



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Photographer: P-E NILSSON

Conference Program

MODERN GOVERNMENT SOVEREIGNTY AND THE CATEGORY OF RELIGION

An interdisciplinary conference on
Critical Religion Theory, May 8th-11th, 2014



WELCOME!

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and Uppsala University (SALT and the Impact of Religion), welcome you to the conference “Modern Government, Sovereignty, and the Category of Religion” in the town of Uppsala.

Attending the conference’s open sessions (May 9th-10th) is free of charge. Seetings after availability.

If you have any questions regarding the conference please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

PhD Per-Erik NILSSON
Conference organizer
Impact of Religion, Uppsala University
CHERPA, Sciences Po Aix
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For more information:
www.impactofreligion.uu.se
<http://criticalreligion.org>
<http://nsrn.net>



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Photographer: Tommy Westberg

Engelska parken, Entrance CRS

Photographer: Magnus Hjalmarsson



**CONFERENCE
THEME**

The University Library

**CRITICAL APPROACHES TO
THE STUDY OF RELIGION**

This conference gathers world leading scholars in the field of Critical Religion Theory. During the conference these scholars will critically examine how the very idea that religion is something that can be set apart from other societal spheres like economics and culture has influenced/affected modern governance and the exercise of sovereign power.

The topics covered vary from contemporary relations between French Muslim communities and the French state, recent developments on the Indian political scene, the effects of the importation of the category of religion in 19th century Japan, feminist spirituality and the governing of the self, the Israel-Palestine conflict seen from a new perspective, the myth of secular political economy, and much more.

During the conference two leading networks in critical approaches on religion and secularism will also engage in a debate on the premises for studying religion and secularism. The networks are the Critical Religion Association (UK) and the Non-Religion and Secularity Network (Germany and UK).

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Photographer: Staffan Claesson

VENUE INFORMATION AND SCHEDULE



Blåsenhus

OPEN SESSIONS

The open, free, and public sessions will be held in the Gunnar Johansson lecture hall. It is located at the Blåsenhus Campus at Uppsala University. The address is von Kraemers Allé 1A. At the entrance to Blåsenhus signs will lead you to the lecture hall.

CLOSED SESSIONS

The closed sessions, i.e. the workshop seminars will be held in the seminar room at CRS, the Engelska Parken Campus at Uppsala University. The address is Thunbergsvägen Thunbergsvägen 3D, House 4, level 2.

FOOD AND DRINKS

All the contributing participants will receive coffee/tea, lunch, and two dinners (Thur. 8th and Sat. 10th). Visitors may buy food and refreshments at the Feiroz Restaurant in Blåsenhus or choose any other restaurant in the city center.

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Modern Government, Sovereignty and the Category of Religion

Friday 9th open sessions

Keynote by Trevor Stack	8:30-9:30
Discussion led by Anders Sjöborg	9:30-10:00
Coffee/Tea	10:00-10:30
Lectures (Session 1) Robert Yelle Rajalakshmi Nadadur Kannan Laura S. Levitt	10:30-12:00
Discussion led by Mia Lövheim	12:00-13:00
Lunch served at Blåsenhus	13:00-14:00
Lectures (Session 2) Arvind Mandair Jeffrey Israel Mitsutoshi Horii	14:00-15:30
Discussion led by Mattias Gardell	15:30-16:30
Coffee/Tea	16:30-17:00
Debate led by Teemu Taira	17:00-18:30
The Critical Religion Association vs. the Non-Religion and Secularity Research Network.	

Dinner (non-organized dinner)

Saturday 10th open sessions

Keynote by Timothy Fitzgerald	8:30-9:30
Discussion led by Mattias Martinsson	9:30-10:00
Coffee/Tea	10:00-10:30
Lectures (Session 3) Jeremy Carrette: Alison Jasper Craig Martin David Liu	10:30-12:30
Discussion led by Petra Carlsson	12:30-13:30
Lunch served at Blåsenhus	13:30-14:30
Lectures (Session 4) Valerie Amiraux Cecile Laborde Per-Erik Nilsson	14:30-16:00
Discussion led by Vanja Mosbach	16:00-17:00
Coffee/Tea	17:00-17:30
Keynote by Naomi Goldenberg	17:30-18:30
Discussion led by Edda Manga	18:30-19:00

Dinner (at Snerikes Nation)

Sunday 11th closed sessions

Workshop (Session 1) Evin Ismail (Stacey) Evelina Lundmark (Trevor) Ulrika Svalfors (Alison)	8:30-10:00
Coffee/Tea	10:00-10:30
Workshop (Session 2) Johan Eddebo (Jeremy) Anthony Fiscella (Naomi) Gabrielle Desmarais (Robert)	10:30-12:00
Lunch served at CRS	12:00-13:00
Workshop (Session 3) Rebecca Tessier (Timothy) Michael Ruecker (Mattias) Emma Svensson (Naomi) Cameron Montgomery (Edda)	13:00-15:00
Evaluation with coffee/tea	15:30-16:30

Welcome Reception, Thursday 8th, 17:00

Will be held at CRS, Engelska parken, Uppsala University. Food and drinks will be served.

Dinner, Saturday 10th, 20:00

Exact locations for the dinner will be given during the Welcome reception. Dress as you like.

