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The *Encyclopedia of Religion* in a Digital Age

Entries Not Found, Treasures Not Mined

The wealth of online materials concerning religion may seem to supplant and imperil the stature of Mircea Eliade's 16-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987), long considered the standard reference work in the field. This article argues, however, that the seminal encyclopedia, especially in its heavily revised and expanded second edition (2005), continues to provide researchers of religion a uniquely valuable resource—but only when they are awakened to the theoretical and explicitly comparative configuration of the set. To that end, the discussion enumerates some of the encyclopedia's most distinctive features that are not matched in other reference works, digital or print.

Somewhere along the way in my work as editor in chief of a revised second edition of Mircea Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religion* (*EOR1*), I discovered

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the utility of responding to questions with a formula that included, "on the one hand, and then again, on the other hand."[1] Actually, I like this formulation of "two hands" on a revision of Eliade's *EOR1*, for several reasons. For one, that notion of two hands on the revision invokes the image of hanging on tightly as one does, for instance, on a roller coaster, since I and my wonderful editorial board knew from the outset that it would be a too-fast ride and too-large challenge in which we were always hoping for more time to reach the academic standards we had in mind. Secondly, I like the image of two hands insofar as it connotes embracing the task with full, two-fisted energy. We imagined that the editorial undertaking was, in large part, about vision and large ideas but also, in larger part, a kind of hard labor that would require perseverance and endurance even more than talent and insight; the work of an encyclopedia editor often resembles digging ditches more than writing poetry. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, I invoke the image of two hands to reflect the initiative of balance and compromise, or weighing and negotiation, that was at issue at virtually every point in the revision process. In other words, over and over I found that—rather than delivering pointed and definitive answers—everything in this project seemed to operate on a kind of spectrum between poles: on-the-one-hand and on-the-other-hand, as it were.

For instance, *on the one hand*, to play a large part in the revision of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (*EOR2*) was, for me, the opportunity of a lifetime, a stroke of professional good fortune on the order of winning the lottery, a chance to make a contribution to the field vastly beyond any I would have dared to imagine for myself. But, *on the other hand*, assuming the lead role in revising this esteemed work was a burden and a nightmare, an impossible and preposterous occasion to slosh in the giant shoes of Mircea Eliade, and to assume all the baggage that comes with that heritage. In the apt metaphor of one associate editor, editing an encyclopedia is a no-win proposition like handling the stage lighting for a large theatrical production: if you do everything exactly right—and accomplish your task with perfect success—then no one will even notice that you are there; but, if you err, you diminish the efforts of others and bring all attention to yourself. Editors are backstage

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[1] *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols., editor in chief, Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Reference, 1987); and *Encyclopedia of Religion*, revised 2nd ed., editor in chief Lindsay Jones, 15 vols. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005). Solely for the purposes of this article, I use "*EOR1*" to refer to the first edition, "*EOR2*" to refer to the second edition, and "*EOR*" in reference to more general remarks that apply to both editions.

hands, not on-stage actors, who must accept the responsibility and modesty captured in the colloquial phrase, "It is not about you."

At any rate, then, for each of the quite simple points that I am going to make, I will rely on this on-the-one-hand versus on-the-other-hand formulation. And while giant reference works of this sort evoke a raft of issues, I will attempt to focus my remarks by taking seriously the opening sentence of the AAR panel description, which reads:

> In the age of the Internet, Wikipedia, digitalization, and tightened library budgets, what purposes are served by large reference works, specifically encyclopedias and handbooks, in religious studies?

These are not, I think, topics about which I have any special insight, but they are issues that have vexed and puzzled me. And thus to the extent that these brief comments require a title, mine is "The *Encyclopedia of Religion* in a Digital Age: Entries Not Found, Treasures Not Mined."

