Territory

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> Archie marked the key sites in the dirt, and drew a line between them. Then he indicated how a second rain track, belonging to Jakamarra-Jupurrurla/ Nakamarra-Napurrurla, split off from the main one and ran to a place called Wingkiyi. Still other tracks converged on Kulpulurnu from the west. I recognized enough of the site names to realize that Archie's sand diagram was an objectification of how he *thought* of their relationships: the tracks would actually meander and dogleg in linking all the places he had named.
> —Michael Jackson, *At Home in the World*

"Territory" is not a term commonly used in the academic study of religion. It does not appear among the 3,200 articles in *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*. Space, time, and place, particularly when qualified by the adjective "sacred," are commonly used terms. While territory, in this sense, may refer to concrete space and time, to the specific geographical, physical, and temporal structuring of actual religious traditions, it is also used metaphorically to refer to a wide range of theoretical issues. For example, the complicated theoretical issues regarding the relationship between the concrete materials considered by students of religion and some supposed corresponding religious reality, understood as either a spiritual realm or an academic construct, have been addressed in the metaphorical terms of the relationship between map and territory. Reflection upon the term "territory" provokes a wide-ranging critical discussion of academic method.

The concerns regarding territory serve the correlation of meaning with order. Distinctions made in spatial and temporal terms are often assumed to be fundamental to the way humans designate meaning, create order. Certainly it is a central theme in Western thought to make sense of the world by correlating meaning with order using the terms associated with space, shape, and body. As a product of this propensity, virtually every aspect of religion, both within specific traditions and academic categories, is articulated using a vocabulary of territory. Issues regarding territory must also address the even more fundamental academic assumption that reality invariably exhibits some meaningful order or plan (for an interesting discussion of the expectation that reality presents itself to us as an exhibit, see Mitchell 1988). This assumption motivates the persistence of academic methods to prescribe where to stand to "get the picture," to see the underlying plan or intention of reality.

One of the primary means of individual and group identity for the aboriginal cultures in Central Australia is the complex concept often rendered as "the

dreaming," though the English term all too often suggests unfounded Western romantic projections. Each language has its own term, for example, the Warlpiri call it *jukurrpa* while the Arrernte call it *altjira*.

The people of these cultures are divided into subgroupings, often referred to as totems, and each group is identified with mythic figures who are recognized, in some sense, as their ancestors. These ancestors are identified in the terms of a natural form, that is, they are called by the name of a plant, an animal, or even a meteorological phenomenon like rain. Songs sung during rites tell the actions of the ancestors. They arose from the earth at a particular geographical location. They journeyed across the land, camping at a variety of named places where they performed rites and sometimes interacted with others. Eventually they returned to the earth. These ancestors are not deities (in any sense of being numinous, transcendent, cosmic creators, or sky dwellers), though they are heroic and mythic in being credited with engaging in formative acts, establishing rites, and identifying themselves and their actions with the territory they traveled through. Aborigines do not have accounts of cosmic creation or origination.

Jukurrpa or *altjira* can refer variously to these mythic ancestors, to their actions, to the accounts told of their actions, to graphic depictions of ancestral journeys, and to the country defined by the itinerary taken by these ancestors. *Jukurrpa* or *altjira* also denotes one of the ways all human beings are identified, including one's responsibilities (one's dreaming is the law) and the potential of one's opportunities (particularly in terms of the potential for forming new relationships). For aborigines, identity is inseparable from territory and, as Tony Swain (1993) has shown, their ontology is strongly spatial, rather than temporal, in character.

Aborigines identify with country, but it is a conception of country that differs from the boundaried understandings by which cartographers customarily circumscribe countries. Country, to aborigines, is designated by a track across the land. It is a series of nameable geographical locations interconnected as the itinerary of ancestral travels. The totem identity—that is, the identity with a plant, animal, or natural form—designates a track (a song line) and one's country.

The groups of people who are identified with a given country have the responsibility to "hold up" that country, which they do by traveling to specific locations along the track where they perform song and dance dramas that refresh the knowledge of the actions performed by their ancestors at this location. Over a period of years, each track is retraced by the group whose members identify with the country.