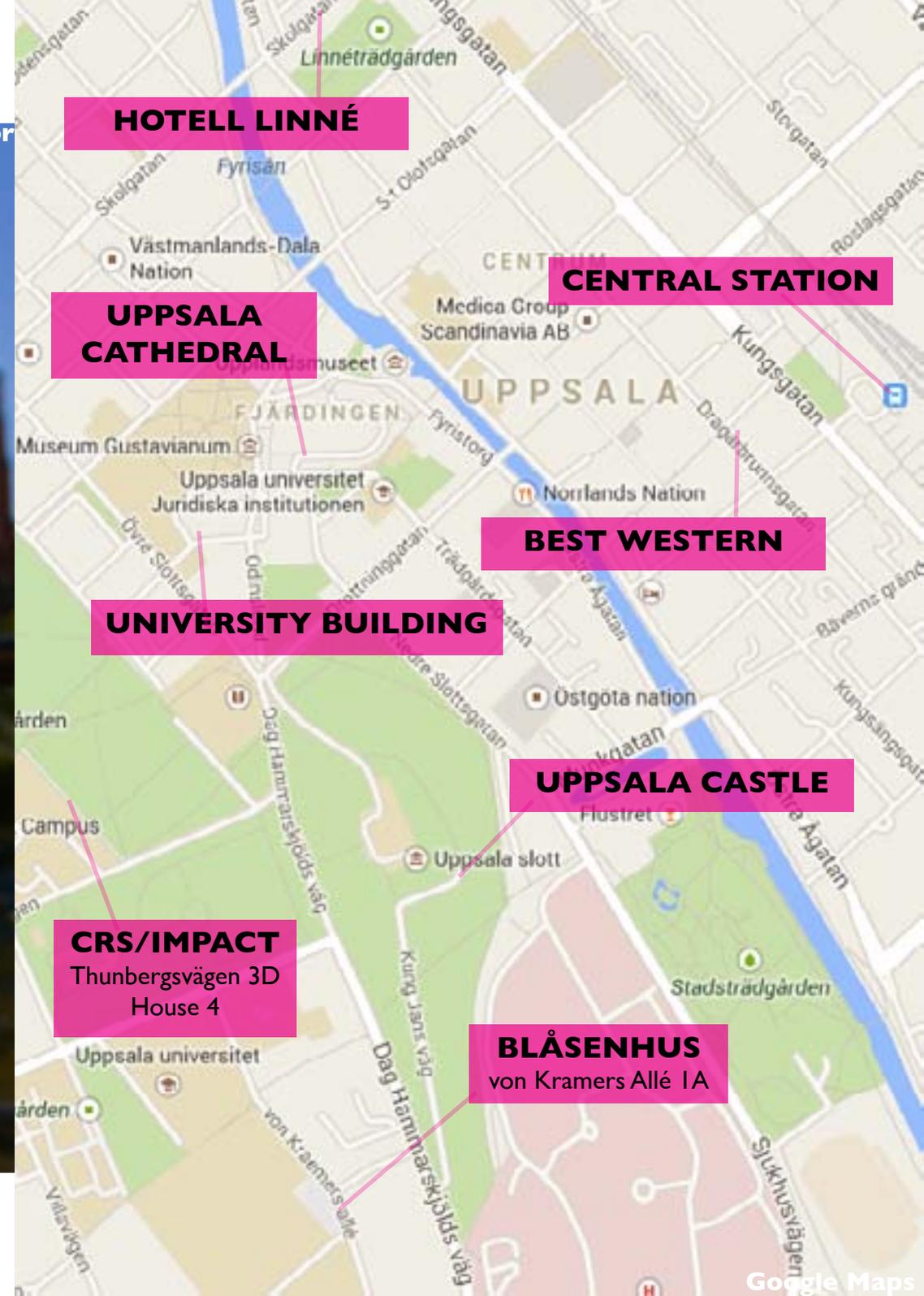
All meals will be lacto-ovo vegetarian.

RSVP before May 1st if you a) will not partake in one or any of the lunches/dinners and b) have special food requests.

Photographer: David Naylor

MAP and LOCATIONS

The Fyris River and the Cathedral



HOTELL LINNÉ

CENTRAL STATION

UPPSALA CATHEDRAL

BEST WESTERN

UNIVERSITY BUILDING

UPPSALA CASTLE

CRS/IMPACT
Thunbergsvägen 3D
House 4

BLÅSENHUS
von Kramers Allé IA

Modern Government, Sovereignty and the Category of Religion

Photographer: David Naylor



The University Main Building

Amiriaux, Valerie

Professor University of Montreal,
Canada Research Chair for the Study of
Religious Pluralism

Carlsson, Petra

Post-doctoral researcher, Uppsala University

Carrette, Jeremy

Professor, University of Kent

Desmarais, Gabrielle

Master's student, University of Ottawa

Eddebo, Johan

PhD-Candidate, Uppsala University

Enkvist, Victoria

Lecturer, Uppsala University

Fiscella, Anthony

PhD-Candidate, Lund University

Fitzgerald, Timothy (Keynote speaker)

Senior lecturer, University of Stirling

Gardell, Mattias

Professor, Uppsala University

Gutkowski, Stacey

Lecturer, King's College London

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Goldenberg, Naomi (Keynote speaker)
Professor, University of Ottawa

Horii, Mitsutoshi
Associate Professor, Shumei University

Ismail, Evin
PhD-Candidate, Uppsala University

Israel, Jeffrey
Assistant Professor, Williams College

Jasper, Alison
Lecturer, University of Stirling

Laborde, Cecile
Professor, University College London

Lee, Lois
Associate Researcher, University College
London

Levitt, Laura
Professor, Temple University

Liu, David
Researcher, Duke University

Lundmark, Evelina
Master's student, Uppsala University

Lövheim, Mia
Professor, Uppsala University

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Martin, Craig
Assistant Professor, St. Thomas
Aquinas College

Mandair, Arvind
Lecturer, University of Michigan

Manga, Edda
Senior researcher, Uppsala University

Martinson, Mattias
Professor, Uppsala University

Montgomery, Cameron
PhD-Candidate, University of Ottawa

Mosbach, Vanja
PhD-Candidate, Uppsala University

Nadadur Kannan, Rajalakshmi
PhD, University of Stirling

Nilsson, Per-Erik
Post-doctoral researcher, Uppsala University/
Sciences Po Aix

Ruecker, Michael
Master's student, University of Ottawa

Schenk, Susanne
PhD-Candidate, Uppsala University

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**Modern Government, Sovereignty
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Sjöborg, Anders
Associate Professor, Uppsala University

