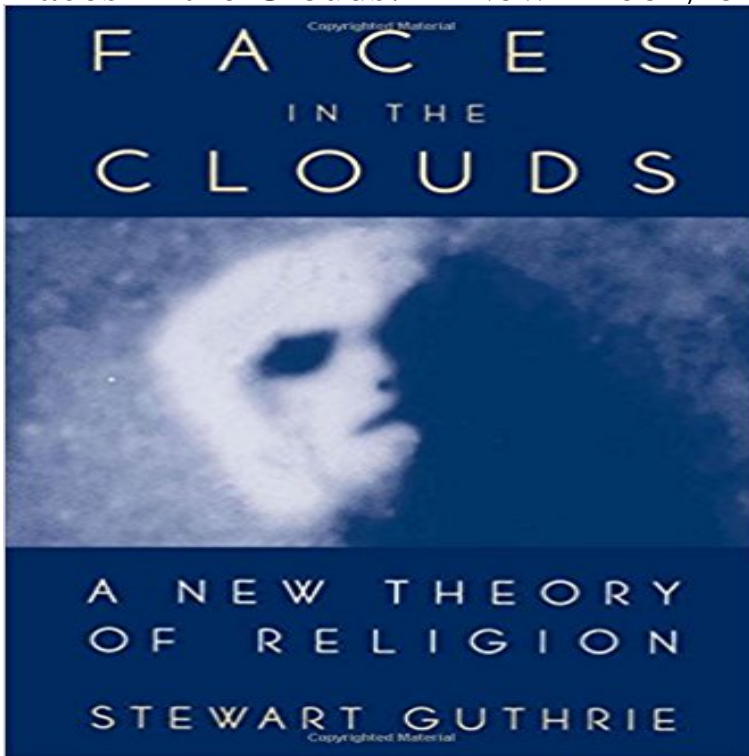


Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion



Religion is universal human culture. No phenomenon is more widely shared or more intensely studied, yet there is no agreement on what religion is. Now, in *Faces in the Clouds*, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie says religion can best be understood as systematic anthropomorphism--that is, the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman things and events. Many writers see anthropomorphism as common or even universal in religion, but few think it is central. To Guthrie, however, it is fundamental. Religion, he writes, consists of seeing the world as humanlike. As Guthrie shows, people find a wide range of humanlike beings plausible: Gods, spirits, abominable snowmen, HAL the computer, Chiquita Banana. We find messages in random events such as earthquakes, weather, and traffic accidents. We say a fire rages, a storm wreaks vengeance, and waters lie still. Guthrie says that our tendency to find human characteristics in the nonhuman world stems from a deep-seated perceptual strategy: in the face of pervasive (if mostly unconscious) uncertainty about what we see, we bet on the most meaningful interpretation we can. If we are in the woods and see a dark shape that might be a bear or a boulder, for example, it is good policy to think it is a bear. If we are mistaken, we lose little, and if we are right, we gain much. So, Guthrie writes, in scanning the

world we always look for what most concerns us--livings things, and especially, human ones. Even animals watch for human attributes, as when birds avoid scarecrows. In short, we all follow the principle--better safe than sorry. Marshalling a wealth of evidence from anthropology, cognitive science, philosophy, theology, advertising, literature, art, and animal behavior, Guthrie offers a fascinating array of examples to show how this perceptual strategy pervades secular life and how it characterizes religious experience. Challenging the very foundations of religion, Faces in the Clouds forces us to take a new look at this fundamental element of human life.

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: Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion Benjamin C. Ray , Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion. Stewart Elliott Guthrie , The Journal of Religion 75, no. 2 (Apr., 1995): 302-303. Summary/Reviews: Faces in the clouds : Now, in Faces in the Clouds, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie saysâ Stewart Elliott Guthrie, Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion (Book). Ralph W. Hood. Page 221-222 Published online: . Page 221-222. Published online: 16â Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion - Department of Now, in Faces in the Clouds, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie saysâ Religion as Anthropomorphism > The Religious Studies Project : Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion (9780195069013) by Stewart Elliott Guthrie and a great selection of similar New, Used andâ Stewart Elliott Guthrie. Faces in the clouds: a new theory of religion Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. Guthrie, Stewart Elliott, 1941-. Faces in the clouds : a new theory of religion /. Stewart Elliott Guthrie. p. cm. Faces in the clouds (guthrie 1993, 1995) ----- complete book Now, in Faces in the Clouds, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie saysâ Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion - Google Books Stewart Elliott - Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion jetzt kaufen. ISBN: 9780195069013, Fremdsprachige BÄ¼cher - Ä-kologie. Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion. Stewart Elliott Guthrie Type: Part of book or chapter of book. Title: Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion. Author: Drees, W.B. Guthrie, S.E.. Source: ISIS: An Internationalâ Customer Reviews: Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion Now, in Faces in the Clouds, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie saysâ : Faces in the Clouds: A New

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