

BASR BULLETIN



#126 - MAY 2015



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ABOUT THE BASR

The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR), formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), whose object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions and who are normally resident in the United Kingdom. Membership of the BASR confers membership of the IAHR and EASR.

All correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent to:

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EDITORIAL

Can it really be June so soon? As ever, the academic year has flown by, and the Editors hope that this issue finds you looking forward to the summer break, having completed all your marking. Of course, by 'summer break', we mean 'catching up on all of the overdue writing commitments we accrued over the year'... Hopefully however, your thoughts will also be turning to this year's BASR conference at the University of Kent, and the IAHR Congress in Erfurt.

It has been an eventful year in many respects, but thankfully not for the BASR. The committee has been continuing to build, modernising our website and social media presence, DISKUS and the Bulletin itself. On top of this we have been capitalising on the financial successes of recent years by extending our bursary scheme for postgraduate students to offer travel grants to the IAHR. However, there will be changes to the committee following the conference, when we welcome Steven Sutcliffe as president and say goodbye to our honorary secretary Bettina Schmidt. A form to nominate her successor can be found on page 3, and must be returned by August 1st.

Alongside the usual conference reports, book reviews, members news and recent publications, This issue features an article on the history and

future of the study of religion at Durham, and a warm personal reflection on the history of the Spalding symposium on Indian religions. In addition, we continue our regular features. This month's From our Correspondent comes from Lithuania, and is written by Milda Alisauskiene. As well as a stark reminder of how lucky we are in some respects in the UK, it also suggests some parallels which might give pause for thought. George Chryssides contributes another piece of advice for young scholars, this time on writing academic book reviews, something which can provide experience and books - both valuable commodities for postgraduates. The issue also features an article from Ian Blair from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, reflecting in his experiences using the Religious Studies Project's podcasts as an undergraduate student. So overall, the Features have much to say about the influence of the BASR beyond the UK.

Sadly, however, the issue also includes obituaries for two of our colleagues, Ian Harris and Lance Cousins.

We hope you enjoy the issue, and we'll see you in Canterbury!

David G. Robertson & David G. Wilson

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

News Items	Up to 150 words
Conference Reports	500-1500 words
Conference Announcements	Not more than a single page
Book Reviews	500-00 words
Features	Around 1000 words
Members' Recent Publications	Maximum 5 items

PLEASE SEND ALL MATERIAL FOR INCLUSION TO d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk
DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER 2015 ISSUE IS **15 OCTOBER 2015**



NEWS, ETC

Proposed change to constitution:

At the General Meeting the executive committee will propose this amendment to the constitution:

8. Rules for proposing and electing honorary life members

Honorary Membership can be awarded to members who have made a significant and sustained contribution to the BASR. Proposals can be made to the committee at any time prior to a General Meeting. These will be discussed by the committee and put forward to members at the General Meeting for election.

[current paragraph 8 to change to 9 and paragraph 9 to 10]

in the Religion and Society Research Centre in the University of Western Sydney. He will work with the Director of the Centre, Professor Adam Possamai, on a number of research projects, including the completion of their edited book due out later this year entitled, Religion and Non-Religion Among Australian Aboriginal Peoples, which will appear in Vitality of Indigenous Religions Series of Ashgate.

George Chryssides has been appointed Visiting Fellow in Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University.

From 2014-15, Rosalind Hackett has been appointed Visiting Professor and Research Associate, Women's Studies in Religion Program, Harvard Divinity School.

MEMBERS' NEWS

James L. Cox, who is Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies in the University of Edinburgh, has been appointed Adjunct Professor (Honorary)

Two of our esteemed Committee members - Bettina Schmidt (Honorary Secretary) and Graham Harvey (President) - have been awarded full Professorships, by the University of Wales, Trinity St. David and the Open University respectively. Our congratulations to them!

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

I propose for election as Secretary of the British Association for the Study of Religions to serve from 2015-2018.

Signed Dated

I second the above nomination:

Signed Dated

I agree to be nominated

Signed Dated

Please send the completed form by 1 August 2015 to Prof Bettina Schmidt, Hon. Secretary, BASR, School of Theology, Religious Studies and Islamic Studies, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7ED.

