

# 'JUST FOLLOW THE MONEY': THE COLD WAR, THE HUMANISTIC STUDY OF RELIGION, AND THE FALLACY OF INSUFFICIENT CYNICISM

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*Contrary to studies that argue there is no direct link between Cold War era politics and the shift in the United States from confessional to tax-supported Humanistic studies of religion, this paper explores whether such direct evidence does in fact exist. Focusing mainly on the National Defense Fellowships that were instituted by the US federal government soon after the launch of Sputnik, the essay concludes that there is considerable warrant for further investigations into the public and private funding that made the Humanistic study of religion a reality in the mid-1960s to late 1960s. Given current worldwide political and military developments, and the manner in which some scholars of religion are arguing for the relevance of the study of religion for those wishing to ensure the spread of liberal democracy, it may now be the time to reconsider the Cold War history of our field.*

KEYWORDS history of the study of religion; Cold War; Danforth Foundation; humanities; National Defense Education Act; National Defense Fellowships

I frequently chide myself for running afoul of what I might call the fallacy of insufficient cynicism. I had not, for example, imagined the lengths to which the FBI would go to investigate even the most trifling aspects of life in academe in the early Cold War period. (Cumings 1998,166)

### **Sputnik and the Rise of Religious Studies**

In the early 1990s I attended a guest lecture given by David Miller, the well-known Jungian scholar of myth and religion, that he delivered at the University of Tennessee. As I recall, his lecture argued for the continued relevance of the Humanities for the mission of the university, lamenting cuts to funding for higher education in the United States. To help make the argument that a new renaissance in the Humanities was required, he drew on the example of the Soviet launch of Sputnik, on 4 October 1957, and the US response of increasing funding throughout the university—what, since then, I have learned was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, signed into law just 11 months after Sputnik's launch and 1 month prior to the founding of the National Aeronautical and Space Agency. The mention of the Soviet satellite in this lecture on myth struck me as odd, for I did not immediately see the link between the nearly 50-year-old, 184-pound, beachball-sized satellite and the lecturer's argument concerning the relevance of the study of myth for the future well-being of the nation. I specifically recall that, as I sat there trying to make the leap from this lecture to Sputnik's steady beeps that I have heard only in scratchy recordings, I realised that my inability to connect these dots was not shared by most others attending the lecture, for whom the mention of Sputnik was, apparently, a transparent reference filled with obvious meaning and continued relevance.<sup>1</sup>

Although I have no wish to over-read this one brief aside, I also wish to avoid dismissing it as a purely innocent, rhetorical move, thus falling victim to what one writer who has studied the impact of the Cold War on area studies has called the fallacy of insufficient cynicism. Because far too many books on the history of the study of religion portray the field as if it was solely driven by great ideas and deeply personal belief commitments that are necessarily disconnected from any socio-political context—presuming, as some might, that the impersonal and irresistible force of secularisation was responsible for the advent of our academic discipline—I choose to read this casual aside somewhat cynically, or at least with a great deal of suspicion. I therefore see the juxtaposition of the launch of the first Sputnik and this lecturer's thoughts on the continued health of the study of myth and religion—not to mention the nation—as providing a point of entry into the critical analysis of the socio-political context from which the publicly funded study of religion arose in the United States.

The suspicion that prompts this reading gains momentum, I believe, when we recover the arguments from writers in the Cold War era who were equally persuaded that the Humanities were just as necessary as research in the

so-called hard sciences if the worldwide pre-eminence of the so-called Western culture was to be ensured. Although I could easily cite a writer such as Mircea Eliade to support my contention, instead, consider the comments of Dennis Gabor (1900–1979)—the Hungarian-born, British physicist and humanist who won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1971—published in the journal *Encounter* in May 1960: ‘It is a sad thought’, he writes:

that our civilization has not produced a *New Vision* which could guide us into a new ‘Golden Age’ which has now become physically possible, but only physically ... Who is responsible for this tragi-comedy of Man frustrated by success? ... Who has left Mankind without a vision? The predictable part of the future may be the job for electronic predictors but the part of it which is not predictable, which is largely a matter of free human choice, is not the business of the machines, nor of scientists ... but it ought to be, as it was in the great epochs of the past, the prerogative of the inspired humanists. (quoted in the foreword to Holbrook 1965, ix)

Read into its historical context, Gabor’s effort to link Humanistic learning to technological advances, all for the purpose of a civilisational renaissance, becomes all the more interesting, especially given that the monthly British periodical in which these comments were published was one of many initiatives undertaken by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a Paris-based, CIA-established organisation that flourished between 1950 and 1967.<sup>2</sup> That Gabor’s comments were then used by Clyde Holbrook to set the table for his well-known 1965 apologia for reconceiving the study of religion as a Humanistic discipline is all the more significant. Although hesitating to accept Gabor’s portrait of the Humanist as an ‘inspired prophet’, after quoting these lines the general editor for the series in which Holbrook’s volume appeared—Richard Schlatter—at least acknowledges in his Foreword that Humanistic scholarship ‘is essential to enable us to distinguish the inspired prophet from the fanatical Pied Pipers’ (Holbrook 1965, ix).<sup>3</sup> This in turn helps to establish Holbrook’s own argument that the non-sectarian, Humanistic study of religion is essential to a ‘liberalizing education’, as in when he observes that:

one of the most persuasive reasons offered for the resurgence of interest in religion in the academic world was the overdue realization by all but the most prejudiced opponents that religious phenomena constitute so large a segment of human experience that without specialized study and instruction in it, a college or university could scarcely be regarded as offering a liberalizing education. (Holbrook 1965, 68–69)

Keeping in mind this often found linkage between a renaissance of Western civilisation in general and the future well-being of the United States in particular, on the one hand, and the Humanistic scholar of religion conceived as someone who is ‘directly and pertinently related to a most important area of human life’ (Holbrook 1995, 290), on the other,<sup>4</sup> I turn my attention to a recent,

important book—important because it stands out as the only book-length investigation of the Cold War setting of the study of religion in both Europe and North America.<sup>5</sup> Despite the impressive range of its chapters and the obvious expertise of its 22 authors, my present interest concerns merely its final section, notably those chapters by Luther H. Martin (2001) and Donald Wiebe (2001). Their contributions to this volume tackle the question of whether the US field's rebirth in the 1960s merely coincided with the peak of the Cold War or whether the publicly funded, Humanistic study of religion—for good or ill—was intended as but one more way to defeat the 'godless Communists'. Deciding this point is no easy task for, as Wiebe points out:

there is no direct evidence that any direct support, whether from government agency or private foundation, is responsible for the entry of religious studies into the curriculum of college and universities in North America in the 1960s and no evidence that its research agendas were influenced to any great degree by specific Cold War values. (Wiebe 2001, 280)

Although I agree that the evidence is hard to come by, before trying to link the realisation that the Soviet Union possessed the technology to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles to the invention of the Humanistic study of religion, it is worthwhile to tease out two separate issues Wiebe addresses in this passage. That is:

1. on the one hand there is the issue of determining whether there existed any direct public and private funding that was 'responsible for the entry of religious studies into the curriculum of college and universities in North America'—I take this to be a structural or institutional level of analysis; and,
2. on the other, we have the issue of determining whether there exists any 'evidence that its research agendas were influenced to any great degree by specific Cold War values'—what amounts to an analysis of the specific sort of content made possible by its institutional structure.

Whereas both Martin's and Wiebe's essays are more concerned with the latter, for the time being I am exclusively concerned with the former. So, to rephrase: regardless of the type of scholarship carried out in these newly founded, publicly funded programs—whether openly theological, crypto-theological, or social scientific—I am concerned with how it is that these institutional niches came into existence in the first place.