Three Qualifications: An Exceptionally Thorough Revision

Before I turn to this topic of encyclopedias in a digital age, I should, however, make just three quick qualifications or clarifications, again relying on my on-the-one-hand versus on-the-other-hand formula. First, I may be unique in this symposium, perhaps an outlier of sorts, because, instead of a brand new encyclopedia, I was the editor of what was, *on the one hand*, a revised second edition of Mircea Eliade's sixteen-volume *EOR1*, which was originally published in 1987; our revision, *EOR2*, appeared in 2005. And of course, revising an encyclopedia is a quite different undertaking than starting fresh; indeed, there are many fascinating issues at stake in "revising," almost none of which I address here. As one wise editorial board member expressed it, revising *EOR1* was "cooking with leftovers." But, *on the other hand*, ours was an exceptionally thorough revision insofar as all of the some 2,700 first-edition entries were revisited, and therefore vulnerable to reworking or replacement. Many were, then, variously revamped, replaced, or just omitted; and nearly 600 brand new entry headings were added until we finally arrived at a revision with over 3,200 entries (an increase from about 8 million words to 9.6 million words).[2] Thus, while this was, *on the one hand*, a revision, it did

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[2] Lindsay Jones, "Preface to the Second Edition," *EOR2* 1: xi–xv, provides a fuller and more technical account of the numerous forms of revision at issue in *EOR2*.

entail, *on the other hand*, about 1,000 either completely rewritten or entirely new entries, which is to say, *EOR2* is substantially larger than *EOR1*, and roughly one-third of the entries were completely new in 2005. It was, in short, a major revision, the extent of which exceeded all early expectations. Yes, had we only known how deep the editorial blade would be set.…

Second, it is relevant to note in this context that, *on the one hand*, the original *EOR1* was paired with a CD-ROM, which was available for sale to private individuals. That electronic option notwithstanding, one has to imagine that the overwhelming means of accessing *EOR1* was via hard copies in libraries; only a few, myself included, were enthusiastic enough to buy personal copies of the multi-volume set. In the process of the making of *EOR2*, we editors relied very heavily on those old CD-ROMs, which still constitute the only electronic version of *EOR1*; in fact, we slipped through a small window of opportunity insofar as, one by one, editorial board members experienced upgrades in their computer operating systems that, usually by unfortunate surprise, made the old CD-ROMs unworkable. At present, almost no one has the equipment necessary to run them; and thus, for most practical purposes, no electronic version of *EOR1* is available. *On the other hand*, *EOR2*, essentially from its first emergence in 2005, has been available electronically, but only via subscription services in which many university libraries participate. It has been a disappointment to learn that, owing to severe shelf space constraints in most libraries, when *EOR2* emerged, *EOR1* usually went into storage and, consequently, it is used with declining frequency, an eventuality that, had we editors foreseen it, might have led to some different decisions. We operated with a naïve vision of library patrons who would encounter *EOR1* and *EOR2* on shelves right beside each another, which turns out to be an infrequent occurrence. Be that as it may, and without hard numbers to support this contention, I am confident that people who access *EOR2* online via the subscriptions of their respective university libraries constitute, at this point, the largest body of *EOR2* users. Predictably, the broad trend is toward more and more electronic usage.

And third, I would insist, *on the one hand*, that by far the clearest map of the original *EOR1* is the so-termed "Synoptic Outline of Contents," a thirty-eight-page outline of the entire sixteen-volume work that appears in the final volume. (A two-page summary of that Synoptic Outline, unlike any such concise summation that appears in either edition of the actual set, is appended to this article.) *EOR2* conforms to the same basic structure; and thus the amended, somewhat longer "Synoptic Outline" appears in the final

volume of that edition. Now, while I will not spend time trying to address the involved matter of *EOR*'s logic and structure, and its investments in a *Religionswissenschaftlich* approach to the academic study of religion, simply note (with reference to that two-page summary outline) that the full work is composed of two very unequal and different "Parts" and four different "Conceptual Blocks."³ Though never explicitly identified as such, Part I corresponds to the "historical branch" of Religionswissenschaft insofar as this is the straightforward material, composed of more than 2,000 entries, that concerns each of forty-four different religious traditions, from African Traditional Religions to Zoroastrianism. As a very broad and imperfect generalization, these are entries of a historical and descriptive sort that one might well find replicated in other reference works.

Part II, which in *EOR1* was entitled "The History of Religions," was re-titled in *EOR2* as "Religious Studies," because this is actually the non-historical or, in cases, trans-historical component of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Part II is made up of three different "Conceptual Blocks," which together constitute the so-termed "systematic branch" of *Religionswissenschaft*. This is the more venturesome, explicitly comparative, thematic, and methodological component of the work. These are, in other words, the entries—more than 1,000 of them—that reflect *EOR1*'s and *EOR2*'s special and distinctive approach to the study of religion and special commitments to cross-cultural comparison; and these are, consequently, entries that are much less likely to be replicated elsewhere. It is, then, the material in Part II that is most prone to lead various audiences either to love or to disdain the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. This is, assuredly, the more heavily contested ground and, therefore, the component of *EOR2* that posed the greatest editorial challenges and also greatest rewards.

