the late nineteenth century, Tylor claimed that belief arose naturally from elements that are

universal in human experience and 'leads through processes of primitive logic to the belief in a spiritual reality distinct from the body and capable of existing independently.' This leads to belief in ghosts, phantoms and the soul. Tylor developed this idea and traced it to the development of Totemism, polytheism and monotheism. C.P. Tiele (1830-1902) followed Tylor's morphological classification, but his point of departure from Tylor was 'a pair of distinctions made by the philosophers of religion Abraham Kuenen and W.D. Whitney.' Kuenen distinguished between religions limited to particular people and those that took root among many people. Whitney distinguished between religions of nature and religions of ethics (Adams, 2011).

Tiele strongly agreed with Whitney's view and claimed ethical religion develops out of nature religion. Tiele differentiated religions within Nature Religions accordingly:

1) Polyzoic religion - natural phenomena attributed life and superhuman power.
2) Polydaemonistic magic religion - dominated by animism, strong belief in magic and fear as the preeminent religions emotion.
3) Therianthropic polytheism - deities are of mixed animal and human composition.
4) Anthropomorphic polytheism - deities appear in human form with superhuman powers.

and Ethical Religions:

1) National nomistic (legal) religion - particularistic and limited to one people only and based upon 'a sacred law drawn from sacred books.'
2) Universalistic religion – 'aspiring to be accepted by all men, and based upon abstract principles and maxims.'

Although typically associated with phenomenological approaches to religion, Mircea Eliade was also influenced by Tiele's classification. However, Eliade made a distinction between 'traditional religions' and 'historical religions.' Traditional religions (including primitive religions, hinduism, buddhism) view time as cyclical and its followers' religious activities strive to go back to the beginning, the 'Great Time.' Historical traditions (including Christianity, Islam, Judaism), on the other hand, view history as linear, and believe it to have a beginning and an end. They view the sacred as beyond

the cosmos and that meaning for humanity is worked out in the historical process (Adams, 2011).

These classifications have so far mostly focused on an historical, geographical or social science perspective. One particular classification that focuses on the components of religion developed out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl. The Phenomenological classification of religions rejects historical approaches and rather focuses on classification according to religious phenomena. Although significantly contributing to the Morphological classification of religion, C.P. Tiele was also a pioneer of the phenomenology of religions. Tiele advocated an approach based upon the observation of religious phenomena (Capps, 1995). One of the first to apply the Phenomenological approach to the classification of religions was Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848-1920). Chantepie notes that genealogical (geographical) and morphological classifications are useful for 'historical surveys' but another type of classification is needed that is based upon the components of religion. Chantepie states that the Phenomenological approach is closely connected with psychology, as it concerns itself with human consciousness. Religion, even the 'outward parts,' can only be explained by examining the 'inward processes.' Chantepie's classification is slightly influenced by Hegel's, although he doesn't employ the same philosophy. He instead divides religions into 'its essence and its manifestations' which are affected by the Philosophy of Religions and History of Religions, respectively (Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1891). Chantepie's Phenomenological approach spread and was adopted by W. Brede Kristensen (1867-1953), an early Dutch Phenomenologist. Kristensen 'was not concerned with the historical development or the description of a particular religion or even a series of religions but rather with grouping the typical elements of the entire religious life, irrespective of the community in which they might occur' (Adams, 2011).

Influenced by both Chantepie and Kristensen, G. van der Leeuw (1890-1950), a well known phenomenologist, categorized the 'material of religious life' under the following headings:

1) The object of religion
2) The subject of religion

3) Object and subject in their reciprocal operation as outward reaction and inward action

4) The world, ways to the world, and goals of the world

5) Forms, which must take into account religions and the founders of religions (Adams, 2011)

Van der Leeuw's headings are representative of how Phenomenologists classify religions.

Conclusion

As evidenced above, the classification of religion has been varied, difficult and problematic. The next chapter will explore the epistemological assumptions in depth and will discuss in more detail the advantages and disadvantages behind some of the aforementioned classifications.

Chapter 3. Epistemological Assumptions behind the Classification of Religions

Hjørland (1998) states that 'different methods of classifying are in a very direct way related to different epistemological theories. Insight in epistemology can thus provide us with knowledge about the merits and weaknesses of the different solutions.' Analyzing epistemological assumptions behind classifications in domains can provide significant benefit to both those in Library and Information Science and the specific domain. In the specific domain, it can aid in understanding advantages and disadvantages of how knowledge is organized. In LIS, it can help information workers categorize works appropriately and allow users to find information within certain paradigms. This chapter will examine epistemological assumptions behind the classification of religions, beginning with the problem of finding the substance, or 'essence', of religion, then proceeding to examine the prominent theories of classification within Religious Studies, and finishing with a comparison to Hjørland's theoretical view on the methods of classification.

