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Author(s): Thomas A. Tweed

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# After the Quotidian Turn: Interpretive Categories and Scholarly Trajectories in the Study of Religion since the 1960s\*

Thomas A. Tweed / University of Notre Dame

All scholars in the human sciences use interpretive categories. Those theoretical tools may be employed to make empirical claims that can be confirmed or disputed, but the categories themselves are not true or false. They are more or less adequate for the researcher's purposes. In other words, we assess those categories by appealing to pragmatic criteria.<sup>1</sup> Focusing on the conceptual implications and interpretive effects of scholars' linguistic usage, in this essay I discuss a cluster of related categories, especially *everyday life*, and assess their utility for the study of religion. It is important to note at the start that all categories—the terms and phrases used to guide research—afford a particular angle of vision. In turn, they all have blind spots. In some ways, the history of the study of religion—and all fields and subfields—has been a process of ceaseless change as one perspective replaces another, as scholars claim that the prevailing category—

\* This is a revised version of an invited lecture I gave at the conference on "The Future of the Religious Past," which was sponsored by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NOW) and held in Amsterdam. I am grateful to my hosts, who asked me to trace the history of the study of religion and everyday life, and to the participants who made useful suggestions. I presented revised drafts to the Religion in the Americas Colloquium at the University of Texas and the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California. Many others helped along the way, including Gregory Alles, Philipp Gollner, Janet Hoskins, Jillian Owens, Sherri Sheu, Christian Smith, Michael Stausberg, William Taylor, Ann Taves, and James Turner. I also am grateful to the editors and anonymous reviewers for their help in refining my argument.

<sup>1</sup> I have addressed this issue in other works. I have proposed criteria for the use and evaluation of Weberian *ideal types* and have assessed the guiding categories in the study of US religion and Buddhism: Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 49–50, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 135–38, and *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–23. I laid out my pragmatic approach most fully—and discussed the assessment of categories, definitions, and theories—in *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 16–20, 30–31, 165–67, 246–47.

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the orienting metaphor, key noun, or favored phrase—obscures something we should notice. That realization prompts a search for another interpretive term that promises to illumine what has been obscured.

As early as the first decade of the twentieth century and increasingly after the 1960s, scholars in the humanities, arts, and social sciences turned to the phrase *everyday life*—and related categories like *everyday religion* and *lived religion*—to illumine what had been obscured. Religion's interpreters in multiple disciplines used the adjectives *everyday* or *lived* to redirect attention to the embodied practices and material culture of ordinary people beyond the threshold of worship spaces. That redirection, which I call the *Quotidian Turn*, provided a much-needed corrective; however, I suggest, it was not without its interpretive limitations and definitional problems.

### THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: TOWARD A HISTORY OF CONVERGING INTERPRETIVE TRAJECTORIES

Those who chart the history of the humanities, arts, and social sciences delight in naming the twists and turns in theory and method. For example, we are told that there was a “linguistic turn,” a “poststructuralist turn,” and a “spatial turn” during the second half of the twentieth century. From one point of view, this is silly. The appeal to a single phrase to describe the complex and distinct approaches of many scholars in different disciplines and diverse nations is doomed to fail. Such attempts overstate the novelty and scope of the interpretive shift, and no label is elastic enough to contain all the subtle but significant variations. If we acknowledge the limitations of this scholarly practice, however, the impulse to label academic trends sometimes can be useful. At its best, it can illumine patterns that we otherwise might have overlooked or underemphasized.

With some trepidation, then, I want to propose just such a flawed label: I suggest that it might be helpful to talk about a *Quotidian Turn* in the study of religion—and, more broadly, in the study of history, society, and culture. I cannot offer a full account of these parallel—and sometimes intersecting—interpretive trajectories, but it might help to note that this altered focus appeared (or, in some places, accelerated) during and after the 1960s, especially but not only among speakers of English, French, and German in Europe, South Asia, and North America. Its starting point and defining commitments varied by disciplinary affiliation, research topic, and cultural setting. For example, the German *Alltagsgeschichte* of the 1970s and the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group of the 1980s were very different, even if they shared a concern to attend to ordinary people and everyday life.<sup>2</sup> The categories

<sup>2</sup> Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield, *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 87, 170; David Ludden, “A Brief History of Subalternity,” in *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalization of South Asia*, ed. David Ludden (Oxford: Permanent Black, 2001), 1–39.

that these diverse scholars employed also diverged depending on whether they most wanted to illumine ignored places, practices, or people.

Since I will say more later about *everyday life*, consider just a few examples about the impulse to highlight *ordinary people*. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the work of the British Marxist historians is noteworthy, and none of them had more influence than E. P. Thompson and his 1963 volume *The Making of the English Working Class*.<sup>3</sup> The *Annales* school in the Francophone world and, later, the “new social history” in the Anglophone world aimed to discern the long-term historical patterns and the local variations in the daily life of non-elites, and greater attention to class, race, and gender multiplied the characters in scholars’ narratives about the present and the past.<sup>4</sup> The result was a shift in focus: for example, in the United States the number of doctoral dissertations in social history quadrupled between 1958 and 1978.<sup>5</sup> Starting in the 1970s and increasingly after the 1980s, historians also paid more attention to indigenous peoples, who had suffered a second (representational) colonization as the previous scholarship had imagined the landscape as an unpopulated wilderness before colonizers planted their flags. Folklorists in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic world studied “vernacular creativity” embedded in local settings, and geographers in Germany and the United States turned their attention to the interpretation of “ordinary landscapes.”<sup>6</sup> Reception theory altered the scholarly viewpoint, and literary critics, theater scholars, and art historians asked how ordinary people cocreated the plural meanings of artistic productions or how they created their own “outsider” or “folk” art—even if some complained about the emerging “anti-elitist bias.”<sup>7</sup> In British cultural studies, media studies, and other fields, the analysis of “popular culture” emerged as an

<sup>3</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963).

<sup>4</sup> See Lambert and Schofield, *Making History*; and Guy Bourd  and Herv  Martin, *Les  coles historiques* (Paris:  ditions du Seuil, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Darnton, “Intellectual and Cultural History,” in *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 327–54; Stephen Hunt, *Religion and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Leonard Norman Primiano, “Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklore,” *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (January 1995): 37–56; Marion Bowman, “Vernacular Religion and Nature: The ‘Bible of the Folk’ Tradition in Newfoundland,” *Folklore* 114, no. 3 (December 2003): 285–95; Marion Bowman and  lo Valk, eds., *Vernacular Religion in Everyday Life: Expressions of Belief* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012). Examples from geography are R. J. Johnston et al., eds., *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000); D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580–1845* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1928); Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

<sup>7</sup> See David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Philip Smith and Alexander Riley, *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 158–75; Ernst Gombrich, “David Freedberg: The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response,” *New York Review of Books* 15 (1990): 6–9.

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alternative to the prevailing focus on the cultural production and aesthetic taste of elites.<sup>8</sup>

As with Thompson's influential book, some of that scholarly work on both sides of the Atlantic focused on class as a category of analysis and drew inspiration from Karl Marx and/or Antonio Gramsci, as did scholarship in and about Latin America and South Asia.<sup>9</sup> Starting with the first volume of the Subaltern Studies Group's multivolume series in 1982, scholars writing from and about South Asia, especially India, adopted a term that had a long history but had been reintroduced by Gramsci: they announced their concern to "rectify the elitist bias" and reconsider "the subaltern," those of subordinate rank, "whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other way."<sup>10</sup> The term *subaltern* circulated in different parts of the world among proponents of postcolonial studies from different disciplines. The Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro had used Gramsci's notion of "subalternity" earlier, in his analysis of indigenous peoples.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars writing from and about that region have acknowledged their debts, including those who founded the Latin America Subaltern Studies Group in 1993.<sup>12</sup>

Other Latin Americanists have been more ambivalent. The literary scholar and postcolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo, for example, expressed appreciation for subaltern studies but preferred slightly different categories—Michel Foucault's "subjugated knowledges" and Ribeiro's "subaltern knowledges"—because Guha and other South Asia specialists marked "the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment as the chronological frontier of modernity," while the sixteenth century and "the colonial legacies of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas" are the appropriate starting point for specialists of Latin America.<sup>13</sup> Other scholars of Latin America, including historian William B. Taylor, found Ruha's approach to subaltern studies "good to think with . . . since the 1980s" but argued that its sharp distinctions (between "the people"/"the elites" as well as "resistance"/"accommodation") did not provide "a model for understanding the complexities of Spanish American colonialism, at least in Mexico."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Smith and Riley, *Cultural Theory*, 144–57.

