In this essay I would like to present a few personal comments on the various papers published in the special issue of this journal on the sociology of religion of Bryan Wilson, and at the same time offer some new thoughts on the problem under discussion.

The scholars who commented on Wilson’s essay have already sufficiently brought out its various problematic points and thus my own comments might seem somewhat warmed over, but I am fortunately able to make use of the “Riposte” that Wilson was kind enough to write, and which has made the points in question much clearer than they were initially. Since I myself, though, have also been in search of an appropriate method of scientific study, I am afraid that my comments may serve to complicate matters rather than to clarify them.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE
Wilson’s essay can be called representative of the traditional mainstream of the sociology of religion: while presenting an outline of the historical development of this discipline, it also outlines the limitations sociology as a science must observe in dealing with an object as subjective and multivocal as religion. Roughly speaking, we can observe two kinds of such limitations. I would call the first the qualitative and fundamental limitations that are due to the nature of the sociology of religion as a science, and the second the cultural and historical limitations that are due to the fact that the sociology of religion arose in the West.
The former limitations consist of the "objectivity" and "value free" nature that the sociology of religion must strive for as a science, as well as the "ethical barriers" which prohibit it from interfering with or eliminating through rational explanation values such as human dignity or subjectivity. The latter limitations are relative and need to be overcome in the future through refinements in the methodology of sociology, no matter how difficult such refinements might be to bring about. The sociology of religion, in point of fact, has as its goal the interpretation of religious phenomena by means of comparison and conceptual abstraction and the discovery of the fundamentals of the interrelated structure of religion and society in cross-cultural comparison through placing religious phenomena in a wider perspective. The perspectives of comparison and the concepts used in the analysis have, however, been elaborated in a Christian cultural context, and therefore the sociology of religion has so far found a certain cultural bias unavoidable. It is impossible, moreover, to avoid interpretation in the method employed for transferring religious phenomena into research, because one most always rely on certain criteria in the selection and ordering of such data.

The establishment of criteria and the interpretation practiced in data-collecting by the sociologist of religion are, on the other hand, done not with the goal of interpreting religious phenomena themselves, but rather with the aim of knowing the social forms of religious phenomena and the patterns of their relationships with other sociological variables. So long as these criteria and this interpretation in the cognitive system of sociology are open to criticism, then, they constitute nothing more than historical and sociologically relative limitations, and should not be taken as absolute or fundamental in nature. In sum, the cultural bias of the analytical categories and the degree of refinement in the interpretation necessary for organizing data in the sociology of religion are at present only relative limitations, and should be overcome in the future.
Through a focus on these double limitations, the five comments on Wilson's essay can be divided into two camps. First, Morioka and Akaike virtually completely acknowledge these two kinds of limitations on science and present some positive answers and proposals from the current state of sociological methodological attitudes as the central theme of their comments. I myself would like to deal with this problem in this essay, but for the moment will limit myself to merely indicating its presence.

We incidentally owe Araki a vote of thanks for his role in bringing about the clarifications in his views that Wilson makes in his "Riposte," when he attempts to refute all of Araki's arguments.

As its title suggests, Shimazono's essay seems to depart from Wilson's problematic altogether. Insofar as Shimazono points out the contradiction of a position which clings to "objectivity" and "value neutrality" while at the same time attempting to demonstrate a sympathetic understanding of religion, thereby supporting the scientism of traditional sociology that began from skeptical attitudes toward religion, we can take his essay as being both sharply critical of Wilson as well as constituting a change of direction. In a word, religion and science have, in the Western cultural sphere, become two antagonistic world views, and it is therefore utterly impossible to arrive at an adequate cognitive system of understanding religion through any attempt at understanding it with the objectivity proper to science. In the Japanese cultural sphere, on the contrary, different religions have dwelt together in a tradition of mutual tolerance. Here we have seen the rise of a peculiar kind of religious comparison which centers on human beings. Shimazono brings these attempts at religious research back to our sight, and further attempts to open new perspectives for a study of religion attuned to Japan's multidimensional situation. In this respect, his essay is certainly highly worthy of attention.