### **Cold War Developments**

With this structural or institutional level of analysis in mind, then, we must begin with the thoroughly historical presumption that although no single cause probably exists, there may nonetheless be considerable circumstantial evidence to prompt further studies of what the Cold War setting had to do with the widely successful invention of Departments of Religious Studies all across the United

States in the mid-1960s to late 1960s and early 1970s. For I believe that the reinvention of the confessional (largely Protestant) study of religion as a Humanistic discipline eligible for tax dollars cannot adequately be understood apart from the context provided by the Cold War.<sup>6</sup> Certainly those who participated in the invention of the publicly funded study of religion did not necessarily report their Cold War setting as being among the causes of their efforts to invent a new academic discipline; following Schrecker in her study of McCarthyism's impact on the US university system, I therefore wish to follow a rule basic to work throughout the human sciences: 'It is important ... to go beyond the rhetoric of the period and examine what these people were doing rather than what they were saying' (Schrecker 1986, 10).

This having been said, I must say that we would be terribly mistaken if we tackled the study of any complex socio-historical system by looking for smoking guns in the hands of lone agents or a small group of co-conspirators. It is not difficult to recover historical evidence that people at this time all throughout the United States thought, along with such a man as Henry Luce (Chairman of Time Inc., and founder of the now well-known Luce Foundation that has played an important role in helping to fund research in our own field) that the Cold War was a holy war and that the United States, like ancient Israel, was 'obviously designed for some special phase of God's eternal purpose' (Saunders 1999, 281).<sup>7</sup> But linking such rhetoric of Manifest Destiny to the entry of the study of religion into the family of publicly funded Humanity fields requires evidence. So, although I acknowledge that we will find no smoking gun, I for one can smell an awful lot of smoke when I read documents from this era and when I map the history of our field in the United States against the dramatic political events that were taking place at this very time. In this exploratory paper I therefore wish to sketch one way that we can at least begin to accumulate enough initial, circumstantial evidence to warrant further investigations of the connection between the Cold War-time footing of the US economy and the invention of the Humanistic study of religion. Contrary to Wiebe, then, I am therefore inclined to agree with Martin, who concludes that 'the study of religion which was developed in the United States during this period must be seen as being in some way legitimated by the religio-political obsessions of that time, certainly in the selection of Asian and Third World "religions" for its dominant subject matter' (2001, 220). The trick will be determining just what constituted the 'in some way legitimated by' to which Martin refers. If we can do this, then we will have gone considerable distance toward finding the direct evidence Wiebe rightly calls us to provide.

Identifying these links is, however, not merely an idle intellectual activity. Given events that have transpired over the past few years, this project takes on special significance since the extent to which the United States' so-called War on Terrorism has impacted economies and political structures around the world is more than likely the closest we have come to seeing the worldwide effects of the Cold War some 50 years ago. Like the Cold War, the War on Terrorism can easily

be understood as a clash of social systems (what Tariq Ali [2002] has called a 'clash of fundamentalisms') that is now being acted out—often violently—in a host of international sites, against an enemy that is both highly visible (e.g. stereotypes of the fanatical 'Islamist', either on the battlefield, protesting in the streets in some distant setting, or caged as 'unlawful combatants' at a US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) and utterly invisible at the same time (as with the one-time anti-Communist, and even anti-homosexual rhetorics in the United States, even your neighbor might be one of 'them'—the proverbial enemy in our midst). If the Cold War setting of the emergent field turns out to be one of the necessary pre-conditions for establishing the Humanistic study of religion as a legitimate academic pursuit, then perhaps the War on Terrorism, and the widely shared presumption that the study of deeply personal beliefs somehow helps to bring about mutual understanding and tolerance among so-called peace-loving peoples everywhere, will also play a role in helping to understand any efforts to strengthen and extend the influence of the Humanistic study of religion.<sup>8</sup> For, as I have argued elsewhere, if the discourse on tolerance and mutual understanding that we find throughout the study of religion is but one method for establishing a liberal hegemony (McCutcheon 2001, chapter 10; 2003, chapter 12), then there may be surprising contemporary relevance in writing the field's Cold War history.

To break out of the apolitical 'history of ideas' model that continues to dominate our attempts to understand the development of our own field and its current social role<sup>9</sup>—and thereby distinguishing what McCumber (2001, xx) calls merely intellectual from a disciplinary history—we could follow the advice of the infamous informant code-named 'Deep Throat' who is said to have told Watergate investigators, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, to 'just follow the money'. For once removed from privately funded Divinity schools, a significant infusion of public dollars constituted the necessary precondition for the field's survival. We can follow the money in a variety of ways: the direct as well as the indirect funds; the criteria for, and awarding of, graduate fellowships; the ways in which new journals were funded; the sabbatical and research grants; the grants for curriculum development and faculty sabbaticals; along with contributions to the general operating expenses of new university departments and library collections. We could do this by examining such sources as the Pew Charitable Trusts; originating in 1948 (shortly after the end of the second world war and at the dawn of the Cold War), its aim was to assist 'America's will to protect democracy in Europe and the world'—as described by the Trusts' own history. (In 2001 alone its religion program awarded twelve grants for a total of over \$20 million.<sup>10</sup>) We could also investigate such other private funding sources as the Danforth, Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, Hazen, and Luce Foundations, all agencies whose mid-twentieth-century missions and practices dovetailed nicely with attempts to bring about a renaissance in American democracy in particular, as well as recovering and spreading what were understood to be the deepest moral values yet attained by Western civilisation, in general.

In following the money, we will of course have to distinguish between various types of funding: not just private and public, but those funds that had a structural impact (e.g. funding renovations of facilities as well as new construction, establishing new language and areas studies programs, providing matching funds for professor's and support staff salaries, etc.) and those that played a supplemental role in shaping particular research and publishing agendas (e.g. incentives to do research in specific content areas, assistance to attend certain conferences, learn specific modern or ancient languages, win grants for certain types of sabbatical research, etc.). Given that my concern is with the structural level of analysis,<sup>11</sup> then to start us on this project of tracking 'the infusion of public funding that followed upon the successful 1957 launch of Sputnik' (as phrased by Martin 2001, 212), I would like to focus on a significant source of public funds which comprised one of the most wide-sweeping educational reform initiatives in US history: the National Defense Education Act (NDEA).

Signed into law on 2 September 1958, the NDEA was originally authorised for only 4 years but was subsequently extended in scope and duration, eventually becoming part of the 1965 Higher Education Act, and then absorbed into 1980s far-reaching Amendments to the 1965 Act. (For details on the history of the NDEA legislation, see Clowse 1981.) The original Act of 1958 was comprised of several programs, or titles, each addressing a distinct area of need: student loans for higher education (a portion of which could be 'forgiven' if one went into a teaching profession; \$1,305,043.00 alone were forgiven in this manner after only the first 4 years of the Act); funds to strengthen science, mathematics, and modern foreign language instruction throughout all school levels; graduate student funding known as National Defense Fellowships (NDF); funds for increasing the quality of guidance counselling and career-aptitude testing; funds to establish centers for the study of modern foreign languages; funds for vocational and technological training; and funds to assist the collection, dissemination, and analysis of scientific research (United States Government 1959a). Over the coming decade a gravy train rolled throughout virtually every field in the university, with billions of tax dollars being invested to carry out the Act's various programs—by my accounting, just over \$123 million was spent in the Act's first year (1959–1960); in each subsequent year the government spent approximately \$225 million (1960–1961), \$191 million (1961–1962), \$213 Million (1962–1963), and \$228 million (1963–1964), for a total over its first 5 years of \$980 million.<sup>12</sup> In today's dollars the total for just the first 5 years alone would be nearly \$6 billion.<sup>13</sup>

The rationale for this massive redistribution of wealth is apparent in the opening line to the legislation's 'Declaration of Policy' where it is observed that 'the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women'. As it goes on to read: 'The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available. The defence of this Nation de-

pend upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex scientific principles' (United States Government 1959a, 1581). The Act, therefore, was designed to address what lawmakers termed an 'educational emergency' by correcting 'as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology'. The Act therefore aimed to 'provide substantial assistance ... in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defence needs of the United States' (United States Government 1959a, 1582).

Although the source of this 'educational emergency' is not specifically mentioned in the legislation, it is not difficult to connect this rhetoric of crisis to the launch of Sputnik, especially when reading the NDEA's early annual reports. 'Passage of the act', the reader of the report for the fiscal year 1963 is told, 'was occasioned by the sudden challenge to our scientific and technological supremacy posed by the appearance in orbit of the first man-made satellite', ominously adding, 'a satellite made not in the United States but in Russia' (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1964, 1). While the NDEA report for 1963 mentions various other causal factors that also existed at this time—such as 'the explosion of new knowledge', the effect of previously insufficient funding for education, inequalities between various school systems throughout the country, and 'the continued rise of school enrolments and the tidal wave threatening to engulf the colleges'—I am not persuaded by the report's efforts to portray these factors as the 'deeper causes [which were] at work demanding changes and improvements to our educational system' (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1964, 1). Simply put, regardless of how important such 'deeper causes' were, or how long reformers may have been lobbying for what admittedly might have been a long overdue overhaul of the US educational system, it was the steady drumbeat of a highly effective rhetoric of crisis occasioned by the launch of a man-made Soviet satellite—broadcast first on ham radios tracking Sputnik's faint beeps, soon played out in photo spreads in *Life* magazine chronicling advances in Soviet schooling, reported in *New York Times* exposés (as early as November 1957) on the crisis in the American educational system (Dickson 2001, 160), and eventually debated in US Congressional hearings—that provided the catalyst for this massive funding initiative signed into law by President Eisenhower.<sup>14</sup> If we take into account that, despite the fact that '[b]y 1953 a flood of articles and books had appeared' (Dow 1991, 11) advocating extensive education reform (one of which bore the wonderful title, *Quackery in the Public Schools*) but, by the 'early 1950s a series of bills in support of public education had been introduced in Congress, but not a single one reached the president's desk for signature' (Dickson 2001, 225), then it seems reasonable to infer that without 'a satellite made not in the US but in Russia' passing over US soil every 96 minutes, little educational reform would have happened. In fact, the first annual report's introductory claim that

'the defense and security of the Nation are inseparably bound with education' loses much, if not all, of its rhetorical punch without the crisis occasioned by the Soviet satellite (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1960, 1).<sup>15</sup> That the national security argument, although stated first in this report, immediately leads to what is described as the 'single purpose' of the Act—that every young person from the day he enters school should have an opportunity to develop his gifts to the fullest extent—strikes me as evidence of Cold War double-speak, in so much as the structural level of analysis (i.e. the military–industrial–educational argument) is personified, and thereby obscured, by means of the 'equality of access' argument. Studies of our field's history that equally shift the conversation from the analysis of structural constraints to individual motives and beliefs of isolated actors strike me as just as obscurantist. Such obscurantism is, however, to our benefit if we wish to portray our scholarly pursuits as somehow removed from history, as if the content of our work and the ideals of scholarship could somehow float free of the practical, material context that makes both of these possible. Taking into the account the general unwillingness of many US philosophers to understand their own discipline as having a specific history, McCumber phrases the point as follows:

if philosophy professors provide no account of themselves, of how they got to be where they are or of where they are going, then the impression given to their students is inevitably that they somehow dropped from heaven. What drops from heaven is hardly open to discussion, much less criticism. The usefulness of such a standpoint to the professor can hardly be disputed. (McCumber 2001, 11)

Since this understanding of the meaning and content of their work as somehow predating historical and thus contingent grammars and structures also informs the self-understanding of many scholars of religion (who are more at home working in the history of big ideas), it is little wonder, then, that as Wiebe points out in the introduction to his chapter, we 'seldom even come across mention of the Cold War in the literature of the field' (Wiebe 2001, 267). We seldom come across explicit mention of it, perhaps because—at least as McCumber (2001, 18) thinks, with reference to the effect the McCarthy purges had on the discipline of philosophy—it may be our 'repressed family secret'.

### **National Defense Fellowships**

Although reversing this repression means determining the ways in which all of the Act's various funds (i.e. titles) were used, I wish to begin to 'follow the money' merely by focusing my gaze rather tightly, on the use of the NDF, which fall under Title IV of the Act. My aim is to use these Fellowships as an example of how the necessary (although hardly sufficient) conditions were put into place that made it possible, perhaps even desirable, to reinvent the confessional study of religion as a tax-supported, Humanistic discipline.

Before outlining to whom they were (and were not) awarded, let me briefly describe the Fellowships: worth \$2,000 in their first year (or approximately \$12,400 in today's dollars, making the NDF competitive with some current graduate stipends), the award increased by \$200 per year and could be held by a doctoral student for a total of 3 years. In addition, recipients could receive an additional \$400 annually per dependent, and the institution in which recipients were pursuing their education received a yearly payment of \$2,500 to assist it in providing its educational services. In the Act's first year (1958–1959), 1,000 Fellowships were awarded nationally, and in each subsequent year 1,500 new Fellowships were awarded, such that soon several thousand recipients, all at different stages of their doctoral studies, could be holding the Fellowship in any given year. Students who were eligible for this award were those pursuing a doctoral degree in one of the new or expanded existing programs in the sciences, mathematics, or modern foreign language study. However, despite this apparently narrow definition of eligibility, from the outset doctoral students in not just such areas as biology, theoretical physics, or electrical engineering received these funds, but also students earning a Ph.D. in various disciplines within the Social Sciences and the Humanities. (A quick search on google.com reveals scores of academics whose Humanities Ph.D.s were earned in the United States during this time period and who list the NDF on their curriculum vitae.) Although students enrolled in, for example, Chinese language and history along with what was then called Russian studies seem to have obviously met the overt geo-political intentions of the Act, students working in entomology, American studies, veterinary medicine, music, English, philosophy, and Classics were all awarded Fellowships in the Act's inaugural year.

As you might be able to guess, what I am working toward is a list of those doctoral students pursuing the study of religion, in any one of its late 1950s and early 1960s forms, who also received this funding. Despite the fact that an organised field known as Religious Studies was still several years away from being a nationwide reality, as you will see from Table 1, over the course of the Act's first few years, the study of religion in its many guises was well represented among the ranks of National Defense Fellows.