<sup>9</sup> See Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), viii; Partha Chatterjee, "After Subaltern Studies," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47, no. 35 (September 2012): 44–49.

<sup>11</sup> Darcy Ribeiro, *Las Américas y la civilización: Proceso de formación y causas del desarrollo desigual de los pueblos americanos* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1968), 13.

<sup>12</sup> See the Latin America Subaltern Studies Group's "Founding Statement," *Boundary* 2, no. 3 (1993): 110–21.

<sup>13</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 18–21.

<sup>14</sup> William Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images: Religious Life in Mexico before the Reforma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 89.

Taylor, who attended to religion, also criticized Subaltern Studies scholars for leaving “aside the religious faith—beliefs and practices—of peasant actors either as false consciousness or beside the point of their politics.”<sup>15</sup> Like Taylor, a number of scholars who embraced the Quotidian Turn strove to take religion seriously, although their terminology varied depending on whether they wanted to emphasize the spaces, participants, or actions that had been obscured in the scholarship. For example, since the 1970s many historians and social scientists in Europe and in the Americas have studied “local religion” or “popular religion.”<sup>16</sup> And Gabriel Le Bras influenced a generation of postwar French sociologists to study what he called “lived religion” (*la religion vécue*), which meant mostly the piety of the laity.<sup>17</sup>

Some interpreters in Europe, Latin America, and North America have directly or indirectly aligned themselves with the French sociology of “lived religion.” Most of them continued Le Bras’s original emphasis on non-elites, although they understood the adjective *lived* as an answer to the question of how religion is practiced more than as a response to the question of who is practicing it. Among the category’s advocates were the contributors to historian David Hall’s 1997 volume *Lived Religion in America*, including the French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger and American religious studies scholar Robert Orsi. Since 1997, other interpreters have used the category.<sup>18</sup> Among specialists in North American religion, Timothy Matovina employed it in a study of Latino Catholics in Texas, and Jennifer Hughes did the same in her study of Mexican Catholicism.<sup>19</sup> Historian Diane Winston and her collaborators studied “television and lived religion,” and US sociologist Meredith McGuire analyzed *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*.<sup>20</sup> As with McGuire, some European social scientists also referred to the

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> On local religion, see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Daniel L. Overmyer, *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Ellen Badone, *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Daniel H. Levine, *Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) have emphasized “popular” religion.

<sup>17</sup> Gabriel Le Bras, *Etudes de sociologie religieuse* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955). On Le Bras’s influence, see Danièle Hervieu-Léger, “‘What Scripture Tells Me’: Spontaneity and Regulation within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” in *Lived Religion in America*, ed. David Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 22–23; and Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Sage, 2007), 35.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Manuel Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 252–55.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Jennifer Schepher Hughes, *Biography of a Mexican Crucifix: Lived Religion and Local Faith from the Conquest to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Diane Winston, ed., *Small Screen, Big Picture: Television and Lived Religion* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Another coedited volume used a related term, *practice*, but approvingly cited David Hall’s *Lived Religion in America* in the introduction. It also

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ways that lived religion is practiced in *daily life* or *everyday life*, as with Sanne Derks's ethnography of a Bolivian pilgrimage site and as with other volumes on contemporary practices.<sup>21</sup>

Whichever adjective scholars chose—local, popular, or lived—many also appealed to phrases like *ordinary people* and *everyday life* in their analyses of religion. And, as I will show, some scholars have talked about *everyday religion*. Keeping these related but distinct scholarly trajectories in mind—especially the intersections with the study of lived religion—I now want to consider one of the central phrases in the analytic vocabulary of what I am calling the Quotidian Turn: *everyday life*.

### EVERYDAY LIFE: TOWARD A HISTORY OF USAGE

Before assessing the phrase's accomplishments and limitations, it might help to give a few instances—though not a full historical account—of how scholars have employed it in cultural analysis. A preliminary survey of usage in publications suggests that the English adjective *everyday*—and the rough equivalents in German (*alltäglich*) and French (*quotidienne*)—appeared more frequently in books during the twentieth century, with variations across those languages but with a steady upward trend since 1920 and a precipitous spike after 1980.<sup>22</sup> Various kinds of texts—including fiction—included

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was coedited by Leigh Schmidt, one of the contributors to Hall's 1997 book, and it appeared in the Lived Religions Series edited by Hall and Robert Orsi: Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, eds., *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630–1965* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Sanne Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage: Dealing with Class, Gender, and Ethnic Inequality at a Bolivian Marian Shrine* (Berlin: Lit, 2009), 27, 171; Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, eds., *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (London: Ashgate, 2009); Heinz Streib, Astrid Dinter, and Kerstin Söderblom, eds., *Lived Religion: Conceptual, Empirical and Practical-Theological Approaches: Essays in Honor of Hans-Günter Heimbrock* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). The anthropologist Sanne Derks confirmed my understanding of the intersections between the categories of *everyday life* and *lived religion*. As far as I can tell, Dutch, Swedish, and German anthropologists and religion scholars seem to have led the way in the adoption of the term *lived religion*, a phrase that Derks has translated into Dutch as *geleedfile religie*. Sanne Derks, e-mail to the author, March 2, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> This claim is based on extensive searches of the several terms (and related phrases) in English, French, and German in online library catalogs in North America and Europe, including Harvard University's collections. To test my preliminary results about the history of usage, I also consulted Google Books' "N-gram Viewer," an interactive online "culturomics" project based at Google and Harvard University that uses the millions of publications in Google Books and allows researchers to chart the changes in frequency of usage of a term or phrase. See Jean-Baptiste Michel, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, William Brockman, the Google Books Team: Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden, "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* 331, no. 6014 (January 14, 2011): 176–82. This quantitative method has flaws, of course; it makes no distinctions among types of publications, the context of usage, or the reception among readers—to mention only a few limitations—but it provides noteworthy supplemental evidence about the history of usage.

the term, but especially since the mid-twentieth century social scientists and historians writing in several European languages—and not only German, French, and English—have appealed to notions of *everyday life* and related categories to signal their intent to broaden the analytical scope of their studies of selves, societies, and the sacred.

Classic religion theorists, like the psychologist Sigmund Freud and the sociologist Max Weber, used the phrase, even if it was not the focus of their work. In his 1904 book, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud redirected the clinician's gaze from the couch to the street and the home as he analyzed how “unconscious psychological processes” drive ordinary people's behavior in daily life, including by excavating the “concealed meanings” of slips of the tongue and erroneous actions, as well as common experiences such as *déjà vu* and “foreboding.” In that work, Freud confessed that he had those unusual experiences but dismissed them as “superstitions,” since “I belong to that class of unworthy individuals before whom the spirits cease their activities and the supernatural disappears, so that I have never been in a position to experience anything that would stimulate belief in the miraculous.”<sup>23</sup> Weber admitted he too was “religiously unmusical,” but in his *Sociology of Religion* he was more sympathetic—and more suggestive—than Freud. He not only discussed *everyday life* and the *everyday world* but even introduced a category, an “ideal type,” that marked off a distinct kind of piety, *alltagsreligion*, a term that has been translated as the “workaday mass religion” or, better, the “religion of everyday life.”<sup>24</sup>

Appeals to *everyday life* appeared in social scientific and historical publications in other European languages, including but not only Norwegian (*hverdagsliv*) and Dutch (*het dagelijks leven*).<sup>25</sup> And a tradition of “everyday life sociology” developed among Anglophone and Germanophone scholars after World War II.<sup>26</sup> It was an emphasis prompted in part by the Canadian Erving Goffman's 1959 dramaturgical account of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and by Austrian-American Peter Berger and Slovenian-German

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), 277–338; 312–13.

