Vocabulary for the Study of Religion

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have centered on the controversial new religion, the Church of Scientology, established in 1953 by American science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard. Since its inception, Scientology has been surrounded by intense controversy, particularly because of the secrecy surrounding its advanced levels of training yet, there has been disclosure of these secret teachings by a variety of ex-members, media sources, and websites. Indeed, from the early 1950s down to Janet Reitman's 2011 book, *Inside Scientology*, much of the debate surrounding this movement has centered on its claim to powerful (and expensive) esoteric knowledge and the claims of various critics to expose the scandalous "true secrets" of Scientology (Urban 2008; 2011).

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Discourse

The term "discourse" has a long history with ever-changing meanings. In French and English usage since the sixteenth century it had referred to units of text that give a reasoned argumentation for something. A good example is René Descartes' 1637 *Discours de la méthode* ("Discourse on Method"). When we talk of "discourse" today, however, the concept is inseparably tied to the usage that French structuralism, and in particular Michel Foucault (1926–1984), established in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Diversity of Discourse Research

When it comes to the study of religion, the first conceptualizations of discursive approaches date back to the 1980s (see Kippenberg 1983; Lincoln 1989; also Kippenberg 1992 and Lincoln 2005 [1996]). But for a long time these suggestions were not picked up in a more general way, attempting to build a serious referential framework for a (self-) critical study of religion. Recently, we have witnessed a rich discussion in neighboring disciplines about the usefulness of discursive analyses. German and French scholars, in particular, have readdressed the theories of discourse, which were developed by Foucault and others a generation earlier, and have made them fruitful for the study of cultural phenomena in the twenty-first century. The academic study of religion has only sporadically taken notice of these new approaches to the study of discourse that break down the boundaries between academic disciplines and even between the humanities and the natural sciences. More recent publications show that there is a growing interest in discourse theory, including its application to the study of religion (see Neubert 2014; Wijsen and von Stuckrad forthcoming 2015; see also von Stuckrad 2013 as an earlier version of the present article).

As a discipline that is concerned with diachronic and synchronic, historical and comparative

approaches to a topic, the meaning of which changes significantly in different periods and contexts, the study of religion can profit a lot from contributions to discourse theory that come from what Reiner Keller calls the "Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse" (SKAD, see Keller 2011; Keller 2013) and from historiography. Although they acknowledge the importance of language in the study of discourse, these approaches move beyond linguistic analysis (in the field of social linguistics "discourse" refers to the more minute and specific patterns of speech in the everyday sense) and include the materiality of discursive structures. However, because all research into discourse has to include terms and languages to be scrutinized, the distinction between linguistic and historical approaches to discourse should not be overestimated. But these approaches have a different focus, and critics of linguistic approaches argue that a focus on language easily overlooks the practices, functions, and non-linguistic elements of a discourse, thus resembling a content analysis more than a discourse analysis (on the difference between those two methods see Wedl, Herschinger, and Gasteiger 2014).

Within the large framework of discourse research many forms of discourse analysis are possible (Maingueneau 1991: 15 distinguishes seven for the French academic discussion; see also Mills 2004: 1–25). Different forms of discourse analysis may need to apply different methods and discursive practices, but what they have in common is the fact that "doing" a discourse analysis is always an attribution of meaning that is itself part of the discourse (see Wrana 2014; Moberg 2013: 12, referring to Taylor 2001: 39). Hence, constructing a discourse analysis is a discursive practice that needs to be reflected upon from a meta-discursive perspective (von Stuckrad 2010b: 157–158). The endless regress that this self-reflection entails is an unavoidable feature of all constructivist approaches, including discourse analyses (Knorr-Cetina 1989: 93). I will come back to this "double-bind" of discourse analysis below.

Knowledge, Power, Discourse

Since the 1960s, "knowledge" has been an important dimension in sociological and discursive theory. This is true for the influential contributions of Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and Alfred Schütz on the social construction of reality and knowledge (particularly Berger and Luckmann 1966; Schütz and Luckmann 1979–1984), but also for Foucault's interest in the structures that produce shared knowledge in a given societal and historical situation. Foucault put particular emphasis on the power-structures that distinguish approved from non-approved knowledge (see especially Foucault 1980), a focus that puts his work in a Marxist line of interpretation still visible in some recent approaches to discourse theory, such as those of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who emphasize the primacy of politics and the importance to solve urgent problems of our time. Jacob Torfing builds on this approach when he describes a discourse "as a relational totality of signifying sequences that determine the identity of the social elements, but never succeed in totalizing and exhausting the play of meaning" (Torfing 1999: 87). Power is an element of discourse that plays a role in any form of analysis. Despite many differences, most theories of discourse commonly problematize the triangle of power, knowledge, and subjectivity.