The Import of the Synoptic Outline of Contents: A Map of the Entire *EOR*

In any case, putting aside a slew of issues posed by this two-part, four-block structure, I would argue strenuously that, *on the one hand*, no encyclopedia user can possibly ascertain the logical layout of *EOR2* without appeal to this Synoptic Outline of Contents. In the Synoptic Outline, all 3,200 entries are arranged in a systematic, historically, geographically, thematically, and

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³ The Synoptic Outlines of both *EOR1* and *EOR2* explicitly identify "Parts I and II," but the rubric of four "Conceptual Blocks" is not explicitly identified.

intellectually logical way; this is a thoughtful and *significant* arrangement of the highest order. But then in the actual fifteen volumes, all of those entries are reshuffled into an order that is alphabetical, but otherwise completely random and *insignificant*. Accordingly, the Synoptic Outline, unlike the alphabetical Index that also appears in the final volume, remains the uniquely valuable map to the very wide and heterogeneous terrain of the nearly ten-million-word set; and, therefore, *on the one hand*, the Synoptic Outline is, I contend, a mandatory tool for full and effective use of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. That was true for *EOR1* and it remains true for *EOR2*. This thirty-eight-page outline really is, without question, the passkey to the arrangement, logic, and contents of the whole thing. But, *on the other hand*, distressingly enough, I quickly discovered that the overwhelming majority—perhaps ninety-eight percent—of the users of *EOR* either don't know, or really don't care, about the Synoptic Outline of Contents. In that sense, the gap between the idealized expectations of editors and ground-level encyclopedia user practices is enormous.

In fact, *on the one hand*, even among the scholars on the *EOR2* editorial board, some referred to the Synoptic Outline as our "dirty laundry," which is to say, they saw it as a crucial working document for our revision process, a kind of scaffolding without which we could not possibly build *EOR2*; but they argued that it was not something that ought to be displayed in public, where it might facilitate the sort of entry-counting that inevitably leads to half-informed complaints about the distribution of words and topics. From that perspective, the Synoptic Outline was a strictly in-house document, a kind of Pandora's Box, or perhaps some early and unappetizing stage in the "sausage-making" of editorial revision, which was better kept out of sight. But, *on the other hand*, I also came to realize that librarians—arguably the most savvy if not-at-all typical users of *EOR*—were equally adamant, and much more convincing, in their insistence that the Synoptic Outline of Contents must be out in completely full view. Librarians, as a uniquely informed and critical audience, agreed fully that an effective use of *EOR2* continues to depend upon that significant schematic organization of the full contents of the work.

Consequently, *on the one hand*, following the lead of librarians rather than my colleagues on this issue, I, from the beginning editorial stages, developed an intimate relationship with the Synoptic Outline of Contents. Indeed, it is a feature of *EOR2* that I reworked almost completely by myself,

because to make the necessary revisions and to fit new entries into the global scheme of the full work required a sense of "the big picture" that neither individual contributors nor area editors could really see. For me, it was the Synoptic Outline that facilitated decisions about balance and coverage, that exposed both gaps and redundancies, and that, therefore, became my most indispensible editorial instrument. But, *on the other hand*, queries and conversations with even the most enthusiastic users of *EOR1* invariably revealed that the great majority of them engaged the work more or less like a huge dictionary insofar as they would have a topic in mind, and then go straight to that topic via the alphabetical order of the sixteen volumes. From there, the system of cross-references might (or might not) lead them to related entries; but, for the most part, they would simply ignore the Synoptic Outline of Contents and go directly to the article they have in mind.

In this respect, professors do not seem to be greatly different from students. Seasoned scholars too, while overwhelmingly grateful for *EOR1*, frequently framed their appreciations with anecdotes about how, when called upon to teach about something that lay outside of their expertise, *EOR1* provided an expeditious and reliable means of laying hands on information that they could relay to their students. Again and again professors confided to me that, when charged, on short notice, to play a riff for students, colleagues, or the local newspaper—on karma, cannibalism, calendars, Kukai, Korean religions, or Christian creeds—nothing served better "to bail them out" than *EOR1*. And certainly, *on the one hand*, I concur that the use of *EOR* as that sort of safety net is important and entirely legitimate. But, *on the other hand*, it is a pattern of usage that usually entails employing *EOR* as a kind of fact-finding dictionary without any recourse whatever to the Synoptic Outline. Moreover, while one might hope that this situation is somewhat alleviated as more and more people access *EOR2* electronically rather than via the hard copy, to the disconcerting contrary, the electronic version actually exacerbates rather than alleviates the problem. In the online version of *EOR2* it is difficult even to find the Synoptic Outline and even more difficult to use it.[4]