<sup>24</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1993), 152, 159, 21, 24.

<sup>25</sup> For a Norwegian social scientist's use of *hverdagsliv* or everyday life, see Marianne Gulstad, *Kultur og hverdagsliv: På sporet av det moderne Norge* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1989). For a recent Norwegian work that uses a related phrase, see Sükrü Bilgiç's *Hovedfaktorer i integrering: Religion, kultur, økonomi og dagligliv* (Oslo: Kulturbro, 2008), which might be translated as “Main factors in integration: religion, culture, economy, and daily life.” For a recent work in Dutch, see Marjo Buitelaar's *Islam en het dagelijks leven: Religie en cultuur onder Marokkanen* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2006), translated as “Islam and everyday life: religion and culture among Moroccans.” I am grateful to Ingvild Gilhus, Lisbeth Mikaelsson, and Einar Thomassen of the University of Bergen for helping me understand the subtle differences in the related Norwegian phrases used in scholarship. On the Dutch phrases, I am indebted to several Dutch scholars, including Anne-Marie Korte and Sanne Derks. Derks has suggested that the best variants in Dutch are *alledaagse leven* or *het leven van alledag*.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Adler, Peter Adler, and Andrea Fontana, “Everyday Life Sociology,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 217–35.

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Thomas Luckmann, sociologists who were influenced by Weber and Alfred Schutz and who in 1966 coauthored a widely read phenomenological analysis of “the foundations of knowledge in everyday life.”<sup>27</sup> Berger also analyzed religion in “everyday life” in *The Sacred Canopy*, and, as the British social scientist Grace Davie has pointed out, the study of “the everyday,” which includes diet, sexuality, gender, healing, and the lifecycle, had become a predominant theme in the qualitative sociology of religion on both sides of the Atlantic by the late 1990s.<sup>28</sup> Of course, anthropologists had been concerned with non-elites and daily life for a long time, and Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and others exerted influence on diverse fields, prompting a “cultural turn” among historians during the 1970s and 1980s and an “ethnographic turn” among religious studies specialists during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>29</sup> Further, some cultural anthropologists explicitly used the phrase *everyday life*.<sup>30</sup> More recently, European and North American sociologists, anthropologists, and historians of religion have employed variants of Weber’s phrase, “everyday religion,” including Nancy Ammerman, Grace Davie, Enzo Pace, Martin Riesebrodt, Marja-Liisa Keinänen, and Samuli Schielke.<sup>31</sup>

As I have noted, French social historians associated with the *Annales* school also probed the “collective mentality” of ordinary people and the long-term trajectory of everyday life, and sociologist Marcel Mauss, who discussed *la vie quotidienne* in his important study of “bodily techniques” in

<sup>27</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor, 1959); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967), 19–46.

<sup>28</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967), 41–43; Grace Davie, “Sociology of Religion,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William H. Swatos Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1998), 483–89, and *The Sociology of Religion*, 224–44. See also Stephen Hunt, *Religion and Everyday Life*. Quantitative sociologists, who used numerical data about representative samples, hoped to discern the attitudes of a cross-section of society about all sorts of topics, from the mundane to the transcendent, even though they did not appeal explicitly to categories like “everyday life” as often as their qualitatively inclined colleagues. My account here focuses on the qualitative social sciences, but it might be helpful to incorporate quantitative approaches into my historical narrative of the human sciences.

<sup>29</sup> Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Thomas A. Tweed, “Between the Living and the Dead: Fieldwork, History, and the Interpreter’s Position,” in *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, ed. James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 63–74; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 231–39.

<sup>30</sup> For example, James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 36; Eric Venbrux, *Ongeloflijk!: Religieus handelen, verhalen en vormgeven in het dagelijks leven* (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2007); Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage*, 171; Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, eds., *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, ed., *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 92; Marja-Liisa Keinänen, ed., *Perspectives on Women’s Everyday Religion* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2010); Schielke and Debevec, *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes*.

1935, and Henri Lefebvre, who published *Critique de la vie quotidienne* in 1947, had enormous influence on subsequent transnational conversations.<sup>32</sup> Among Francophone scholars, the continuing impact of Mauss and Lefebvre, including the latter's Marxist analysis of "perceived, conceived, and lived" spaces shaped some of the most widely read French social theorists of the next generation, including Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel de Certeau.<sup>33</sup> In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, for instance, Certeau provided a model of how to analyze "everyday practices" while accounting for both the micropolitical agency of the individual and the constraining power of social structures.

ASSESSING THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: EVERYDAY AND LIVED AS INTERPRETIVE CATEGORIES

As I turn to the task of evaluating the utility of the phrase *everyday life*—and related categories like *everyday religion* and *lived religion*—I should say that I am sympathetic to these interpretive traditions. In fact, many scholars have understood my work, especially my study of Cuban Catholic piety, as aligned with those approaches, especially the study of lived religion.<sup>34</sup> They are right to note the parallels. Further, my theory of religion attends to the body and the home and resonates with many of the themes announced by interpreters who have been associated with these scholarly lineages, including Weber, Schutz, Mauss, Lefebvre, Bourdieu, and Certeau.<sup>35</sup> My earlier emphasis on "embodied practices," "ordinary devotees," and "social space" owes much to those European theorists; so does my more recent analysis of what I called "vernacular intellectualism."<sup>36</sup> In short, I think there is much to celebrate about these cross-disciplinary traditions of social analysis and historical investigation. Most important, religion specialists—and their colleagues in allied disciplines—have helpfully shifted attention from "religion as prescribed" to "religion as practiced," from the organized religious rites and the systematized theological beliefs of elites in dominant religious institutions to the practices, artifacts, and environments of ordinary devotees in

<sup>32</sup> Marcel Mauss, "Body Techniques," in *Sociology and Psychology: Essays by Marcel Mauss* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 105; Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne* (Paris: Grasset, 1991). For a history of the term *mentalité*, which I have translated here as collective mentality, see Volker Sellin, "Mentalität und Mentalitätsgeschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 241 (1985): 55–98.

<sup>33</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 36–41.

<sup>34</sup> Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*; Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 111, 192; McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, 188, 217; Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful*, 182; Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage*, 171; Hughes, *Biography of a Mexican Crucifix*, 15; Hilary Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*.

<sup>36</sup> Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*; Thomas A. Tweed, "Toward the Study of Vernacular Intellectualism," *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11, no. 2 (2010): 281–86.

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daily life, including in times and places that might be deemed secular.<sup>37</sup> That redirecting of scholarly attention is a praiseworthy accomplishment, on both epistemological and moral grounds: it has provided a basis for more textured and more inclusive interpretations. Consider, for example, Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s important book series that began in 1995, Princeton Readings in Religions, which "moves away from an emphasis on philosophy and the religious expressions of elite groups to represent instead a wide range of current and historical religious practices," or Robert A. Orsi's influential 1985 account of the annual *fiesta* in the streets of Italian Harlem in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, as well as the contributions of his collaborators in David Hall's 1997 collection *Lived Religion in America*, which aimed to uncover more about "religion as practiced and . . . the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women."<sup>38</sup>

However, the emphasis on the everyday presents some challenges when applied to the study of religion.<sup>39</sup> I want to concentrate on two problems that arise when we appeal to the study of "lived religion" or (to use Weber's phrase) "the religion of everyday life": it is difficult to identify religion scholars' subject of study and hard to avoid new interpretive imbalances.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> On the distinction between prescription and practice, see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 178.