To put these numbers into some sort of context, consider that in the NDEA's first year 18 of the available 1,000 NDF were awarded in an area that could be characterised as falling under the admittedly large umbrella of the study of religion (regardless how it was practised), whereas Departments of English received a total of 78 Fellowships.<sup>16</sup> Given that in the academic year 1959–1960 Departments of Religious Studies had yet to be instituted throughout the US public university system, and given that Departments of English had long been, and continue to be, a mainstay of the Humanities divisions of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, 18 Fellowships as compared with 78 is more than respectable. With this in mind, it is important to note at this point that, unlike some characterisations (for example, Wiebe 2001, 271), the Humanities benefited more than just indirectly from such federal, Cold War programs as the NDF. For

**TABLE 1**  
National Defense Education Act, 1958. Title IV: National Defense Fellowships (NDF): awards in areas of direct relevance to the study of religion, as a portion of the total number awarded per year per institution

School	Program	1959-1960	1960-1961	1961-1962	1962-1963
Claremont Graduate School	Religion: Oriental and Christian	-	4/19	3/12	-
Emory University, CA	Old Testament	3/9	-	-	-
University of Iowa, IA	Contemporary Religion	-	-	-	2/29
Brandeis, MA	Near Eastern and Judaic Studies	-	-	5/12	-
Columbia University, NY	Near and Middle East Studies	3/3	7/11	-	-
New York University, NY	Hebrew Culture and Civilization	3/3	5/15	4/11	-
Union Theological Seminary, NY	Theology	5/5	-	-	-
University of Rochester, NY	Church Music	-	5/13	-	-
Duke University, NC	Religion: Church Hist/Xian Ethics	-	4/18	3/19	-
Dropsie University, PA*	Comparative Religions	3/3	3/3	-	-
Brown University, RI	Religious Studies	1/5	4/24	2/25	-
University of Wisconsin, WI	Buddhist Studies	-	-	4/27	-
<b>Total</b>		18/28	32/103	21/106	2/29

Source: Report on the *National Defense Education Act, Fiscal Years 1961 and 1962*. A Summary of Programs Administered by the Office of Education Under Public Law 85-864. 1963. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 17. (The original table reports the school, area, and number of NDFs awarded over the course of the NDEA's first 4 years.)

\*Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning, founded in 1907 by a bequest from the estate of Moses Aaron Dropsie (1821-1905), was located in Philadelphia and produced over 200 doctoral degrees before it was destroyed by fire in 1981. Reconstituted as the Annenberg Research Institute in 1986, in 1993 it became the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, sponsoring post-doctoral research.

example, of the six general areas in which the first year's worth of NDF were awarded: Physical Science and Mathematics received 224 Fellowships (or 22 per cent of the total); Biological Sciences received 158 (16 per cent); Engineering received 59 (6 per cent); the Social Sciences received 264 (26 per cent); Education received 47 (5 per cent); and scholars in the Humanities received 248 (25 per cent). Accordingly, it is a mis-characterisation to see such programs as the NDEA as primarily devoted to research in the hard sciences and only secondarily (by means of a dispersion or trickle-down effect) of benefit to the Humanities. Returning to those awards that were given out in religion, doctoral students classified by the government as studying religion, in one way or another, received 0.18 per cent of the total number of Fellowships awarded in the first year of the Act (in which 1,000 NDF were awarded). The number of new Fellowships awarded in religion increased significantly to 32 out of 1,500 the following year (0.021 per cent), declined somewhat to 21 of 1,500 in 1961–1962 (0.014 per cent) and then virtually dropped off the radar screen altogether, numbering only two in 1962–1963, both of which were held by students at the University of Iowa (0.0013 per cent).<sup>17</sup>

Determining the cause of this drop in NDF awarded to religion doctoral students—and whether the severe drop was reversed by the invention of the Humanistic study of religion in the following years—probably holds a key to unlocking at least one of the direct, and unambiguous links between the Cold War funding initiatives for higher education and the reincarnation of the confessional study of religion as Religious Studies.<sup>18</sup> To help sketch how one might go about finding this key, consider that this time period, the early 1960s, is just when assorted lower court challenges to such things as public elementary school prayer were about to make it onto the docket of the US Supreme Court (e.g., *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962; *Abington v. Schempp*, 1963)—a time when the Court was just beginning to reconsider how the First Amendment's establishment and free exercise clauses impacted the place of religious instruction in the public school system. With this in mind, it makes sense that mid-twentieth-century students in the study of religion—in its many incarnations—would receive NDF funding and that the first annual report on the NDEA would single out and celebrate the fact that the NDF were 'unique among Federal fellowship programs in that it makes no restriction as to field of study and sets no priority among the various fields in the award of fellowships' (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1960, 15). It seems sensible, then, that funds in these early years were awarded to young scholars to study such topics as the Old Testament at Emory (a Methodist institution; Candler School of Theology was founded in 1914 and became part of Emory in 1915), Christian ethics at Duke (also with Methodist origins), Church Music at the University of Rochester (a private Baptist school founded in 1850), theology at Union Theological Seminary (founded in 1836 as a non-denominational Christian institution), and what was then called Comparative Religion at Dropsie University (the one-time school for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia, and now the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Judaic Studies, a post-doctoral research institute).

However, in 1964 the NDEA was amended by the 88th US Congress; among the changes introduced by this amendment was extending the Act to the study of nursing at accredited schools and, conversely, severely limiting the funding of religion studies. I quote at length from the *United States Statutes at Large* for 1964:

No fellowship shall be awarded under this title for study at a school or department of divinity. For the purpose of this subsection, the term 'school or department of divinity' means an institution, or department or branch of an institution, whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation or to prepare them to teach theological subjects'. (United States Government 1965, Public Law 88-665, 16 October 1964, Section 402 [d])

What is most fascinating about this amendment is just how different its spirit is from the current Bush administration's 'Faith-based initiative' as well as from the attitude of many openly theological, current members of such organisations as the American Academy of Religion. We must therefore recall that in the mid-1960s all studies of religion receiving public support were potentially seen to be in conflict with the establishment clause of the US Constitution's First Amendment. Indeed, as Richard Schlatter correctly point out in his 'Foreword' to Holbrook's 1965 volume:

A considerable body of American scholars are of the opinion that religious studies are no part of the humanities, no part of the liberal arts, not an objective scholarly discipline. These scholars think of traditional religious scholarship as a professional study preparatory to the tasks of indoctrination and conversion and want it relegated to the seminaries of the various denominations. (Holbrook 1965, ix-x)

The difference between then and now is striking, for despite the degree to which scholars of religion are still often mistaken for crypto-theologians, our place in the Humanities is generally taken for granted, so much so that—with a heaping dose of postmodern irony—theologians now openly claim membership in the publicly supported Humanistic study of religion. But 40 years ago this was not the case, as signified by the fact that the only explicitly singled-out groups who were *ineligible* to hold NDF were those doing doctoral work in a divinity school and those who were incapable of signing the oath attached to the NDEA; I quote once again at length from the *United States Statutes at Large*, this time from 1958:

No part of any funds appropriated or otherwise made available for expenditure under authority of this Act shall be used to make payments or loans to any individual unless such individual (1) has executed and filed with the Commissioner an affidavit that he does not believe in, and is not a member of and does not support any organization that believes in or teaches, the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence or by any

illegal or unconstitutional methods, and (2) has taken and subscribed to an oath or affirmation in the following form: 'I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America and will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States against its enemies, foreign and domestic'. (United States Government 1959a, Public Law 85-864, 2 September 1958, Section 1001 [f])<sup>19</sup>

So, apart from divinity students, the only other groups who could not hold a NDF were Communists as well as applicants who failed to disclose their criminal past (not counting crimes for which they were convicted prior to the age of 16 and minor traffic violations resulting in a fine of less than \$25). As an aside, I presume that the 1964 amendment also impacted those who were eligible to hold student loans under the NDEA, since 42 different theological institutions were involved in the Act's loan program during its second year (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1961, 4, Table 4).