The Substance of Religion

Before examining the assumptions behind the classification of religions, it is important to consider how the concept of religion has been viewed among its prominent scholars. Prior to the scientific study of religion, religion fell into the realms of theology and philosophy. It's no surprise that the father of modern western philosophy, René Descartes, explored the essence of religion. Like his famous statement '*cogito ergo sum*', Descartes proposed that the proper method of investigating religion involved reducing it to its core components (Capps, 1995).

A key philosopher who has contributed to examining the substance of religion is Immanual Kant. Kant, using Descartes' methodology, claimed that religion must belong to one of three capacities of human experience: the world of thought, moral or ethical considerations, or aesthetics. Kant argued that religion mainly dealt with moral and ethical issues and therefore belonged to ethics. In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant (1996) presented an argument for Christianity based upon morality. He

built his argument upon his presupposition that the human capacity of ethics was the locus of religion in the natural world and that all people make moral and ethical decisions regardless of religious belief. He left his successors three options for examining the essence of religion: develop his position further, seek out other possibilities within the three human capacities, or fashion another paradigm. Not many chose the third option and the Descartes-Kantian paradigm proved to be quite influential for the following century (Capps, 1995).

Friedrich Schleiermacher, another prominent philosopher and theologian working on the problem of finding the essence of religion, followed the Kantian paradigm. However, rather than believing religion fell in the capacity of ethics, Schleiermacher placed religion in the domain of aesthetics. He defined religion as 'a kind or quality of feeling' and based his defense of religion on observation and judgment. He viewed religion as 'the feeling of absolute dependence' and claimed Christianity was the highest expression of natural religion (Capps, 1995).

Rudolf Otto, theologian and early scholar of comparative religions, also followed the Kantian paradigm. However, he concluded that the *sine qua non* of religion was what he termed, 'the Holy.' The Holy, he claimed, was something that was peculiar to religion, distinct from the rational and is closely related to goodness, whilst religion is most closely associated with the ethical. Despite its appropriate fit with ethics, Otto believed that religion had the most in common with the capacity of aesthetics. However, religion went beyond aesthetics and 'the Holy' was more than just an emotional feeling. He termed the word *numinous*, which he defined as 'an intangible, unseen, but compelling reality that inspires both fascination and dread' to describe the locus of religion (Capps, 1995).

Swedish theologian Anders Nygren, once again following the Descartes-Kantian paradigm of reduction, also explored the *sine qua non* of religion in his book *Religious A Priori*. However, rather than attempt to define the *sine qua non*, Nygren instead chose to provide justification that there is indeed an essence of religion. He did this by claiming the a priori as transcendental, that religion was a 'necessary and universal experience, inseparable from the nature of man.' In addition, Nygren, rather than claim the essence of religion be a part of the three human capacities Kant listed, put

religion In a fourth all-encompassing category which he named, 'the Eternal' (Johnson, 1964; Capps, 1995).

Two important twentieth-century theologians and philosophers of religion, Paul Tillich and Karl Barth, also shaped how the substance of religion should be thought. Both of them were influenced by Rudolf Otto and the idea of 'the Holy;' however, they felt modifications were necessary. Tillich extended Otto's idea and claimed the underlying element of religion was to be found in meaningful cultural activity. However, Barth viewed the *sine qua non* of religion in much narrower terms and claimed that God is the substance of religion and therefore can only be accessible through revelation. The contrast between Tillich and Barth's perception of the substance of religion reflects the Enlightenment dichotomy between natural and revealed religion (Capps, 1995).

So far, this section has mainly discussed those who explore the substance of religion from a theological rather than a secular point of view. However, it is important to understand the nature of the exploration of the substance of religion by those previously mentioned in order to put into context the secular study of religion. One prominent philosopher who examined the essence of religion from a secular view is Ludwig Feuerbach. Feuerbach also followed the Descartes-Kantian paradigm of reduction, but came to different conclusions. He believed that there may very well be an essence of religion, but that the essence is unreal. He viewed the substance of religion as a projection and a 'product of misplaced enthusiasm' (Capps, 1995).

The Feuerbach school had a tremendous influence on many prominent religious scholars. Karl Marx worked from the same Descartes-Kantian paradigmatic model of reduction in order to find the substance of religion. Marx began with an analysis of Christianity in order to discover the nature of religion, rather than the opposite. He viewed the substance of religion as a product created out of alienation and saw the practice of religion as a sign that social, cultural and political emancipation had not yet been achieved (Capps, 1995). Through his analysis, Marx concluded 'Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again... Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people' (Marx, 1970).

Discovering the substance of religions also became of interest to twentieth century psychologists. Sigmund Freud, influenced by Feuerbach, claimed that religion was nothing more than the dynamics of an aspirational life. While Feuerbach claimed that the *sine qua non* of religion was a projection, Freud took it further and said 'belief is an illusion when wish-fulfillment is a prominent factor in its motivation' (Capps, 1995).