<sup>38</sup> Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, vii; Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). Originally published in 1985, that second edition included a new introduction that situated the book in "the study of lived religion" (xix). Orsi's book might be the most widely influential book in this interpretive tradition published in English in the past three decades. The Princeton Readings in Religions Series began in 1995 with the publication of two volumes edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Religions of India in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and has since included edited collections of sources on "practice" in other traditions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) and regions (Japan, China, and the United States). The description of the series' aims is taken from the official web page account, available at <http://press.princeton.edu/catalogs/series/prr.html>, accessed June 18, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> The focus on "everyday life" entails methodological challenges, finding relevant sources, and employing appropriate approaches, though that is not my focus here. Of course, every approach has its distinctive methodological challenges, and those who analyze contemporary everyday practices have it somewhat easier, since they can encounter human subjects and use participant observation, taped interviews, telephone surveys, focus groups, or oral history, though none of those methods are without flaws. Those engaged in the historical analysis of the religious practices of women, children, migrants, indigenous, slaves, the working class, and the socially marginalized face especially vexing questions about how to recover the past. There are some available strategies. We can incorporate disciplinary practices from archaeology, geography, and history, for example, and we can draw on multiple sources. Historians can seek textual sources, like letters, wills, congregational records, court cases, and diaries. Usually, however, we are left to reconstruct practices from other, more mute and opaque sources such as population records, excavated fragments, historical maps, chiseled inscriptions, domestic artifacts, and vernacular architecture—or the tools of so-called ethnohistory, which presupposes a continuity between contemporary and past practices.

<sup>40</sup> On the first problem, which I lay out below, I am assuming that the interpreter self-identifies as a scholar of religion and, therefore, has a role-specific obligation to define the constitutive disciplinary term of the field. I have made that argument and will not repeat it here (see Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 30–33).

First, a conceptual tension and definitional problem enters as we strain to conjoin *religion*, which usually refers to the extraordinary, and the *everyday*, which usually refers to the ordinary. A distinction, which amounts to an implied opposition, surfaces as soon as we begin to ask: *when* is the everyday? and *where* is the everyday? Usage in English, French, and German (and other European languages too) suggests the word *everyday* is, in part, a temporal and spatial designation. It refers to the days of the week not reserved for regular, institutionally prescribed worship—"not Sunday," as the *Oxford English Dictionary* puts it. In the pluralistic context of late modernity, the day set aside might be Friday, Saturday, or Sunday—or another day. As the historic significance of the related phrase "ordinary time" signals, the everyday also is imagined in opposition to the ritual seasons—for many Christians that means Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter. So, in terms of time, the everyday (*der Alltag* or *la vie quotidienne*) refers to profane time, moments *not* set apart. It is a spatial indicator too, gesturing beyond the threshold of institutionally sanctioned worship sites (churches, temples, or mosques), outside places where ritual specialists preside at regular and prescribed rites. The everyday, which begins with the body, happens in intimate domestic spaces and the built environment beyond the home, including the street, the park, the factory, the market, the courtroom, the school, the theater, the athletic stadium, the hospital—and since the transportation and communication technologies of late modernity extend and transform space—also the airport and the Internet.<sup>41</sup>

We arrive at similar conclusions if we ask *what* the everyday is and not just about its duration or location. Both vernacular usage and scholarly practice suggest that the everyday refers to the usual, the mundane, the natural, or the routine. It is the quotidian. In turn, the everyday's implied or stated opposite is that which disrupts, suspends, or stands out from the quotidian—the unusual, the exceptional, the supernatural, the special.<sup>42</sup> It is the ecstatic. Berger referred to it as "the experience of 'ecstasy' (in the literal sense of *ekstasis*—standing or stepping outside reality as commonly defined . . . the world of everyday life)."<sup>43</sup> Not all disruptions, or modes of standing out from the everyday, are religious, as Berger, Weber, and others have pointed out: not only sex and music but also dreams, drama, ritual, dance, and drugs can

<sup>41</sup> On technology in late modernity, see Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995); Manuel Castells, *The Rise of Network Society*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> Speaking of antonyms, one conceptual difficulty with the phrase *lived religion* appears. What is its opposite? Surely, it is not *dead* religion. Is it something only thought but not enacted? For most users of the phrase, I think, its implied or stated opposite is religion as prescribed by institutional elites' doctrinal creeds, moral codes, or ritual guidelines. So, to return to the affirmative claim again, the category refers to religion as it is practiced in everyday life. If I am right that interpreters often intend an indirect gesture to everyday life, then the same oppositions I am identifying apply for this term too.

<sup>43</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 43.

transport individuals and groups beyond the routine.<sup>44</sup> So, as one social scientist has argued, societies take shape not only as social groups struggle for power over the means of production and consumption but also as varied institutions battle for control of “the means of ecstatic expression.”<sup>45</sup> Churches, temples, and mosques, then, can be understood as one of many “institutions of ecstasy” competing in late-modern societies, performing important functions, even if religious traditions’ “chains of memory” have been weakened or broken in secularizing western Europe.<sup>46</sup>

Many classic and contemporary interpreters of religion have mapped the boundaries of what I am calling the quotidian and the ecstatic. In different ways, Freud, Weber, and William James did so; and since Émile Durkheim defined the sacred as “things set apart,” several traditions of the sociological, anthropological, and phenomenological study of religion have assumed that their proper subject matter was the times and spaces that devotees marked as distinct from the mundane.<sup>47</sup> The advantage of those interpretive traditions was that they attempted to map the boundaries between the religious and the nonreligious; a major disadvantage was that those interpreters had to exert effort to relate religion to other domains of human life—politics, society, culture, and economy—and to practices conducted outside prescribed times and beyond consecrated spaces. Disquiet with that interpretive constraint, the prevailing blindness to daily life, prompted scholars of everyday religion and lived religion to intentionally blur the boundaries. Using slightly different metaphors to make the same point—including

<sup>44</sup> Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 1971), 101; Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 94–165, and *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications), 102–23.

<sup>45</sup> Philip H. Ennis, “Ecstasy and Everyday Life,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6, no. 1 (1967): 47.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 44; Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *La religion pour mémoire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993).

<sup>47</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 379–429; Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 44. In her book *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), Ann Taves continued and refined this Durkheimian lineage by suggesting that our central task is to analyze how ordinary people and scholarly interpreters deem some things “special,” either because they are “ideal” or “anomalous” (36). Many other contemporary scholars of religion have worked from similar assumptions: for example, Michel Despland proposed that we understand the “supernatural” as occurrences and beings that “impinge upon one’s everyday experience” (Michel Despland, “The Supernatural,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed. [Detroit: Macmillan, 2005], 13:8860–64); and Paul Courtwright suggested that religion’s objects “lie outside the realm of the everyday objects in time and space” (Paul Courtwright, “Shrines,” in Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 12:8376–78). Victor Turner’s analysis, I should remind readers here, relied on the opposition between *structure* and *anti-structure*, between everyday social relations and the feeling of *communitas* generated by the *liminal* stage of the ritual process (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94–130). Even contemporary interpreters of religion with a very different theoretical orientation, like the Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek, in *On Belief: Thinking in Action* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 110ff., presuppose an opposition between the ecstatic and the quotidian: “However, is it not that ALL religion, ALL experience of the sacred, involves—or, rather, simply is—an ‘unplugging’ from the daily routine? Is this ‘unplugging’ not simply the name for the basic ECSTATIC experience of entering the domain in which everyday rules are suspended, the domain of the sacred TRANSGRESSION?”

