Sam Gill: It wasn't long ago that it dawned on me that my academic career is approaching 60 years. When that dawned on me, I began to ask myself, why have I spent a lifetime studying religion? Why do that? Why should I do that? It wasn't easy to solve that, frankly, because I have studied so many different areas and things, and why did religion seem to stream through all those? But then I began to realize that what may be is the light motif that spans through all of those is an abiding passion for what distinguishes us as human beings, so that that makes then religion a human study. It's about human beings and their capacity. That has been the focus of what I have been thinking of lately. Religion makes sense then in terms of that. Religions feature mythic worlds populated by powerful agents, moral dramas, and uncanny forces. Religions perform elaborate and skilled actions, rights, festivals, dancing, praying, storytelling. Religions build impressive structures, cathedrals, and temples, and monuments. Religions organize people and communities and give identity to nations. Yet, religions are the common motivation for violence and wars and hate, and prejudice. Religions are forged in the interplay of elaborate fantasies and the gritty details of quotidian life. From a practical perspective, religions seem perplexing. They shock common sense. Religion, then, I think, is a good choice for the study of human distinctiveness because religion is quintessentially human. My experience has shaped my interests. I've spent a bunch of time in cultures where dancing and religion are nearly synonymous. I taught religion and dance classes with 80 students. We met two days a week in a classroom and one day a week in a studio where we danced. I've been a dancer and dance teacher for 40 years. I have naturally been drawn to the skilled practices and actions common to religion. In my experience, most everything religious is in motion. As a student at the University of Chicago, I proposed I study Native Americans. Not possible, they told me, they have no texts. I chose Navajo anyway, not out of defiance, but because my math, physics, and business degrees hadn't afforded me exposure to the world. As a Kansas kid, I at least knew of Indians. Living on the Navajo Reservation, I went to Hotevilla, a Hopi village on Third Mesa, to experience a Kachina dance. For two days, I stood on a Pueblo rooftop. In the plaza, dozens of stunningly colorful Niman Kachina danced to the complex rhythms of their songs. A troop of clowns delighted. On the second day, I approached a Hopi man. I knew better, but I asked him, so what does this all mean? Why do you do it? He said, we dance for rain. The plaza was filled with a gorgeous marvel in motion. A whole Hopi community was involved. It seemed so complex and intricate. Everything screamed, this is Hopi. No way was I satisfied that this was a dance for rain. I had so many questions, asking and answering them would shape my religion studies and my life. The questions, how can we study religion in a way that does not strip it of its vitality? How can we account for the dancing, masking, singing, feasting, clowning, storytelling with all of the colors, sounds, tastes, and feelings without halting the action and turning everything monochrome with statements about what it means? Can we avoid turning skilled, artful actions into vitality-draining explanations? Is it possible to account for the enchanting and engaging effect of religious action? Can attention to religion emotion constitute a credible academic study? The Christian and Cartesian heritage of the modern secular study of religion has focused attention on thought and mind expressed primarily in language. The importance of such logo-centric studies is without question. They have long histories and admirable accomplishments. Yet, the aspects of religion that most interest me include actions and practices and skills and gestures. All of these are possible only because of distinctive human biology. My novia's study of the biology of moving and skill reveals important insights about religion. These are not reductive, they demand expansion by raising profound philosophical questions. Religion in motion is not a supplement to belief and faith, and doctrine, it is the granular process of living a religious life. The aim of this talk is to chart elements of a strategy for the secular study of religion that focuses on religious life being lived. I want to begin with what is obvious to ordinary human experience. We are whole, organic, moving beings. We must be whole before we are parsed into mind and body. We are human before we are religious. Secular religion studies are human studies. Essential to this approach, I will outline the biological and philosophical context. Perhaps we should start with the choice of terms. I urge the use of the GERD moving because it focuses on process and vitality. I prefer it to the more common noun movement. Since movement means change in place, it is concerned with the fixed rather than with process. I

often use the term " self-moving " to distinguish biologically active from passive moving, such as riding in a car. Aristotle understood moving as "being in act as potential. This is moving is acting towards something yet unrealized. It is ongoing process." Many philosophers agree. One of the best quotes that I know is from Erin Manning. She wrote, "Moving is becoming towards a potential future that will always remain not yet. Process and passage are my interests. In my experience, the Cartesian conditioning shaping academia typically assigns moving to body, not mind. When referring to body, our language preference is the term embody." The word means embody. The unwanted inference is that the body is a container that it houses the more important soul or mind. The mind-focused academy tends to see moving body as a niche concern, a reluctant afterthought. In this Cartesian frame, should we persist in holding that humans are whole moving organisms, we find ourselves making desperate efforts to put Humpty back together again with mind-body conjunctions whose Cartesian cracks are as obvious as egg on one's face. I have no desire to try to crack the mind-body problem, rather, I have sought to simply preempt the split. Since I'm interested in vitality and process of ongoing life, I look to biology for some simple observations. Before birth, life is marked by moving felt in the womb. We are born moving, we identify life with moving. Moving engages the entire organism and all of its systems. We discover our earliest selves and our world not by language, but by innate groping. There is a long history of connecting philosophical implications with biology, assuring that biology is not reductive. A bridge between philosophy and biology was built in the 18th century when the French philosopher Condorcet wondered about sentience in biological terms. He posited a stone man, fully equipped with senses, yet inactive due to his inertness. He suggested that the man would need only a hand that he could move to touch his body to gain sentience. Maine de Biran, another French philosopher, a few decades later, suggested this stone man only need a moving hand because we feel ourselves moving. These clever Frenchmen revealed that the feeling of knowing, born of moving and touching, requires functioning senses. Sentience arises as action and motion. These biological actions include the distinction of subject and object, self and other. The specific biology that captured the attention of these Frenchmen would, more than a century later, be discovered as proprioception and kinesthesia. They also foreshadowed the 20th-century insights of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He contemplated one hand touching the other, one doing the touching, the other being touched, one subject, the other object. He noted that the touching and touched hands could be reversed. While the hands are different and distinct, they are of the same body, subject and object are distinct yet also the same. Maurice Merleau-Ponty projected this dynamic prosthetically beyond the body limitations to the exterior to the world. In this frame, the two nodes are the perceiver and the perceivable. Touching untouched hands, these two are distinct yet interdependent, they constitute perception. The world of perceivables exists through the action of being perceived. The reversibility then indicates that the perceiver also gains identity through this interaction. Thus, the action of perception have worlding powers. Renaud Barbaras made explicit the role of moving when he wrote, "It is moving itself that perceives." This argument initiated a major change in the understanding of perception. The extant representational understanding posited the projection of a representation from the perceivable onto something like a screen in the brain. The new interactional understanding came to be preferred. Perception occurs in the dynamic, moving interaction of the human body and its perceivable exterior. What have we gained so far? Moving his life, moving his sentience, moving his perception, moving as a feeling of self. The experience of moving as a knowing that is unassailable. Moving has primacy in the creation and discovery of identity and world, so far so good, but I want to enrich it a bit. These philosophical observations, inspired by biology, are promising, yet none of these consider, even in general terms, how biology enables them. I think this further step, even if it's a tiny one, is essential for the proper humanities grounding of the approach that I seek. As did the French philosophers, let's focus on proprioception and kinesthesia. Time for a little class here. When I began to understand proprioception, it immediately became the biological poster child for the insights I was hoping to articulate. The word proprioception means self-perception. It was discovered in the early 20th century by Sir Charles Sherrington. Thousands of proprioceptors in the muscles and ligaments are composed of nerve endings entwining muscle fibers and ligament

collagen. They are of the nervous system, they are of the skeletal muscular system. They function as the dynamic interface between systems, they monitor ongoing self-moving. Proprioception has a kinesthetic aspect. This means that it enables us to feel ourselves moving, to locate our moving parts, and to enable perception of ourselves and our environment, constituting what might be called an inner touch. Proprioceptors constantly evaluate the body's physical encounter with the exterior. They provide the brain with experience-based input in the ongoing development of neurological networks that build profiles and synergies, the brain's structures of what we know and how we act. All animals have proprioceptors. In humans, proprioception is, as implied by the Frenchmen, has an articulatable counterpart, an identifiable awareness made possible by human neurology. Neuroscientists concur that moving has primacy. Novelist Gerald Edelman wrote, "The brain's maps and connections are altered not only by what you sense, but by how you move." Joseph LeDoux showed that brain plasticity is possible only because synaptic criteria are influenced by the whole body's experience. Sherrington wrote, "The living moving system is itself the cause of the harmony of the parts." I want to repeat that because it's such an important, powerful statement. The ongoing moving is what creates coherence in the unbelievable, complex, and varied organism. Moving plays a fundamental role in shaping the brain and in the coordination of a complex biological system. Russian physiologist Nikolai Bernstein spent decades studying the biological inclination towards what he called "smooth movement." He found that the most efficient motion for a task is experienced as being smooth. It is moving with ease and grace, it correlates with health. Jerky movement is unsettling and awkward and indicates pathology. From an evolutionary perspective, smooth moving links with the survival of efficient healthy organisms. Thus, the feeling of smooth or jerky moving corresponds with degrees of coherence and incoherence with health and pathology. I've introduced several elements of basic biological, human, self-moving, touching, perception, and associated philosophical implications. These show that religion in motion is possible only because of these biological capacities. They show that religion in motion contributes to the human processes of discovering and creating identity and environment. How then might this information shape an adequate strategy, an academic strategy? I'll offer some ideas that I've been working on, and then I'll illustrate these with some specific examples. My consideration of moving, touching, perceiving has alerted me to what seems a persistent dynamic. The more I explore it, the more I feel it offers insight about what is distinctively human. I call it the co-presence of impossibles. It is the human capacity and the proclivity to hold together two or more things, considering and experiencing them as the same while clearly knowing they are not the same at all. For example, metaphor is a trope composed of understanding one thing by equating it to another thing which it is not. If I might say I'm spending too much time writing this paper, I think we've all experienced that. The underlying metaphor is time is money. Yet, of course, we know time is not money. An essential feature of the co-presence of impossible is, as with metaphor, its use does not give rise to a sense of conflict or a need for reconciliation. If I say I spend time, no one stops me and says, that makes no sense. Time isn't money. The co-presence does not confound, as does paradox. It does not frame a dialectic engaging argumentation. It is not betwixt and between, as is liminality. In a sense, it operates silently. It is elementally human. Fundamental to creativity, novelty, communication, and intellection, religion's engaged co-presence in skilled actions, arts, symbols, metaphors, and in myths, stories, theologies, ideologies, and rights, all of these are inventions and fictions made to convey truths without raising a crisis in logic. Now, let's consider the moving body's role in concept formation. While we think of concepts as dimensions of the mind, the philosophy and biology of moving and perception tie concepts firmly to experience, to deed, to whole body knowing. Without perceiving body, concepts would be empty. Concepts can be articulated in abstract and virtual terms, yet it seems undeniable that they cannot escape a corporeal base. Religion is closely associated with the transcendent, with myths, deities, and the spiritual. If concepts are corporeally based, how do we account for the grounding of transcendence in moving bodied experience? Brian Massumi offered insight when he wrote, "To think of the body in motion means accepting that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body, of it, but not it, real, material, but incorporeal." Emphasizing the ongoingness of moving forces us to acknowledge what is common to our experience of moving

time and life. In being processed passage, they are fully bodied, yet they all have an incorporeal dimension of the body, but not yet real material, but incorporeal. In their moving, they are all always transcending themselves. Moving is always a transcending place. The experience of this biological transcendence provides a corporeal experience of the incorporeal. The soaring human imagination of transcendent worlds, so common to religions, fulfills the creative potential enabled by the human biological experience of moving. Now let's consider coherence, which I almost always prefer to meaning. In evolution, the survival of the organism correlates to its smooth and efficient operation. It is thus the common human biological urge to seek coherence. We experience coherence as felt rather than a reasoned condition. Coherence is subjective. It is a measure of health, well-being, functionality, organicity. Greeting friends when we ask, how are you doing, we're really asking them about the degree of coherence or smoothness they are feeling. I suggest that the feeling of the smoothness of moving is the foundational experience that serves as the standard for evaluating the coherence of perhaps any system. Yet, life never is free of nonlinearity from disruption, threat, illness, conflict, death. Religions as life are shaped by incoherence, imagined in such rich notions as evil, sin, and hell. Religions and cultures function to assist in the negotiation of incongruities and disruptions in pursuit of coherence. Yet, nonlinearity is a powerful force for change. Evolutionary biology charts how organisms adapt to such threats. Religions as life gain their vitality and power from the endless moving interplay of incongruity and congruity. Now I want to introduce gesture, tool, and skill. Andre Leroi-Gourhan, in his classic study Gesture and Speech, understood that to appreciate early cultures, rather than focusing solely on the materiality of their tools, the concern should be on the human self-moving, skilled actions that give rise to the tools and their uses. He saw tool use as the prosthetic extension of our capacity to use parts of or our whole body as objects as tools. Leroi-Gourhan considered the human hand as the first tool. I focus on the pointing finger to classify or to clarify the power of the co-presence of gesture and tool. When we point, the eye is drawn first to the finger and then outward to what it designates. The gesture links finger and object, ontologically distinct, yet co-present, shaping the amorphous exterior into something perceived, into a world feature. Gesture then becomes a tool of perception as well as designation and recognition. This capacity extends mechanically when a charged stick is used to draw an image on a wall or when a sound names an object seen. In this way, gesturally wrought tools, symbols, language, material objects, externalize memory and enable communication. The intentional repetition of gesture accumulates power in the development of skill. We elect to pursue skill. Skill is gradually acquired through the human biological process of organically building acuity. Skill requires long, highly repetitive, critically guided effort. Skill has vast potential, as evident in the ballet dancing of Misty Copeland, the piano performances of Yuja Wang, and the tennis brilliance of Carlos Alcaraz. Skill is associated with grace and beauty, with pleasure and identity. Skill engages the whole body. It is a feeling kind of knowing, as well as accumulation of technical knowledge, with ever-expanding potential. Can religion in motion be considered as skill? I think so. We commonly identify ourselves and our communities by the skills we pursue and practice. Teachers, skiers, pianists, photographers, dancers, all are designations of identity linked to skills. While skills can be a means to gain rewards, they are commonly practiced because they are autotelic. They are wholly satisfying simply by doing and practicing them. Skill is more about process than about outcomes. Because I believe that skill, at least as I understand it, is deeply human. There is much to gain by considering religions as composed in part of communities whose identities and activities are centered on shared skills. I've introduced a few of many possible elements of a strategy for attending to motion and a proper study of religion. I turned out to specific cultural examples to show the potential of this strategy. Powamu is a nine day Hopi ceremony performed in February. I've attended quite a number of times. It marks the public beginning of the half-year when Katsinas are physically present at Hopi. Powamu features many distinct, beautiful Katsinas. They appear climbing the ladders, extending through the rooftops of the kivas. Then they parade from kiva to kiva. During Powamu, children are initiated into Katsina society. This society is made up of all of those who have rights and responsibilities for ceremonial life. I want to focus on one aspect of initiation that reveals something crucial about religion in motion. Prior to initiation, children

frequently encounter Katsinas, yet they are carefully protected from knowing that Katsinas are masked beings. A startling moment for initiates occurs during the Bean Dance with the initiates present when the Powamu Katsinas come down the ladder into the kivas they are costumed, but they are not wearing masks. Children are shocked, some even cry when they recognize the men. Some are their relatives. They feel betrayed. They are confused about Katsinas. Hopi ceremonial life has endured across many, many generations. We must ask then how a disenchanting beginning to an adult religious life, seemingly counter to common sense, forges and initiates a lifetime commitment to the practices that constitute Hopi culture. We need to think about masking and the associated skillful actions of singing, dancing, acting, and storytelling. Masking is a common religious action that I've witnessed in many cultures in the Americas, Southeast Asia, and Africa. Masking is not disguise. Disguise attempts to eliminate the doubleness that is essential to masking. A masker wears an obviously crafted face and costume, presenting a mythic or fictional being. The artificiality of the mask emphasizes the distinction of the human masker and the masked character. Yet, through posture, gesture, dance, and song, and acting, the presence of the masked figure in all of its otherness is experienced by the masker in the community. Masking provides experiential knowledge that exceeds proposition in its certainty. The core of masking is the co-presence of the two identities in one body, the human mask and the other than human or fictional being. Masking is a doubling with a dynamic that does not call for resolution. The effectiveness of masking and Hopi initiation is connected to the initiates' surprise that occurs when the doubleness of masking is suddenly revealed. Their naive understanding of the other than human Katsinas as just so is ruined by the shock that Katsinas are men the initiates know. It is a painful incongruity. Why does this shock not alienate the youth? Why does it not destroy Hopi religion? The Hopi appreciates that disenchantment initiates a transformation. It creates incongruity, and where there is discord, there is a biologic-based need for congruity and harmony. The Hopi meet this demand not with explanation, but by incorporating the newly initiated children into Hopi secret societies where they immediately begin having ritual responsibilities. The children spend extensive time in the skill-building practice of group coordinated masking, singing, dancing that creates a strong, strong sense of identity. They learn skill required to perform specific ritual roles of Katsinas and clowns. They learn the more general ritual skills common to all initiated Hopi adults. These actions are not symbolic abstractions. They produce experiential knowledge. It is the force of the ongoing moving of these actions that engenders coherence and identity. As the initiated are involved in the extensive reputation of masking related actions of Katsinas, a deeper understanding of Hopi identity emerges. The newly initiated begin to experience Katsinas as both revered figures and human enactors. The co-presence is experienced as the very fabric of Hopi life and religion, the initiates finally come to be Katsinas. I spent half a year traveling in Australia, Thailand, Nepal, Bali, and Java. Years later, Borobudur called me back. This enormous Buddhist stupa is located not far from Yogyakarta. It took a century to build. It was finished a millennium ago. It is one of my heart places. Climbing the nine levels early in the morning, I sat among the Buddhas gazing across the hazy blue gray sea of palms, and I felt I was at the still, calm center of the universe. When I arrived in Yogyakarta, the city was engulfed in protest. The streets were filled with angry youths wearing red headbands, revving motorbikes and shouting through crackling loudspeakers. Walking through the crowd, I arrived at the Sultan's palace, finding the vast grounds to be calm, even serene. I wanted to experience Javanese classical dancing, wayang wong. I was happy that I'd already experienced wayang kulit Shadow Puppet Theater. Following a tip seeking wayang kulit, I wound my way through a labyrinthine neighborhood to a large room attached to a house where a performance of wayang kulit was underway. The dalang, or puppet master, sat facing the screen with a flame lamp above and behind him. The gamelan orchestra filled the room with music. The cast of filigree puppets leaned against the scrim. Their shapes, clothing, accessories, and facial features identified them as figures in the Javanese version of the classical Hindu stories. Throughout the night, the dalang voiced all of the characters, manipulating puppets and props so that their shadows danced across the scrim. The flickering lamp gave the silhouettes breath and life. Shadow cannot exist without light. Apart from the occluding puppet, the light is pure radiance with no

form. As the puppet moves, its shadow appears on the screen mirroring the puppet, yet taking on a life of its own. Javanese aesthetics infuses these performances, the refined characters representing Alice are slender with pointy noses, whereas the crudeness casar is represented by puppets with bulbous noses and fat bellies. These factions engage in epic battles and interactions continual entwining these qualities. Prepared with my experience of Wayang Kulit, I sat in the dance pavilion of the Sultan's palace enthralled by Bedoyo. Nine female dancers in immaculate costume and composed facial expression entered the space, taking small, waddling steps, a gesture of respect for the Sultan. Accompanied by a Gomelin, they moved in perfect unison with the slow, precise postures and gestures of the dance. Grouped in threes, their stylized swaying evoked seaweed stirred by ocean currents. In their self moving dancing, human dancers became the sea nymph brides of a well known Javanese story. The effect was uncanny. I do not embrace the notion that dance is a universal language grounded as it is in logocentric reduction. Yet dancing is broadly engaging. Bedoyo like all dances, bears a clear cultural identifying aesthetics and forms, stories, characters, music, postures, gestures, while still crossing cultural linguistic and religious boundaries. In my university teaching and directing a public dance studio, I have seen how deeply people are drawn to the dance and music of cultures