While all those previously mentioned were concerned about a specific *sine non qua* of religion, psychologists and philosophers William James and John Dewey were not. James posited that religion cannot be reduced to any one entity or quality, but rather, religion, whatever it may be, is 'a man's total reaction upon life' He defined religion as 'the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.' Dewey, like James, was not interested about its substance or origin, but rather focused attention on the effects that are produced by religion. Dewey claimed that being religious is 'a quality that refers to the active practice of unifying the self via allegiance to prescribed ideal ends' (Capps, 1995).

Although coming to different conclusions, and not without some modification, most of the previous mentioned religious thinkers followed the Descartes-Kantian paradigm of attempting to reduce religion to its barest parts. This paradigm proved to be a powerful force in shaping the conception of religion and certainly had influence on how it is to be categorized.

Theories of Classification of Religion

As different disciplines influenced the scientific study of religion, different methodologies and paradigms emerged. As a result, different classifications of religion were influenced by their respective paradigms in which they were created. The previous chapter briefly discussed the development of the classification of religions and those involved in it. This section will elaborate on some of the more influential theories of classification: phenomenological, morphological, ethnographic-linguistic, and geographical.

The phenomenology of religion began with the intent of providing a description of religion rather than focusing efforts on attempting to find its *sine qua non*. Within the

phenomenology of religion, there are at least two strands of thought, one of which stems directly from post-Kantian and post-Hegelian philosophy. Husserl is always mentioned as the phenomenological approach's 'primary inspirer;' however, the second strand of the phenomenology of religion does not trace its roots to Husserl, but rather to Tiele and Chantepie de la Saussaye, who are considered to be the first phenomenologists of religion (Capps, 1995).

The two strains share the same method and terminology, yet their 'intentions can be remarkably different.' Phenomenology of religion focuses on the religion's manifest features as the most appropriate and effective way to study religion. Both strands qualify as phenomenology because both believe 'that attention to phenomena—to concrete form, immediate particulars, nonabstractable data—is the most appropriate way of approaching and discerning the truth' (Capps, 1995).

Husserl's solidification of the phenomenological perspective provided the foundation for the phenomenology of religion. In Husserl's view, objects, regardless of whether or not they are figments of the imagination, are to be examined based upon the properties they exhibit. The observer must study the object from a first person point of view in order to examine the object 'exactly as is experienced, or intended, by the subject,' and disregard any 'existence assumptions' (Beyer, 2011).

After Tiele had finished a morphological approach to classifying religions based upon the history and evolution of religion, he turned his attention to identifying the religious 'science's intentions, procedures, and scope.' Tiele's approach was phenomenological in that it attempts a descriptive analysis of religion rather than a search for its 'innermost core.' On the definition of religion, Tiele states 'By religion we mean for the present nothing different from what is generally understood by that term--that is to say the aggregate of all those phenomena which are invariably termed religious, in contradistinction to ethical, aesthetical, political, and others' (Capps, 1995).

An important aspect of the phenomenology of religion is that it is descriptively oriented. It seeks out accurate descriptions and interpretations of religious phenomena, including 'rituals, symbols, prayers, ceremonies, theology (written or oral), sacred persons, art, creeds and other religious exercises, whether corporate or individual, public or private.' It places emphasis on data collection and finds meaning in

comparing religions, but does not seek to rate them as other paradigms have done. The Phenomenological approach cares little about the essence of religion and avoids reductionism (Moreou, 2009).

As discussed in the previous chapter, two prominent classifications have been devised within the phenomenological approach, one by W. Brede Kristensen and the other by Gerardus van der Leeuw. Kristensen, a student of Tiele, believes that 'history and phenomenology of religion assume and mutually anticipate one another.' As such, he takes classification of religions out of historical context and focuses on descriptors. For example, instead of focusing on Egyptian and Babylonian sacrifice, Kristensen would focus on sacrifice in general. In order to properly compare data, he would ask questions such as 'What religious thought, idea or need underlies this group of phenomena?' (Platinga, 1989).

Adams (2011) states that Kristensen's organization of religious phenomena is reflected in the table of contents of Kristensen's *Meaning of Religion*. The contents are divided as followed:

1) 'Cosmology, which includes worship of nature in the form of sky and earth deities, animal worship, totemism, and animism'
2) 'Anthropology, made up of a variety of considerations on the nature of man, his life, and his associations in society'
3) 'Cultus, which involves consideration of sacred places, sacred times, and sacred images'
4) 'Cultic acts, such as prayer, oaths and curses, and ordeal'

This classification reflects Kristensen's phenomenological perspective in which 'elements within religious life' take precedence over any historical or ethnographic classification.