“overlapping,” “embedding,” and “enmeshing”—many like-minded historians and social scientists have agreed with Orsi’s judgment, which he offered in his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* and repeated in the second edition of his classic work, *The Madonna of 115th Street*: religion “cannot be neatly separated from the other practices of everyday life.”<sup>48</sup> In the introduction to the 1985 edition of *Madonna*, Orsi actually had taken a slightly different position. He offered two definitions of religion.<sup>49</sup> His “more traditional” one focused on popular piety and employed, though did not define, the notion of the sacred—“the sacred rituals, practices, symbols, prayers, and faith of the people.” This definition provided self-identified scholars of religion with some clues about their topic of study—look for practices and symbols among ordinary people—but it had the same advantages and disadvantages of earlier accounts that appealed to the sacred/profane dichotomy. Interpreters were still left wondering how to mark the boundary between the two: how would one decide whether a particular practice was sacred or profane? Orsi’s second “more comprehensive” definition—“*religion* here means ‘what matters’”—actually began to erase that boundary completely. And in that way it anticipated his later position, as found in his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* and the introduction to the second edition of *Madonna*, where Orsi avoided a formal definition of religion and suggested only that “it is enmeshed in the structures of culture,” where culture means “the webs of meaning that humans spin.”<sup>50</sup> The principled refusal to define *religion*, or the intentional blurring of boundaries between the quotidian and the ecstatic, has produced vivid accounts that helpfully expand the analyst’s purview, as with Orsi’s memorable analysis of the smells, sounds, and sights of the New York street festival and the fine studies in Hall’s *Lived Religion in America* and Nancy Ammerman’s *Everyday Religion*. Those chapters alert us, for example, to meaning-making practices we otherwise might have overlooked or undervalued, from political activism and media viewing to gift giving and homesteading.<sup>51</sup>

But a conceptual tension and a definitional problem arise as analysts of “everyday religion” try to locate the ecstatic in the quotidian.<sup>52</sup> If they insist on distinguishing too sharply between the ordinary and the extraordinary, then it is not clear how they might meaningfully talk about religion’s expression in everyday time and space, since what is set apart as special ap-

<sup>48</sup> Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” in Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 6, and *The Madonna of 115th Street*, xxi.

<sup>49</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, xliii.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, xx–xxi.

<sup>51</sup> Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 69–81, 121–35; Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 69–91, 217–42.

<sup>52</sup> This strategy is not confined to US-based specialists who self-consciously align their work with the study of “lived religion.” For example, in her study of space and religion, the British religious studies scholar Kim Knott described her aim in similar ways: “my original intention in this project,” she tells the reader, “was to find a way of locating religion in everyday spaces.” Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London: Equinox, 2005), 229.

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pears wholly discontinuous with the quotidian. That would not do, of course, since it was dissatisfaction with categories that frame religion as discontinuous that prompted the Quotidian Turn. However, if analysts try to avoid that definitional problem by blurring the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary, as many scholars of lived religion and everyday religion do, then they risk creating a meaningless category that fails to identify their subject of study and is unable to distinguish what is not religious. Others have made a similar observation, including a US historian who reviewed Hall's *Lived Religion in America*: "As productive as this approach is in this volume, it raises methodological and definitional questions," he proposed. "In establishing boundaries and context for a history of lived religion, how does a historian of everyday religious practice decide *who* will be included in (or excluded from) the study? And how does such a historian decide *what* will be included (or excluded) if the line between secular and sacred is completely erased?"<sup>53</sup> And others who are more sympathetic to the Quotidian Turn, even some of the contributors to *Lived Religion in America* and *Everyday Religion*, have acknowledged the problem and called for solutions. "Although I do not believe that the intent of the recent turn to the daily necessarily excludes the experiential," sociologist Courtney Bender suggests in her chapter in *Everyday Religion*, "in some accounts daily life is emphatically viewed as mundane and ordinary." "It might be worthwhile," she continues, "to ask where, or whether, there is a place for the transcendent or the divine in this study of 'daily life.'" <sup>54</sup> I agree that this is a worthwhile question. And it is difficult to see how analysts of the quotidian can talk clearly and persuasively about the "transcendent" in "daily life" if they eschew definitions of their own key terms. Readers do not need an essentializing account of the universal attributes of all religion everywhere. They do need a clearer sense of what the constitutive terms of the analysis mean, however. Below I will consider possible strategies for addressing these conceptual problems, but for now it seems sufficient to emphasize that the conceptual tension is not eased by eschewing definitions of religion altogether—or postponing the task indefinitely on empiricist grounds—since scholars inevitably assume, imply, or employ a more or less self-consciously crafted definition in their analysis.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> John Smolenski, "Culture, History, and the 'Religion Concept,'" *American Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1999): 889.

<sup>54</sup> Courtney J. Bender, "Touching the Transcendent: Rethinking Religious Experience in the Sociological Study of Religion," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 215.

<sup>55</sup> For example, in Orsi's contribution to *Lived Religion in America*, he refuses to offer his own definition of religion but does gesture toward a particular understanding of the term. He uses the verb *to make* and endorses Jonathan Z. Smith's notion that in religion humans are "at work on the world" (9). That is a wonderfully suggestive claim, and one that, if elaborated more fully, might lead to a rich theory of religion as labor. Much is left unsaid, however, about the meaning of the term. I assume that is because of his concern to emphasize the "interplay" between "religion" and "everyday experience" (9). But if we do not know what the two terms mean, we cannot formulate an account of their interaction.

Some sophisticated interpreters who appeal to the notion of the *everyday*, including Orsi and sociologist Nancy Ammerman, the editor of *Everyday Religion*, have recognized the problems, although their shrewd but ambivalent gestures toward defining key terms have not gone far enough to resolve them. “Everyday religion,” Ammerman suggests in her introduction, has to do “with the mundane routines” as well as “the crisis and special events that punctuate those routines.” As she sets up the studies in the volume, Ammerman does not theorize that which punctuates the mundane, however. She and her fellow contributors do not stipulatively define the noun in their key phrase *everyday religion*, as I would do, but instead “ask what makes some social events and individual actions religious in the minds of the actors.”<sup>56</sup> That approach, which also has been advocated by those not explicitly identified with this interpretive tradition, can be very useful in tracing how and why participants and scholars deem some things religious.<sup>57</sup> It is less useful for other research questions and interpretive goals. And, of course, it does not resolve the definitional problems and interpretive challenges. For example, what if the interpreter concludes that some or all of the features of religion are expressed but the actors themselves do not accept the label “religious”—as with twelve-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous? Ammerman does not address that issue but she does acknowledge that the phrase “everyday religion” raises a series of “nagging questions,” including some about the ordinary and the extraordinary: “When and where do we find experiences that participants define as religious or spiritual? Where do we see symbols and assumptions that have spiritual dimensions, even if they are not overtly defined as such?”<sup>58</sup> In a somewhat surprising twist, in the volume’s very suggestive conclusion, Ammerman returns to the problem of “the fuzziness around the edges of the category” and cautiously defines religious action. “It seems to me that religious activity is recognized as such because it has something to do with things that are sacred, transcendent, or beyond the ordinary.”<sup>59</sup> That is a wonderful start. But that Durkheimian definition fails to advance the conversation very much since it merely restates the problem by reaffirming that the extraordinary is not its opposite. Right: that is clear from an analysis of how the words are used in the language. But what do we mean by the word *extraordinary*, and how might we recognize it? Even more vexing, how can we talk about the relation between the quotidian and that which stands out from it?

Orsi also sees the conundrum as he describes religion in the mundane. To surface the tension embedded in the categorical binaries, Orsi entitled his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* “Everyday Miracles.” That is a

<sup>56</sup> Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*.