To quote Johannes Angermüller:

> Discourses are formed by power structures, but because discourses represent power structures, they can also produce and reproduce them. Power and knowledge are inextricably linked to each other. Power can make knowledge 'true' or 'ideological,' and it is through knowledge that power can be exerted. Through discourses a body of knowledge circulates in social groups and establishes itself in communities. Discourses are central to the construction of subjectivities, identities, and relations, because those who enter a discourse are assigned a certain posi-

tion in the discourse and thus are enabled to gain recognition and visibility. (2014: 23; my translation)

When it comes to the question of criticism, discourse-analytical approaches part ways. In what is usually called Critical Discourse Analysis a common normative claim is that the discourse analyst should "take sides" and "uncover" the power structures that undermine the agency of the underprivileged. Critics of this claim argue that while biases are part of discursive practice, the biases should not be built into the claims in a way that all other researchers should include a critique (and not just a description) of power relations in their analysis as well. Normative claims are objects of discourse analysis, not their instruments.

Consequently, sociologists of knowledge still include the dimension of power and the importance of politics in their analysis, but not necessarily as the main and determining dimension of discursive practice or as an expression of the need to radically reform plural democracies (in the way Laclau and Mouffe would have it: see Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 24–59).

Combining ideas about the social construction of reality with Foucault's understanding of discourse, this approach argues that everything we perceive, experience, and feel—and also the way we act—is structurally intertwined with socially constructed forms of approved and objectified knowledge. We do not have an unmediated access to the world *an sich*, even though the "robustness" of its material quality limits the spectrum of interpretation. Knowledge of the world is not a neutral understanding but the cultural response to symbolic systems that are provided by the social environment. These symbolic systems are typically produced, legitimized, communicated, and transformed as discourses. Discourse analysis aims at reconstructing the processes of social construction, objectification, communication, and legitimization of meaning structures. What is regarded as legitimate knowledge in a given society is gener-

ated on the level of institutions, organizations, or collective actors.

There is a close parallel between this approach to the social organization of knowledge and the poststructuralist positions that have reshaped postcolonial and gender studies since the 1980s. In all of these contributions, the notion of knowledge does not refer to an objective truth of the world but to the social communication, attribution, and legitimization of what is accepted in a given society *as* knowledge. This knowledge can be explicit, but also implicit or tacit. Implicit or tacit knowledge is, generally, not tested or challenged (or even thematized) by agents in a given society; what is more, such knowledge can change significantly from one society to another and from one historical period to another. That is why historical analysis of discourse addresses not only the explicitly available forms of knowledge (for instance, in the natural sciences) but particularly the "self-evident knowledge," the truth which is not formalized but generally accepted.

Foucault and the Genealogies of Discourse

Throughout his work, Michel Foucault was interested in the genealogy, or "archaeology," of discursive structures, which naturally implies an historical dimension in his analysis of discourse. Therefore, it is astonishing that Foucauldian approaches have only rarely been adopted in the study of religion, arguably a discipline that has a strong historiographical focus. One reason for this may be that the notion of "history of religion" has been to a large extent associated with Eliadean phenomenology of religion (as a critique see McCutcheon 1997), which led to a general disregard of the category "history" in the study of religion, particularly in the United States (see Kippenberg 2001; see also Lincoln 2005 [1996]).

Historical knowledge was also criticized in the wake of the so-called linguistic turn. That our knowledge of the world is constituted in language and linguistic structures and that the scholar is

also an author whose narrative account does not provide a privileged access to truth was famously argued for historiography by Hayden White and for anthropology by Clifford Geertz. To be sure, large parts of historical scholarship, including scholars of religion, shunned the consequences of this reflective critique. Even today, "sources are still read as "documents" of a past reality—perhaps they are read better, more diligently and critically, but nevertheless as medium with sufficient transparency" (Sarasin 2003: 32, my translation). That historical meaning is generated in communicative processes is insufficiently acknowledged. Even fewer scholars include the category of "discourse" in their historical analysis or make the argument that historical meaning is not "reconstructed" from the "facts" and "sources" in a hermeneutical process of understanding but discursively generated. This is exactly what Foucault wanted to show in his critical reflection on our presupposition that historical truth is attainable in our accounts of it. Since Foucault, "discourse analysis can be understood as the attempt of scrutinizing the formal conditions that steer the production of meaning" (Sarasin 2003: 33). Philipp Sarasin explains:

> The thing that is meant, the referent, is *as referent* of a certain linguistic sign not prior to language; rather, it is the system of signs that ultimately creates it as social reality from the "chaotic variety" [*chaotische Mannigfaltigkeit*] (Kant) of all possible things in the world: "It is the world of words that generates the world of things" [Jacques Lacan]. Something else is fundamental for discourse analysis: This is not about the abstruse question whether there is more than texts; it is about how the non-linguistic things gain their meaning. No discourse, no grid of classification, however familiar it may appear, has ever been derived 'from the things themselves'; it is the other way round and discourse and classification generate the order of things.... Even though practices, gestures,

and objects are themselves no longer constituted in language, they are relevant in the social world only because meaning has been discursively attributed to them. (2003: 36, my translation; see also Busse 1987: 23)

We can understand the working of discursive structures only if we know their genealogy and formation. And only through comparison—in diachronic or synchronic perspective—can we see the historicity and even singularity of discourses. There are no discourses that emerge "naturally" or that are dictated by the working of some abstract reality. Historical and comparative analysis of how social communicational structures attribute meaning to the world and organize explicit and implicit knowledge is the basis of discursive approaches.

This point applies to the formation of knowledge in the "hard" or natural sciences as well. The practices and procedures in the natural sciences are a materialization of a discourse on, for instance, nature, evolution, or relativity. The discursive materializations, in their turn, stabilize and legitimize the discursive assumptions that have made them possible. By so doing, discursive structures steer the attribution of meaning to things and establish shared assumptions about accepted and unaccepted knowledge. Discourse research breaks down the borders between the natural sciences and the social or cultural sciences. Despite their different methodologies to produce accepted knowledge, the natural sciences are no less discursively structured and thus socially steered than the humanities. Discursive approaches help us to overcome the conceptual boundaries between the natural sciences and the humanities in our attempt to understand the communal production of "academic knowledge" (see von Stuckrad 2014).

Consequently, discourse analysis argues that our knowledge is not about "*the* world out there" (even if the existence of '*a* world out there" is not denied) and that we should adopt a relativist rather than a realist position in the philosophical

debate that is linked to these epistemological and ontological issues. What is at stake is an acknowledgment of the difference between something that *simply happens* (often without being reported) and something that is *made into a fact or event* by discursive and communicative procedures. As Antonio Gramsci reminds us, without an inventory that organizes our knowledge about ourselves and our history, understanding is impossible. "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. Such an inventory must therefore be made at the outset" (quoted from Forgacs 1988: 326).

Concepts and Definitions for a Discursive Study of Religion

After these general remarks about forms of discourse analysis, let us now turn to the question of how we can apply these considerations to the study of religion. But before I can discuss the most important concepts and definitions, I must point out that discourse analysis is not itself a method. Sometimes harking back to Ludwik Fleck's notion of *Denkstil* ("thought style"; see Fleck 1935), many theorists of discourse agree that discourse analysis is a research perspective or research style that applies a spectrum of possible methods in order to answer its guiding research question (see Sarasin 2003: 8 and 30). This approach stands in contrast to those approaches that focus on linguistic analysis or what Norman Fairclough calls "textually oriented discourse analysis" (1992: 37–61). If scholars choose the linguistic and textual orientation, it is easier to talk of a "method," but it also means to limit the applicability of discourse theory (examples of such an understanding of discourse analysis are Renkema 2009; Hjelm 2011). Within SKAD, as well as in the more historically oriented discourse theory, both leaning more heavily on Foucault's work, the methods that are considered useful can range from philological methods to

quantitative and qualitative methods, content analysis, etc. However, even if discourse analysis is not a specific method, it follows certain steps and rules that have proven useful in concrete analytical work. These steps consist of the demarcation of the discourse under scrutiny, the collection of relevant data, and the decision of which method would be most productive in collecting and interpreting the data (see von Stuckrad 2013: 18–21; Keller 2013: 89–134).