Stack, Trevor
Lecturer, University of Aberdeen

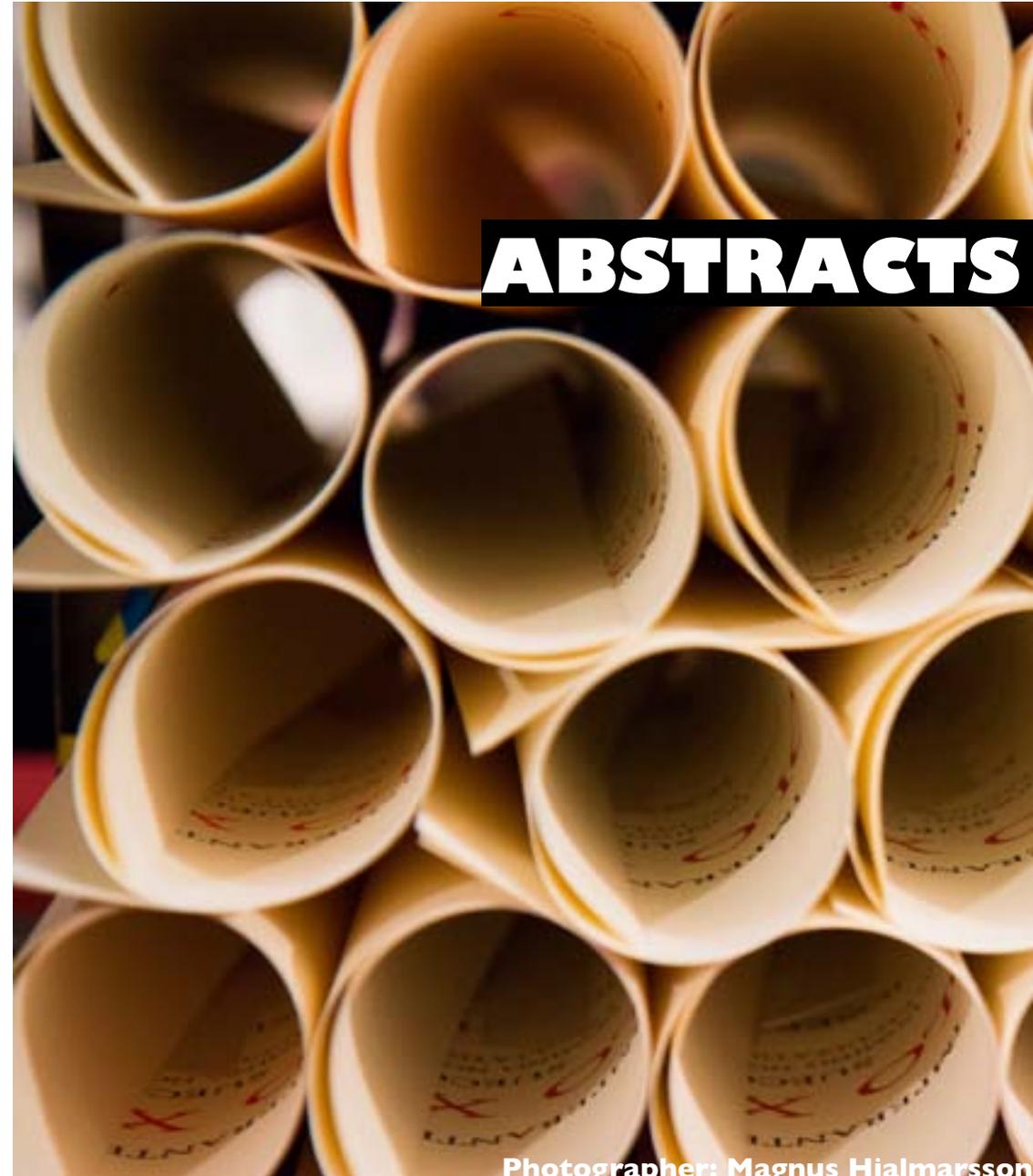
Svalfors, Ulrika
PhD, Uppsala University

Svensson, Emma
PhD-Candidate, Uppsala University

Taira, Teemu
Researcher, Turku University

Tessier, Rebecca
Master's student, Queens University

Yelle, Robert
Fellow, New York University Law School



ABSTRACTS

Photographer: Magnus Hjalmarsson

KEYNOTES

Naomi Goldenberg

The Category of Religion in the Technology of Statecraft: An Outline of a Theory of Religions as Vestigial States

It will be argued that religions can be productively and interestingly thought of as vestigial states in order to clarify their status and function in relation to contemporary forms of statecraft. The theory of 'vestigial states' describes 'religions' as sets of institutions, ideologies and practices that originate in particular histories with reference to former sovereignties. The term 'religion' gains traction through history and is applied to 'states' that have been displaced through war, invasion or colonization. Vestigial states – i.e. 'religions' - are both tolerated and encouraged as attenuated and marginalized governments within fully functioning nation states. However, they compete with contemporary states and therefore are problematic - especially if a vestigial state challenges the exclusive right of the recognized state to control violence. Indeed, vestigial states tend to behave as once and future states. Nevertheless, although vestigial states can contest contemporary governments, they also work to ground the

powers that authorize them by recalling earlier, now mystified forms of sovereignty from which present states arise. They thus can serve as storehouses of nostalgia for either idealized or demonized former hegemonies that present states are thought to embody in less magical (i.e. 'secular') incarnations.

Timothy Fitzgerald

Liberalism and the myth of secular political economy

Liberalism is an ideology based on counter-intuitive beliefs that require acts of faith, and is thus not essentially different from what is typically classified as a 'religion' or an irrational faith system. Yet there are few MP's in the UK parliament (and this point applies equally to the US Congress, and probably to the EU too) who would deny being Liberal, even if their party is called Conservative or New Labour. Liberalism appears in daily discourse as the secular common sense of the age, in tune with science and instrumental reason. Furthermore, while in actuality an inherently divisive and self-centred practice, Liberals think they are the nice guys of the world who want the best for everyone and know the best way to do everything. How has this modern illusion arisen, and how does it persist in the teeth of so much counter evidence?