Insofar as I can judge from Wilson's "Riposte," however, it would appear that the real meaning of Shimazono's multidimensionality has not been fully understood. To delve more deeply into Shimazono's point, the coexistence of different religions he speaks of
refers to a coexistence within the same personality or same group of people, and does not signify the coexistence of different people who each possess their own particular faith, or the coexistence of such different groups. Wilson gives examples from Europe and the East (the historical East) which belong to this latter type of religious coexistence, and argues from these that no cognitive system of religious understanding comparable to science has come about. He therefore refutes Shimazono’s proposal for the acquisition of an understanding of religion as such as being inappropriate for a sociology of religion dedicated to exploring the relationships between religion and society and human beings.

To summarize, above I have attempted to trace the gist of the five comments in light of Wilson’s argument about the scientific limitations of the sociology of religion. Wilson does not, in fact, himself regard “objectivity” and “value neutrality”—which I have called fundamental limitations—as scientific limitations. Instead, he positively affirms these as objectives to be aimed at if the sociology of religion is to become a real science. My insistence on considering them as “limitations” is in line with an argument that I wish to develop further at this time, which runs roughly parallel to the arguments of Swyngedouw, Araki and Shimazono where they are searching for the possibility of a sociological study of religion that would focus primarily on religion itself. My own standpoint, however, is not so much to comment on traditional scientific research that takes only religion as its object of study, but is to have a new look at the traditional human and social sciences as a whole; my aim is to understand, if possible, human beings and their society. I want to bring up once more the question of the sociology of religion’s great presupposition that it is a “human science.”

THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM: SYMPATHY AND OBJECTIVITY

The reason I wish to raise this question once again is to be found in Wilson’s two essays, and is, further, nothing less than the problem of “sympathetic detachment” dealt with by the commentators.

In his reply to Shimazono, Wilson again mentions “detached
objectivity" as a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of scientific studies, including studies of religion. We can also infer, from his replies both to Araki and others, that he himself really heeds this scientific objectivity. A careful reading of his first essay, of course, will reveal that Wilson's "objectivity" refers to what sociology must aim at as a scientific discipline, and not to the objectivity presupposed by the natural sciences. The idea of "value neutrality," too, is ultimately a question of degree, and Wilson seems to agree that it can hardly be obtained in the full sense of the word. He constantly stresses, moreover, that the sociologist who takes the social forms of religion as his object of study, "must first take the self-interpretation of religious individuals and groups as the point of departure from which his study begins" (Wilson 1982a, p. 22), because "only if he can gain some apprehension of what it means to be a believer can he say anything useful about the religious movement he studies" (1982a, p. 23). In other words, his is a sociology of religion based on an understanding of the subjective meaning that religion holds for people, and it is in this sense a scientific stance faithful to the Weberian tradition.

Wilson shows his faithfulness to this tradition precisely by his insistence on "sympathetic detachment" and his pointing out the contradiction this implies. While arguing for the necessity of a certain empathy toward the object of study in order to reach an understanding of the inner meaning of religious groups, he adds his interpretation that sociology, because it is a science, requires an objective distance from what it studies. The faithfulness of the sociologist of religion can be found in his constant awareness of this methodological contradiction both during his research and when he interprets his results.

Precisely for this reason, sociology has always to bear in mind that it faces certain relative limitations in its scientific objectivity. If I understand them correctly, each of these assertions of Wilson is individually very reasonable. I myself, in my own studies, have always experienced the difficult problem of approaching the object "from within" and "from without," as Swyngedouw puts it. The
observations on the problematic points that I will make in this essay are, then, done from a keen awareness of my own "puzzlement."

The first problem is this. If, as Wilson says, the standpoint of the sociologist is a quest for an objectivity that still will leave room for a sympathy that might jeopardize it, and the necessity to live with this unresolved tension, what, then, does this ultimately mean for someone aiming at a "human science?" Another, related, problem, is this. Is sociology a discipline that exists in order to be a science, or is it a discipline that exists in order to correctly understand society?—is clinging to the objectivity of science really its only possible method? To repeat, Wilson acknowledges, even while emphasizing the scientific nature of sociology, his awareness that an objectivity like that of the natural sciences is undesirable. If, indeed, the ultimate aim is to know man and society, what is the reason for clinging to objectivity?