[4] Regarding the ease or lack thereof in using the Synoptic Outline of Contents in hard copy versus electronic versions, note that in the hard copies of both *EOR1* and *EOR2* that outline is roughly thirty-eight pages long, with entry titles, most just a word or two, arranged in three columns per page; thus a reader opening the hard copy can view at once six columns of entry titles. Often that enables seeing a whole constellation of entries under a broader heading, which is very helpful. By contrast, in the electronic version of *EOR2*, the more than 3,000

A Modest Thesis: *EOR2* as a Non-Expendable Resource

That, then, brings me to my main point—or my principal thesis—to the extent that this modest essay has a thesis: if, *on the one hand*, your primary means of engaging the *EOR2* is to use it as a kind of fact-finding dictionary in which you think of a topic and then go directly to that topic via the alphabetical order, then, in that case, so-termed "quick look-up on-line sites" like Wikipedia very well may supersede *EOR2*. With that sort of narrowly targeted usage, Wikipedia arguably provides equal or even more expedient, if sometimes less reliable, "factoids," for instance, those quick summary treatments that an instructor needs prior to entering the classroom to talk about a topic that is somewhat distant from her area of specialization. Yet, *on the other hand*, not surprisingly, I would also argue that *EOR2* presents a set of usages—opportunities and "treasures," if you will—that one cannot replicate via Wikipedia or other quick look-up sites. But if encyclopedia patrons do not appreciate at least the broad strokes of the structure and the organizational logic of *EOR2*—and if, for instance, they never make any use of the Synoptic Outline of Contents in their searching strategies—then these are valuable entries that they very well may never find. That is to say, the very best and most distinctive features of *EOR2* just might remain, to again quote my subtitle, "Entries Not Found, Treasures Not Mined."

EOR2 Entries Worth Finding, Treasures Worth Mining: Five Exemplary Sets

With that simple thesis in mind, I devote the rest of my remarks to enumerating five sets of such usages or five specially valued sorts of entries—most but not all of which belong to Part II of *EOR2* (as represented on the Synoptic Outline); and though I will not elaborate on this topic, it is worth noting that most but not all of these privileged entries are designed to facilitate comparison in one respect or another. These are, in a sense, greatest hits, prized possessions or "treasures" from *EOR2* that the editor in chief, *on the one hand*, hopes are discovered with greater regularity, but that he, *on the other hand*, strongly suspects far too often elude the simple alphabetical search strategies of most *EOR2* patrons.

entry titles are arranged in a single column that is, accordingly, more than a hundred screens long. This makes it exceptionally difficult, arguably impossible, to visualize the structure and layout of the complete work.

1. "Further Consideration" Entries

First, there are in *EOR2* more than fifty instances in which the editors encountered an *EOR1* entry that was, *on the one hand*, assessed as too important and consequential—perhaps a "classic" entry of sorts—to delete, but, *on the other hand*, too outdated to stand as the current offering on the topic. For instance, the first-edition entry on "Sexuality" was written by Eliade himself, certainly not a piece that ought to be deleted; but nor is it the sort of state-of-the-art discussion of the topic suitable to a 2005 reference work. Thus we retained Eliade's *EOR1* article, explicitly designated it as a "First-Edition Entry," but also commissioned a new entry entitled "Sexuality: Further Considerations" by Jeffrey Kripal, and then positioned the 1987 and 2005 entries side-by-side in *EOR2*. By the same token, there is, for instance, a first-edition entry on "Ritual" by Evan M. Zuesse, which was retained and juxtaposed with an *EOR2* entry on "Ritual: Further Considerations" by Catherine Bell; and there is a first-edition entry on "Syncretism" by Carsten Colpe, which was retained and juxtaposed with new entry on "Syncretism: Further Considerations" by Fritz Graf.

Accordingly, each of more than four dozen such pairings, *on the one hand*, places a somewhat heavier burden on readers to make sense of the interplay between a seminal but significantly outdated entry and a newer article, which in most cases entails a direct engagement with its predecessor. But each of these juxtapositions—paired entries that are relatively easy to locate in the Synoptic Outline but otherwise discovered only via serendipity—is, *on the other hand*, something quite wonderful and pedagogically productive. These pairs are, in short, a special feature of *EOR2*, treasures not to be missed, which cannot be replicated by any quick look-up site.

2. "Religious Phenomena" Entries

Second, in *EOR2*, are some 360 thematic entries on topics such as Ablutions, Affliction, Afterlife, Ages of the World, Agriculture, etc. (See Conceptual Block 2 in the summary outline of the Synoptic Outline.) These are the most characteristically "Eliadean" entries in *EOR2* insofar as they address topics in cross-culturally comparative ways. For *EOR1*, these topical entries, the headings of which are, in principle, endless, were the most difficult entries for which to find contributors; and for *EOR2*, finding scholars willing and capable to write such thematic entries grew even more difficult.

These articles might, *on the one hand*, be assessed as quirky, old fashioned, and distressingly ahistorical; and I would concede that the quality of these so-termed "Religious Phenomenon" entries is uneven; only some succeed in casting their respective topics in a widely balanced cross-cultural frame. Yet, *on the other hand*, they are a special—arguably unique—feature of the *EOR*, entries that are not likely to be replicated in other references works, and entries of a provocative sort that, if unfashionable, nonetheless widen the field of religious studies in important ways. Again, locating the 360 titles of these entries is a quite simple matter in the Synoptic Outline; but without the cumulative list that appears there, most of these thematic entries will remain completely obscured. Who, after all, goes to the *EOR* in search of an article on Keys or Knees or Knots? Or Lakes or Lions? Or Tears or Tobacco? Very few, I suspect, though those who do will be well rewarded.

3. Tradition-Specific Blocks of Entries

Third, in *EOR2* there are many sets or clusters of related entries, nearly all of which are explicitly conceived as means of facilitating comparisons, and several of these entry-sets are substantial enough to constitute a small or mid-sized book. Prominent among such clusters are large blocks of entries on major traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism (see Part I of the summary outline). And while these tradition-specific sets of entries are, *on the one hand*, predictable offerings that are, therefore, less likely to be overlooked, *EOR2* treatments of these traditions are, *on the other hand*, distinctive insofar as they frequently address the breadth of each tradition both via *geographically* configured articles (e.g., "Buddhism in India," "Buddhism in Southeast Asia," etc.) and then again via *thematically* configured articles (e.g., articles on each of nine different "Schools of Buddhism," six "Modern Forms of Judaism," etc.). That strategy again provides unique, rich opportunities for cross-cultural comparisons, both across and within these large religious traditions; and again, the logic of those configurations is much easier to ascertain in the Synoptic Outline than in the actual text.

4. Thematic Blocks of Entries

Fourth, and considerably less predictable, are thematic blocks of entries that address large topics such as afterlife, drama, iconography, music, and rites

of passage. Most of these clusters open with a general entry like "Rites of Passage: An Overview," which is followed by a set of more specific entries on "Rites of Passage in Africa," "Rites of Passage in Oceania," "Rites of Passage in Mesoamerica," "Rites of Passage in Hinduism," etc. These thematic blocks even more explicitly encourage the sort of cross-cultural comparison that is at the heart of this encyclopedia, and thus in *EOR2* we retained and substantially expanded numerous *EOR1* clusters of this sort. Moreover, in some of the most extensive and ambitious enhancements to the second edition, several totally new thematic clusters were added. For instance, "Ecology and Religion" (fourteen entries); "Fiction" (eleven entries), "Gender and Religion" (twenty-two entries), "Healing and Medicine" (fifteen entries), "Law and Religion" (thirteen entries), and "Transculturation and Religion" (seven entries) are among the largest of several entirely new *EOR2* constellations of related entries. Likewise, "New Religious Movements," composed of eleven main entries, ninety supporting articles and sixty-two biographic entries, was a thematic area of abundant, fully new articles.

Accordingly, while, *on the one hand*, students of religion can find competent articles on many of these topics on Wikipedia and other quick lookup sites, I dare say, *on the other hand*, that no other source, paper or electronic, can replicate the sort of cross-culturally expansive and balanced presentation of these themes that *EOR2* accomplishes. No other source can, for instance, better support college students in writing research papers that compare the manifestations of one general religion-related theme—say, gardens, orgy, soul, pilgrimage, priesthood, or prophecy—in several different regions or traditions than does *EOR2*. An area of enormous growth and a major point of pride in the second edition, these marvelous thematic blocks of entries—the quintessence of what this encyclopedia is all about—are yet one more feature that is most easily discovered and understood via consulting Part II of the Synoptic Outline of Contents.