Like Kristensen, van der Leeuw believed the ideal classification to be based upon descriptions of religious experience rather than historical or ethnographic lines. However, Kunin (2003) notes that he differed from Kristensen in that 'rather than being specifically interested in objects, van der Leeuw is concerned with structures or

relations.' As mentioned in the previous chapter, van der Leeuw divided 'the material of religious life' into the following headings:

1) The object of religion
2) The subject of religion
3) Object and subject in their reciprocal operation as outward reaction and inward action
4) The world, ways to the world, and goals of the world
5) Forms, which must take into account religions and the founders of religions

In addition, while van der Leeuw wasn't 'interested in grouping religious communities as such,' he nonetheless created twelve forms in which the world's religions fit:

1) 'Religion of remoteness and flight (ancient China and 18th-century deism)'
2) 'Religion of struggle (Zoroastrianism)'
3) 'Religion of repose, which has no specific historical form but is found in every religion in the form of mysticism'
4) 'Religion of unrest or theism, 'which again has no specific form but is found in many religions'
5) 'Dynamic of religions in relation to other religions (syncretism and missions)'
6) 'Dynamic of religions in terms of internal developments (revivals and reformations)'
7) 'Religion of strain and form, the first that van der Leeuw characterizes as one of the "great" forms of religion (Greece)'
8) 'Religion of infinity and of asceticism (Indian religions but excluding Buddhism)'
9) 'Religion of nothingness and compassion (Buddhism)'
10) 'Religion of will and of obedience (Israel)'
11) 'The religion of majesty and humility (Islam)'
12) 'The religion of love (Christianity)' (Adams, 2011).

As evidenced in these two classifications, the phenomenological approach differentiates religion by types of religious experience, without regard to historical or ethnographic context. The phenomenological approach is one of the most popular paradigms of studying religion and provides insight by revealing common components among religions. However, due to its lack of historical context, comparisons may be

meaningless. In addition, the phenomenologists' method of studying religious phenomena from the participant's point of view is naïve, particularly in regard to ancient religions.

Morphological classifications are also popular among Religious Studies scholars. The morphological approach emphasizes the development of religions, its structures and forms. Influenced by the hard sciences of the late nineteenth century, it is often associated with the evolution of religions, and in fact, is sometimes referred to as evolutionary classification (Adams, 2011). Two prominent classifications based upon the morphological approach are offered by Edward Burnett Tyler and Cornelius P. Teile.

A pioneer of the scientific study of religions, Tylor also pioneered the morphological approach. Unlike the phenomenological approach, Tylor was interested in discovering the essence of religion. In *Primitive Culture*, Tylor (1871) claimed that that the essential element of religion is 'belief in spiritual things.' This declaration, known as animism, is the basis of his approach to differentiating religions. Tylor created a classification based upon his animistic thesis and the progressive development of religions:

1) 'Ancestor worship, prevalent in preliterate societies, is obeisance to the spirits of the dead.'
2) 'Fetishism, the veneration of objects believed to have magical or supernatural potency, springs from the association of spirits with particular places or things.'
3) 'Idolatry, in which the image is viewed as the symbol of a spiritual being or deity.'
4) 'Totemism, the belief in an association between particular groups of people and certain spirits that serve as guardians of those people, arises when the entire world is conceived as peopled by spiritual beings.'
5) 'Polytheism, the interest in particular deities or spirits disappears and is replaced by concern for a "species" deity who represents an entire class of similar spiritual realities.'
6) 'Monotheism, a belief in a supreme and unique deity.' (Adams, 2011).

Although Tiele is often credited as a pioneer in the phenomenological approach to religion, his approach to classifying religion is often more evolutionary and therefore

falls under morphology. While his classification is similar to Tylor's, Tiele provides more sophistication to his classification by utilizing a distinction made by the philosophers of religion, Abraham Kuenen and W.B. Whitney. 'Kuenen had emphasized the difference between religions limited to a particular people and those that have taken root among many peoples and qualitatively aim at becoming universal. Whitney saw the most marked distinction among religions as being between race religions ("the collective product of the wisdom of a community") and individually founded religions.' Whitney considered race religions to be 'nature' religions and those individually founded 'ethical' religions. Tiele strongly agreed with this division, believed that ethical religions developed out of nature religions, and used this distinction in his classification:

- 'Nature' Religions
  1) Polyzoic religion - natural phenomena attributed life and superhuman power.
  2) Polydaemonistic magic religion - dominated by animism, strong belief in magic and fear as the preeminent religions emotion.
  3) Therianthropic polytheism - deities are of mixed animal and human composition.
  4) Anthropomorphic polytheism - deities appear in human form with superhuman powers.
- Ethical Religions:
  1) National nomistic (legal) religion - particularistic and limited to one people only and based upon 'a sacred law drawn from sacred books.'
  2) Universalistic religion – 'aspiring to be accepted by all men, and based upon abstract principles and maxims.'