Unlike countries that mutually exclude one another, this aboriginal conception of country allows one country to span the territory occupied by peoples who speak mutually unintelligible languages or different dialects, and who have different social structures and kinship systems. It also allows for countries, tracks, to cross one another, to occupy the same objective space. Typically one country crosses another at a specific location that is important to both. Each group's story

of their dreaming tells of the encounter with the other group at the place of intersection. When a group performs rites at a totem location shared by other groups, they all meet together, share their knowledge through dance drama performances, and form relationships based on the terms of these crossings.

Jukurrpa, altjira, country, totem, dreaming, law (all more or less synonymous) define a person's identity, her or his descent (though not consanguineous). Each person receives this identity at birth, and it is immutable. However, the aboriginal conception of territory interplays with complex consanguine relationships providing the foundation for aboriginal society and religion.

Nineteenth-century colonialism and the rise of modern anthropology with its vast ethnographic project challenged accepted, basically theological views of the world by introducing evidence and experience of human diversity. Distinctions in space and time were employed as fundamental to the social sciences informed by the powerful presumption of evolution developed by the natural sciences. The evolutionist assumption demanded that the territory of human existence be presented as a sequence of developmental stages. The quest, distinctive to the social sciences during this late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century period, often took the form of a concern with beginnings that frequently included the search for the origin of religion. Emile Durkheim (1965, pub. 1912) found the origin of religion in society as expressed in his famous statement that "the 'sacred' is society." Sigmund Freud (1913) articulated his understanding of origination in terms of "the primal scene." Phylogenetically this primal event occurred "one day" and was distinguished by brothers killing and eating their father because of their sexual desire for their mothers and sisters. The proposition of this event endeavors to explain the origin of sacrifice, taboos, and belief in gods. Ontogenetically this primal scene is inseparable from the dynamics of infant sexuality; it designates a child's observation of her or his parents in coitus. Both Durkheim and Freud depended heavily on Australian aboriginal ethnography for the development of their theories of origination. All of the classical works in the social sciences during this period were influenced to some extent by the evolutionist assumptions and an essentialist/objectivist epistemology.

The emergence of the modern academic study of religion in the nineteenth century correlates with the realization that religion might be understood in such a way as to be useful in accounting for the development, classification, and distinction of being human. Since the academic study of religion developed from Western intellectual roots, with Christianity (and, to a lesser extent, other Abrahamic traditions) functioning as the categorical prototype, religion was, as it continues to be, understood in largely theological terms, that is, religion has to do with beliefs in the existence of God. A broad and concerted effort was made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to retain belief in God as the distinctive characteristic of religion by seeking high gods among so-called primitive and archaic peoples to show that these peoples, considered as represen-

tative of the earliest stages of human development, believed in a creator god. The belief of the first peoples in a high god arguably confirmed the Christian understanding of religion, the early existence of the Christian god, and the definition of religion as belief in god.

The academic study of religion began to emerge as a distinctive enterprise with the shifting from theologically based to territorially based understandings of religion. Concerns with documenting the high god and original monotheism blended into more neutral, less theological concerns with a study of religion centered on beginnings or origins. In the nineteenth century, religion, seen on a worldwide stage, began to be thought of in terms of classifications in space and time. While these territorial classifications simply overlay the underlying theological assumptions, they established the taxonomy of religion that remains broadly accepted today. The most fundamental classification in this taxonomy is world religions. World religions are those that, like Western religions, transcend national boundaries and are inclusive with respect to national and ethnic identity. World religions contrast with national and ethnic religions in terms of their relationship to territory. Though world religions transcend national boundaries, they continue to be identified in terms of basic relative territorial categories: Western and Asian or Eastern, which are further subclassified East Asian, Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern, American, and so forth. Temporal distinctions have also been important. Archaic and ancient religions are distinguished from modern or living religions. Primitive religions, though temporally contemporary, are commonly correlated with the archaic. Further, historical methods have constituted the primary approaches used to study world religions. Studies of religion are commonly distinguished in terms of a particular historical period as more fundamental even than the designation of geographical place. So-called primitive religions, being made to correlate with the time of origination, have been typically considered, following the logic of the temporal assumption, ahistorical.

The shift to concerns with territory—space, time, and place—and away from theological interests corresponded with the shift from understanding religion as principally Christian or Western to acknowledging religion as a distinct aspect of being human. It corresponded with the growing awareness that comparison among religions serves the endeavor of understanding the human world rather than advancing the understanding of a particular religious tradition or people. Still, analysis of these often self-contradictory and illogical divisions of the territory of religion reveals the persistence of the powerful historical and ideological assumptions of the Western prototype for the category religion. The academic study of religion has yet to free itself from its roots in a colonial territorial ideology.

Territory as it is and has been engaged by the academic study of religion can be effectively presented through the critical examination of the contribution of two religion scholars to the concept "territory": Mircea Eliade and Jonathan Z. Smith.

Numbakulla arose "out of nothing" and traveled to the north, making mountains, rivers, and all sorts of animals and plants. He also created the "spirit children" *(kuruna)*, a very large number of whom were concealed inside his body. Eventually he made a cave or storehouse, [in which] to hide the *tjurunga* [oblong decorated ritual object] that he was producing. At that time men did not yet exist. He inserted a *kuruna* into a *tjurunga,* and thus there arose the first Achilpa (mythical) Ancestor [the Achilpa, or *tjilpa,* are the wild cat totem group of the Arrernte]. Numbakulla then implanted a large number of *kuruna* in different *tjurunga,* producing other mythical Ancestors. He taught the first Achilpa how to perform the many ceremonies connected with the various totems. (Eliade 1967, 50–1)

Mircea Eliade has been the most influential proponent of focusing on territory as the basis for the academic study of religion. The modern comparative study of religions that Eliade introduced when he arrived midcentury in the United States broadly transformed the academic study of religion. Developing upon the Durkheimian distinction between the sacred and profane, Eliade recognized a correlation between this distinction and distinctions in space and time (see esp. Eliade 1959). Informed about religious traditions the world over and throughout history, Eliade argued that religious values are imprinted as distinctions in space and time. These distinctions owe their existence to some nonhuman other, often termed "the sacred," which manifests itself in what Eliade referred to as "hierophanies," eruptions of the sacred into the world as acts of creation and orientation resulting in distinguishing a territory as qualitatively different from all other places. Human beings do not construct their world so much as they discover or recognize the distinctions, the sacred places, that supernatural beings introduced in the world.

The presence of the supernaturals in the human world occurred "in the beginning." Events designated as "sacred" correspond with "the beginning time" (*in illo tempore*), which Eliade understood as constituting a distinct kind of time, a "sacred time." Through their actions supernaturals created and ordered the world as it is now known. Their deeds are recounted as "sacred history" in the mythology of a tradition. Human time and history, if they are to be meaningful, must reflect and stem from this sacred time. It is to this time that religious practitioners eternally return in the performance of rituals, the reenactments of the actions of the gods. The actions of the gods, the events of sacred time, distinguish the sacred from the profane, the real from the chaotic, the meaningful from the meaningless. Rather than freedom and creativity, the human modes of engaging reality and meaning are repetition and participation. Eliade focused his attention on the analysis of mythology recounting the sacred history, the ritual "reactualizing" of those events, and the cosmic distinctions borne often symbolically in the structure of the world. Because of what he believed was their

proximity with the sacred time of the origins, Eliade held that the archaic traditions and those contemporary religions he classified as primitive are more prototypically religious in character than the world religions bearing long histories. History, in the sense of ongoing accumulating human action, is, to Eliade's view, a degenerative process in that it moves progressively away from the sacred events of the beginning. Sacred time is, however, circular or reversible, indefinitely recoverable and repeatable through reenacting the cosmogonic acts (see Eliade 1954). Australian aborigines were highly important to Eliade because their preagricultural lifestyle as hunter-gatherers and their absence of writing and technical history indicated to him that, structurally speaking at least, they live in close temporal proximity to the realm of the gods. Aborigines were to Eliade truly *ab origine*.

> Numbakulla had planted a pole called *kauwa-auwa* in the middle of a sacred ground. . . . After anointing it with blood, he began to climb it. He told the first Achilpa Ancestor to follow him, but the blood made the pole too slippery, and the man slid down. Numbakulla went on alone, drew up the pole after him and was never seen again. (Eliade 1967, 51)