### **Disciplinary Makeovers**

Although I would be remiss if I left the impression that I was arguing that divinity students in the early 1960s had anything significant in common with Communists and criminals (although, as pointed out to me by my colleague, Ted Trost, it is no secret that the Masters of Divinity degree was one of the domestic refuges of US anti-war protesters, making programs that offered these degrees possible targets for conservative politicians with a vendetta for the anti-war movement), I do wish to leave the clear impression that it was in the best self-interest of liberal scholars who studied religion in the early 1960s to persuade their peers in the university as well as their overseers in government, that they were as legitimate a scholarly pursuit as any other Humanistic discipline. If the pattern of NDF awarded to doctoral students in religion is any indication, at stake was their ability to receive not simply student funding, but significant grants toward the operating expenses of new institutional units. Although at this point it is based largely on speculation, I cannot help but think of this time period as being characterised by a dream come true for a generation of highly motivated young, entrepreneurial academics who had already been thoroughly disillusioned with the denominationally based study of religion and who were therefore primed to reinvent their field, along with their own scholarly interests, as but one more branch of the Humanities. After all, writing shortly after the US Congress amended the NDEA to exclude divinity students, Holbrook observed that '[t]he favorite dream of the seminary and college professor of religion is one in which at last the sluice gates of funds will be opened in his direction ... This dream should not be allowed to fade into fantasy' (Holbrook 1965, 275). As he goes on to speculate, 'if religion scholarship were more widely disengaged from theological institutions and placed within the framework of humanistic studies in universities, public and private, it could become the

recipient of funds now inaccessible to it ... Once this role [i.e., the study of religion as a humanistic subject] is firmly established, perhaps there will follow increased opportunities for the grants and support now made available to other humanistic scholars' (Holbrook 1965, 281–282).<sup>20</sup>

If I am correct that scholars in the mid-1960s to late 1960s were among the vanguard of those who worked to prevent this dream from becoming an idle fantasy—and I have no illusions about having made anything near to an airtight case in this one essay—then it is no coincidence that the more broadly salvific quest of the liberal Humanist scholar for the abiding permanence of Meaning lodged deep within the Human Spirit so efficiently replaced the more narrowly salvific quest of the liberal Protestant theologian's pre-occupation with the abiding permanence of the Faith in the Holy Spirit. Humanistic make-overs were happening all around these young scholars: the National Council on Religion in Higher Education (founded, along with the Kent Fellows Program, by Yale University's Charles Foster Kent in 1923) was reincarnated in 1962 as the Society of Religion in Higher Education—along with the Danforth Foundation taking over the funding for the Kent Fellowship Program—and was eventually renamed, in 1975, the Society for Values in Higher Education (SVHE). In its 50th year of publication *The Christian Scholar*—until 1953 it had been entitled *Christian Education*—was reconceived and renamed in 1967 as the SVHE's liberal humanist journal *Soundings*. Then, in 1965 Princeton University's Council of the Humanities, with financial support from the Ford Foundation (through its Ford Humanities Project), commissioned 14 'state-of-the-art' surveys of 'Humanistic Scholarship in America', two of which were Holbrook's already quoted volume, *Religion: A Humanistic Field*—concerned not only with 'acquainting a larger public with religion's role in the ensemble of the humanities'<sup>21</sup> (Holbrook 1965, xi), but also with the larger, nationalist task of documenting and correcting the fact that '[w]e do not produce [scholarship on religion] in proportion to our numbers or to the religious vitality of American culture' (Holbrook 1965, 258)<sup>22</sup>—along with Paul Ramsey's (1965) edited survey of the field's several subareas, simply entitled, *Religion*—'a volume on the state-of-the-art in the US that is equally concerned with persuading readers concerning the legitimacy of "new" fields in the study of religion' (as phrased in his essay on the History of Religions by Philip Ashby 1965, 3). It may hardly be coincidental, then, that the reinvention of the largely liberal, Protestant study of religion as a legitimate Humanistic discipline<sup>23</sup> that contributed to the general well-being of the US nation-state, happening as it was at a host of separate sites for undoubtedly differing reasons, eventually trickled-up (or down) to the national professional association; in 1967 the National Association of Bible Instructors was reconceived as the American Academy of Religion, and the former's *Journal of Bible and Religion* became the considerably broader and more liberal *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.<sup>24</sup> Reading such events in light of the significant funding opportunities that waited just around the corner, it is difficult not to see these almost simultaneous institutional changes in relation to the rewards

that awaited those who, in the mid-1960s, were interested in reconceptualising the study of religion.

Even if the origins of this shift from the confessional to the Humanistic ('non-sectarian') field lay in a host of other 'deeper causes' that long predated-Sputnik, I am arguing that without the perceived Soviet threat and the significant financial investment in higher education that followed closely upon the heels of the satellite, coupled with lawmakers weary about the public support of religion in an increasingly diverse society where the one-time White and Protestant hegemony could no longer simply be taken for granted, there would have been little practical benefit for investing the sort of individual and institutional time and effort necessary over the coming years to invent a new academic discipline. While not being so cynical as to think that it constitutes the sufficient cause or the infamous smoking gun, Sputnik and its direct fallout in the United States might at least be understood as providing one of the necessary precursors not only of the invention of 'wired, wireless, and satellite-linked technologies of everyday life in the twenty-first century' (Dickson 2001, 247), but also of the intellectual field that we take for granted today and in which some of us earn our daily bread; for good or ill, we are all direct beneficiaries of the Cold War rhetoric of crisis. Given that many who attended that talk at the University of Tennessee were scholars hired in the 1960s and early 1970s, many of whom had been active in the SVHE throughout their careers, I cannot help but speculate that, although it was lost on me, this knowledge might have had something to do with the obvious meaning of the lecturer's reference to Sputnik.

Whether or not the early field was comprised of eager, young cold warriors intent on fighting the 'godless Communists' with their deeply humane knowledge and keys to civilisation (I think here specifically of Mircea Eliade's new humanism), it was at least comprised largely of disillusioned liberal Protestant scholars who, although no longer part of a comfortable hegemony, nonetheless possessed sufficient cunning intelligence to take full advantage of a brief but significant window of opportunity to create a new field and a host of new jobs and, along the way, set the agenda that would shape the discipline for the coming generations (e.g. the continued dominance of the seminary model in Departments of Religious Studies). Even if we wish to suspend the cynicism that drives this analysis and, instead, simply understand our field's origins to the growing interest throughout the 1960s with 'things Asian', we would be hard pressed to enshrine these interests in the ethereal realm of merely disembodied curiosities, hermetically sealed-off from US foreign policy in Asia and changes in US immigrations laws (e.g. the US Immigration Act of 1965, which shifted the priority from European to Asian immigrants). However, if we let our cynicism run freely, then we might imagine liberal scholars of religion from two generations ago remarking, as Major General John B. Medaris once quipped several years after Sputnik's launch, 'If I could get hold of that thing, I would kiss it on both cheeks' (quoted in Dickson 2001, 223).<sup>25</sup> Simply put, Sputnik was good for all sorts of businesses.

## Conclusion

To better support the thesis that one cannot study the establishment of the Humanistic study of religion in the United States without taking into account its Cold War funding context will, of course, require far more research than I have provided in this exploratory paper. We will need to determine such things as: whether the rate of NDF awards to the study of religion rebounded over the course of the late 1960s to early 1970s and whether this can be directly linked to the fact that there no longer appeared to be a vague relationship between confessional theology and the study of religion; to what extent funds from such public, as well as private, sources that were explicitly aimed to promote democracy and address what President Dwight Eisenhower's 'National Day of Prayer' Proclamation of 1958 phrased as the 'unprecedented changes and challenges by an aggressive denial of Divine Providence' (United States Government 1959b, Proclamation, 1 August 1958), were used to establish the structural setting in which scholars could work to recover the irreducibly religious nature of human civilisation; the degree to which graduate students in the freshly constituted field of Religious Studies were eligible for federal loans to pursue their studies; and the history of such public funding initiatives as the Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowships as well as the Graduate Assistants in Areas of National Need fellowship program, and the role each has played in making possible the modern field of History of Religions (given its emphasis on fieldwork and language abilities).

Finally, to return to a topic treated only briefly at the outset of this paper, we will also have to investigate the specific involvement of a host of private funding agencies that might have directly contributed to the movement of Religious Studies Departments into the Humanities curriculum. Not long ago I learned that, dating from the early 1960s, funding from the Danforth Foundation was routinely awarded to public universities to pay a portion of the salary and benefits of a department chair for a new Department of Religious Studies for up to 3 years.<sup>26</sup> Founded in 1927, the Foundation's mission, as described in its annual report for 1958, was as follows:

The Danforth Foundation desires to be recognized as an educational foundation interested in all that touches American education, and with special interest in the legitimate and rightful place of the religious dimensions within the academic experience.<sup>27</sup>

With the generally liberal notion of 'religious dimensions' in mind, initial research into this has revealed some interesting funding: in its annual report for the 1962 fiscal year, the Danforth Foundation noted that it continued its 'modest "program" of special grants for the establishment of new departments of religion'.

This effort consists in the willingness to defray one-half the cost of a new department in any type of undergraduate college, including tax-supported

institutions, for a period of three years, on condition that the full support of the department will thereafter be guaranteed. (1958, 3)<sup>28</sup>

Citing the Foundation's long-time 'concern for values', the 1962 report alone itemises grants to 'aid in establishing a Department of Religion' at: Barnard College (the final payment of \$4,000, for a total of \$20,000); Gallaudet College (the second [\$3,950] of three payments); the University of Iowa (the final payment of \$13,333, for a total of \$40,000 'for expansion of graduate program of School of Religion'); the Pacific School of Religion (\$8,614 received as part of a \$24,000 grant to their Program of Religion in Higher Education); Shepherd College (the second [\$3,092] of three payments); Stanford University (the final payment of \$8,875, for a total of \$25,000 to 'support Department of Religion'); Temple University (the second [\$5,650] of three payments); and Whitman College (\$7,080). That grants during this time period were also awarded to Humanities programs (e.g. Southern Methodist University received \$140,000 total in the early 1960s for a 'program of Graduate Council of the Humanities'), strikes me as significant, especially given the 1964–1965 report that, after observing that '[t]he values at the heart of liberal education are rooted politically and socially in the Greco-Roman and Anglo-Saxon heritage, and morally and religiously in the Hebrew-Christian tradition', goes on to note:

The need that public schools and colleges in a democracy be non-sectarian has been interpreted to mean that they should also be secular, not merely in the defensible sense of being independent of religious bodies but in the unnecessary sense of being divorced from all religious interest ... [D]oes religion as a subject for curricular study belong in the offerings of higher education? This question, once widely debated, is now answered almost unanimously in the affirmative; and even those tax-supported institutions that long held back for fear, expediency, or simply a misapprehension about the church-state issue, are now introducing the discipline into their regular courses of study ... It is the Foundation's view that neither piety nor impiety is a substitute for education's giving proper place for the consideration of non-sectarian religious views. (Danforth Foundation Annual Report 1964–1965, 20–21)

After placing great weight on the difference between sectarian and non-sectarian religious views (a.k.a. Humanistic scholarship on religion),<sup>29</sup> the report then goes on to name several additional programs that benefited from 'its continuance of a program of aid to institutions establishing new departments of religion, whereby one-half of the salary of the chairman is provided for a period of three years': the Dayton campus of the Miami and Ohio State Universities; Florida State University; and Pitzer College; and a final grant is noted, to the Society for Religion in Higher Education, 'to establish a program of fellowships for teachers of Asian religions'.

Although considerable further research on private and public funding of religious studies remains to be done,<sup>30</sup> to my way of thinking it does not take a conspiracy theorist to conclude that both the NDEA and the involvement of private funding sources (funding contingent, in the case of the Danforth Foundation, on the institution normalising the new department within 3 years) constitute sufficient evidence of a direct link between ‘the entry of religious studies into the curriculum of college and universities in North America in the 1960s’ (as phrased by Wiebe) and ‘the heady days of academics’ (Dow 1991, 4) in the period immediately following the launch of Sputnik. Demonstrating the specifics of his direct, structural linkage and the ways in which these funds created ‘opportunities for research [and] ... stimulat[ed] relations among scholars’ (Holbrook 1965, 270)—whether such research, journals, conferences, and professional associations were impacted ‘to any great degree’ or to any degree whatsoever—will, as Wiebe phrases it, ‘have to await another occasion’ (Wiebe 2001, 284, n. 10). My hope is that the evidence I have provided warrants just such another occasion, for—giving the last word to Holbrook—‘only the remarkably unperceptive would imagine that problems such as these could be treated without confrontation at last with the fateful question of financial support for religion scholarship’ (Holbrook 1965, 270).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Brief versions of this paper were presented at the 2002 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion conference in Denver, CO and the 2003 meeting of the American Academy of Religion, held in Atlanta, GA (as part of its ‘Cultural History of the Study of Religion’ Consultation). The author thanks Bill Arnal, Willi Braun, Bruce Lincoln, Luther H. Martin, Malory Nye, and Donald Wiebe for their comments on earlier versions of the paper.

#### NOTES

1. Although this anecdote relies on personal memory, it is confirmed by a later paper by the same author, which once again makes use of the Sputnik example (Miller 1999). For instance, he writes:

Forty-two years ago this nation responded forthrightly to a wake-up call in education. Sputnik was the alarm ... It constituted a clarion call, a mandate for scientific and technological education. In October of 1957, the first of Soviet Russia’s spacecraft was launched, not only on the horizon of the planet, but also in the consciousnesses, of Americans everywhere. And America responded. For a third of a century, more than two educational generations, this nation heeded the implicit mandate of Sputnik. The United States achieved superiority and strength in science and technology, able to respond to the

needs of the world and to our needs. But the times have changed ... America is experiencing in these post-modern, postcold-war times a second wake-up call, a clarion call, a mandate that is at least of the magnitude of Sputnik. Nor now are science and technology what is needed, though these too are always important. Now what is crucial, crucial for the survival of our race and planet, has little to do with information and data, with sound bites or megabytes, not even with kilobytes and gigabytes. We now need to know and think through the myths that divide, and understand the mythology that unites. For myth—the stories remembered, beloved, and believed by young and old, male and female, from long ago and from yesterday, north and south, east and west—such stories (however out of date) are vessels which carry the ultimate signification of what is, at its lowest and highest, most human ... [Joseph] Campbell and [James] Hillman sensed the need for myth when we were responding to Sputnik with science ... We are now called by our *postmodern* crises to education in mythology just as surely and just as crucially as the Sputnik of a *modern* time called America to education in science and technology. The world of activism is giving us an archetypal wake up call.

2. As phrased in the opening lines of Frances Saunders' book, *The Cultural Cold War*:

During the height of the Cold War, the US government committed vast resources to the secret programme of cultural propaganda in western Europe. A central feature of this programme was to advance the claim that it did not exist. It was managed, in great secrecy, by America's espionage arm, the Central Intelligence Agency. The centrepiece of this covert campaign was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, run by CIA agent Michael Josselson from 1950 to 1967. Its achievements—not least its duration—were considerable. At its peak, the Congress for Cultural Freedom had offices in thirty-five countries, employed dozens of personnel, published over twenty prestige magazines [and funded a 'clearing house' for the worldwide distribution of such other cultural periodicals as *Partisan Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Hudson Review*, *Sewanne Review*, *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, *Daedalus*, etc.], held art exhibitions, owned a news and feature service, organized high-profile international conferences, and rewarded musicians and artists with prizes and public performances. Its mission was to nudge the intelligentsia of western Europe away from its lingering fascination with Marxism and Communism towards a view more accommodating of 'the American way' (Saunders 1999, 1; see also 333 for the list of journals included in the Congress' 'world family of magazines').