Tiele therefore viewed polytheism as not quite reaching the ethical category. Within the ethical religions, he named only three religions as belonging to the Universalistic category: Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, which he uniquely identified as being associated with three 'distinct personalities' (Adams, 2011).

The morphological approach is very useful in tracing the development of religions. However, while tracing the evolution of religions can be insightful, it is also the bane of morphological classification as it invites speculation on the superiority or inferiority of

certain religions. In addition, the morphological approach reveals nothing of elements of religious life, practices or experiences.

The ethnographic-linguistic (sometimes called genealogical or genetic) approach to the classification of religions helped establish religion as a domain that could be studied scientifically. The ethnographic-linguistic approach differentiates religions based upon the historical development of languages and nationalities. Max Müller and Duren J.H. Ward have contributed significantly to the development of this classification.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Müller's classification is based upon his investigation into languages. Müller found that modern races and languages derive from three historic families of language, which correlate to the following nationalities: the Turanians, the Semites and the Aryans. He believed that nationality, language and religion are intrinsically tied together; therefore, all religions stem from these three races. Müller's investigation came to this conclusion by comparing languages and examining similarities between religious terminology among different languages and races, such as the names of deities and rituals (Adams, 2011). However, even in his own time, Müller was criticized for classifying religions based on languages. Faber (1879) writes 'to classify religions according to languages is as appropriate to classify languages according to the length of tongues or shape of mouths, and plants according to the animals that live on them.'

Ward, continuing in the ethnographic-linguistic approach, accepted and built upon Müller's division. In *The Classification of Religions*, Ward (1909), writing on his development of an ethnographical classification, states 'the reason for an ethnographical classification of religions is the fact that religion gets its character from the people or race who develop it or adopt it, and the religions of related peoples are more nearly alike in character.' Ward addresses the most striking problem of an ethnographic-linguistic classification—the fact that religions developed by one race sometimes become more prevalent among another race, e.g. Christianity and Buddhism—by drawing attention to intermingling of religious traditions that occur when one religion is imposed or spread to another region. Nonetheless, the problem still remains. Ward breaks his divisions down into five different categories, with corresponding subcategories. His five divisions are:

1. Oceanic races

2. African races

3. American races

4. Mongolian races

5. Mediterranean races

Ward subdivides Mediterranean races into primeval Semites and primeval Aryans, 'in order to demonstrate in turn how the various Semitic, Indo-Aryan, and European races descended from these original stocks' (Adams, 2011).

While the ethnographic-linguistic approach is novel and Müller and Ward prove that language can provide insight into comparative religions, it is flawed by its inaccuracies. Transplanted religions are an excellent example of how language and ethnicity are not always relevant. In addition, like the morphological classification, this classification doesn't reveal much about religious experience.

One final method of classification that has proved influential over the years is geographic classification. The geographical approach can be used universally or locally and within the context of history (mapping out where religions began or flourished) or within the context of current data (mapping out religions based upon, for example, census data). The geographical approach is quite popular and used particularly among the comparative study of religions and the history of religions.

Adams (2011) notes that geographical classification is typically divided into the following categories:

1. 'Middle Eastern religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islām, Zoroastrianism, and a variety of ancient cults'

2. 'Far Eastern religions, comprising the religious communities of China, Japan, and Korea, and consisting of Confucianism, Taoism, Mahāyāna ("Greater Vehicle") Buddhism, and Shintō'

3. 'Indian religions, including early Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, and sometimes also Theravāda Buddhism and the Hindu- and Buddhist-inspired religions of South and Southeast Asia'

4. 'African religions, or the cults of the tribal peoples of black Africa, but excluding ancient Egyptian religion, which is considered to belong to the ancient Middle East'

5. 'American religions, consisting of the beliefs and practices of the Indian peoples indigenous to the two American continents'

6. Oceanic religions—i.e., the religious systems of the peoples of the Pacific islands, Australia, and New Zealand'

7. 'Classical religions of ancient Greece and Rome and their Hellenistic descendants'

This seems to be accurate. However, an overview of the table of contents of a few popular textbooks on the world's religions reveals modified geographical structures. For example, in Brodd's (2003) *World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery*, the headings are divided into:

1. South Asia – including, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism

2. East Asia – including Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism and Zen Buddhism

3. The Ancient West – including Zoroastrianism, Classical Greek and Roman religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Brodd chooses to lump Oceanic, African and American religions into 'Primal Religious Traditions,' outside his otherwise consistent geographical classification.

Geographical classifications are useful to the student of religion, but can be confusing when taken out of historical context as religions have been transplanted. It's interesting to see Brodd place Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam into 'The Ancient West' rather than a separate 'Middle East' category and is perhaps an attempt to compensate for the inadequacies of a geographical classification. In addition, like previous classifications, the geographical classification does not reveal anything about religious life or experience. Regardless, classifying religions based upon geography is still widely used.