Let us now clarify the terms that are most relevant for our purpose here. Making use of the recent discussion outlined, we can define "discourse" as follows: *A discourse is a communicative structure that organizes knowledge in a given community; it establishes, stabilizes, and legitimizes systems of meaning and provides collectively shared orders of knowledge in an institutionalized social ensemble. Statements, utterances, and opinions about a specific topic, systematically organized and repeatedly observable, form a discourse.*

When it comes to the link between several discourses, we can conceptualize these as "intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, the history of an organization or institution, and situational frames" (Reisigl and Wodak 2010: 90).

Consequently, "discourse analysis" addresses *the relationship among communicational practices and the (re)production of systems of meaning, or orders of knowledge, the social agents that are involved, the rules, resources, and material conditions that underlie these processes, as well as their impact on social collectives.*

"Historical discourse analysis" explores *the development of discourses in changing sociopolitical and historical settings, thus providing means to reconstruct the genealogy of a discourse.*

In addition to these fundamental terms, it is useful to introduce the concept of "dispositive," a term that was coined by Foucault (*le dispositif*, often translated as "device," "deployment," or "apparatus"), but that recently has been defined more clearly in scholarly discussions. The concept

moves beyond the analysis of discursive practices to include non-discursive practices and materializations, tacit and implicit knowledge, as well as the relationship between these dimensions of social action. A dispositive is here understood as *the material, practical, social, cognitive, or normative "infrastructure" in which a discourse develops*. This infrastructure can include governmental decisions and laws, new technologies and media, museums, educational programs, television, or the healthcare system. Dispositive analysis examines how "assignments of meaning create reality" (Jäger and Meier 2010: 39; for a detailed introduction see Bührmann and Schneider 2008). The distinction between discourses and dispositives becomes clear when we consider examples. Television, the Internet, a governmental decision, and an institution such as the Nobel Prize are not "discourses" in themselves (discourses on what?), but they provide the communicative infrastructures in which attribution of meaning becomes operative. That is why historical discourse analysis has to include these dimensions of communicative structure.

Discourses develop within cultural processes and dispositives. They form around specific topics, but most discourses also contain "strands" from other discourses. For instance, the statement "The preamble of the future constitution of the European Union should refer to Christianity as Europe's religious and philosophical roots" is linked to several discourses, particularly discourses on European identity, on constitutional law, on religion, on Christianity, and on philosophy. What we see here is that several discourses can be entangled and form a "discursive knot" (Jäger and Meier 2010: 47). The notion of discursive knots shows that the borders of a discourse are flexible and dependent on scholarly definition, which means that discourses do not exist "out there." They have no ontological status other than being analytical categories that the analyst of cultural processes constructs to serve her or his interpretative goal.

This view is entirely in line with Foucault's understanding and his program of deconstructing and reconstructing analytical frameworks:

The ... purpose of such a description of the facts of discourse is that by freeing them of all the groupings that purport to be natural, immediate, universal unities, one is able to describe other unities, but this time by means of a group of controlled decisions. Providing one defines the conditions clearly, it might be legitimate to constitute, on the basis of correctly described relations, discursive groups that are not arbitrary, and yet remain invisible.... [I]t is not therefore an interpretation of the facts of the statement that might reveal [the relations], but the analysis of their coexistence, their succession, their mutual functioning, their reciprocal determination, and their independent or correlative transformations. (Foucault 2010 [1972]: 29)

After having "disentangled" the discursive knots, we can also suggest new "unities":

I ... will do no more than this: of course, I shall take as my starting-point whatever unities are already given (such as psychopathology, medicine, or political economy); but I shall make use of them just long enough to ask myself what unities they form; by what right they can claim a field that specifies them in space and a continuity that individualizes them in time; according to what laws they are formed; against the background of which discursive events they stand out; and whether they are not, in their accepted and quasi-institutional individuality, ultimately the surface effect of more firmly grounded unities. I shall accept the groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them. (Foucault 2010 [1972]: 26)

Implications and Challenges for Studying Religion

In a discursive framework of analysis, it does not make any theoretical difference whether we study religion, politics, technology, cars, animals, music, masculinity, or any other topic of social and symbolic communication that is linked to an identifiable discourse. But for the study of religion as a specialized area of research, discursive approaches have implications that need to be made explicit.