Trevor Stack

Beyond the 'post-secular'

Scholars of the “post-secular” tend to exaggerate the trends of recent years because they have not fully understood the category of “religion” to begin with. Some argue that the boundary between “religious” and “secular” is increasingly blurred in practice, and view this as the harbinger of a brave new post-secular era. Others debate whether “religion” has or ought to have more of a place in public life than it has enjoyed hitherto. I argue, drawing on contributions to a volume that I am co-editing with Timothy Fitzgerald and Naomi Goldenberg, that there may have been shifts in recent years but none so dramatic as to warrant the term “post-secular”. The proposed title of our volume “Beyond the Post-Secular” has, therefore, the same meaning as Mandair and Dressler’s term “post-secular-religious” in a recent volume (2011). It is certainly not a historical claim - that we have left behind a “post-secular” era. On the contrary, the historical claim is that little has changed: the religious-secular distinction is still largely taken for granted and remains of considerable importance. Indeed, I will argue that it continues to be key to the way in which nation-states claim sovereignty as well as rationalise their governance.

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LECTURES

Valérie Amiraux

Gossip, Fetishism, and Hate: Muslims in French public culture

Over the course of the last thirty years, the publicly visible “otherness” embodied by the Muslim population in the member states of the European Union has sparked movements of transnational moral panic mainly driven by the fear of the collapse of “national cohesion”. This paper is more specifically concerned with the “public texture” of the discussions surrounding the recent ban on the wearing of the full veil in French public spaces. What does the omnipresence not to say ubiquity of public discussions about religious otherness reveal of the current political moment? It aims to engage in the conversation about the epistemological and political implications of the evaluation of daily, individual experiences through a legal framework and classifying them as problematic in secular contexts, or even criminalizing them.

These occurrences of local friction, tension, disagreement, and more recently violences, have emerged in different European contexts, regardless of the national conventions with regards to immigration politics, the

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relationship between church and state and the wider construction of national identity. They are part of a racializing configuration about which I will develop three arguments: the unintelligibility/incongruity of certain manifestations of belief in secularized European public spaces, the racialization of the indicators of religious belonging, and finally some speculative readings of the public experience of the different crises arising from the visibility of Islamic religious signs and the capital attached to their visibility. What does fetishism about religious attire tell us about citizenship?

Jeremy Carrette

*Lost Memories of Critical Religion:
Returning to William James and Nineteenth-Century Metaphysics*

All critique is a return to foundations and 'critical religion' finds its own critique - and hidden support - in the nineteenth-century. Critical discussion of the category of religion to a large extent lacks a metaphysical ground and as a result dilutes its critical force by turning critique into historical-social logic and oppositional binary politics, rather than seeking to find its metaphysical assertion. This paper returns to the nineteenth-century philosophy of William James to show how

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there is a different critical imagination for the category of religion, one that repositions and re-reads James as a foundational critical scholar of religion - a James beyond the straitjacket of psychology and pragmatism. This return to James opens up his metaphysics of relations and shows how the critical discussion of the category of religion is already at play inside his nineteenth-century metaphysical system. This paper will show how the category of 'religion' is shaped by relation rather than power and how thinkers like Ivan Strenski (1993) and Jonathan Z. Smith (2004) unknowingly signal a need for a more sustained Jamesian metaphysics of relation in their language of 'relating religion'. The poverty of contemporary critique is to forget the work James had already carried out.

Mitsutoshi Horii

The Formation of 'Religion' Category in Japan

The Japanese concept for "religion" shūkyō was invented in the nineteenth century. It played an integral role in the establishment of the Japanese nation-state. The social category of religion legitimated the state's authority over the public. The category of religion was reformulated after the Second World War under the influence of American-style liberal democratic values. The boundary between religion and nonreligion (or the secular) has

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been ambiguous and often contentious. This paper examines the social construction of the religion category in Japan. This is a preliminary analysis of how the term “religion” imported and translated in Japan, how it was indigenised, how it has been codified by the state, how its conceptual boundaries have been contested in contemporary Japanese society, and how it is used by people in their everyday language.

Jeffrey Israel

Capabilities, Justice and Jewishness Beyond the Religious/Secular Dichotomy

The religious/secular dichotomy has been identified as a core structure of modern state sovereignty in a variety of cases. Identification of this dichotomy and precisely how it serves to secure state sovereignty is sometimes thought to have a kind of “political” significance. For instance, it is thought to entail a devastating critique of normative political theories that call for states to separate the “religious” from the “secular.” According to one version of this critique, the presumption that states will genuinely cede a degree of sovereignty to “religion” by virtue of the religious/secular dichotomy is belied by the further presumption that the same states will maintain a monopoly on the privilege to police what belongs on which side of the

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dichotomy. Of course, this critique is not devastating for all normative political theories. And this is fortunate, since some normative political theory will be required if we are to make compelling interpretive judgments about what is lamentable and what is worth encouraging in contemporary political life. I will argue that the “capabilities approach” to political justice is particularly attractive as a guide for such interpretative judgments because, among other things, it avoids further instantiating the religious/secular dichotomy. In fact, it provides us with compelling reasons to lament any further instantiation of this dichotomy. I will conclude with an illustration of how the approach can be applied to a particular context of ongoing injustice: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I will argue that the capabilities approach to political justice, amended to amplify its sensitivity to the injustices that result from the religious/secular dichotomy, gives us compelling reasons to oppose the recognition of claimants to “religious” authority as privileged “peace-makers” by powerful governments and quasi-governmental organizations.