The world created by the supernaturals in the beginning sacred time constitutes "the real," "home," or cosmos. Any territory lying outside this world is considered chaotic, uncreated, dangerous, and unreal. The creation of "sacred space" is synonymous with establishing orientation. Such spatial distinctions invariably correlate with the points of entry into the world of the supernatural creators. These places continue to function as the locations where humans may communicate with the gods. In Eliade's analysis, the strongest place, the place giving orientation to all space, is the center. Structurally the center can have no other valuation than sacredness since it is the locus of all creative and thereby religious activity, both divine and human. Thus "sacred space" is focused upon and is oriented by "the sacred center." As Allah revealed himself to Muhammad at Mecca, Mecca is the center of the Muslim world. It is the orientation for daily prayer for Muslims throughout the world and the destination of religious pilgrims. By following the model of creation, human beings may replicate the sacred center in architectural forms such as dwellings and places of worship. The spires, poles, towers, inner sanctuaries, and altars of religious architecture replicate the sacred centers as do designated mountains, trees, and water places in nature. These places thus become openings to the transcendent. Eliade (e.g., 1958), as have those who have followed his approach, tirelessly described and amassed the evidence of this religious patterning throughout human history.

> One day an incident befell one of these mythical groups: while pulling up the *kauwa-auwa*, which was very deeply implanted, the old chief broke it just above the ground. They carried the broken

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pole until they met another group. They were so tired and sad that they did not even try to erect their own *kauwa-auwa* "but, lying down together, died where they lay. A large hill, covered with big stones, arose to mark the spot."

Seldom do we find a more pathetic avowal that man cannot live without a "sacred center" which permits him both to "cosmicize" space and to communicate with the transhuman world of heaven. So long as they had their *kauwa-auwa*, the Achilpa Ancestors were never lost in the surrounding "chaos." Moreover, the sacred pole was for them the proof par excellence of Numbakulla's existence and activity. (Eliade 1967, 52–3)

With religion being recognized as having the quality distinguished as "sacred," the study of religion was thus the study of territorial distinctions made significant by sacred events, "the center" (or "the sacred center") in spatial terms and "the beginning" in temporal terms. Eliade showed that one approach to understanding the religion of another people is to appreciate their characterization of territory, especially in terms of space and time.

Eliade's influence on the shape of the academic study of religion has been extensive. The establishment of a large number of religion programs in American state-supported institutions of higher education was an important consequence of the mid-1960s U.S. Supreme Court decision in the cases of *Engel* and *Schempp* that distinguished between teaching religion and teaching *about* religion. In institutions that had to carefully avoid the theological terms associated with seminary education and the teaching of religion that would be considered illegal in these new programs, Eliade's seemingly nontheological terms based in the apparently neutral and universal categories of territory were broadly embraced.

While Eliade's terms and approaches continue to shape the study of religion, they have not gone without challenge. Jonathan Z. Smith has been an outspoken critic, and he has presented important alternatives. Smith's criticism has shown that Eliade's territorial categories, while promising nontheological and religiously neutral terms for the comparative study of religion, stem from an essentialist presumption that does little more than disguise their theological character.

Smith began with queries and concerns (1972), largely pertaining to the narrowness and historical applicability of Eliade's categories, and in time (1987) presented a full critical discussion of Eliade's program focused on examination of his territorial language regarding the sacred center. In examining the principal historical and cultural examples on which Eliade constructed his notion of the sacred center, Smith shows that the center "is not a secure pattern to which data may be brought as illustrative; it is a dubious notion that will have to be established anew on the basis of detailed comparative endeavors" (Smith 1987, 17).

Smith's critique of Eliade presents a fundamental anthropological and epistemological alternative in the academic study of religion. Eliade's discourse on

territorial categories is basically a consideration of the morphology, the structure, of the phenomenological world. He ultimately rejected the Kantian view that to be human is to be a constructor of worlds; he was opposed to the relativism suggested by such a view. For Eliade, the presence that marks some times and places as sacred establishes an objective, dependable grounding beyond all human creativity. Smith's response to Eliade is more than a rational criticism of Eliade's scholarship, it is a challenge to his understanding of the world; it exposes it as grounded in belief that is, finally, religious in character.

> By focusing on the false causal relationsip—from broken pole to corporate death—Eliade has missed the actual structure of the narrative. . . . The horizon of the Tjilpa myth is not celestial, it is relentlessly terrestrial and chthonic. The emphasis is not on the dramatic creation of the world out of chaos by transcendent figures, or on the "rupture" between these figures and man. Rather, the emphasis is on transformation and continuity, on a world fashioned by ancestral wanderings across the featureless, primeval surface of the earth. (Smith 1987, 9–10)

Smith does not reject territorial categories of space, time, and place as important to the academic study of religion. Rather he sees territory as offering the basic world-building tools used by all human beings. Religion, for Smith, is a mode of creating and discovering worlds of meaning and the discourse upon territory is the enterprise of creativity and discovery. For Eliade, the student of religion shares the anthropology of all human beings in that he or she must discover the sacred in the world of the academic subject and report upon its existence: an academic method that seems to require certain human qualities more than rational procedures. Smith's anthropology, also encompassing students of religion as well as religious peoples, sees humans as constructing their worlds of meaning. For Smith there is no objective territory; religion is not sui generis; and no data are essentially religious. The discourse on territory is then a discourse on mapping. Distinctions in space, time, shape, and body are the human methods of constructing reality, of engaging the world meaningfully. To recognize something as a center or an originating event is not to locate a hierophany, a point of rupture, but to participate in a mode of human creativity. The academic student of religion assumes no being presence, no essential sacredness, yet such beliefs may exist among the people of the traditions studied.

> The Tjilpa conceive of the world as a landscape whose distinctive features were formed by ancestral activity. . . . for the Australians, the world was a "man-made world" and summarized the mythology. . . . A topographic feature was not deliberately constructed by the ancestors. In most cases, it appeared as a sort of accidental by-product of their journeys. The feature records, permanently, the transitory act

of their passing-through in a manner similar to a photograph of the movement of charged particles in a cloud chamber—a solemn and important graffito, "Kilroy was here." (Smith 1987, 17–18)

In the territorial terms of the received tradition of studying religion—the academic tradition in which religion is inseparable from the sacred and where Christianity is the operative prototype for the category religion—the alternative presented by Smith's approach can only be recognized as an act of profanation. The word "profane" comes from the Latin *profanum,* the place in front of the temple, outside the temple. The historical, psychological, anthropological study of myths, scriptures, and rites renders these religious forms profane. The comparative study of human culture in the academically constructed terms of religion requires the profanation of the religious. The academic study of religion demands the removal of the sacred from the temple, or at least the examination of the temple and what takes place inside the temple from the perspectives of the world outside. The morality of the academic study of religion corresponds with the morality of the novel, a genre distinctive of Europeans, which Milan Kundera identifies as the suspension of moral judgment (1995, 7). That is, the morality of the academic study of religion, as of the novel, requires the suspension of all moral judgments with respect to the study of all religions. Where, other than outside the temple, can religion be studied without making moral judgments?

Smith differs markedly from Eliade regarding comparison, the most fundamental method of the academic study of religion. Eliade's work proceeded from the assumption that, structurally speaking, the sacred is everywhere essentially the same as is the structure of the human response to the sacred. Thus the student of religion knows at the outset the structure and pattern of the sacred. The sacred is synonymous, in territorial terms, with the beginning time and the place designated as the center. The principal comparative method of the study of religion is, then, the identification of the phenomenological examples of this pattern. Comparison is, as it is broadly understood in folk usage, the discovery of sameness.

> The fact that Numbakulla disappeared into the sky after climbing it suggests that the *kauwa-auwa* is somehow an *axis mundi* which unites heaven and earth. Elsewhere, and particularly in the Oriental cultures and areas under their influence, the *axis mundi* (conceived as a pillar, a tree, a mountain, etc.) actually constitutes a "center of the world." This implies, among other things, that it is a consecrated place from which all orientation takes place. (Eliade 1973, 50)

In contrast, Smith's study of religion proceeds from no essential structures that define religion, but rather from the conviction that religion is a mode of creating meaning. The possible weakness here, it seems, is the failure to distinguish a religious mode of world creating from other modes. The tendency is to

consider any construction of meaning potentially religious. Smith is interested in the diverse ways in which this world construction is practiced. Religion is always application, never essence. For Smith the task of understanding religion is not the recognition of some essential structure wherever it occurs; rather it is constantly to expand one's understanding of religion by the way observed applications reshape and challenge some aspects of the academically constructed concept of religion.