different than their own. Bedoyo can also illustrate co presence and skill. Javanese women train for years under the dance master's critical guidance, costumed and accompanied by music. Their highly skilled dancing makes present the sea nymph brides. The effect is mesmerizing, a mobius like folding of identities human and fictional, ontologically distinct, yet as a single body. The distinction between dancer and dance character implies separation. Yet in Bedoyo as distinctive all dancing, the two orders of reality are present in one body. Wayang and the classical dance at Wayang Kulit perform the same stories, yet the contrast is instructive. Shadow theater requires physical separation of puppet and shadow. The shadow is a negative image that only appears across measurable distance. Dancing presents ontological distinction without physical separation. Dancer and dance are different, yet they are the same body. The dancing body thus reveals distance before it becomes measurable, the dynamic potential of co presence itself. Dancing is a quintessential form of moving. Movement, change of place, denotes objective measurable distance. Moving as process or passage implies a here and there, a direction, yet as ongoingness, it cannot be grasped or fixed without losing its essence, its ongoingness. The esthetic aspect of proprioception allows us to feel and experience moving in its ongoingness. The objective distance evident in the shadow theater expands in dance into depth, a quality of process. Distance is an objective measure between points. Depth is much more profound and interesting. It arises in the subjective interaction of perceiver and perceivable. Discernible through motion, occlusion, stereopsis, and paralaxis. Depth is the living interconnection of perception. Depth is subjective and relational, belonging to both ongoing moving and the interactions by which we form self and world. Dancing and the witnessing of dancing evokes this depth through the negotiation of two presences of the same body dancer and figure danced. Dancing has primacy. It sustains cultural and religious specificity while illuminating something fundamental about being human. My experience in Java convinced me that religion does not begin with belief and doctrine. It begins with a biologically enabled capacity to move in ways that hold identity and difference together. In shadow theater and dancing, we witness not mere representation, but co presence, self and other depth and distance, body and world arising together in motion. Religion, in this sense, is not first an explanation of the world, but a disciplined, skillful cultivation of forms of self moving that evoke depth by which worlds and identities are shaped and coherence is pursued. To study religion emotion is therefore to recognize that its most profound achievements are rooted in the extraordinary capacities of humans as whole, living, moving organisms. On a snowy winter afternoon, a blast of cold air accompanies a group of masked D andont as they push past the blanket covering the east facing door of a Navajo hogan. Artisans have worked much of the day to create an intricate, colorful sand painting filling much of the pecked wood floor. A human, a woman, the patient or the one song over, sits in the middle of the painting. She and the singer or medicine man have just recited a nearly hour long prayer. The masked D andont walk onto the sand painting. In a ritualized sequence, they each touch the figure of themselves in the painting and transfer the

sand adhering to their moistened hands to the patient's feet, legs, torso, head, and lips. This enacts the ritual sequence, feet, leg, body, mind, and voice so common in prayer and song. The patient is thus identified with D andon by touch. The D andon and the blurred sand painting is removed. My dissertation was on Navajo Prayer. I collected what I referred to as 20,000 lines of prayer text. It was not despite the fact who told me that Native Americans didn't have texts. It was to support a structural analysis that correlated common word groupings in prayers of various types with story elements, ritual actions, and cultural concerns. Yet, clearly, for the Navajo, praying is action, not text. Rather than focusing on the meanings of words in prayer, my interest is in appreciating how aspects of Navajo prayer rituals, such as posture, gesture, skill, and sensation shape Navajo identity and reality. The motivating circumstances for the performance of Navajo prayer ceremonies are described in terms of illness. The heroes in Navajo mythology are those who dare to go where they are forbidden, with the courage to suffer the consequences. The stories of their adventures, including the healing rites done to treat their suffering, become the prototypes for the specific healing prayer ceremonies. The most beloved character of Navajo stories is the trickster, coyote. In Navajo language, he is Ma'ii. This means trotter, the one always moving. Challenging convention, Ma'ii daringly breaks the rules and suffers the consequences. They are violent but often comical. They often told humorous stories of Ma'ii teach Navajo ethics, morality, proper behavior. The incoherence of disruption shapes behavior. Navajo medicine men serve long apprenticeships. They learn a huge repertoire of stories, prayers, and songs. They learn the ritual