Alison Jasper

Critical Religion and the Politics of Difference: Feminist Spirituality

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The parameters of 'critical religion' as a disciplinary category are marked by suspiciousness; how is this term 'religion' being used, by whom and for what purpose? The implication is that religion – like a number of other categories such as politics and economics – has been invented with the intention of keeping potentially unsettling/messy/unpredictable forces or perceptions in their proper place where they cannot disturb or upset the status quo; within western modernity, the hegemony of patriarchal capitalism. This understanding of religion informs the work I have been doing recently with John I'Anson of Stirling University in developing a better understanding of what might constitute a countervailing acknowledgement of cultural, intellectual or ontological difference/s in educational spaces. Although in the UK over the last 40 years, the discourse of 'world religions' has dominated the view of religion in educational spaces implying a programmatic 'openness to difference', we detect that factors internal to the project of 'world religions' discourse and also decision making in the management of public educational space dedicated to 'the incoming of the new,' function to limit its impact. And in this sense, what we say also reflects a feminist analysis of gender difference; in spite of some relatively superficial window dressing in terms of equality and diversity, policy decisions

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continue to accord more comfortably with (gender) difference as threatening Otherness that needs to be contained rather than engaged with positively. This paper will consider in some greater detail, the case of feminist 'spirituality' as a kind of conceptual persona that, in Rosi Braidotti's terms, evokes and mobilises creative possibilities in order to change the dominant subject position and allow the difference/s in.

Cecile Laborde

Whither Religion?

In this talk I ask whether religion a valid category of scholarly inquiry, and I set out three distinct approaches to the study of religion: criticizing religion, upholding religion, and disaggregating religion. I then go on to defend the latter.

Laura S. Levitt

Seeing 'Religion' through an American Jewish lens: Almost but Not Quite

My presentation will illuminate how Jews have used and how they have been used by the category of religion. My focus will be on Jews in the United States. I will address what

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it has meant for Jews to deploy the category of religion to explain Jewishness, what this has enabled and what it has foreclosed. Building on recent critical work on secularization that has interrogated the binary the religious and secular, my presentation will revisit the presumption the Jewish difference is religious difference. By opening up the category of Jewishness in America, I will call attention to how and in what ways what Jakobsen and Pellegrini (*Secularisms*, 2008) describes as the Protestant secular continues to make it difficult to claim a range of Jewish positions in the United States. I will explore some of the haunting legacy of the privatization of Jewish identification to a form of individual faith revisiting a range of other forms of Jewish expression that perform Jewishness otherwise.

David Liu

On Un-re-naming Religion

The recent interventions in critical religion and nonreligion (and secularity) provoke a general question: What is at stake and operative in the naming, un-naming or renaming of “religion,” and to what (possible) use? This paper offers a theoretical foray into these issues:

Just as beings are not to be multiplied without need, so nothing is named without desire. I

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argue that the naming of “religion” and its alternatives is/are driven by the desire to functionalize those objects. If “religion” has been a vessel of imperial and Christian missionary desire no less than one to privatize or govern practices and institutions of piety, then what does un-naming or renaming “religion” functionalize? Here I assume the optics of (semi)nominalism, Madhyamaka epistemology, historicism and paradigmatic logic, decoloniality, and a Ghazalian porosity. Yet each of these is also laden with cultural-political implications. Ultimately I plea for a plastic, plural – indeed nomadic – approach that assiduously enunciates its aims as they shift and reconfigure.

Craig Martin

‘Religion’ and the Management of Selves

Scholars such as Russell McCutcheon, Tim Fitzgerald, and William Cavanaugh have argued that the creation of “religion” as the other of “secular” reason is part of the cultural framework that carves out and legitimates modern state sovereignty. According to this ideology, religion is perhaps fundamentally irrational or divisive—for which reason it must be kept private—whereas so-called secular, public, or economic reason is rational and reasonable by contrast. I am in agreement with

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their work, but my presentation will suggest that insofar as modern discourses on “religion” are overdetermined, there are other, competing discourses that simultaneously operate and which perhaps advance the same social agenda. Using Nikolas Rose’ theory that psy discourses function as a form of governmentality to constitute subjects as subjects of capitalism or neoliberalism, I will argue, through an analysis of Lewis Richmond’s *Work as Spiritual Practice* and Matthew Fox’s *The Reinvention of Work*, that modern discourses on “spirituality” are designed to encourage individual workers to use reflexive “spiritual” practices to accommodate themselves to any feature of the workplace that chafes with their life. Richmond in particular draws from the Buddhist tradition, while Fox draws primarily from the Bhagavad-Gita, yet both books teach the same lesson: teach yourself to desire what your corporation desires of you. Both authors’ work is designed to produce happy and productive capitalist workers. On their view, however, religion is not something that should be private or distinct from the workplace; on the contrary, the fact that they present themselves as drawing from ancient religious or spiritual cultural tradition is precisely what is supposed to lend their work an air of authority. For these authors, the fact that something is a universal “religious” truth is what makes it suited for the business world. In conclusion, it appears that the view that

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says religion should be private and the view that religion offers universal truths useful for the business world are perhaps both designed to justify the hegemony of capitalist modes of reasoning.

Rajalakshmi Nadadur Kannan

The ‘Secularity’ of Neoliberalism and the 2014 Parliamentary Election Campaigns in India

The on-going campaigns for the upcoming 2014 Parliamentary elections in India have put Mr Narendra Modi as the National Democratic Alliance candidate (NDA) headed by the right-wing political party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The former Chief Minister of Gujarat has come under severe criticism for his alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat communal riots that saw hundreds of Muslims killed so much so that his eligibility to become the Prime Minister of India has been questioned by both the media and the opposition coalition party, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) headed by the Congress Party. However, both the NDA and the UPA have appropriated the language of neo-liberalism and the seeming development (of the economy) it has resulted in, as the testimony for ‘secularity’ thus asserting that neoliberalism is inherently ‘secular.’ Using works of theorists of Critical Religion and Dipesh Chakrabarty, this paper

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deconstructs the understanding of inherent 'secularity' of neoliberalism specifically pertaining to India. The paper further argues that such understanding decontextualises the contexts (or Histories as Chakrabarty puts it) within which neoliberalism functions, and assumes linearity of time in which a direct causality is established between economic policies and development, thus resulting in abstractions of concepts such as 'economics' and 'development'. The paper concludes by showing the complex functionings of neoliberalism in Indian society that the election campaigns undermine.