If the objectivity of science is nothing more than an ideal that can never be ultimately realized, and if it is nevertheless the task of sociology to infinitely strive for its realization, the attitude of sociologists toward their research results will tend to lean to either optimism or pessimism. In other words, insofar as objectivity is the only criterion of science, any human science, including sociology, can as a discipline never be on a par with the natural sciences because they cannot completely separate themselves from the subjective meaning of their object of study. The awareness of this can become the sincerity of the sociologist, but it can also constitute a subservient weakness of the sociologist toward the natural scientist. Precisely for this reason, those who desire to know human society in a scientific way sometimes lose their positive self-confidence and self-respect.

Here I would like to raise the problem of the exact meaning of "objectivity" in the human sciences, including sociology and Religionswissenschaft. I must admit that when I read Wilson's essays I felt his opinion to be extremely reasonable from the standpoint of the traditional sociology of religion. Akaike, for example,
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asserts that he has no particular disagreements with Wilson concerning his postulations on the serious research attitudes of the sociologist of religion. In spite of this, I also felt a certain uneasiness on reading these essays, an uneasiness which originated from my views of the problems involved and which has to do with Wilson’s unconditional commitment to “scientific objectivity.” It seems to me that Wilson’s establishment of an objective standpoint for the research as a conditio sine qua non for sociology to become a science is both too hasty and slightly exaggerated. According to Wilson, the sociologist of religion must first adopt an objective standpoint, however incomplete this might be; this means, then, that he must also risk a feeling of sympathy—which is a contradiction of his objectivity—in order to understand the subjective meaning inherent in religious people and groups. Such an assertion immediately, from the very beginning, labels the respective cognitive orientations of those involved—namely, the objective view of the researcher and the subjective views of the religious people—as being in mutual opposition. “Sympathy” and “empathy” toward the subject, further, are considered subjective tendencies that undermine the researcher’s own objective viewpoints. Because Wilson presupposes the objectivity of the researcher, his attempts to explain the points of difference in objectivity between sociology and the natural sciences assert that these are only a matter of degree. And his references to the “risk of sympathy” enforce the opinion that the objectivity of the researcher and the subjectivity of the religious believer are completely heterogeneous and irreconcilable entities.

While all this makes me feel uneasy, it seems to have angered Araki, and he sharply criticizes Wilson, admittedly somewhat distorting Wilson’s statements in the process. This distortion seems to be due to certain preconceptions that Araki saw hidden in Wilson’s ideas. To repeat, Wilson seems to be totally committed to the idea that the scientific nature of sociology and the subjectivity of religion are, from the very beginning, elements belonging to es-
Solutely heterogeneous dimensions. Precisely for this very reason, therefore, I cannot but feel that implicit in Wilson’s reasoning is the idea that “sympathetic detachment and non-participation” are the only methodological attitudes possible for the conscientious sociologist of religion, and the idea that the human sciences thus cannot attain the objectivity of the natural sciences. Can there, though, really be an “objective” standpoint in the human sciences?

Wilson contrasts objectivity and subjectivity in his “Riposte” and particularly in his reply to Araki, and unconditionally opts for the former as the more scientific method. Is it, though, really so easy for a discipline that is dealing with human beings and society to trumpet “objectivity,” and to do away with the “subjective?”

From my own narrow perspective, I would say that in the contemporary science of man and society the traditional methodology has clung too strongly to the dogma of “objectivity,” and that we need to undergo some serious self-examination on this point. We need, in other words, a fundamental re-examination of the optimistic and naturalistic attitudes of science—that is, the so-called “objectivity”—toward the social and human phenomena that constitute its object of research. It should be unnecessary to note that this means efforts to reestablish the methods and systems used in the human and social sciences, from the wider perspective of phenomenology.

To summarize my conclusion, I think that, in contrast with Wilson, we should build our standpoint in the human sciences not from “objectivity,” but rather from the “subjective.” Below I will explain what I mean by this.

BEYOND OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE
We can divide phenomena in general into two types, namely the natural and the human. When modern science makes these two types of phenomena into objects of study we have the natural sciences and the human sciences. Both types of sciences deal with the adequacy of human experience through experimentation and
positive verification, and the systems of these disciplines are them-
selves established on intellectual abstraction. Insofar as the
phenomena under research are to be dealt with from a scientific
perspective, therefore, they must undergo a certain abstraction or
reduction corresponding to these intellectual systems. In point of
fact, the division of phenomena into natural and human can itself
be called a reduction of the phenomena corresponding to these
two disciplines. An object such as a stone, for example, will be
"natural" when we concentrate on its constitution as a stone, but
"human" when we look at its impression and meaning. In other
words, a difference arises when we treat phenomena as mere things
instead of treating them in their relationships with human beings.