<sup>58</sup> Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

wonderfully evocative phrase that seems crafted to acknowledge and confront the conceptual challenge. And in his later work, he took another step toward confronting that challenge by offering a new definition. "Religion," he suggested, "is the practice of making the invisible visible, or concretizing the order of the universe, the nature of human life and its destiny, and the various dimensions and possibilities of human interiority itself, as these are understood in various cultures at different times, in order to render them visible and tangible, present to the senses in the circumstances of *everyday life*."<sup>60</sup> That suggestive phrase and that poetic definition do not fully resolve the problems, however, at least for those who want to identify the boundaries of the scholar's subject and analyze the relation between the religious and the secular. I realize that those with a principled suspicion of theory will disagree—and some scholars in this interpretive tradition urge us to resist the impulse to elevate our gaze above the empirical particulars—but I would prefer to more systematically theorize the everyday—and its implied opposite.<sup>61</sup> That would improve Ammerman's otherwise subtle account, which leaves her key terms (*ordinary* and *transcendent*) unelaborated, and it would help in Orsi's case too. Is there not more to say about the important terms and phrases in his definition: not only *everyday* but also *making, invisible*, and *order of the universe*? Readers are left wondering how the invisible relates to the visible. What is "order of the universe," and how does it make an appearance in "the circumstances of everyday life"? So even the most sophisticated scholars of religion who employ the phrase *everyday life* continue to struggle with the problem of how to overcome the implied binary between the ordinary and the extraordinary. But it is not their problem alone, of course; all of us who use the phrase inherit it.

A second conceptual problem and interpretive limitation arises when scholars declare their intention to focus on everyday life: a number of other implied distinctions form as concomitants of vernacular usage and scholarly practice, whether we intend to invoke those oppositions or not. The redirected focus corrects for earlier academic blind spots, but the appeal to everyday, popular, or lived religion also wittingly or unwittingly replicates binary pairs and implies value hierarchies, usually privileging one element of the pair as the analysis reverses earlier interpretive patterns. Those interpretive patterns have varied across national borders, yet the felt need to attend to religion in everyday life emerged in most places because the scholarship had obscured what non-elites did at routine times and in mundane spaces. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, and even into the 1960s,

<sup>60</sup> Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 73–74 (emphasis mine).

<sup>61</sup> Aaron Hughes, "Boundary Maintenance: Religions as Organic-Cultural Flows: On Thomas Tweed," in *Contemporary Theories of Religion: A Critical Companion*, ed. Michael Stausberg (London: Routledge, 2009), 220–22.

religion scholars focused on the collective symbols, rituals, and myths of so-called primitive peoples, who did not resemble either the positioned Western interpreter or his (and, rarely, her) imagined audience, while many others presupposed that religion was about beliefs, elites, institutions, sacred texts, organized rituals, consecrated spaces, and the public realm. The use of the category *everyday life* signaled the interpreter's opposition to the prevailing focus and usually announced increased attention to one element in each binary. There has been enormous variation among proponents of these transnational and multidisciplinary interpretive lineages—for example, about whether to emphasize power more than meaning, biological constraints more than cultural forces, and social structures more than individual agency—but many interpreters have assumed, argued, or implied that everyday religion is more about the body than the mind, about practices and artifacts more than beliefs and values, about ordinary people more than institutional elites, the private sphere more than the public arena, more about the weekday than Sunday.<sup>62</sup>

I should acknowledge that some interpreters of the quotidian have argued passionately against the (mis)reading I am offering here, insisting that the study of lived religion or everyday piety must hold together all those binaries. Ammerman, for example, acknowledges that “to start with the everyday is to privilege the experience of non-experts,” but “that does not mean that ‘official’ ideas are never important.” “Similarly,” she continues, “everyday implies activity that happens outside organized religious events and institutions, but that does not mean that we discount the influence of those institutions wield or that we neglect what happens within organized religion ‘every day.’” Further, “everyday religion may happen in both private and public life, among privileged and non-privileged peo-

<sup>62</sup> Kevin O’Neill, an anthropologist who studies religion in Latin America, has criticized the lived religion approach by suggesting that attention to the *lived* has meant assuming a focus on the *local*; it has rendered that stance less able to deal with global flows and the “re-spatialization of culture” so important in the world today and so dominant in other fields, including anthropology and geography (Kevin O’Neill, “Beyond Broken: Affective Spaces and the Study of American Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 4 [December 2013]: 1093–1116). I see O’Neill’s point, though I am not certain that attention to religion as practiced in the local necessarily implies a blindness to global flows. It depends, as I will suggest below, on whether the scholar employs a static or kinetic theoretical framework more than whether the study focuses on a single site. O’Neill also offers a criticism of scholars of lived religion because they have seen space as “broken,” divided between the sacred and profane. My reading of that tradition is quite the opposite. Scholars of lived religion actually have shared O’Neill’s interest in blurring those boundaries. I should also point out that O’Neill also criticizes my work in that article (1094–96). I will let others decide about that critique. But he is right that I set religion apart from non-religion. I am unrepentant about that, as I have shown here, though he fails to note that my work, and that of Manuel Vásquez, whom he also criticizes, has been focused on the same “questions of globalization and transnationalism” that he has called for scholars to address (1100–1102). If he meant to say that the field of US religion has been less focused on varying scales and global flows than it should be, I concur; in fact, I made that point in an earlier review of the field (Thomas A. Tweed, “Expanding the Study of U.S. Religion: Reflections on the State of a Subfield,” *Religion* 40 [2010]: 250–58).

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ple.”<sup>63</sup> Orsi, to refer again to the most influential contemporary scholar in this interpretive tradition, uses the related category *lived religion* but offers a similar caution. In his contribution to *Lived Religion in America*, Orsi emphasized that “the focus of lived religion in this volume points us to religion as it is shaped and experienced in the interplay among venues of everyday experience,” and that means it should not be interpreted in terms of divisions between mind and body, elite and popular, theology and practice. And in his introduction to the second edition of *The Madonna of 115th Street*, where he retrospectively framed that volume as a contribution to “the study of lived religion,” Orsi suggested that approach “directs attention to institutions *and* persons, texts *and* rituals, practice *and* theology, things *and* ideas—all as media of making and unmaking worlds.”<sup>64</sup>

In these passages and others, then, some scholars have argued for holding together the interpretive binaries and correcting possible analytical imbalances, yet, I think, there might be a reason they have to insist so forcefully and remind readers so often. It is not because of any deficiency in scholarship, of course; the most prominent scholars of the everyday deserve all the acclaim they have received. Those conceptual oppositions and interpretive asymmetries emerge from their chosen scholarly idiom, including the emphasis on “everyday” and “lived” piety. There are plenty of wonderful counterexamples of studies that attend to both pairs of the oppositional categories introduced by the use of the *everyday*, as with David Hall and Anne Brown’s subtle analysis of lay and clerical attitudes and practices in Colonial New England.<sup>65</sup> And even those studies that tend to emphasize one side of the interpretive pairs more than the other have made crucial contributions. Consider, for example, the groundbreaking analysis of lay women’s embodied practices in the work of Orsi and Marie Griffith, another contributor to *Lived Religion in America*.<sup>66</sup> So I am not saying those works are not remarkably helpful for attending to people, places, and practices that had been

<sup>63</sup> Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 9, and *Madonna of 115th Street*, xix.

<sup>65</sup> Anne S. Brown and David D. Hall, “Family Strategies and Religious Practice: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Early New England,” in Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 41–68.

<sup>66</sup> Here I mention the works of two of the finest scholars working in my subfield, nuanced books I deeply admire. Griffith and Orsi acknowledge the role of male clergy, for example, though few readers would suggest that ordained institutional elites received sustained and detailed attention either in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, a study of the “popular religion” of Italian immigrants and their children (xxxix–xl), or Marie Griffith’s *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), “a study of a female world of religious devotion” in *Women’s Aglow Fellowship* (ix). The same could be said, I think, about my own earlier work, *Our Lady of the Exile*. I mentioned some clerics, especially the Cuban American bishop, but clearly focused on the embodied practices of the laity. The concern to recover what had been lost in earlier scholarship led me to underemphasize some things that had been the focus of earlier scholars. As I note below, in Thomas A. Tweed, *America’s Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation’s Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), I tried to correct that interpretive imbalance, though surely I introduced new problems and displayed other limitations.

previously obscured. They are. I am saying only this: the Quotidian Turn, as transformative as it has been for me and many others, has brought gains and losses. The gains are obvious, I think, but because this interpretive stance continues to be so influential, even ascendant in religious studies today, the losses might be less obvious. Those include, I have suggested, (1) a tendency to intentionally blur the boundaries between the religious and nonreligious, thereby rendering religious studies scholars' constitutive disciplinary term unclear, and (2) a tendency to attend most fully to ordinary people and everyday life, which minimizes the significance of clergy, beliefs, ecclesiastical institutions, prescribed rituals, and consecrated spaces.