Arvind Mandair

Contradictions of Sovereignty: How Sikhs (un-) Inherit the Religion-Secular Binary

This paper will track some of the ways in which different forms of modern government have successively imposed the religion-secular binary on the indigenous enunciation of the Sikh 'life-world', in each case coercing Sikhs into representing their life-world as a 'religion'. I will look specifically at Sikh responses to the British colonial state (19th-20thC), the modern Indian state (1947 to present), and to state multiculturalisms in North America and Europe (late 1990's to post-9/11). From the case studies I present

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it should be fairly obvious that these very different modern governments used existing legal frameworks, or, reformulated existing laws to classify Sikh institutions, practices and persons as 'religious or non-religious', for the sole purpose of legitimizing and consolidating state sovereignty. What remains perplexing, however, is why many Sikhs and Sikh institutions continue to be so heavily invested in 'religion-making' despite the emergence of a grass-roots Sikh consciousness that is actively engaged in reviving forms of lived-experience that are interdicted by modern governments. Why is it that Sikhs, while not lacking the will to do so, have not been successful in removing governmental interdictions? The answer, I will argue, lies in the inability of modern Sikh elites to develop a notion of sovereignty that can contest the hegemony notion of autonomic state sovereignty intrinsic to modern government, and at the same time, give voice to a different form of sovereignty (what I will call heteronomic sovereignty) that corresponds to a life-world whose memory remains vibrant, though continually interdicted. If Sikhs have inherited the religion-secular binary via the colonial encounter, it can also be un-inherited by developing a notion of heteronomic sovereign consciousness which I believe is necessary for stateless and highly visible minorities such as the Sikhs to cultivate in their relations with major democratic systems of the 21st century

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(India, North America, Europe).

Per-Erik Nilsson

Hijacking French Secularism: The will to know and the power of origins

It is commonplace for scholars in the social sciences and humanities, as well as for republican spokespersons, to point out the singularity of French secularism (*laïcité*). French secularism is moreover attributed a particular status among contemporary secularisms for being a particularly assertive type. In this paper I discuss the work by the influential scholar Jean Baubérot on French secularism using the deconstructive tools for the 'religion-secularism' binary developed within the field of Critical Religion Theory (CRT). Seen through the lens of CRT I argue that although Baubérot provides for the perhaps most substantial analysis of French secularism, the analysis is guided by a sort of hermeneutical temptation, of a teleological search for origin, leading to an anachronistic analysis of contemporary French secularism. I question to what degree the normative claims emanating from this analysis could serve to reify hegemonic conceptions of French secularism and overshadow its relation to the exercise of sovereign power, contingency, and hegemony. I end the

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paper by discussing an analytical approach to French secularism based on CRT and that seeks to counteract this type of anachronism.

Robert Yelle

Disenchantment and the Liberal Constitution

As is well known, the Weimar- and Nazi-era jurist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) identified an analogy between the executive "decision," which is necessary to declare a "state of exception" to the law, and the miracle, which interrupts natural law. Each of these ruptures in the regnant order signifies a supervening sovereignty. Schmitt argued that the modern liberal Rechtsstaat, which attempts to base itself entirely on legal norms and, by doing so, to exclude such a notion of sovereignty, depends on a theological dispensation inherited from radical Protestantism. Despite the surge of interest in Schmitt in the English-speaking world, especially among political theorists, little has been done to follow up his claims concerning the genealogy of sovereignty. My lecture will address this omission by examining how Deist and other Protestant polemics against the sovereign God of the Hebrew Bible—the God of miracles, revelations, and sacrifices—coordinated

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with an insistence on the regularity of natural law as a stable basis for human self-assertion. This complements the arguments of Hans Blumenberg and, more recently, Michael Gillespie that modernity emerged in response to the threat to human autonomy posed by the Nominalist emphasis on divine omnipotence. Schmitt identified Weber's theory of charisma and its routinization as a version of this "Protestant political theology," one that encoded the assumption of a decline of antinomian sovereignty into bureaucratic legalism. Evidence from 17th-century English debates over the cessation of the charismata—the idea that signs, miracles, and prophecies ended in the Apostolic age—will show that Weber's ostensibly scientific and "value free" categories of charisma and disenchantment encoded and echoed a set of theological assumptions. A genealogy of the debate between Schmitt and Weber therefore promises to shed light on the relationship between sovereignty and religion in the modern age.

DEBATE

On the Right and Wrong Trees: Do "The Critical Religion Association" and "Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network" Have Overlapping Agendas?

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In 2011 there was a discussion on the NSRN email list concerning the relationship between the study of nonreligion and critical approach to the category of religion. Timothy Fitzgerald suggested that "this whole NSRN discussion, despite the many interesting facets that it has, is based on a modern myth, an ideological illusion. It is barking up the wrong tree, because it is merely reproducing the problematic terms of the discussion [...]". After a couple of responses Steve Kettel concluded that "Fitzgerald's work seems enormously valuable, since there is nothing more hazardous to knowledge than the unreflective use of standard categories. But I agree with the other comments: if this is the wrong tree, what's the right tree?"

This panel takes the email debate as its starting point in asking, whether "The Critical Religion Association" (represented by Fitzgerald in the email discussion) and "Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network" have fundamental disagreements in their assumptions, approaches and aims. The purpose of this panel is to clarify what are the overlapping issues and differences between the two prolific research networks and identify potential common research topics.