> To return to Numbakulla. The 1927 version of the myth appears to be an awkward hybrid. A common corporate name for ancestors has been reinterpreted as the proper name of a single figure who has been given a number of characteristics more typical of a celestial high god than an Australian totemic ancestor.
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> Such an odd combination raises the possibility of Christian influence, of a Christianized reinterpretation of Arandan [Arrernten] myth. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that the putative deity's full title, . . . *Injkra Altkira Njambakala,* was an Arandan phrase created by local Christian missionaries to translate the liturgical acclamation, "Lord God Eternal." (Smith 1987, 5)

Smith offers a discussion of territorially oriented strategies to map the world: "locative," which emphasizes place, and "utopian," which values being in no place (Smith 1978). These mapping strategies can be discerned from an examination of the myths and rituals of a religious tradition. The locative approach is identifiable as the attitude of attempting to "overcome all incongruity by assuming the interconnectedness of all things, the adequacy of symbolization . . . and the power and possibility of repetition" (308). To the utopian approach, interconnection and repetition spell terror and confinement. This strategy "turns in rebellion and flight to a new world and a new mode of creation" (309). Smith warns that these mapping strategies are not adequate to classify religions, yet he notes that the academic study of religion has been most successful at describing traditions characterized by a locative mapping, a territory oriented to a center and an origin.

Smith's important contribution is less in the categories he introduces than in the difference represented by his attitude towards territory. Smith recognizes that the materials publicly available to the academic endeavor—materials such as myths and the descriptive accounts of ritual—are equivalent to maps and, like maps, they are significant only in terms of their use in making sense of some territory. Advancing this metaphor, as maps are used by travelers to negotiate some territory or are constructed by cartographers to chart the significance of a territory from some perspective, so too function the myths and rituals that play major roles in religious traditions. As there are endless ways to map a territory and to use maps to negotiate a territory, there are endless ways to perform rites and apply myths in the effort to construct meaning in life. What is important to

Smith is application. Application always involves the issues of correspondence, the fit or lack of fit, between map and territory; it is an enterprise of negotiating and manipulating the incongruities between the exigencies of life and the expectations of tradition. For Smith, then, religious meaning is not accomplished through an endless repetition of the sacred events but through the manipulation and negotiation of myths and rites in the attempt to apply them to the situations of life and to adjust life to these maps. Comparison, in Smith's view, is always motivated by, made interesting because of, difference. "The Tjilpa do not build; Mesopotamia did" (1987, 17, referring to the two principal cultural examples Eliade used to establish his notion of the "sacred center").

While the locative and utopian maps discussed by Smith have commonly been used by students of religion as interpretive categories, the fullness of Smith's views on territory can be gained only by heeding his warning that these are not intended as categories by which to classify religions and by paying careful attention to a third, usually overlooked, mapping strategy that Smith describes. This strategy amounts to the recognition that religion may be meaningfully considered as a process of negotiating among mapping or map-using strategies. When the locative and utopian mapping strategies are pushed to their limits, it is clear that neither is ever more than momentarily achievable and that one is but the flip side of the other. Logically the two mapping approaches are inseparable. Both strategies are intent upon overcoming the separation between map and territory, the locative by making the map correspond perfectly with the territory, the utopian by eliminating map (and for that matter territory) altogether. Acknowledging that the locative and utopian visions are strategies that shape ongoing processes is tantamount to seeing religion and the religious in more process-conducive terms, allowing "the incongruous elements to stand . . . [and admitting] that symbolism, myth, ritual, repetition, transcendence are all incapable of overcoming disjunction" (Smith 1978, 309). In other words, religion is a map-making and map-using process characterized by differing attitudes toward the inevitable difference between maps and territories. Whatever the attitude, the difference must remain. The title of Smith's seminal essay on this topic, "Map Is Not Territory," clearly states his position. Later, Smith writes: "What does such [aboriginal ancestral] activity mean in such a context? It is clearly more a matter of marking than of making, of memorializing than of constructing. It is not a language of edifices, but of 'tracks,' 'paths,' 'traces,' 'marks,' and 'prints'" (1987, 18).

Smith further utilizes the same map-territory metaphor to discuss the task of the academic student of religion. The work of the study of religion is borne in the juxtaposition of the interpretive frame of the student (the mapping strategy) with the data (the territory), such as rites and myths that present a religious tradition, in the attempt to manipulate and negotiate the incongruities between theory and data in the construction of meaning (a map), making an interpretation or reading. While, if one is unable to free oneself from the former essentialist position, it might be thought that the goal of this process is to reveal the religious

territory of the subject studied (which might be designated "the sacred"), Smith cuts short any hope for closure in a further application of the metaphor: "'Map is not territory'—but maps are all we possess" (1978, 309). In other words, as religion is the continuing process of negotiating the application of elements of a tradition with the ongoing lived history of the tradition, the academic study of religion is the continuing process of negotiating the application of academic theories and expectations with the historical and culturally specific evidence of the traditions studied. Both map and territory are real in both cases and both are being constantly re-created.