Grounding the Sacred through Literature and the Arts Conference

23 to 26 July 2015, Australian Catholic University, 25A Barker Road, Strathfield, NSW 2135

The conference will bring writers, artists, musicians, academics, researchers, religious and members of the public together to discuss where creativity sits in relation to religion and the search for meaning. Are the arts a conduit between the divine and the everyday? To flourish, do we need both a sense of the sacred and the means to express it? Do the arts provide a common ground for people of different faiths - or maybe none - to explore the ineffable?

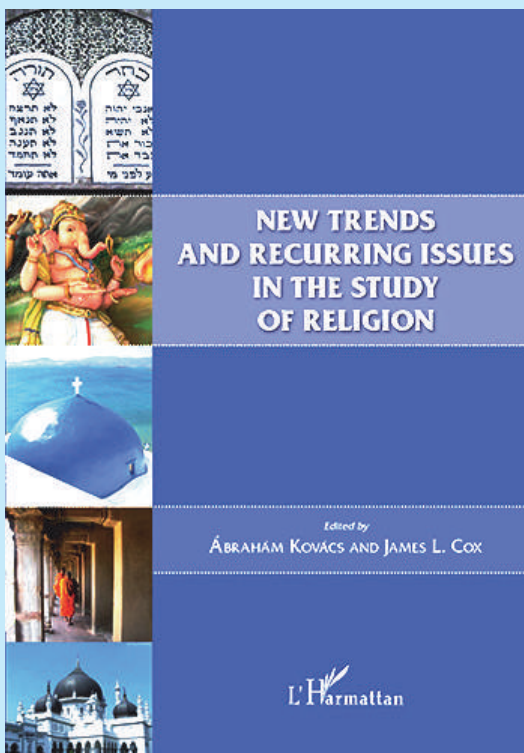
Invited speakers and performers include Imam Afroz Ali, Carmel Bird, Kathleen Deignan (Iona Spirituality Institute), Kevin Hart (Virginia), David Jasper (Glasgow), Vivien Johnson, Dr Rachael Kohn, Dr Genevieve Lacey, David Malouf, Michael McGirr, and Thaddeus Metz (Johannesburg). Some 70 conference papers are also anticipated.

The Conference will be accompanied by an exhibition of paintings by Papunya Tula Artists and the Warlayirti Artists of Balgo. A post-graduate seminar will be held on 23 July with Kevin Hart, Alison and David Jasper and Thaddeus Metz to encourage interdisciplinary discussion and networking on the sacred and the arts.

Registration is essential and is encouraged by 8 July 2015. To register, visit <http://www.acu.edu.au/groundingthesacred>

Announcing the Publication of Papers from the 2011 EASR Conference in Budapest

Selected keynote papers presented at the 10th Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions held in Budapest from 18-22 September 2011 have been published by L'Harmattan (Budapest) under the title: *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion*, edited by Ábrahám Kovács and James L. Cox. In addition, two further articles written by the editors have been included. The link to the publisher is: http://www.harmattan.hu/konyv_1236.html.



This book is divided into three sections according to the themes of the papers. The first section provides an overview of the field written from sociological and historical perspectives. The history provided focuses on the academic study of religion in relation to Eastern Europe, with an emphasis on two seminal Hungarian scholars. A second section deals with current issues in and new approaches to the study of religion as presented by four academics from Finland, Scotland and Hungary. The final part of the book addresses philosophical issues in the study of religion, largely by presenting a phenomenology of Christian belief and practice.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Annual Conference



Religion in the Local and Global: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Challenges 7-9 September 2015

Conference Suite, Darwin College, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NY

In the 50th year of the University of Kent, Canterbury, the Department of Religious Studies is hosting the British Association for the Study of Religion Annual Conference, with a special launch and reception for our forthcoming celebratory booklet, 50 Years of the Study of Religion at Kent.

The conference will explore the theme of 'Religion in the Local and Global' across a range of disciplinary perspectives, including religion, politics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and philosophy. The aim is to bring together a range of disciplinary perspectives on the study of religion to explore the local/global challenge to conventional assumptions about religion, both in empirical and theoretical work.