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Gabrielle Desmarais

*Sui Generis v Bona Fide: The Relevance of
Critical Religion Theory to Human Rights
Law*

The emergence of ground-breaking work in the critical study of religion has brought much self-awareness to the work of scholars in Religious Studies. However, there remains a concern that critiquing the category of “religion” has no relevance outside of academia. In response to this concern, the following paper considers the benefits of applying Critical Religion theory to the analysis of human rights law. This paper investigates whether the issues with the term “religion” that concern religious studies scholars also surface in a legal context, and whether these issues have concrete consequences affecting the lives of real people. Through the analysis of Canadian case law spanning from 1959 to 2009, this paper analyses concludes that the continued use of the word “religion” in human rights replicates a problematic narrative that constructs religion as a sui generis entity rather than as a bona fide self-identification. As a result, individual

freedom to practice a personal concept of “religion” is restricted; in attempting to protect “freedom of religion”, the law curtails actual religious freedom.

This paper has been adapted from the Master’s dissertation “Religion Drag: The Relevance of ‘Critical Religion’ and Queer Theory to Canadian Law and Religious Freedom” (Desmarais, University of Ottawa, 2014).

Johan Eddebo

*A secularist argument for the regulation of
science by religion*

Science, as a somewhat cohesive body of tradition, is nowadays less often approached as the source of objective and incorrigible knowledge it was previously taken to be. The philosophy of science of the 20:th century brought with it a greater understanding of the theoretical entrenchment of particular scientific practices, as well as the ability to acknowledge the limitations of modern, Western science and the advantages of otherized, ostensibly non-scientific traditions in relation to the production of useful knowledge. This implies the old problem of demarcation, aggravated by the common definition of science as a practice

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of systematic study, critical observation and empirical experimentation constructed upon any body of knowledge, since this definition often is applicable to knowledge and practices commonly labeled non-scientific due to, for instance, certain metaphysical assumptions. Given this obscurity with regard to the demarcation between the categories of tradition, what would be a fruitful relationship between them as institutions and traditions of ideas and knowledge?

In this paper, I will argue that science, for three main reasons, ought to be opened to the influence of religious, and other traditions of knowledge. First of all, the boundaries between science, religion, and other types of non-scientific traditions of knowledge are vague and often arbitrary. Second, science by necessity contains aspects of worldviews which influence and guide them, the consequences of which are magnified via technology, as scientific results implemented in a goal-oriented manner – and as religious traditions unlike science explicitly analyze and produce information pertaining to worldviews, they would seem well suited to function as a corrective with regard to the worldview-aspects of scientific knowledge and practice. Third, assuming that religious traditions uniquely could contribute with a useful

tool for constructive correction generally unavailable for science internally, it seems to be in the interest of the society at large to enable such a contribution. This would be advisable if for no other reason than that a broad and varied critique of ideological assumptions underlying technology and scientific practice is necessary, if an informed populace are to make rational decisions regarding their implementation.

Anthony T. Fiscella

Races, Religions, and Christianities: Toward an Intersectionality of Key Historical Concepts

In light of insight garnered from Critical Religion Theory, this paper aims to discuss some of the ways in which the concept of “religion” both intersects and parallels developments within the construction of similar categories, namely, “race” and “Christianities.” One aspect that is examined is the way that, by referring to each of these terms in the singular form (as is common), each term carries an inherent prototype implication for what the term ought to refer to in either a normative and/or preferred sense. Whereas the implied prototype of “religion” is that of contemporary Westernized Christianities who accept the religion-politics and

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religion-secular binaries, the implied prototype of “race” is a preferred and mystified “whiteness.” Similarly, of all the possible significations of “Christianity,” the normative implication is that of established churches in the West who acknowledge the legitimacy of the state and distinctions between various sub-groups are to be understood according to doctrinal variety. In contrast, this paper suggests that a more helpful means of categorizing the various Christianities begins not with a contrast between Eastern Churches and Western Churches nor Catholic and Protestant Churches but with a distinction between “imperial Christianities” and “communal Christianities” that is rooted in ongoing historical tensions. The obfuscation of these underlying tensions through the application of traditional categories is furthermore intertwined with the development and usage of the concept of race which this paper aims to explore.

Evin Ismail

Muslim feminism and its challenges for European Muslim communities and Anti-Muslim racism

In this paper I examine different forms of Muslim feminism and its challenges

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for established Muslim communities and anti-muslim racism. My main focus is on a Swedish organization of Muslim women working for women’s rights within the Muslim community and in the majoritarian society by challenging stereotypes of Muslim women. I examine their problems, methods and reception in the Swedish society.

Evelina Lundmark

“They neatly fold up their reason and skepticism and put it in a locked box” - atheist negotiations of religious people online

This article traces discursive practices of self-positioned atheists in a non-affiliated atheistic setting to reveal how religion and religious people are constructed in one particular setting (reddit.com/r/atheism). Through application of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory the article reveals an apparently contradictory understanding of religious people as choosing to be brainwashed. Finally the article concludes that this understanding is rooted in a conceptualization of human beings as fundamentally rational, which implies both the possibility of conversion to atheism as well as cements an understanding of religion as an archaic mode of rationality.

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Cameron Montgomery

Protest in Post-Secular States: FEMEN's Challenge to the Collusion of Church and State in the Post-Cold War Era

The reification of the category called “religion” presents challenges to scholars in departments of “Religious Studies”. Faced with obsolete theoretical frameworks and a conceptual apparatus which operates only within the limitations of a theological sacred-profane pendulum, scholars are left constantly redefining a term which has no object. Naomi Goldenberg’s Vestigial State Theory provides a theoretical means to avoid asking “what is religion”, and instead asks “what forces are operating within the category and why or for what purpose?” This allows the discourse to move beyond questions of theology (particularly colonial Christianity).

The applications of Vestigial State Theory are tremendous and far-reaching, but I am particularly interesting in the use of antireligious imagery in anti-state protest. We have all seen the patriotic church and the complicity between conservative institutions of religion and conservative institutions of government,

but more difficult to address through the traditional approaches in the field is the notion of ‘religions’ working against the state, and more difficult still, activists criticizing the state by criticizing religion.