When we treat phenomena as being related to human beings,
we must acknowledge that despite the form in which they might
appear, there is a subjective human mediation involved in our
perceptions. To look at something as only a natural object, how-
ever, involves a kind of intellectual reduction that excludes human
subjectivity. On the other hand, however, acknowledging the
subjectivity of a human-related phenomenon does not mean that we
have made no intellectual reduction in that case, for we have seen
the phenomenon in its subjective meaning rather than as merely a
phenomenon in nature. And this, indeed, is itself a kind of ab-
straction and reduction.

The problem, then, is to determine the basis for this reduction or
abstraction. The natural sciences, in their reductional perspective,
omit the human element and establish a direct interaction between
things and things. In other words, they abstract phenomena and
leave human experience aside. On the other hand, however we
might abstract phenomena in the human sciences, it is impossible
to attain a perspective that does not take account of the subjectivity
of the human actor, since the phenomena abstracted in the re-
ductional perspective involve essentially the interaction of things
and persons, and of persons and persons.

Science is, of course, a creation of human beings. All sciences,
therefore, whether natural or human, deal to a certain degree with
the relationships of things and persons (theory), insofar as these sciences are intellectual systems established by human beings. Can we not then think that the objectivity of science, in a strict sense, depends on the manner of the relationship between persons and things?

The terms shukan (“subjectivity”) and kyakukan (“objectivity”) have been derived from the Buddhist practice of suspension of looking at objects; “objectivity,” consequently, means doing away with subjectivity in the process of attaining muga (“selflessness”). In Western philosophy, however, objectivity originally refers to “objectification,” which means nothing less than the process of establishing an object by a cognitive subject. It means, thus, looking at things as they are, as objects, and this does not at all imply the self-effacement of the subject.

If modern science has its roots in the natural sciences, however, the objectivity postulated there has nothing to do with either an extension of the original process of establishing an object or with the process of the annihilation of the subjective. Phenomena are abstracted into the interactions of thing with thing, and made objective by repeated empirical verification; the human aspects are left out, and objectivity is established apart from human beings, and is consequently not the opposite pole of the subjective. Does this objectivity, which came out of the empirical sciences, not belong to a different sort of objectivity than do these sciences?

In other words, the “objectivity” of the sciences, which is often postulated nowadays, is certainly an old term. It does not, however, refer to the objectification of facts that were the original posture and action of human knowledge. On the contrary, objectivity is considered to indicate a level apart from human beings, a level where the interrelations of phenomena have been established. If this is indeed the case, it is problematic whether we can question, as is done in the natural sciences, the “objectivity” of the human sciences, since we have not only confused the original meaning of “objectivity” with the meaning it has in the natural sciences, but also tend to easily lose or disregard the fundamental humanity of
the human sciences. As long as the human scientist, even the most conscientious one, is not aware of this confusion, he will wind up serving a science that lacks humanity, however earnestly he might set up barriers around his objectivity.

In order to completely avoid this danger of confusion, therefore, we should get back to the original meaning of objectivity, and express it as the "establishment of an object," that is, as true objectification. In other words, the original meaning of objectivity was the systematic objectification of the knowledge of phenomena by the researcher, and in this case it is no different from the subjective knowledge that any person has of reality, since ultimately every experience of reality is nothing less than an act of objectification. It is only that the universal adequacy of the objectification of the researcher is valued in a scholarly system. But even in ordinary life the adequacy and social plausibility of the objectification of reality is always questioned. The borderline between normal and abnormal persons lies precisely in that point.

The objectification of phenomena mediated by people—that is, of human phenomena—referred to here is in line with the original meaning of subjectivity. The phenomena which arise here cannot come into existence without human subjectivity, whether these phenomena concern the relationships between things and persons or between persons and persons. This is as true for science as it is for religion. The natural sciences that regard human beings as things are, of course, different. Biology and physical medicine, for example, see humans as organisms. In such cases the subjective view of the researcher, through its ability to reduce persons to the organic relationships between things and things, can become in truth totally dissolved through empirical verification. No matter how one reduces human phenomena, however, one can never totally do away with human subjectivity. It is thus also impossible for the subjectivity of the researcher to dissolve as the result of empirical verification conducted on the same dimension that the research object exists on. There is ultimately no solution other than for the researcher to objectify, on a different dimension, the objectifica-
tion of the subjective experience of the people he is studying through his own understanding, which is further subjective.

Religion is often said to be the ultimate subjective phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that differs from the everyday experiences undergone by all people, and hence is extra-ordinary and the property only of religious people. For this reason religious phenomena contain an experience of reality that cannot be sufficiently and concretely objectified and, consequently, cannot be expressed in words or forms. In other words, the form that is objectified is merely a symbol that indicates the religious experience. Religious phenomena are therefore said to be understandable only to those who have experienced them themselves. A religious phenomenon does not, however, really become religious if it remains confined to a solitary experience. Religion comes into being when symbols are systematized, experience is typified, and those symbols and experiences become common subjective possessions of the believers. In short, whether these symbols and experiences are limited to the believers in a particular sect or whether they are phenomena peculiar to religion as a whole, they become true religious phenomena only when they have become common subjective possessions. This is precisely the point Wilson wishes to convey when in his reply to Araki he asks what religious phenomena exist that are not social phenomena. Admittedly, William James, for example, argues concerning the phenomena of solitary conversion and the mystical experiences of saints that the only true religion is individual religion, but even in such cases he cannot escape the fact that however solitary they might be, they are subjective religious phenomena that have a social dimension.

As has become clear by now, then, all cultural phenomena are, strictly speaking, based on human subjectivity and thus imply a social dimension, however individual they might be.

The question, then, is how the subjective and social dimensions of phenomena are interrelated. Here we must examine the meaning of “intersubjectivity.” This conception by no means refers to the often discussed non-differentiation of subject and object; nor does
it refer to their mutual relationship. It should instead be taken literally, to refer to the relationship between subject and subject. Needless to say, this is the central concept that A. Schutz used in his sociological theory based on phenomenology, and I think that it is, for reasons which I have tried to explain, a basic theme in the human sciences. As we have learned, there can be no objective standpoint in human phenomena and the human sciences such as is found in the natural sciences. All human phenomena, whatever form they might take, are nothing less than objectification in the subjective field.

Insofar as this subjectivity is human, however, it does not come about purely on an individual basis. My own subjective views do not arise apart from the subjective views of others. I am born among these others, as an other among the "others," and my subjective views are mine individually, nurtured among the others. Even so, this of course does not mean that subjectivity is essentially other-related. As G. H. Mead and E. Cassirer have pointed out, there is, as a phenomenological reality, both a subjectified "I" and an objectified "me" existing within the self. The subjective inevitably objectifies the self at the same time it subjectifies it. In other words, subjectivity is essentially at the same time both self-directed and other-directed.

Consequently, in order for me to recognize the reality that I am subjectively myself, I must first objectify this self, and the objectified self must then become real in the subjectivity of others. I can only recognize myself as myself through a process of identification, in which I once again subjectify the real "me" in both my own subjectivity and in the subjectivity of others. This is precisely what E. Erikson has called the structure of ego-identity. The reality of the self, in short, is essentially established in the very areas between subjectivity and subjectivity.

If, then, we say that human subjective reality is subjective, this does not mean that it is therefore necessarily individual or that it is destructive of individuality. Both individualism, which takes humans primarily as individuals, and socialism, which takes them
primarily as social beings, are "isms" that do not fit phenomenological reality. Further, the conventional behavioral sciences such as exemplified by Talcott Parsons, which functionally divide and analyze humans according to cultural, social, personal and physical-organic levels, end up with a functional dissolution of human subjectivity and cannot be called adequate as human sciences. Living human reality is neither unilaterally individual nor unilaterally social; there is no point in discussing it as being organic. It is, more than anything else, intersubjective reality.

To make what is probably an unnecessary addition here, in Japanese we classify persons (hito) generally as humans (ningen), which is very suggestive in this respect. In China the word "ningen" meant nothing other than human relationships, or society. In Japan, where the characters were imported with their original meaning, somewhere along the line the word "human" (ningen) came to mean "person" (hito), even if it was referring to only one individual. The Japanese must, from a very early period, have intuitively understood the essence of being human.