To begin with, religion completely loses its status of being something *sui generis*. Rather, discursive approaches study the very claim that "religion is *sui generis*" as part of a discourse on religion that has formed under identifiable historical circumstances and that has materialized in university institutions and scholarly programs, in turn stabilizing and legitimizing the attributed meaning of religion as *sui generis*. We can historicize the discourse on *sui generis* religion. What is more, we can scrutinize the dispositives and discursive knots which characterize this discourse and maintain the construction of meaning, until at some point in the historical development other discourses determine the socially communicated knowledge about religion.

Definitions as Objects of Study

Discursive approaches provide a solution to another problem as well. It is no longer necessary—in fact, it would be counterproductive—to apply a generic definition of religion. Definitions of religion are statements and utterances that attribute meaning to things and that provide orders of knowledge. As contributions to a discourse on religion, these definitions are *objects* of discursive analysis rather than its *tools*.

Regarding the term "religion" as an empty signifier that can be activated with definitions, meanings, and communicational practices does not compromise the clarity of the object or the scholarly rigor of the study of religion. It merely moves the obligation to define our objects from the level of communicational practices to the level of discursive reflection. The discourse on religion then is simply defined as "the societal organization of knowledge about religion." To avoid misunderstandings, this definition does not mean that a "pre-discursive" definition of "religion" is somehow smuggled into the analysis, because if people do not use the term "religion," that source would not be part of our data in the first place. And if we construct a grouping of terms that cluster around "religion," we still need to demonstrate that these groupings exist in actual usage.

The Ontology of Discourses and the Double-Bind of Discourse Research

How "real," then, are discourses? Although discourse research does not require that discourses exist outside the construction of the researcher, it does not require that they be arbitrary either. We only assume that if persons use the term "religion," and if discourses on religion are re-entangled in changing historical constellations, these discourses "exist" because persons are basing their interpretation of the world on them. It is the same mechanism as described in the Thomas Theorem: Situations defined as real are real in their consequences.

There are no objectively given "discourses" that only wait to be studied by historians or social scientists. The description of a discourse, or Foucault's project of suggesting new "groupings" of "things," is a constructive process that follows the interests of the researcher. The selection of data and the building of a corpus are part of the researcher's constructive work. Of course, it would be too simple to say that "facts" are "fabricated" in historiographical work; but the transition of "traces" to "sources" and "data"—and thus, the generation of facts *as* facts—is by no means an objective and straightforward process (see von Stuckrad 2010a: 195–196). In many ways the researcher is both the product of the discourse described and the producer of it through the attribution of meaning to things. I call this situation the "double-bind of discourse research."

The Limitlessness of Discourse Research

Another recurrent theme in discussions about discourse research is the question of how we determine the limits of a discourse. Often people ask: If everything is discourse, and if discourses are all we have, how can we come to any meaningful statement and analysis? Indeed, the limits of discourses present an important challenge to discourse research, even if perhaps in a different way than the question assumes.

To begin with, not everything is discourse; rather, everything can be "discursivized," which means that basically everything can under certain conditions become part of a discursive constellation that scholars address as such. Two conditions in particular should be mentioned here: the repeated occurrence of a discourse, and the fact that scholars have to construct a discourse *as* discourse and convince their discourse community of its significance.

Repeated occurrence of a discourse means that although in principle everything can become a discourse, only those signs and communicational practices are likely to become a discourse that are repeatedly visible and display a series of significant uses. For instance, if someone comes up with the idea of a flying spaghetti monster and jokes about it among his friends in a bar, this idea does not necessarily constitute a discourse worthy of discussion. But if that idea takes off and gains significance in various contexts and groups, and if the idea materializes in institutions and juridical controversies, it makes sense to study the discourse on the Flying Spaghetti Monster (as Teemu Taira does in Wijsen and von Stuckrad forthcoming 2015).