5. Theory and Method Entries

Fifth and finally—though certainly this is a highly attenuated list of *EOR2* highlights—of the 3,200 entries, more than 600 of them deal with questions of the theory, method, or history of the academic study of religion (see Conceptual Block 4 of the summary outline). Accordingly, while, *on the one hand*, *EOR2* wins many accolades as a resource to track down basic information about innumerable historical religious traditions, *on the other hand*, to

limit one's usage to that sort of fact-finding is to again miss a major component of this fifteen-volume set that can by no means be replicated via online quick sites. Indeed, *EOR2* is a unique and fabulous resource for methodological entries of at least three sorts. One example is a block of ten entries on "The Academic Study of Religion" not only in Europe and North America (as was the case in *EOR1*), but also in Australia and Oceania, in China, in Japan, in North Africa, in the Middle East, and so forth. A second example, a component that became a pet project of mine, is a set of thirty-one different entries that treat the respective "History of the Study" of various areas— for instance, "African Religions: History of the Study"; "Arctic Religions: History of the Study"; "Confucianism: History of the Study"; "Gnosticism: History of the Study"; etc. And a third example comes with some 220 entries that focus upon individual "Scholars of Religion," a roughly eighty percent increase over such biographical entries in *EOR1*.

Again, there are, *on the one hand*, abundant venues and even whole journals devoted to questions of theory and method in the study of religion; but again, *on the other hand*, with respect to these three sets of methodological entries, *EOR2*'s over 600 relevant offerings present a uniquely thorough and systematic treatment of these topics, especially as concerns various aspects of the history of the study of religion. None of these three sets of methodological entries can begin to be replicated by quick look-up sites; and again, each of these components becomes far more accessible via consultation of Conceptual Block 4 of the Synoptic Outline.

Closing Thoughts: Good and Better Uses of *EOR2*

In sum, then, *on the one hand*, at this point we reference-work editors all appreciate the hubris, perhaps absurdity, of claiming to have treated "religion" in some "encyclopedic" or ostensibly comprehensive fashion, from "Ablutions" to "Zoroastrianism," as it were; and yet, *on the other hand*, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* does constitute a coherent, well-ordered universe of reflections on the academic study of religion. It is not simply an assemblage of topics more-or-less related to religion; it is not, as some wished to make it, a kind of public square where all views on religion can be aired; it is not a work without a point of view. To the contrary, there is a kind of logic, coherence, consistency, and balance to the entire *EOR1*, and thus *EOR2*. Moreover, while it is unreasonable to expect mainstream encyclopedia users to have a nuanced understanding of all of the relevant organizational princi-

ples, I have made the case that, if they are to make effective use of what the *EOR* has to offer, they must, *on the one hand*, have a working facility with the Synoptic Outline of Contents. That thirty-eight-page Synoptic Outline really is the key—or the map—which marks the way into and through the vast landscape that the *EOR* covers. And yet, I have, *on the other hand*, also shared my very strong suspicions that only a tiny percentage of *EOR* patrons—be they professors, students, or other interested parties—ever consult that Synoptic Outline. Furthermore, I wager that the increasing numbers of users who rely on the electronic version of *EOR2* are less likely still to browse that Synoptic Outline, or even to realize that it exists.

Consequently, if I am correct about these patterns of usage, then the vast majority of users engage *EOR2*—or enter the landscape of *EOR2*—without a map, as it were. Nonetheless, confronted with a choice of assessing this sort of mapless wandering through *EOR2* in either negative or positive terms, I want to end on an optimistic note, and therefore I opt for the latter. That is to say, *on the one hand*, there are some real limitations, perhaps even dangers, to heading out into a vast and unfamiliar countryside or cityscape without a map. Without a map one risks getting lost, risks missing the most compelling features of that context, and risks never knowing quite where she has been or how to get back there. Accordingly, *on the one hand*, editors who have labored so hard to ensure that the universe of *EOR2* is suitably complete, balanced, and well-ordered can feel some deep frustration when they sense that most of the people traversing it do not really appreciate the work's logic and structure; mapless wanderers, editors lament, will fail to appreciate just what a wonderful world they have entered and just how many riches reside there. In the process of editing the *EOR2* revision, how often I wondered and worried, which of these fabulous entries may go largely unread? And what measures can we take to ensure that our most valuable treasures do not go undiscovered?