3. In Holbrook's hands, this same argument is presented as follows: 'A scholar need not feel charged with the responsibility of saving civilisation, although more than one has moved his age into new and fruitful channels of human effort ... His duty, more modestly put, is to lay before his generation his knowledge and assessment of the past, its appalling failures and disfigurements of the human and divine images no less than its highest aspirations and spiritual achievements' (Holbrook 1965, 289). This normative role suggests affinity between Holbrook's scholar of religion c. 1965 and that of such later writers as Carl Raschke who argue that scholars of religion ought to identify 'aberrations of religious thinking and behavior' (Raschke 1986, 136; for a critique of this view, see McCutcheon 1997a).
4. Although a specific type of politics can now be understood to be driving arguments that establish these particular linkages, to writers from this historical period these associations were self-evident and the result of what they considered to be value-free research. As Holbrook writes later in his book, in an attempt to argue against those who held that the study of religion ought to be a form of religious pluralism directed toward mutual self-understanding of Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism (the US pre-eminent religions in the early 1960s): 'The notion that the university's offerings and its employment of personnel should be controlled by the aim of reflecting cultural conditions outside the university is a fallible principle. Nowhere else does it hold ... [T]he university operates on a principle of selectivity, the criteria of which are established by the institution itself ... Insofar as the university cherishes and makes effective the ideal of serving as the critic and leader of a vital culture, it must retain its autonomy' (Holbrook 1965, 178). This quotation nicely demonstrates the rhetorical utility of the *sui generis* strategy (i.e. the argument concerning the autonomy of the university and its ideals from historical pressures), in so much as it is a way of insulating this institution from one set of cultural influences while—at least when judged from today's vantage point—it had long before internalised yet another set of cultural influences (e.g. the crisis in democracy that required the intervention of the Humanist). Specifically, Holbrook effectively uses this rhetoric of autonomy to distinguish the emerging Humanistic study of religion (i.e. the study of religion as providing access to a deep and enduring aspect of the human experience) from the previously existing confessional study of religion as carried out in (largely Protestant, sometimes evangelical) Divinity schools.
5. Although much has been written on, for example, the direct impact of Cold War funding and US security needs and the invention of such pursuits as area studies and international studies, almost no research has gone into the Cold War's impact on the study of religion.
6. Neusner attributes this 'reinvention' to explicit Cold War needs: 'the Cold War required us to understand the faith and life of strangers ... The field of the academic study of religion was reinvented in the United States, the first naturally, authentically multicultural field America would produce' (Neusner &

Neusner 1995, 23). Although I believe that the content of the field may indeed have been directed by such Cold War needs (something I have discussed in print; for example, McCutcheon 1997b, 163; see also Martin 2001), in this paper I am interested solely in the establishment of the institutional structure in which various forms of the publicly funded study of religion were carried out. Distinguishing among the various types of scholarship carried out within these units, and then arguing for the priority of any one in particular, is a separate project.

7. Saunders is quoting John Kobler (1968. *Henry Luce: His Time, Life, and Fortune*. London: Macdonald).
8. For example, although I would not necessarily criticise Departments for seeing current interest in the relevance of Arabic civilisation as an opportunity to press university administrations for adding much needed (and sadly absent) faculty to their Departments, the manner in which Departments of Religious Studies all too often normalise one particular type of Islam (that which is generally open to capitalist investment, liberal democratic values, and thus understood as 'tolerant' and 'pluralistic') is, in my opinion, very problematic. It is problematic because of the manner in which it legitimises only one type of Islam—not surprisingly, that which furthers our own national interests—as if it was an extension of some originary essence, all at the expense of other equally legitimate, historical forms of Islam that, after they pass through our lens, are understood as aberrant, deviant, fundamentalist, extremist, fanatical, and thus derivative and wrong. On this point, see McCutcheon (2004).
9. For example, like almost all histories of the field, Hart (1999) makes little or no reference to the wider socio-political context in which the non-confessional study of religion developed in the United States. While this frame of reference (what I am characterising as a 'history of ideas' approach, somewhat akin to the 'great books' approach in some liberal arts curricula) is hardly wrong, the almost exclusive reliance on this one scale of analysis in forming our self-understanding strikes me as a way in which we authorise (i.e. dehistoricise) our practices by disconnecting them from their contingent conditions.
10. See [http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/grants\\_item.cfm?image = img3&program\\_area\\_id = 7](http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/grants_item.cfm?image = img3&program_area_id = 7).
11. If pressed, I would argue that although these two issues can be separated analytically, they are intimately related. Although it is not my intention to support a deterministic reading (i.e. that the content of these units and topics under investigation in research and teaching were wholly determined by their structure and source of funding), I would argue that the broad parameters set by the ways in which these units were structured and reproduced made certain sorts of scholarship not just unpopular but, perhaps, unimaginable. If we were to rely on the analogy of a language's grammar and the possible meaning of its sentences and words, even grammatically transgressive instances of language-use (e.g. slang, swearing, etc.) still conform to the larger

- set of conditions that make meaning possible. Therefore, studies that separate structure from content, although analytically useful, have their limitations.
12. These numbers are derived from the actual allocations reported each year. In many cases the Congressional authorisation was for considerably more funds than were requested.
  13. The conversion rates—obtained from web-based inflation conversion tables—varied from 0.161 for 1959 dollars to 0.170 for 1963 dollars.
  14. Interestingly, in the midst of his own argument concerning the essential role played by the Humanistic study of religion in fulfilling the university's 'liberalising' function, Holbrook also points out the demographic argument: 'Nor should it be overlooked that increasing numbers of students find their way to publicly supported institutions, a fact which makes more imperative the need for providing first-rate opportunities for study of crucially important segments of culture, including, of course, religion' (Holbrook 1965, 174).
  15. An example of but one pre-Sputnik, post-World War II reform-minded work on US education is Bernard Iddings Bell's (1949) *Crisis in Education*. 'If our civilization is to ... survive,' Bell speculated, 'it will be saved... by leaders of trained intelligence' (Bell 1949, 63; cited also by Dow 1991, 11). Among the proposals that Bell believed would save 'our civilization'—a phrase nicely at home with other forms of Cold War rhetoric—was religious teaching in the nation's school system.
  16. The schools receiving 1959–1960 NDF in English were: the University of Arkansas (five), Claremont Graduate School (five), University of Southern California (eight), University of Connecticut (eight), University of Notre Dame (six), University of Kansas (three; this includes English/Folklore), University of Mississippi (four), Washington University (five), SUNY, Buffalo (three), University of Rochester (five), Duke University (five), Western Reserve University (4), University of Oklahoma (three), University of Pennsylvania (five), Rice University (five), and Texas Technological College (three). Also, in 1961–1962 a total of 102 NDF grants were eligible to be awarded in English alone, plus 19 more in Comparative Literature, making a total of roughly 10 per cent of all new NDF awards for that school year (see US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1961–1962).
  17. According to the NDEA documents that list the doctoral programs eligible to receive NDF for doctoral work in religion, four programs qualified in 1961–1962 (State University of Iowa, Biblical and Judaeo-Christian Studies; Duke, Church History and Christian Ethics; Claremont Graduate School, History and Philosophy of Religion; and Brown, Religious Studies), receiving 10 awards total. Three additional programs of relevance to the study of religion also qualified under the general heading of 'Humanities: Other': Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis; Buddhist Studies at the University of Wisconsin; and Hebrew Culture and Education: Judaeo-Arabic Studies at NYU. That same year, of the 29 Humanities programs that lost their previous NDF eligibility, three were in one or another area of the study of religion: Dropsie College for

Hebrew and Cognate Learning (previously eligible for studying Comparative Religion), Emory (previously eligible for Old Testament), as well as Union Theological Seminary (previously eligible for Theology) lost their eligibility. Moreover, the following year (1962–1963) no programs in religion were listed as eligible. (See US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1961–1962, 1962–1963).