### AFTER THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: WHAT NEXT?

I have made two proposals. The first concerns how to narrate the recent history of the study of religion: the label *Quotidian Turn*, I have suggested, might be useful for thinking about one cluster of approaches since the 1960s. The second proposal concerns how we might evaluate that methodological shift: I noted that the scholars associated with the Quotidian Turn accomplished an important corrective by redirecting the focus to ordinary people and everyday life, but their guiding categories, including the modifiers *everyday* and *lived*, created conceptual tensions and categorical binaries—and, despite scholars' best intentions, sometimes led to one-sided interpretations. The first proposal, which is rather ambitious, surely needs refinement. After all, the proposed label brings together many interpretive traditions from varied social contexts. I have either forced things into the box or not made the box large enough, probably both. But we cannot decide its utility in advance. Time will tell if the label *Quotidian Turn* proves helpful to those who want to chart the twists and turns in the history of the study of religion. If not, other labels should frame the historical analysis.

As for the second proposal, about the Quotidian Turn's limitations, I can imagine several kinds of responses. Two of them can be stated simply and set aside as not requiring much more reflection. You might respond by saying that you never much cared for the approaches I classify as aligned with the Quotidian Turn, perhaps because your own research focus—for example, canonical texts, intellectual history, or institutional leaders—seems to rest on different assumptions and to enact different values, while it also requires different sources and methods. So you might be indifferent to the alleged conceptual challenges and interpretive limitations or have only mild interest in accumulating more reasons to reject approaches that you already were spending little time considering. On the other hand, to mention a second possible response, you might be a vigorous advocate of the use of *everyday religion* or *lived religion* as a guiding category and remain unpersuaded by my analysis of the definitional problems and untroubled by my claims about one-sided interpretations. You might not identify as a

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scholar of religion and have no disciplinary concern to define your subject matter more precisely, for example, or you might report that the boundary blurring and the interpretive slant are what you most value in these approaches. In both of these imagined responses—unqualified rejection or unqualified affirmation—there does not seem to be much more to say. We can simply agree to disagree and let many flowers bloom.

However, if you think my analysis of the accomplishments and limitations of the Quotidian Turn raises some issues worth pondering more, then the dangling question is simple: What should we do next? I see two main alternatives.

First, scholars might continue to employ the Quotidian Turn's guiding categories while trying to confront and minimize the difficulties I identify. Those who want to continue and refine this interpretive tradition might begin their reflection with the useful cautions by Ammerman and Orsi, though others will have their own thoughts about how to deal with the issues I have raised. As a sympathetic conversation partner, and someone whose work has been shaped by the Quotidian Turn, I want to make only three modest suggestions.

It might help to theorize more fully each of the key terms—the *everyday* and the *religious*—and, most important, the dynamic relation between the two. If you cannot imagine a conceptual problem in relating the quotidian and the ecstatic, then that means you probably are presupposing a framework—a sacramental theology or a phenomenological perspective, to mention two of many possibilities—that provides an idiom for theorizing their interrelation. If so, it would help to surface those presuppositions. If you insist that you have no presuppositions, we again reach a point where there is not much more to say, since I think presuppositions are inevitable. However, if you are cautious because much of what has passed as theory rests on claims that go beyond the evidence—the assertion that religion or secularity is the same in all times and places—then there is much more to say. I understand the principled resistance to this sort of theorizing, but I think there are ways to clarify lexical usage and refine scholarly practice without making the contestable empirical claim that the interpreter's categories, including *religion*, are “universal.”<sup>67</sup> A bit more theorizing and a few more stipulative definitions—those that stipulate a term's meaning for a particular project—might help with some of the conceptual problems I have identified. That might nudge us toward accounts that identify religion scholars' subject of study more clearly and bridge the implied binaries more fully.<sup>68</sup>

As you theorize those key terms—the *religious* and the *everyday*—you also could develop a continuum or spectrum model. You might suggest that

<sup>67</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 36–37, 40–41, 55, 78.

<sup>68</sup> Orsi seems to agree with my suggestion here: “Religion comes into being in ongoing, dynamic relationship with the realities of everyday life” (Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 7).

we should talk about *more or less*, not *either-or*. You might classify diverse spaces, times, practices, experiences, narratives, and artifacts on a continuum between two conceptual poles and understand the scholar's task as analyzing how the things you are studying are deemed more or less "special," "singular," "sacred," or "set apart" by scholars and/or by devotees.<sup>69</sup> This approach can be very useful to talk about practices as more or less religious, or quasi-religious. However, that continuum model is much less useful if scholars resist the task of defining its conceptual poles—the everyday and the religious—for how would we know where to classify a practice or space along the spectrum if we do not know what those polar categories mean?<sup>70</sup>

Finally, some minor terminological revisions could help. For example, those who want to retain the emphasis on the everyday might distinguish *religion every day* (self-identified devotees' daily practices within or beyond ecclesiastical boundaries as part of the prescribed conduct of the faith) and *everyday religion* (practices conducted by different people, including the avowedly ambivalent and agnostic, in diverse spaces outside churches, temples, and mosques). Taking the lead from Orsi, it also might help to create compound categories that combine both terms of the polarizing binaries, since categories can redirect attention in useful ways, just as the phrase *everyday life* originally shifted the focus to that which had been excluded in earlier studies. In this case, however, those new compound categories and hyphenated phrases might signal an attempt to hold together what language tries to pull apart. Scholars thereby might anticipate objections about one-sidedness and encourage investigators to consider the full complexity of religious life. In my theory of religion, for example, I argued that religions are "confluences of organic-cultural flows," so I could conjoin the biological and the cultural, body and mind, and name the site where embodied brains meet coded cultures.<sup>71</sup> In a similar way, for the study of the everyday, those sympathetic to the study of everyday religion or lived religion might consider the potential uses of compound nouns and hyphenated categories like Orsi's *everyday miracles*. It might make scholars slightly less likely to focus exclusively on one side of the binary at the expense of the other. It might remind interpreters to attend fully to the routine as well to that which breaks it.

A second alternative response—and the one I favor—is to maintain the concern to attend to ordinary people and everyday life but to use different

<sup>69</sup> Knott, *Location of Religion*, 61; Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 28–35; Thomas A. Tweed, "Space," *Material Religion* 7, no. 1 (2011): 116–23.

<sup>70</sup> Neither Taves nor Knott are interested in defining religion. In the piece on "Space" I cite above, I conditionally endorsed this continuum approach but found it less useful, as I actually tried to interpret particular practices—for example, of sports fans and memorial visitors—since it did not offer any guidance about where that practice fell on the continuum, unless I presupposed my own definition of religion and its claims about the boundaries between the secular and the religious.

<sup>71</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 54–69.

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orienting categories, theoretical frameworks, and methodological principles. How might we do all that? Well, in many ways, I think. But it seems unfair to offer criticisms and not provide suggestions about what we might do differently. So to give you some idea of what I have in mind, I will risk the embarrassment of being too self-referential and say a bit more about how I have tried to maintain my earlier concern for ordinary people and everyday life while also trying to address the limitations I saw in my own work and that of my like-minded colleagues.

Using alternative categories that do not directly mention ordinary people and everyday life actually can allow the interpreter to attend to both, and with fewer—or at least different—difficulties. Let me just mention three terminological alternatives that might be more useful: presence/absence, flows/channels, and crossing/dwelling.