Smith cites Archimedes, "Give me a place to stand on and I'll move the world," reflecting a classical perspective and one common to many religions. But he denies students of religion the possibility of a firm place to stand. According to Smith, students of religion have no place to stand "apart from the messiness of the given world. . . . There is . . . only the plunge which he takes at some arbitrary point to avoid the unhappy alternatives of infinite regress or silence" (1978, 289–90). It is in this dilemma that the student of religion bears kinship with the novelist.

The more fully we appreciate the operative uses of territorial terms, the clearer it is that they have yet to realize fully the morality of the academic study of religion; they remain terms used within the temple, at least the temple of colonialism. In this respect territory is a political term. The search for neutral language has served as a disguise, though doubtless most often unwittingly, for knowing the other in the sense of controlling the other.

Jean Baudrillard uses the map-territory metaphor to describe the process in which the map becomes the only reality, a process he sees as increasingly characterizing the modern West. Applying his perspective to the academic enterprise suggests that abstractions, models, academic constructs of the generic are no longer maps that reflect a real territory. They are not used as maps to direct the inquiry of historically and culturally real territories, nor are they the products of such inquiries. Rather they amount to a hyperreality without the traditional correspondence of a represented territory. As Baudrillard puts it, "Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation of models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—that engenders the territory" (1994, 1).

Doubtless Baudrillard's broad analysis of Western culture applies, to a degree not yet appreciated because it would be too damning, to the academic study of religion. The implication is that we may have come to rely so deeply on our maps, on our generic ideas regarding religion, that our presentations of religion are simulations of culture and history; hyperrealities with few territorial or referential realities beyond the simulation.

Territorial terms that are used in the analysis of phenomena considered to be

religious remain largely those of space and time. Terms that are used in conjunction with territory—such as perspective, worldview, insight, outlook, landscape—all privilege the visual sense. Both in its literal and figurative senses, the visually dominated sensorium subtly transforms the world senses, to use Walter Ong's term, of others into the familiar Western concept of worldview. Studies in sensory anthropology show that the visual is not primary to the sensoria of many cultures. For the Arrernte and Warlpiri, while their dreamings are represented in diagrams etched on *tjurungas* (oval-shaped ritual objects) and in the designs of body painting, these markings are not pictures, maps, or even representations. They are themselves presentations, something more akin to embodied poetry. They correspond with the poetic songs sung in dance dramatic performances. An important use of *tjurungas* is to rub them with fat and ochre and press them to the human body, particularly the stomach. "Painting up," that is, body painting in preparation for dancing, requires extensive touching of the body. Sight is no more important than other senses to aboriginal understandings of territory. While travel literature is brimming with descriptions and personal responses to the stimulation of the nonvisual senses, suggesting that the full sensorium can hardly be suppressed when one is in another's territory, students of religion have given little attention to the sensoria of others.

Many of the limitations on the present conceptions of territory stem from the Western style of separating mind and body that elevates the mind over the body. The privileging of sight is associated with this devaluation of body. Sight is understood to be the objective sense: seeing is believing. The other senses are more personal and, therefore, more subjective. Territory, though the key to cultural differences, tends to be considered as objectified and impersonal. But Merleau-Ponty insisted that lived space is different from objective uniform space. Territory is perceived and experienced differently with respect to gender, culture, age, and bodily ability. Lived territory, as evidenced by human action, does not appear much in analyses or descriptions of territory. The terms of territory in use in academic analyses have focused largely on the designation of objective structural categories that distinguish religion. However, territory is always significant only as the setting for action, only as the background against which action engages the motion that is life. The dream tracks of aborigines are useless and meaningless to them without the movement and actions of the mythic ancestors and without the weight of the law these actions bear upon the people. It is fitting that aborigines present dreamings in the dynamic form of dance dramas. Students of religion must conceive anew the terms of territory using enriched metaphors. The map-territory metaphor, as powerful and effective as it has been, tends to support the comprehension of territory as static, as stable, as mappable, as graspable from some view. Smith's attention to application implies the importance of movement and process. Journey or story may serve more effectively to stimulate a richer conception of territory, and these active terms are now receiving increasing attention.