The Japanese thinker Watsuji Tetsurō once looked for the basis of the human sciences in man's aidagara ("interrelationships"), from the standpoint of ethics. More recently similar attempts have been made from the standpoints of disciplines such as historical materialism and psychopathology. All of these point to the social nature of subjectivity and contrast this Japanese trait to the individualism of the West. These are no doubt academic trends that we should watch carefully.

CONCLUSION
What I have attempted to describe in such a halting way in these pages has been my own idiosyncratic search over the years for a human science perspective, and I have allowed myself to be led in this attempt by the essays of Wilson and his commentators.

Wilson mentioned only direct interviews and questionnaires as methods of sociological inquiry, but we who value actual observation of religious phenomena at the place where they occur feel foremost
the problems with "objectivity" in ordering the data we have observed. We have not exactly taken an opposite direction, but one cannot help but notice certain subtleties even in the self-interpretations of people during interviews. Perhaps for these reasons, one must be especially careful in considering the inner meaning of religion, even in our analyses of historical material and written records. This is not necessarily a problem that will end, as it does with Wilson, in the ordering of collected data after limiting the area covered to that which is dealt with in sociology.

With regard to this point there have even been attempts made in the social sciences in general, including sociology, to seriously reflect on the so-called traditional scientific methods, and to re-establish sociology by making use of such factors as the phenomenology since Husserl or the hermeneutics of Dilthey. Examples of these are the cooperative achievements of leading scholars in different fields of the human sciences such as R. Bellah, P. Ricoeur, C. Geertz, T. Kuhn and the like. These scholars all unambiguously refer to their own standpoint as "interpretative science." In the framework essay of a collection of essays by this title (University of California Press 1979), P. Rabinow and W. Sullivan call their common methodological proposal an "interpretative turn," and make it clear that their basic perspective lies in the understanding of the intersubjective meaning of their object of study. Among these essays we can find rewritten and improved essays which had already made similar points, and noteworthy is that of C. Taylor, called "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in which the author refers to man as a "self-defining animal." This is a view of man held in common by all the essays in the book.

Also noteworthy is the recent collection of essays by P. Berger and H. Kellner, Sociology Reinterpreted (Anchor Books 1981). It is unnecessary to note that this is an attempt to reconstruct sociology from the perspective of intersubjectivity, which the writers have culled from the phenomenological theories of Schutz. This book is especially interesting in light of the question Swyngedouw
asks Wilson in the special issue—in light of Wilson’s “ethical neutrality,” how should one cope with unavoidable ethical implications and value judgments in scientific research? Swyngedouw states that since the aim of science is ultimately not science as such, but rather is the improvement of society, the suppression of ethical judgments by the scientist as a scientist will lead to a split in his personality and is therefore actually meaningless. P. Berger analyzes the fact that sociology itself, since its emergence as a modern science, has had above all methodologically to serve the relativization and pluralization of modern culture. He asserts that it is the social responsibility of the sociologist who follows this line to search out from the traditional culture in modern society those elements which should be kept alive, and to make a case for their continuation.

It was my intention in this essay to offer some specific comments on the discussion initiated by Wilson, but I devoted all my time to the general problem of “objectivity” in the human sciences rather than dealing with the problems of religion and its social relationships.

One might object, from the tradition of the human sciences, that to substitute “objectification” based on intersubjectivity for “objectivity” is a retreat from science. But even so, is it not possible by this to repair the qualitative schism that has existed between the reality constructions of the people in their lives and the academic constructions of researchers, and which has been based on “objectivity?” As Wilson himself points out, no matter how “objective” our scientific data might be, scientific discipline is not established simply by a description of this data. The people have their own subjective meanings for the data themselves, and the researcher, too, in his own description of the data, must acknowledge the necessity for interpretation. In other words, the evaluative basis of the human sciences lies in attempts to understand the meaning of meaning and to arrive—theoretically and systematically—at a universally adequate objectification.

Is it not precisely here that the systematic historical development
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of the various disciplines and the importance of scholarly communication are to be found?

GLOSSARY

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<th>Muga</th>
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REFERENCES

Wilson, Bryan