I will use the particular case of the atheist-feminist protest group FEMEN International to demonstrate my point. While the intense relationships between nation-states and vestigial-states-called-religions are not especially about gendered social hierarchy, FEMEN particularly recognizes that both geographically bound and ideological states are hegemonic institutions which work both together and separately to exclude women as public actors. FEMEN’s goal is to radically transform both ‘religion’ and the state to make a place for women as contributors to human history and human society, as the structures of modern nationhood and modern powerful ‘religious’ authoritative forces have been formed to serve the purposes of patriarchal social arrangements. By looking at FEMEN activities through the lens of religions-as-vestigial-states, it is possible to explore the relationship between congressional, parliamentary, ecclesiastical and legislative bodies of power in contemporary society.

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Michael Ruecker

Separating 'Religion' from Governance: Pacification and Legacies of Colonial Hegemony in the History of Canada's First Nations

In 1885, the government of Canada added provisions to the Indian Act which would ban the aboriginal ceremonies of potlatch and tamanawas dances on the west coast, as well as the sun dance and thirst dance on the prairies. From the beginning, however, the bans were not administered with much consistency or conviction. Part of the problem was that there was little agreement about what these ceremonies actually were, or why they should be illegal. After decades of confusion, revision, and ineffective enforcement, the bans were finally lifted in 1951, and the ceremonies continue to be practiced today

Today, these ceremonies are regularly referred to as religious ceremonies, by anthropologists, scholars of religion, government publications, mass media, and sometimes by First Nations groups themselves. The bans, then, are usually understood as a product of religious intolerance on the part of the Canadian government, and the lifting of the bans is seen as a sign of the progress Canadians

have made in accepting other cultures and traditions. The texts we have from the time of the bans, however, rarely refer to these ceremonies as being religious; identifying the ceremonies as elements of indigenous religions seems to be a fairly recent re-description. My current work examines a range of texts from throughout the time of the bans, focusing on the point of view of Canadian government officials, to investigate how and why the ceremonies began to be described as religious. Drawing on Naomi Goldenberg's theory of religions as vestigial states, I argue that naming these ceremonies as religious practices allowed the Canadian state to minimize the threat posed by such ceremonies to its own political and economic hegemony.

Svalfors, Ulrika

Spirituality, leadership and politics

On March 9, 2014, a co-founder of Livets Ord (Word of Life) in Uppsala, Ulf Ekman, in a sermon entitled "Follow the Lamb wherever He goes," declared that he and his wife intend to convert to the Catholic Church. In this paper, the event is related to the pilgrim movement which has its center in Nya Slottet Bjärka Säby in Sweden, studied in an earlier research.

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Emma Svensson

A uniform application of the category of 'religion' – in Europe and beyond?

This paper will focus on the category of religion in the framework of the European Union, and in particular on the legal aspects of said framework. In the case law of the European Court of Justice (ECJ), 'religion' have until recently been a rather irrelevant category. Economical integration and free movement are the guiding principles for European cooperation in the European Union. Freedom of religion and state-church relationships have instead been the domain of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The two courts function as separate judicial systems, ECtHR focusing on human rights protection whereas the ECJ serves to enhance the integration of the European Union and guard the correct interpretation of EU law. However, recently the ECJ had to adjudicate on an asylum case concerning religious persecution in Pakistan. This paper will analyze how the ECJ solved this puzzle, using its logic of uniform application and coherence of EU law in the framework of religious freedom. Whereas the ECtHR has been reluctant to interfere with the sovereignty of the nation state in such delicate matters as asylum and refugee status, the judgment of the ECJ

The results of my previous study pointed to an ecumenical consensus on spiritual leadership. These results will be used to examine different interpretations of the two leader's conversion to the Catholic Church, which has gained a lot of media attention. The question is to what extent this incident is a manifestation of something new among spiritual leadership in Sweden and thus also part of a change in the spiritual landscape. I also aim to explore some of the implications that this incident may have for the interpretation of social categories. Is it by definition an exclusive staging of conservatism or is there some sort of liberation in the event? If so, for whom and how? Or should it be interpreted in a completely different way?

The study is carried out through a discourse analysis of the sermon mentioned above and some of the reactions to Ekman's speech and action. The result will then be related to the outcome of my examination of the ecumenical journal Pilgrim, performed in 2008. Attention will be paid to different categorizations that contribute to the meaning of the event with focus on the performative power of the event.

marks a new path of European Union law. This paper will, however, not ask to what extent European integration has moved to far in this field of law, or whether the nation state is better at handling these phenomena. Rather, it aims at analyzing the category of religion and how it is constructed in the multileveled governance of Europe, and in particular in the protection of freedom of religion.

Rebecca Tessier

*Definitional Delinquency and its
Consequences in the Case of Alcoholics
Anonymous*

Due to the advancement of critical theory, we have started to interrogate definitional fallacies and ideological assumptions that currently inform the discipline of Religious Studies. In his work *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, Timothy Fitzgerald calls for a critical examination of ‘religion’ as an operative analytical category. He problematizes the positing of a religious aspect of human existence that is putatively distinguishable from non-religious aspects, arguing that the separation between these dimensions is culturally and historically specific. The positing of a secular dimension “carries the major ideological assumptions

of modernism” and represents an idealized picture of western social organization. From this perspective, the secular can be seen as a reservoir of western values that are problematically exported into cross-cultural research when the distinction between the religious and non-religious is naturalized. I argue that the Alcoholics Anonymous organization reflects what Fitzgerald calls liberal ecumenical theology. Fitzgerald uses this term in relation to liberal Protestant ideology that persists in comparative Religious Studies and in modern conceptualizations of the secular. While foundational pluralism is continually cited, AA follows highly conservative Christian evangelical principles that could only ever fail to translate in other cultural contexts if they were made explicit. Through exegesis of AA’s history and literature, I demonstrate how definitional delinquencies in the field of Religious Studies lend to a wide range of consequences, which work to distort cultural data rather than clarify it— particularly when the claim of cross-cultural applicability is made. It is vitally important that this type of examination extend beyond our discipline to subjects that intersect with the category of religion including legal, public and political discourse and the policies these discourses inform.



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