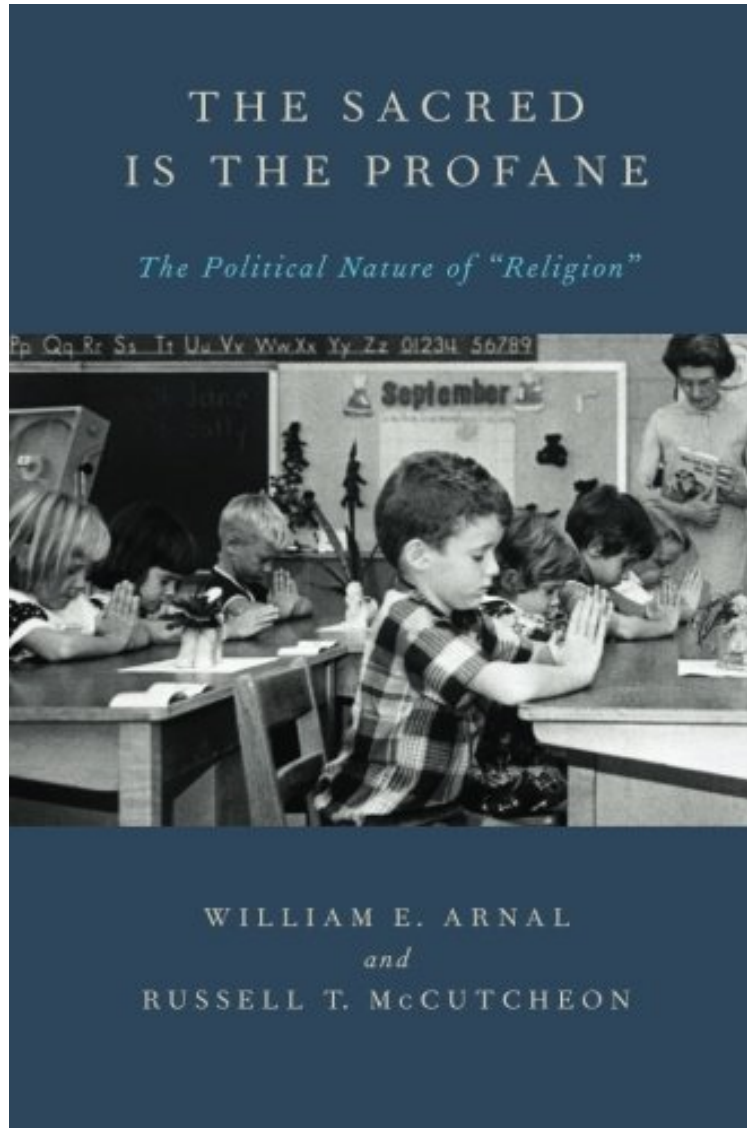


[Read free] The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion"

## The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion"

William Arnal, Russell T. McCutcheon  
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#718165 in Books Arnal William E 2012-11-29 2012-11-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.10 x .80 x 9.20l, .85 #File Name: 0199757127264 pages The Sacred Is the Profane | File size: 65.Mb

**William Arnal, Russell T. McCutcheon : The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion"** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion":

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Clarity for the crux (universal?) definitions of "religion" By Dennis This book is a godsend (irony intended) for all of us academic or not who wrestle with the chaos of parlance for discussing the relationship between "religion" and politics. Somehow the authors manage to juggle the disparate vocabularies and categories from both "lay" (popular) discussions and scholarly ones from within the institutional

places where various disciplines try to maintain a coherent theoretic consensus. I have both my own "citizen's" stake in the issues and a scholarly project for which the book is invaluable. I may add a review or revise this one after I finish the book, but for now I will share two observations: the book inspired me to try "turtles all the way down" for a Google search, which brought me to a wonderful wiki survey of the conundrums over the centuries as thinkers tried to deal with questions of origins . . . the beginning of beginnings. The "chicken or egg" conundrum. And secondly, I noted that coming out of the "religious studies place" for trying to make sense of a relationship between religion/culture and politics, the authors decided to ignore the work from a sociologist/philosopher, Robert Bellah, whose book, RELIGION IN HUMAN EVOLUTION, has an historical base that I will keep in mind as I finish reading THE SACRED IS THE PROFANE. Perhaps Bellah's book arrived too late for at least a citation, but Bellah's work has been steady and substantive over decades addressing the issues addressed in THE SACRED IS THE PROFANE. I would love to have seen the author's discussion of Bellah's work, even briefly, in an epilogue. I guess I have a hunch that Bellah's book has a way out of the conundrum that could be helpful, too.

The Sacred Is the Profane collects nine essays written over several years by William Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon that share a convergent perspective: not simply that both the category and concept "religion" is a construct, something that we cannot assume to be "natural" or universal, but also that the ability to think and act "religiously" is, quite specifically, a modern, political category in its origins and effects, the mere by-product of the modern state. These collected essays, substantially rewritten for this volume, advance current scholarly debates on secularism-debates which, the authors argue, insufficiently theorize the sacred/secular, church/state, and private/public binaries by presupposing religion (often under the guise of such terms as "religiosity," "faith," or "spirituality") to historically precede the nation-state. The essays return, again and again, to the question of what "religion"--word and concept--accomplishes, now, for those who employ it, whether at the popular, political, or scholarly level. The focus here for two writers from seemingly different fields is on the efficacy, costs, and the tactical work carried out by dividing the world between religious and political, church and state, sacred and profane.

"This hard-hitting collection overturns common ideas about religion. Arnal and McCutcheon argue that 'religion' has no independent existence but is rather the unstable creation of political and economic forces. These two prominent critical theorists call for far-reaching reform of the study of religious traditions so that the concepts of nation-state, citizenship, and secularism can be productively transformed. Their compelling work will have profound effect on both specialists and general readers."--Naomi Goldenberg, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa  
About the Author  
William E. Arnal is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Regina.  
Russell T. McCutcheon is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama.