

FORMAL LEXICOGRAPHICAL SUBMISSION

Re-evaluation and Expansion of the Headword: Religion

TO: The Editorial Board, *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)

FROM: Stan Iredale (Banton)

SUBJECT: Ontological Definition and Universal Scope Expansion for "**Religion**"

ABSTRACT

Current lexicographical entries for the term **religion** across standard reference authorities suffer from a structural institutional bias. By defining religion primarily through its behavioral, institutional, and dogmatic manifestations (e.g., systems of worship, specific creeds, or organized bodies of faith), current entries define the subject merely by its tools and containers rather than its overarching ontology. This paper proposes a definitive, absolute expansion of the headword religion to reflect its true, unrestricted scope as the foundational science of existence: "**Everything we know, everything we are yet to learn, and everything we will never begin to understand.**"

1. THE LIMITATION OF THE CURRENT MODEL

Standard dictionary entries currently dissect *religion* into multiple fragmented senses:

1. **Sociological/Behavioral:** Belief in or worship of a supernatural controlling power or personal God.
2. **Institutional:** A particular system of faith and worship (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Rastafari).
3. **Devotional:** A pursuit or interest followed with devotion.

While these entries accurately track common colloquial usage, they fail as a definition of the subject matter *in toto*. Defining religion by churches, rituals, or specific dogmas is equivalent to defining *physics* as "a collection of particle accelerators and university laboratories." The laboratory is merely a human container designed to observe the subject; it is not the subject itself.

By categorizing religion as a sub-topic *within* human activity, current lexicography draws an artificial boundary around a concept that inherently possesses no perimeter.

2. ETYMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL ALIGNMENT

The Latin root of the term, *religare*, translates to "to bind, tie back, or hold together."

To bind reality together completely, a definition cannot be partial, nor can it sit alongside other academic subjects as a separate box. It must serve as the universal continuum—the "head science of life"—that holds all human perception, potential, and limitation simultaneously.

When stripped of man-made containers, institutional politics, and sectarian division, the subject matter of *religion* operates across three exhaustive domains:

- **The Known ("Everything we know"):** The domain of verified human experience, empirical observation, natural law, logic, and established fact.
- **The Unknown ("Everything we are yet to learn"):** The frontier of continuous discovery, intellectual evolution, scientific expansion, and unfolding consciousness.
- **The Unknowable ("Everything we will never begin to understand"):** The realm of ultimate mystery, infinite creation, and the natural boundary of finite human perception, which anchors human humility.

3. EXHAUSTIVE LOGIC: THE ABSENCE OF BOUNDARIES

The strength of this proposed definition lies in its logical completeness. It leaves zero void in the human condition or the cosmos:

Total Reality = The Known + The Unknown + The Unknowable

This model resolves the historical, artificial divide between "Science" and "Faith":

- Science operates dynamically across **The Known** and **The Unknown**.
- Faith and reverence operate across **The Unknowable**.

Furthermore, this model accounts for the container itself. The human structures built to process existence—whether languages, mathematical models, or religious institutions—fall squarely inside "what we know" and "what we build." There is no "outside" box. Religion, in its absolute definition, is the complete field of existence.

4. PROPOSED LEXICOGRAPHICAL REVISION

It is formally recommended that the *Oxford English Dictionary* consider adding or updating the primary philosophical definition of **religion** to reflect its unified, absolute scope:

religion (*n.*)

1. [Absolute / Philosophical Scope] The ultimate continuum of existence and consciousness; the totality of what is empirically known, what remains to be discovered, and that which inherently transcends human comprehension.

CONCLUSION

Language must evolve to reflect reality rather than merely institutional convention. By updating the headword *religion* from a description of human dogmas to an unrestricted statement of total reality, lexicography moves from cataloging sectarian containers to defining the actual subject matter whole.

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