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As suggested throughout this essay, the aborigines of Central Australia may inspire, as they have in the past, the rethinking of our present approaches to territory, and they may stimulate our imaginations with regard to developing new concepts. Their conception of dreamings as designating countries overlying one another, as mythic ancestral journeys that crisscross one another, and as webs of storytracks, as well as the way these notions of territory facilitate human relations is powerfully provocative.

> The Warlpiri social universe was made up of skeins of relationships, not just songlines. A Dreaming defined a person's descent. It was immutable and given. But during the course of a lifetime, a man made contacts with others outside of his own home area. Networks of ties developed which were different for each person, reflecting the contingencies of where he traveled, lived, worked, married, and learned ceremony. It went without saying that alliances shifted, things changed. (Jackson 1995, 64–65)

Warlpiri networks of relationships, which Jackson aptly describes as "skeins," suggest something akin to the structure of the Internet and other postmodern models of communication and interaction. Among Internet users, each person has a distinctive point of access, a way of entering, a motivating idea or need, and a strategy of interacting. Cyberspace is an incredibly complex dynamic field of play in which personal interests, personal whim, and pure coincidence greatly influence the way relationships are made, the way one travels (surfs), works, and learns.

These examples suggest a number of shifts presently under way in our conception of territory. The traditional conception of territory as space and time divided into jigsaw puzzle-like maps in which every division is entirely separate from all others is a less and less useful model. These traditional expectations of territory correspond with traditional conceptions of categories as containers whose members all share a common definitive trait that is the essential feature of the category. We have held such a categorical expectation with regard to religion. Discussions of the definition of religion have been battles over territory. Even identifiable religious traditions—such as Buddhism, Judaism, Islam—are often presented in terms of this understanding of category. Each tradition is identified, despite all of its manifestations and subdivisions throughout history, in terms of a single distinctive trait.

The sociology of knowledge is a discourse on territory. The frequent discussions of the appropriateness of studying religion from the inside as opposed to the outside reflect a traditional understanding of category and associated concepts of power. That the lion's share of the study of religion has been done by insiders (a trend that continues), that is, by members of the tradition studied, has received little critical attention. Being a member of a tradition or gender or ethnicity, being an insider, is often a major criterion for academic authority

and authenticity. Strategies of field study are often directed towards making the scholar in some respects an insider of the religion studied and thus to win the associated authority.

The studies of religious phenomena such as myth, ritual, rites of passage, and pilgrimage are often approached on the basis of a classical theory of category, a traditional understanding of territory directed toward discovering the essential distinctive feature for all phenomena so classified. Unlike the Warlpiri, academic students of religion have not known how to deal with territorial designations that overlap one another, that have fuzzy or fluid boundaries.

If the examples of the Warlpiri and the Arrernte dreamings are not adequate stimulation for imagining an enriched vision of territory, George Lakoff's discussion of category theory in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (1987) may be: "The Australian Aboriginal language Dyirbal . . . has a category, *balan,* that actually includes women, fire, and dangerous things. It also includes birds that are *not* dangerous, as well as exceptional animals, such as the platypus, bandicoot, and echidna" (5). Lakoff proposes a prototype theory of category along with a variety of principles by which prototypes are extended and expanded to bring inclusion of other items into a category. This theory of category helps us understand the richness and apparent conflicting character of such categories as *balan,* and it has promise to do the same for the terms "territory" and "religion."

There is an odd intertwining of Western academic conceptions of territory and Australian aborigines. Doubtless to some extent this has occurred because in being considered *ab origine,* "from the origin," aborigines have been imagined into existence, hyperrealities, in the terms that have satisfied Western territorial needs, whether colonial, conceptual, or observational (sensorial). While this process has been actively imaginative, it has not been interactive. Imaginative constructs of aborigines have been inadequately constrained by the independent reality of the aborigines; they are often preceding simulacra. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the conception of territory is how to foster the creative interpretation of others based on appreciating their lived territory, without the accompanying need to control them and their territory.

> Archie stared somberly at Japanangka's diagrams, "That's the whitefella way," he said irritably, "fixing boundaries." (Jackson 1995, 64)

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