The second condition is a tricky one because it is part of a relativist and pragmatist outlook that many find hard to accept. Theoretically, there is an infinite number of possibilities that scholars could identify as discourses. But the scholarly identification of discourses, or their grouping, is itself steered by the order of knowledge, tacit assumptions, and other determinants that the researcher can only partly be aware of. What is more, discur-

sive events (such as "9/11") can change—almost arbitrarily—the focus of interest in a scholarly and public community. Again, the double-bind of discourse research has a major influence on the "discursivization" of events.

But apart from the double-bind, scholars need to convince their audience of the meaningfulness of their groupings and their (re)construction of discursive constellations. They have to select and present their data in a way that their peers and readers accept as evidence of a point well made. This fact is even more important when it comes to groupings and constellations that run against the tacit knowledge and more common groupings of "facts" within that community. In historical discourse analysis—and perhaps in most research areas in the study of religion—the selection and interpretation of data have to be done "by hand." A quantitative collection of all usages of the terms used in an analysis can only be the beginning of a qualitative interpretation of every single use of it because it is the context (of irony, for instance, impossible to detect by a search machine) that determines the meaning of the discursive constellation. Identifying patterns of meaning is something that escapes quantitative methods. It is a hermeneutical process that needs the active work of the researcher and the combination of quantitative and qualitative research.

To convince our audiences, it makes sense to use data that has a clearly visible discursive impact (evidenced by numbers of sold copies of books, status of the author as leading scientist, national laws, large institutions, etc.). Often, it is these sources that subsequently determine discourses on other levels as well—even down to the names of grocery products and fashion labels—which in turn stabilize the overall discourse. Theoretically, however, we could start our collection of data on all levels, and there is no hierarchy in discursive significance.

That discourse research is in potential limitless—even if in practice the researcher has to make strategic decisions and set up a comprehensive research design—should be embraced as a

virtue of the field and not as a vice. Selectivity is nothing to be ashamed of, as long as the selections are based on, to recall Foucault's notion, "a group of controlled decisions" (Foucault 2010 [1972]: 29) that are capable of convincing our readers and discourse communities.

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Kocku von Stuckrad

Disenchantment

When Max Weber studied religions in modern society, he conceived of disenchantment as a more fundamental concept than secularization. A separation of law and religion occurred often in human history. But disenchantment refers to specific processes fundamental to modern social orders. According to Weber the institutions of economy, state, law, art, and science are not perennial self-evident phenomena; they are generated or shaped by people acting according certain principles— religious ones included. Weber originally made this observation in regard to market economy. Besides favorable external conditions for a rising capitalist economy a certain ethos of the actors is necessary. Impending capitalism needs the support of an internal power—an ethos—that is able to bring down its opponent: *traditionalism*. "A person does not 'by nature' want to make more and more money, but simply to live—to live in the manner in which he is accustomed to live, and to earn as much as is necessary for this" (2002 [1904–1905]: 16]). This traditional resistance was broken by Puritanism. Instead of offering sacraments as a path to salvation, it required from the believers a methodical pattern of working and an ascetic abstention from the benefits it yielded. It was this new subjective ethos of the actors that generated and shaped the capitalist type of economy, producing an anonymous market.

In order to place this case in relation to the whole of human cultural development, Weber started studying the history of world religions. In the context of this endeavor he first turned to the category of social action and introduced a crucial distinction. An action is instrumentally correct when relating to external natural laws; but it may be also called rational when it is based on an intelligible subjective meaning that consistently informs the practical attitudes of actors to the world. When reflecting on this subjective meaning Weber acknowledged that even an action oriented towards magical conceptions may be called rational. "In a world increasingly divested of magic [*mit zunehmender Entzauberung der Welt*], religiosity must take on increasingly (subjective) irrational meaning relationships (ethical or mystical, for instance)" (1981 [1913]: 155). New types of religiosity emerge (ethics of commitment and mysticism) that deny any inherent meaning to the world: to nature, society, and history.

"Disenchantment" does not only denote a denial of inherent meaning, but it is a process generating worldviews and ethics that are able to cope with the experience of a world devoid of meaning. Humans are longing for meaning in their life. Since their longing necessarily faces failure, people turn to specialists who restore their confidence in a meaningful world. With respect to this issue Weber studied and described the various types of