18. To date I have only been able to obtain annual reports for the first 4 years of the NDEA, and am in the process of obtaining subsequent reports to determine the trend in grants given to religion doctoral students.
19. It should be noted that on 16 October 1962, this section—reproducing the language from the National Science Foundation Act of 1950—was amended. This was the result of 20 institutions that, as of December 1961, had withdrawn from participating in the loan program (although, significantly, not from the NDF program; see Orlan 1962, 286, n. 11), along with nine institutions that had never participated, all due to the required disclaimer affidavit. An additional eight (already participating) schools had made their opposition to the required disclaimer known as well (Orlan 1962, 285, n. 10). As phrased in the NDEA *Report* for fiscal year 1963: ‘The feeling that the requirement implied unfair suspicion of students as a group and violated standards of academic freedom had caused 32 colleges to refuse to participate in the Student Loan Program by the beginning of the 1962–3 academic year’ (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1964, 2). As observed by Orlan, it was only after Harvard and Yale withdrew from the program—long after other schools had withdrawn—that the issue received national attention, prompting a Congressional hearing and a change in law (Orlan 1962, 286). Despite the amendment, the law retained the oath and, in step with the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950, made it a crime for an applicant for, or a recipient of, a NDF to be a member of a group registered with the Subversive Activities Control Board. The crime carried a maximum \$1,000 fine, a maximum term of 5 years in prison, or both (United States Government 1963, Public Law 87–835, 16 October 1962).
20. It is important to note that arguments in favor of developing a Humanistic study of religion date to the early 1960s as well.
21. For example: ‘A broadly conceived scholarship presented in attractive oral and written forms can help to create a more receptive attitude to an intellectual tradition in religion. The scholar need not be hemmed in by his technical vocabulary or by an assumed vulgarity of style, but in many cases he should be able to produce some portions of his specialized studies in a form which clarifies their meaning and which evokes the interest of a wider audience than that constituted of his peers’ (Holbrook 1965, 271).
22. See the opening pages to chapter 13, ‘Evaluation of the Situation in Religion Scholarship’, which are concerned to identify (and propose steps to eliminate) the inferiority complex within US scholarship on religion. ‘American scholars’, Holbrook writes, ‘sometimes tend to be ill at ease when comparisons are made

between them and foreign scholars. Some feel that the supreme accolade for their work can only come from abroad and others accept as a fact their secondary status as scholars. Still others are irritated at what they believe to be the highhanded manner in which European scholars especially refuse to take seriously the works produced in America' (Holbrook 1965, 257). Coming at a time when the United States is flexing its unilateral geo-political muscles for the first time, just as the study of religion is also trying to come-of-age, and not too long after the cult of US economic and cultural supremacy was dealt a severe set-back by the surprise Soviet launch of Sputnik, these comments on the deficient productivity of scholars of religion, and their long-time dependence on European scholarship, seem particularly important. In fact, several of the authors in Ramsey's companion volume—notably, Ashby (1965, 7) writing on the History of Religions, Nichols (1965, 158) writing on the History of Christianity, and Welch (1965, 284) writing on Theology—make much the same observation concerning the dependency and the game of catch-up being played by mid-twentieth-century American scholarship. Although descriptively accurate, it is difficult not to read these authors' depiction of US scholars lagging behind their European mentors in light of their goal of reinventing the confessional study of religion as a Humanistic enterprise. Focusing on the deficient amount of scholarship, and the financial conditions and altered teaching loads that could correct this problem, more than likely resonated with the injured pride (of citizens, government officials, private granting agencies) that followed the launch of Sputnik in late 1957. For instance, in the January 1958 words of Gabriel Heatter—syndicated news commentator for the former Mutual Broadcasting System (1934–1999) who broadcast an editorial addressed to Sputnik I following its fall from orbit—'You gave us a shock which hit many people harder than Pearl Harbor. You hit our pride a frightful blow. You suddenly made us realize that we are not the best in everything. You reminded us of an old-fashioned American word, humility. You woke us up out of a long sleep ... A nation, like a man, can grow soft and complacent. It can fall behind when it thinks it is Number One in everything' (as quoted by Dickson 2001, 223). Such words are not hard to understand when we take into account that by the time that the United States successfully launched its first satellite, Vanguard (in March 1958; it weighed a mere 21 pounds), the Soviets had already put Sputnik II into orbit (on 3 November 1957)—comprising a half-ton rocket carrying a live dog, Laika.

23. Although there is little need to provide evidence for the widely recognised dominance of Protestant theology in late 1950s and early 1960s US scholarship on religion, consider that Claude Welch—in his essay on the state-of-the-art in theology—saw little need to take into account Roman Catholic or Jewish work since neither of them 'has as yet produced in America a major body of scholarship on *theology* in the strict sense of the term' (Welch 1965, 221).
24. A difference between my analysis and that of Wiebe presents itself at this point; whereas he sees 'a restructuring of the study of religion in the

mid-1960s as a result of the transformation of the National Association of Bible Instructors (NABI) into the American Academy of Religion (AAR), and the motivation for that reconstruction came from pressures upon NABI to move beyond its Christian orientation in research and teaching' (Wiebe 2001, 274; for a detailed study of the shift from NABI to the AAR, see also Wiebe 1999), I would inquire into why, at this particular historical juncture, such a shift was deemed necessary, desirable, or even possible. Placing this shift in the context of the Cold War funding opportunities at least begins to investigate what factors other than theological lay behind this 'motivation' and these 'pressures'.

25. In the late 1950s, Medaris was the head of the US Army Ballistic Missile Agency.
26. An email (14 October 2002) from Charles Reynolds, former Chair, Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. As an aside I should say that in the summer of 2003, I learned that, in 1965 and just prior to its formal establishment as a thoroughly retooled Department of Religious Studies, my own Department applied to the Danforth for such funding. Prior to that time the Department at the University of Alabama was comprised of volunteer campus ministers and local preachers who taught courses, the vast majority of which were on topics in the history and practice of Christianity. I am not yet aware whether Danforth funds were awarded. My thanks to Betty Dickey for bringing these files to my attention.
27. Founded by Mr and Mrs William H. Danforth, the Foundation's 1958 report elaborates on the mission of the organisation: 'to strengthen and enrich Education, particularly Higher Education, in its outreach to the American student and to our American Society ... The Foundation is eager to aid in the search for moral and spiritual values within both the curricular and extracurricular life of the student ... Furthermore, it believes that some experience with religion, both in its reach of compassion to one's [*sic*] fellow-man and the reach of faith to a Divine Being, is of major importance in the formation of sturdy character and responsible citizenship ... These fellowships to college teachers, campus religious workers and students preparing themselves for college teaching are intended to increase academic competence and spiritual awareness' (Danforth Foundation Annual Report 1958, 2-3).
28. I am indebted to Kay Dusenbert, the Grants/Programs Manager for the Danforth Foundation (St Louis, MO), for providing me with copies of selected pages from their past annual reports. The quotations are from these documents.
29. I am reminded of former colleagues in a publicly funded university who argued that since the American Bible Society was non-denominational then its mission coincided with that of the field of Religious Studies.
30. For example, at which point in its history did the Danforth Foundation fund not just campus ministry-initiatives, but also Departments of Religion in public universities, as well as programs in the Humanities? Were their criteria of 'new

departments' in any way linked to the NDEA's emphasis on funding new programs? What sort of scholarship on religion was going on in these newly devised programs, which were in public institutions, and who was hired to their faculties?

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