Clever, but snarky

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David Hart ("Daniel Dennett Hunts the Snark," January) uses the rhetorical trick of claiming that "religion" does not actually exist but only reflects the existence of a variety of different belief systems we call religion for the sake of convenience. It his point is that religion, like culture, is hard to investigate with the methods of science, then he is correct. If his point is that religion and culture cannot be studied with the methods of science, then he is clearly mistaken. Otherwise, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, etc., would be disciplines without subject matter.

To follow Hart's logic, culture does not exist, music does not exist, art does not exist; ironically, only science would seem to exist, since there are not many scientific methods in the way there are many religions or cultures. It doesn't take a linguist to point out that such terms as religion and culture are universal and used to speak about specific religions or cultures. We might not be able to point to religion, but we can point to many specific religions. How do we know what is a religion and what isn't? We do seem to know, by the way, or else we could never know if we belonged to one or not. So we know it when we see it, and therefore it is not beyond the bounds of the scientific method to study it. Hart's point here is of no consequence; he illustrates a semantic difference that makes no difference.

Hart thinks that if Dennett is to understand religious belief truly and empirically, he should study it from the inside, that he should pray. As it the only way to study a phenomenon is from the inside--whatever that means. I hope Hart means this sarcastically, which would be consistent with the overall tone of his article. Hart argues that Dennett's naturalistic, evolution-based explanations of religion are empty abstractions, but he offers no explanations other than that religious practices and beliefs are somehow...

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If it revolves around being modern and hip, snarky, edgy, and oh-so-clever—you might want to reconsider. A new survey of 1,000 customers by social media management software company Sprout Social shows just how risky it can be to use wit and snark on social media, and how quickly customers can turn on you if you do. So what does help sell on social media? It's not as fun or creative as being snarky or clever or funny—and it's a lot more work—but the answer is responding to your customers. Siri’s Snarkiest, Most Hilarious Answers to People’s Dumb Questions. By Robin Zlotnick. Share on Facebook. If you have an iPhone, you are probably aware that robot helper Siri can sometimes be a little too clever for her own good. But if you ask her about herself or come at her with a snarky question, Siri will always have an answer. She is quick with the comebacks, folks! What Siri says may not be what you want to or expected to hear. I remember distinctly when I was 19 delivering a clever snarky comment to a friend at a meal. I knew the comment was too cutting as soon as I said it. I decided after to say nothing if I could not find something constructive to say. I’ve kept that promise to myself. Snark is easy humor. It gives us pleasure to be clever. But it is more destructive than its advantage in immediate pleasure. It poisons the well for everyone who comes into contact with it.