These classifications are prominent within the Religious Studies discipline and continue to influence scholarship and how religions are viewed. As discussed, none of these classifications are perfect and to assume one is universally superior is naïve. All of the

above classifications provide insight and are useful depending on how the subject of religion is approached.

Hjørland's Theoretical View on the Methods of Classification

The epistemological assumptions behind the previous four major classification approaches to religion can be analyzed in light of Hjørland's theoretical views on the methods of classification. In *The Classification of Psychology*, Hjørland (1998) writes 'different methods of classifying are in a very direct way related to different epistemological theories.' He specifies five broad epistemological categories that classifications fall under: empiricism, rationalism, historicism, pragmatism and postmodernism. This section, based on Hjørland's work, will briefly identify and place the previously discussed approaches to classifying religion in context with the epistemologies of empiricism, rationalism, historicism and hermeneutics.

Empiricism is a 'philosophy that favors perception and experiences' that developed out of the scientific revolution and was very popular in the twentieth century social sciences. According to Hjørland, 'empiricism saw people as born without any knowledge ("tabula rasa"), and all the knowledge an individual obtained came from the senses. Users form simple concepts from simple sense impressions. By the laws of association more complex concepts could be formed in the individual' (Hjørland, 1998).

Empiricism accepts only what can be experienced and opposes 'claims of authority, intuition, imaginative conjecture, and abstract, theoretical, or systematic reasoning as sources of reliable belief' (Fumerton et al., 2011). Therefore, the closest association between empiricism and a theory of classification of religions is the geographical approach. The geographical approach is based upon observation of the locations of where religions have either originated or are currently prevalent. In addition, the geographical approach can easily lend itself quantitatively, whereby classifications based upon data collection and statistical analysis can be created.

Another philosophy Hjørland identifies is rationalism. Rationalism developed and gained popularity around the same time as empiricism. Unlike empiricism, rationalism places emphasis on reasoning in which individuals already possess, unlike the blank

slate assumption behind empiricism. Rationalism holds that 'reality itself has an inherently logical structure' and that 'a class of truths exists that the intellect can grasp directly.' Rationalism holds an *a priori* claim that (at least some) knowledge exists independently of perception, and that abstract 'universals' are already known. Rationalism is the philosophy behind logical divisions (Blanshard, 2011). As such, the ethnographic-linguistic approach to the classification of religions corresponds closely to a rationalistic paradigm. The logical division of religions based upon linguistics and ethnographic investigation reflects the assumptions behind rationalist philosophy.

Hjørland (1998) writes that 'Historicism is a philosophy that emphasizes that perception and thinking are always influenced by our language, culture, by our preunderstanding and "horizon," including our scientific thinking.' He also notes that as 'a theory of science historicism has especially evolved as scientific realism, which is an evolutionary epistemology developed within American pragmatism (by Charles Sanders Peirce) and within historical materialism (by Friedrich Engels) in the 19th century.'

Historicism is similar to rationalism in that it claims that 'experiences are determined by our psychological make-up.' However, rather than viewing a common make-up for all humanity, historicism claims cultural factors determine how individuals and groups perceive the world (Hjørland, 1998). This philosophy corresponds closely with the morphological approach to the classification of religions. This is reflected in the morphological approach's emphasis on the evolution of religions and its focus on religious development within cultural groups.

While typically associated with textual interpretation, hermeneutics has since been developed to encompass all of 'meaning.' Writing on Heidegger's view, Malpas (2009) writes that the principle ontology of hermeneutics is that 'if we are to understand anything at all, we must already find ourselves 'in' the world 'along with' that which is to be understood. All understanding that is directed at the grasp of some particular subject matter is thus based in a prior 'ontological' understanding—a prior hermeneutical situatedness. On this basis, hermeneutics can be understood as the attempt to 'make explicit' the structure of such situatedness. Yet since that

situatedness is indeed prior to any specific event of understanding, so it must always be presupposed even in the attempt at its own explication.'

The hermeneutic view seeks to find components of meaning in objects or events by placing one's self in the context of the event or object. As phenomenology tends to fall under the category of hermeneutics, the phenomenological approach to the classification of religions can certainly be said to be hermeneutical, particularly with its emphasis on understanding the components of religion within the context of its participants.

Table A. Epistemological Comparison of Classification Approaches for Religion.

Epistemologies	Classification of Religion Approaches
Empiricist	Geographical
Rationalist	Ethnographic-Linguistic
Historicist	Morphological
Hermeneutical	Phenomenological

Conclusion

The classification of religions within Religious Studies, as in other disciplines, is influenced by different epistemologies. It is important to understand these assumptions and differences in classification approaches as to better understand the field and how to better categorize it. In the next chapter, religion classes in a few prominent universal bibliographic classification schemes will be examined and compared to the epistemological assumptions found in this chapter.