I have used all three in my own work, though other scholars have made a good case for *presence/absence* as analytic categories. In a suggestive but overlooked essay from the 1970s, the historian of religion Charles Long dealt with the exclusion of African Americans by talking about who is “visible” and “invisible” in history and in our historical accounts, and Orsi, whose work has focused on Catholics, has persuasively suggested that the theme of “presence is central to the study of lived Catholic practice—the study of Catholicism in everyday life is about the mutual engagement of men, women, children, and holy figures present to each other.”<sup>72</sup> Extending the insights of Long and Orsi, I used *presence*—and also *absence*—in a recent historical study of a Marian shrine. I found that strategy had advantages, even if it had its limitations too. As I delineated corporeal and incorporeal presence, I was able to talk about the ways devotees understood suprahuman beings—God, Mary, and the saints—as present in their lives, so it was helpful for writing religious history. More important, I think that theme—and my consideration of ten factors in the interpretation of architecture, including the “makers,” “donors,” and “users” of the space—allowed me to avoid overemphasis on one element in the usual binaries.<sup>73</sup> For example, I could talk about the bishops and architects who planned the building and the lay devotees and women religious who used it. I could note the role of theological beliefs about the church, the saints, and the modern world as well practices like donation, prayer, and pilgrimage. The theme of *presence* allowed me to document those who traveled there and those who had an incorporeal presence through mailed donations and devotional letters. And, most important for preserving the originating motives of the Quotidian Turn, that strategy allowed me to attend to the presence of a wide range of devotees—including women, children, immigrants, Amer-

<sup>72</sup> Charles H. Long, “Civil Rights—Civil Religion: Visible People and Invisible Religion,” in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 211–20; Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 73.

<sup>73</sup> Tweed, *America's Church*, 16–19, 241–45.

indians, and the poor—and to take note of who was absent because of racism, including African Americans.

The theme of *presence*, as I understand it, is a spatial trope related to other interpretive categories that can reduce—though never eliminate—the conceptual and practical difficulties. Presence can be understood as a form of *dwelling*. Religions, I have argued, position devotees in four *chronotopes* or time-spaces: the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos.<sup>74</sup> This approach considers varying social spaces, from the intimate, routine, and profane to the formal, grand, and consecrated. In particular, by attending to the body and the home, a wider range of characters enter our narratives of religious life. An interpretive space opens, for example, for analyzing both the elites' prescriptions about embodiment and family as well as how those prescriptions are enacted, revised, and resisted in vernacular practice.

The theme of *dwelling*, in my account, is always related to another theme, *crossing*, and I have used that spatial trope—as well as the aquatic metaphor *flow*—to propose a kinetic theoretical framework and a set of methodological principles. Religion is as much about crossing, or moving across space, as it is about dwelling, or finding one's place. I have suggested that “religions enable and constrain *terrestrial crossings*, as devotees traverse natural terrain and social space beyond the home and across the homeland; *corporeal crossings*, as the religious fix their attention on the limits of embodied existence; and *cosmic crossings*, as the pious imagine and cross the ultimate horizon of human life.”<sup>75</sup> Despite the richness of many studies of everyday religion and lived religion, most interpreters presuppose a theory of culture and religion that is still too static, imagining a religious world filled by stable objects that exist independently of substantial selves. Their presumed framework does not account for the dynamism of religious life, and the concomitant scholarly usage inclines the interpreter to unwittingly harden the categorical distinctions into conceptual oppositions that can lead to one-sided accounts. It might help, I think, to put the everyday—and the ecstatic—in motion, to employ a more relational and kinetic view of religion and its wider cultural context. The scheme I have proposed certainly still makes distinctions—dwelling and crossing—yet, although I cannot fully substantiate this point here, those distinctions do not set up the conceptual problems I have identified with the Quotidian Turn's lexicon: the problem of how to talk, for example, about both ordinary people and elites, everyday spaces and consecrated sites, beliefs and practices, the quotidian and the ecstatic. It reduces the conceptual problems by sidestepping them. It shifts the idiom—and the implied framework and methodology. Using *crossing* as an analytic category, as I did in *America's Church*, allows for attention to both sides

<sup>74</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 97–122.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 123–56.

of those usual binary pairs, as the interpreter traces the movements to and from the shrine and attends to all the people, things, and practices that crossed the building's threshold.

To put the quotidian and the ecstatic in motion, we also might employ aquatic metaphors, as the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai did in his analysis of cultural flows and as I have done in my theory of religious flows and in my recent methodological proposals.<sup>76</sup> In that idiom, which reflects a more processive theoretical framework, the “mutual inter-causality” of the biological and the cultural can be imagined in terms of “confluences,” and politics, society, and economy can be understood as converging “streams” that impact religions as they emerge from the swirl of transfluvial currents.<sup>77</sup> So the institutional channels of the quotidian—political organizations, social relations, and economic forces—transform the more or less ecstatic spaces, which become sites where power is negotiated as meaning is made. The kinetic and interrelated spaces and times of the ecstatic, or that which stands out from the quotidian, are produced from the swirl of transfluvial currents and, in turn, exert causal influence as they mix with other currents along the way. In this kinetic account, with its emphasis on transfluence, many of the unintended binaries that form when scholars appeal to religion in everyday life are lost in the swirling flows. We certainly can still distinguish bodies and minds, elites and laity, beliefs and practices, churches and the myriad spaces beyond their threshold, Sunday morning and the rest of the time. The categorical distinctions seem less fixed and final, however.

This theoretical framework is more than a metaphor in search of a method, even if I have only gestured toward a fuller methodological proposal here. Most important, this framework affords a vantage from which we can honor the originating concerns of the Quotidian Turn—to attend to ordinary people and everyday life—while offering a richer account of the kinetics of religious practice that bridges categorical binaries and expands our narratives' characters and settings. It can help us analyze ordinary people *and* institutional elites in ecclesiastical *and* mundane spaces.<sup>78</sup>

My approach is not without its own limitations, and its guiding theoretical picture is not the only way to preserve the Quotidian Turn's insights.

<sup>76</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 59–69, “Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism: Toward Translocative Analysis,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 12 (2011): 17–32, and “Following the Flows: Diversity, Santa Fe, and Method in Religious Studies,” in *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Theology and Religious Studies*, ed. Peter Phan and Jonathan Ray (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 1–19.

<sup>77</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.

<sup>78</sup> Some other scholars sympathetic to the Quotidian Turn also have argued for more inclusive accounts. For example, William Taylor endorsed a “synoptic approach” to the study of Indians under colonial rule in Mexico, which meant for him “keeping in mind and under study as many of the actors, dimensions, and primary sources of an episode or structure as I can manage, without claiming there will be a sum total” (Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images*, 2, 90).

Readers might find better ways to proceed. Further, those who are already convinced that we need a kinetic theory might prefer alternative categories that aim for similar ends. My framework relies on aquatic tropes about *flows* and spatial images about *crossing*, but other root metaphors can do helpful interpretive work too, including James Clifford's *routes*, Manuel Vásquez's *networks*, and Anna Tsing's *movements*.<sup>79</sup> My goal is not to champion a framework or a category as the only one. That would be odd and inconsistent with my pragmatic approach, which suggests all frameworks and categories are only more or less useful for a scholar's particular purposes. They all have blind spots—as do mine.<sup>80</sup> But I thought it would help to illustrate what I had in mind by making a few tentative suggestions, if only to generate counterproposals. My primary concerns are modest: to suggest a label for one interpretive pattern and prompt more thinking about how to assess it. Whether or not you find my alternative categories promising, I hope we can have a more robust and sustained conversation about the history, uses, and limits of the scholarly trajectories that have highlighted ordinary people and everyday life. Perhaps we can self-consciously evaluate those and other analytic categories, acknowledging their accomplishments and limitations and, most of all, trying to hold together what language pulls apart, including but not only the *quotidian* and the *ecstatic*.

<sup>79</sup> Clifford, *Routes*; Anna Tsing, "The Global Situation," in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, ed. Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (London: Blackwell, 2002), 475; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 297–319.

<sup>80</sup> Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 14–15, 21–22, 60–61, 171–78.