skills needed to perform long complex ceremonials. Most Navajos participate in multi day ceremonial. Navajo identity is acquired and transmitted through the rhythmic recitation of distinctive prayer phrases, sequences, orientations, and sounds, as well as well as this correspondence of prayers to songs, writes, stories, hogans and the landscape of Navajo land. These skilled gestural actions so commonly experienced convey the shape and flavor and feel that is distinctively Navajo. Navajos, as well as many other Native Americans often use the English word harmony to indicate the distinct to indicate the objective of their religious practices. Harmony must be understood in terms of ongoing space filling, echoing of sounding, and resounding the sounds of singing and praying. Indeed, the songs and sounds of dancing Yeii are among the most eerily distinctive that I have ever heard. Harmony includes the uneasy feeling of discord seeking harmonic resolution. Nearly all Navajo religious actions center on the disruption of life, understood in terms of illness. Navajo articulate desired coherence with their word Hozho, which is often rendered as beauty. It is often depicted as a male, female pair called long life and happiness [inaudible 00:47:37]. They are commonly invoked in prayer. Many Navajo prayers conclude with the standard passage, In beauty, may I walk, and I beauty, may I walk. Importantly, beauty is understand in terms of self moving, walking. It is consistent with the verbal dominance of Navajo language, where everything is understood in terms of its ongoing moving, its action, its behavior. In Navajo language, it is difficult to refer to a non moving object. For Navajo, beauty is smooth, ongoing, self moving as an ideal objective of the ongoing struggle that is articulated in terms of various kinds of illness. Through the eight day and nine night ceremony of most Navajo ceremonials, skilled actions of gesturing, praying, touching, sand painting, singing repair relationships and reaffirm Navajo land as it was created. The one sung over has been the focus for the many forms of religion in motion. Yet the entire community has participated, all have experienced the identity confirming effects of the rights. On the final morning of the ceremony, the one sung over is walked to the east to greet the rising sun for the final prayer right. Leaving the controlled ritual space of the Hogan, this it marks her return to daily life. Through her experience of the skilled ritual actions, she has identified in so many ways with distinctive Navajo dynamics. She has prayed. She has been sung over. She has been physically touched by and identified with the D andont. She has been immersed in the stories and sounds and smells and tastes and sights that are Navajo. She knows that life is never free of the potential for illness causing disruption. Yet on this morning, she walks in beauty. She knows Hajan. In this talk, I've tried to show a different way of studying religion, one that complements the usual focus on words and beliefs and history and thought. I've asked us to include what people do, yet more so the process of the doing, the ongoingness of gestures, skills, and actions of religious life in its living. Humans are self moving

creatures, and that matters. Religion is not first a system of meanings. Religion isn't just about ideas. By means of moving skilled actions, religions shape who we are and how we experience the world. It is a disciplined cultivation of self moving through which coherence, identity, and world emerge. Masking, dancing, praying, storytelling, singing, and endless ritual actions are all ways of making and remaking human worlds. To see this action one last time, let's return to Hopi. My friend Emery Skua told me a story about the funeral of a Hopi clown. Someone who spent his life turning surprise and laughter into a skillful moving art. Clowns are comic figures, yet they often evoke fear. Kachinas enter a plaza in an orderly, elegant fashion. Yet clowns prefer surprise entrances. Sometimes they appear on a Pueblo rooftop. Seeing the Kachinas dance in the plaza below, they raise their hands and they shout, ya ha ha! as a signal that they have arrived at paradise. As they go down the ladder, attempting to enter paradise, they perform a variety of pratfalls to much the delight of everyone present. When this man died, he was widely respected as having dedicated his life to being a clown. He left funeral instructions so he could perform one last time, evoke one last laugh. His fellow clowns dressed the dead man in his costume. They took him to a pueblo rooftop. The village folks had been called to the plaza. Seeing the clowns above, the people didn't know what was happening. The clowns lifted their dead friend by his hands and feet at the roof's edge, and they swung him back and forth out over the plaza. Raising their hands, they shouted, ya ha ha!, and they flung his body into the plaza below. The people were horrified. Then recognition dawned, and they all laughed. I wish it were possible, now, over 50 years later for me to return to Hotevilla to experience my first Non Kachina dance. I would not ask questions. I would go to the edge of the roof. I would gaze at the glorious Kachinas below. I would raise my hands, and I would shout, ya ha ha! [Applause] Thank you. [Music]