Chapter 4. The Assumptions of the Religion Classes in the LCC, DDC and UDC and a Comparison to Classification Approaches within Religious Studies

The previous two chapters have traced the development of the classification of religions and their assumptions within the Religious Studies discipline. This chapter will briefly discuss and examine the assumptions behind the religion classes of the Library of Congress, Dewey Decimal and Universal Decimal classification schemes and compare those with the assumptions behind classification approaches within the Religious Studies discipline. It is important to note that the overall methodology of these classification schemes will not be discussed, but rather only how religions are organized within them.

Library of Congress Classification

The Library of Congress Classification scheme was developed out of the need to reorganize the books already in the collection at the United States Library of Congress, which at the time was using a classification scheme Thomas Jefferson devised. Based on the Expansive Classification scheme created by Charles Cutter, the LCC divides knowledge into twenty different classes and provides an additional class for general works. The order in which knowledge is organized begins with the general and follows through to the specific and the theoretical to the practical. The LCC uses a system of letters and numbers in order to differentiate among subjects (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011).

The LC Classification places religion in the B class, along with philosophy and psychology. Subjects pertaining to religion can be found in BL through BX. Material on religion is classified as follows:

- Subclass BL - Religions. Mythology. Rationalism
- Subclass BM – Judaism
- Subclass BP - Islam. Bahaism. Theosophy, etc.
- Subclass BQ – Buddhism

- Subclass BR – Christianity

- Subclass BS - The Bible

- Subclass BT - Doctrinal Theology

- Subclass BV - Practical Theology

- Subclass BX - Christian Denominations

From just these broad subclasses, an obvious deficiency can be observed. Five out of the nine subclasses deal specifically with Christianity. Christianity's sacred text, the Bible, is given its own subclass while those within other religions are not. One of the world's top religions, Hinduism, does not even have its own subclass, but is instead tucked away within the BL subclass. Understandably, this bias is due to the LCC having been tailored specifically for books in the Library of Congress and not for scholars of religion.

The LC Classification does not seem to reflect any certain theory of classification in Religious Studies, although there are certainly some elements. Within the BL Subclass 'Religions. Mythology. Rationalism,' and under the category of 'History and principles of religions' BL660-2680, the classification begins to follow a mixture of an ethnographic classification and a geographical classification. For example, the BL660 subclass covers material relating to 'Indo-European. Aryan' religions, the BL685 subclass covers material relating to 'Ural-Altaic' religions, and the BL1600-1695 subclass covers material relating to 'Semitic' religions. However, all other material under 'History and principles of religions' is classified according to geography.

Despite some similarity to a couple of classification approaches in Religious Studies, the Religion class in the LC Classification scheme is without a specific methodology and is biased towards Christianity and the West in general.

Dewey Decimal Classification

The Dewey Decimal Classification was published in 1876 by Melvil Dewey. It is the most widely used classification system in the world and has been used in libraries in over 135 countries. The DD Classification notation consists of Arabic numerals which are separated by a decimal after the third digit. This provides an infinite possibility of detailed classification. The structure of the DD Classification is hierarchical, with each

numeral representing a class. 'For example, 500 represents science. The second digit in each three-digit number indicates the division. For example, 500 is used for general works on the sciences, 510 for mathematics, 520 for astronomy, 530 for physics. The third digit in each three-digit number indicates the section. Thus, 530 is used for general works on physics, 531 for classical mechanics, 532 for fluid mechanics, 533 for gas mechanics' (OCLC, 2003).

The DD Classification categorizes all knowledge into 10 categories (000-900) and according to disciplines or fields of study. Religion is placed within the 200 class as follows:

- 200 – Religion
- 210 – Natural Theology
- 220 – The Bible
- 230 – Christian Theology
- 240 – Christian Moral and Devotional Theology
- 250 – Christian Orders and Local Church
- 260 – Christian Social Theology
- 270 – Christian Church History
- 280 – Christian Denominations and Sects
- 290 – Other and Comparative Religions

Like the LC Classification, the DD Classification has an obvious Christian bias. Only three of the ten subclasses are used to classify material that isn't specifically Christian. All material relating to other religions are lumped together under the heading 'Other and Comparative Religions.' While the DD Classification is universally used, it's difficult to imagine that the religion class, without being drastically modified, could be useful to libraries in countries in which Christianity is not the predominant religion.

The DD Classification in general follows a mostly rational paradigm; however, the method used to classify religions is generally normative, based upon Melvil Dewey's perception of religion. The only hint of comparison between the religion classes in the DD Classification and a classification approach within Religious Studies is within the 200 class, 'Religion.' The 'Religion' (200-209) class is somewhat similar to classifications created using a phenomenological approach, as some of its division deal with religious

phenomena. However, it is not a pure division and other categories that aren't phenomenological ('doctrine,' 'leaders and organization') are also included.