As I searched for analogies pertinent to my unease, I was reminded of urging a student to go visit the Chicago Art Institute—which she did—but then realizing after the fact, that she had failed to find her way to what I consider the very best rooms. And I recalled encouraging a friend to visit a particular indigenous village in southern Mexico—which she did—but then discovering in her recap of the journey that she did not find her way to the so-termed Cross of Miracles, which is, for me, the most fascinating feature in the whole area. Those analogies, *on the one hand*, speak to an editor's frustration and disappointment with the kind of lackadaisical, mapless en-

gagement of *EOR2* wherein people simply rely on the alphabetical ordering to locate an entry they have in mind, and then bounce or wander or meander from one cross-reference to another in ways that may or may not lead them to the richest complementary articles. It is an all-too-familiar protocol of usage, one that distresses and annoys. *On the other hand*, though—and this is my optimistic ending—instead of lamenting the seeming misuse, the apparently impoverished, sloppy, and unsystematic engagement with *EOR2*, I end by celebrating the silver lining, as it were, and suggesting that, in the end, *any* use of *EOR2* is good use. In the end, *any* visit to the Art Institute and *any* visit to an indigenous village in southern Mexico is a worthwhile and valuable journey. If the discoveries made there do not comport with my expectations, that may well be because serendipity presented alternate, equally valuable findings and unforeseen highlights. Certainly there are rewards to traveling *without* a guide or guidebook, and thereby opening oneself to fortuitous encounters and unscripted discoveries.

That is to say, even for me, *EOR2* constitutes, *on the one hand*, a landscape far too vast and too diversified to know completely; even for me, well equipped with a uniquely intimate knowledge of the Synoptic Outline of Contents—I have the map!—I can still very easily get lost in *EOR2*. And therefore, *on the other hand*, owing to its huge scale and marvelous diversity—indeed, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* is an orderly universe too large and complicated ever to be fully mastered—it remains, even for me, a site of ongoing discovery, a rewarding place to wander, even with map in hand, without certainty as to what I will find. Yes, in the end, any use of *EOR2* is good use, but some uses are better than others.

Summary Outline of the Contents and Organization of the Encyclopedia of Religion

This outline can serve as a kind of summary of the contents of the entire *Encyclopedia of Religion*. The structure of this outline is based on the two main "Parts" and the four main "Conceptual Blocks" of entries in the original *EOR1* (edited by Mircea Eliade and published in 1987); that overall structure was retained in the second edition or *EOR2* (edited by Lindsay Jones and published in 2005). This arrangement adheres to the structure of the "Synoptic Outline of Contents," which appears in volume 16 of the *EOR1* and volume 15 of the *EOR2*. That is to say, the roughly 2,738 entries to the original *EOR1* and the roughly 3,206 entries in the *EOR2* are distributed according to the following two-Part, four-Conceptual Block organization. Throughout this outline, the stated numbers of articles, which refer to the *EOR2*, are rough estimates, and one should note that many articles are deliberately listed under more than one category.

PART I. *"The Religions" [Conceptual Block 1]:*
[i.e., The "Historical Branch" of Religionswissenschaft]

More than 2,000 entries on various components of specific religious communities, arranged according to the following 44 sections:

African Traditional Religions	*11 principal articles/62 supporting articles/10 biographies*
African American Religions	*2 principal articles/20 supporting articles/10 biographies*
Altaic Religions	*3 principal articles/13 supporting articles*
Ancient Near Eastern Religions	*19 principal articles/20 supporting articles*
Arctic Religions	*2 principal articles/14 supporting articles*
Australian Aboriginal Religions	*7 principal articles/22 supporting articles*
Baltic Religion	*3 principal articles/9 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Buddhism	*11 principal articles/30 articles on "Schools of Thought"/110 supporting articles/10 articles on "Buddhas and Bodhisattvas"/97 biographies*
Caribbean Religions	*3 principal articles/11 supporting articles*
Celtic Religion	*2 principal articles/19 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Chinese Religion	*12 principal articles/60 supporting articles/74 biographies*
Christianity	*17 principal articles/47 articles on "Communities"/150 supporting articles/320 biographies*
Egyptian Religion	*3 principal articles/25 supporting articles*
European Traditions	*Some 100 total articles*
Germanic Religion	*2 principal article/25 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Greek Religion	*2 principal articles/72 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Hellenistic Religions	*1 principal article/57 supporting articles*
Hinduism	*1 principal article/23 articles on "Sectarian Schools and Communities"/107 supporting articles/21 "theographies"/34 biographies*
Indian Religions	*4 principal articles/6 articles on "Religions and Sects"/75 supporting articles/36 biographies/1 related article*
Indo-European Religions	*2 principal articles/14 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Inner-Asian Religions	*1 principal article/26 supporting articles*
Iranian Religions	*1 principal article/9 supporting articles/1 related article*
Islam	*15 principal articles/13 articles on "Schools, Sects, and Communities"/107 supporting articles/81 biographies*
Israelite Religion	*1 principal article/17 supporting articles/40 articles on "Biblical Figures"*
Jainism	*1 principal article/9 supporting articles*
Japanese Religion	*4 principal articles/58 supporting articles/46 biographies*
Judaism	*10 principal articles/6 articles on "Modern Forms"/100 supporting articles/125 biographies*
Korean Religion	*1 principal article/11 supporting articles/8 biographies*
Mandaean Religion	*3 principal articles*
Mesoamerican Religions	*8 principal articles/35 supporting articles*
Mesopotamian Religions	*3 principal articles/27 supporting articles*
New Religious Movements	*11 principal articles/90 supporting articles/62 biographies*
North American Indian Religions	*12 principal articles/48 supporting articles*
Oceanic Religions	*11 principal articles/33 supporting articles*
Prehistoric Religions	*3 principal articles/3 supporting articles*
Roman Religion	*2 principal articles/49 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Sikhism	*1 principal article/9 supporting articles*
Slavic Religion	*1 principal article/7 supporting articles/2 related articles*
South American Indian Religions	*9 principal articles/26 supporting articles*
Southeast Asian Religions	*4 principal articles/33 supporting articles*
Thracian Religion	*2 principal articles/5 supporting articles/2 related articles*
Tibetan Religions	*3 principal articles/29 supporting articles/14 biographies*
Uralic Religions	*3 principal articles/14 supporting articles*
Zoroastrianism	*1 principal article/20 supporting articles/3 related articles*

PART II. *"Religious Studies":*
[i.e., The "Systematic Branch" of Religionswissenschaft]

A. *"Religious Phenomena" [Conceptual Block 2]:* Entries on thematic, cross-culturally comparative topics *(about 360 entries)*—including such article titles as:

Ablutions, Affliction, Afterlife, Ages of the World, Agriculture, Alchemy, Almsgiving, Alphabets, Altar, Amulets and Talismans, Androgynes, Angels, Animals, Apostasy, Ashes, Astrology, … Insects, Inspiration, Jade, Jaguars, Jewelry, Judgment of the Dead, Keys, Kingship, Knees, Knots, Knowledge and Ignorance, Labyrinth, Lakes, Laity, Language, Leaven, Left and Right, Libation, Life, Light and Darkness, Lions, Lotus, Love, Marriage, Martial Arts, Martyrdom, Masks, Meditation, Memorization, Mendicancy, Merit, … Vegetation, Violence, Virgin Birth, Virginity, Visions, Vocation, Vows and Oaths, War and Warriors, Water, Webs and Nets, Wisdom, Wolves, and Work.

B. *"Art, Science, and Society" [Conceptual Block 3]:* Entries on the relationship of "religion, taken as one aspect of culture," to the other arts and forms of knowledge that make up culture *(about 365 total entries):*

a. "Art and Religion"	*1 principal article/about 150 supporting articles;*
b. "Science and Religion"	*1 principal article/about 60 supporting articles;*
c. "Society and Religion"	*2 principal articles/about 150 supporting articles.*

C. *"The Study of Religion" [Conceptual Block 4]:* Entries explicitly concerned with theories and methods for the study of religion *(about 600 total entries):*

a. "History of Study"	*10 principal articles/about 32 supporting articles;*
b. "Methods of Study"	*About 50 articles;*
c. "Philosophy and Religion"	*3 principal articles/about 115 supporting articles;*
d. "Scholarly Terms"	*About 165 articles;*
e. "Scholars of Religion"	*About 220 articles.*