Like the LC Classification, the religion class in the Dewey Decimal Classification doesn't follow any sort of classification methodology within Religious Studies, but is rather a subjective classification based upon Dewey's perception of religions, with a bias towards Christianity and the West.

Universal Decimal Classification

The Universal Decimal Classification scheme was developed by Belgian bibliographers Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine. It was adapted from the Dewey Decimal Classification and first published between 1904 and 1907 and is widely used in Europe. Like the DD Classification, UD Classification notation uses Arabic numerals which are separated by a decimal after the third numeral and is infinitely extensible. Also like the DD Classification, the UD Classification uses a hierarchical structure; however, UD Classification is also structured in a way as to express relations between subjects. As stated, 'In UDC, the universe of information (all recorded knowledge) is treated as a coherent system, built of related parts, in contrast to a specialised classification, in which related subjects are treated as subsidiary even though in their own right they may be of major importance' (UDC Consortium, 2010).

The UD Classification is broken into ten separate classes, from 0-9, although the 4th class is currently vacant. The religion class is in 2 – Religion. Theology and is subdivided as follows:

- 2 – Religion
- 21 – Philosophy and Theory of Religion
- 22 – Religions of the Far East
- 23 – Religions of the Indian Subcontinent
- 24 – Buddhism
- 25 – Religions of Antiquity. Minor Cults and Religions
- 26 – Judaism
- 27 – Christianity
- 28 – Islam

- 29 – Modern Spiritual Movements

One striking difference between the UDC and the LCC and DCC is the apparent lack of a Christian bias. The UD Classification has confined Christianity into only one class, as opposed to assigning different classes for other aspects of Christianity (theology, the bible, etc). In addition, Broughton (2000) has attributed the facet analytical approach used within UD Classification to limiting more subtle bias that often occur within classifying literature on religion.

While the UD Classification, with its divisions based largely upon facet analysis, follows a rationalistic paradigm, the classification of the literature on religion resembles an historicist epistemology, with similarities to the morphological approach to the classification of religions. This is particularly evidenced by the subclasses within 2 – Religion, in which the religions of the world are categorized according to their development.

Conclusion

An examination of the Religion classes within the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress classifications reveal an obvious bias toward Christianity and the West. This bias and lack of any conceived methodology confine these two classes to the normative epistemology, along with the normative epistemology that was prevalent prior to the scientific study of religion. While the Universal Decimal Classification, with its division according to facet analysis, follows the rationalistic paradigm, the method of classification of the literature of religion suggests a more historicist paradigm, associated with the morphological approach within Religious Studies.

Table B. Epistemological Comparisons of Classification of Religion Approaches and Religion Classes in Universal Classifications.

Epistemologies	Classification of Religion Approaches	Religion Classes in Universal Classifications
Empiricist	Geographical	
Rationalist	Ethnographic-Linguistic	Somewhat DDC; Largely UDC
Historicist	Morphological	The Religion Class in UDC
Hermeneutical	Phenomenological	
Normative	Normative distinctions (True/False religions)	The Religion Class in DDC and LCC

Conclusion

In chapter two, treatment was given to the development of the Religious Studies discipline and the development of theories of classification of religion, with special emphasis given to its multidisciplinary approach. As noted, the scientific study of religion was developed out of several disciplines, including philosophy, history, psychology, sociology and anthropology. While Max Muller is often attributed the title 'Father of Religious Studies,' it has been shown that the field's influence stems further back to figures such as Kant, Hegel and Husserl. The development of the classification of religion is particularly indebted to these figures.

In chapter three, an overview of the investigation into discovering the substance, or essence, of religion was given, followed by an exploration of the four main theories of classification of religion, phenomenological, morphological, ethnological-linguistic and geographical. The efforts of scholars of religion, including Kant, Schleiermacher, and Otto, to find the *sine qua non*, the thing that which religion would not be, was discussed and found that many differed on perceptions of religion. The same was found when discussing the four prominent classification approaches to religion. These four approaches were then revealed to reflect a larger epistemological viewpoint.

In the final chapter, the religion classes of three prominent universal bibliographic classification schemes—the Library of Congress Classification, Dewey Decimal Classification, and the Universal Decimal Classification—were given a brief analysis to discern whether the epistemological paradigms reflected in those classification schemes compared to those within Religious Studies. It was found that the religion classes in the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress classifications were mainly constructed based on a subjective paradigm, without any particular methodology, while the religion class in the Universal Decimal Classification revealed an epistemology of historicism, closely related to the morphological approach within Religious Studies, despite that the UDC follows a rationalistic paradigm.

While this study does not provide an exhaustive comparison, it does reveal how paradigms have shaped classification within the Religious Studies discipline and the

lack of methodology in the classification of literature on religion in universal bibliographic classification schemes. However, a more in-depth analysis could provide additional insight, especially one focused on a broader range of bibliographic classification schemes. This could be beneficial to those seeking to build a special bibliographic classification for literature on religion.

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