Keynote speaker: Professor Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany), author of *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Spiritual and Secular in China and India*

Plenary Session Speakers: Professor Mia Lövheim (Sociology of Religion, Uppsala University, Sweden), Professor Tulasi Srinivas (Anthropology of Religion, Emerson College, USA)

For full details and call for papers,
please see the dedicated site:
<http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/basr-conference>





FEATURES

Prof. Milda
Alisauskiene,
Vytautas Magnus
University,
Lithuania

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT ...IN LITHUANIA

STUDIES  RELIGION IN
LITHUANIA? YOU MUST BE
JOKING!

The title of this essay is a reference to the well-known British sociologist Eileen Barker's article¹ on the social-scientific study of religion, which has played a major role in the reinforcement of using social-scientific approaches in studies of religion. The social-scientific approach to religion and studies of religion is well-established in the Western part of the world, but after the fall of the Berlin Wall in the early nineties it was also (re)established in the post-Communist countries. In this article I argue that studies of religion in the post-Communist countries have hardly yet found their place in the academy, are influenced by the dominant religion of the particular society and are marginalized by the other academic disciplines. I will refer to my experience within academia in Lithuania, but I believe that majority of the discussion might be applied to those post-Communist societies that are dominated by the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

Why do we need studies of religion? I raised this question in a public address when the Minister of Education declined funding for

the Bachelor program of Studies of Religion in 2009. The faculties of Theology and Social Sciences at Vytautas Magnus University initiated this study program, but it actually never started because it was closed before it could accept students. In the address I stated that there is a need for Studies of Religion in Lithuania because after the collapse of the state atheism regime, the public ignorance of religion is so evident that it is becoming an obstacle in politics and other everyday matters. Today I would sign the same statement, although there have been some changes that should be discussed further.

A few days ago I received a letter from the Lithuanian parliament, requesting that I submit my opinion about a religious community that has applied for state recognition status. The letter had two addressees; the Lithuanian Council of Bishops, the managing institution for Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church, and me, a sociologist of religion. Where have we moved since 2009 when I publicly addressed the issue of the studies of religion? At that point, Lithuanian politicians considered that the experts of religion in Lithuania were the Roman Catholic Church, but also admitted that sociologists have something

to say about religion, too. What has actually changed since then? Since 2010, the Lithuanian Council for Research has funded at least four scientific research projects focusing on religion in contemporary society of Lithuania, two of which were conducted under Social Sciences, and two under Humanities. In 2011 the Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religion was reestablished and there are attempts for it to become a more active participant within science policy-making. But at the same time, studies of religion are still fighting for their right to exist as an independent discipline within the Lithuanian Science Classification.

In the Lithuanian Study Classification, Studies of Religion are placed under humanities, where it exists as an independent study branch together with philosophy, theology, history and others. What about studies of religion within bachelor, Master and PhD studies? There are two bachelor study programs that provide a diploma of studies of religion in Lithuania, and actually both prepare teachers of religion for secondary schools. Religion is taught within the discipline of religious education which is confessional, i.e. mainly Roman Catholic. Thus, the two aforementioned study programs are actually devoted to the preparation of teachers of Roman Catholicism for Lithuanian secondary schools. The Master's

level of studies of religion reflects a very similar situation as the bachelor level. There are at least three programs that provide Master's diplomas of studies of religion, and one of them is directly related to religious education, one is dedicated to Christian anthropology and one for inter-confessional studies of religion. So far, there is no possibility to undertake studies of religion at the PhD level in Lithuania.

This short overview leads to several conclusions. Firstly, social context matters for the Studies of Religion in Lithuania. The concept of religion is defined as the majority religion in Lithuanian society, i.e. the Roman Catholic Church, and thus the majority of studies of religion programs focus exclusively on this religion. Four of the five study programs actually use a theological approach to the studies of religion and one might be interpreted as utilising philosophical, theological and historical approaches to religion. None of the study programs uses a social scientific approach to religion. Secondly, the focus on theological and philosophical approaches within existing study programs is conditioned by the fact that in the beginning of the process of establishing the studies of religion in the late nineties, there were no educated teachers for the studies of religion. There are only a few even now; these completed and defended their PhD dissertations within different scientific disciplines, focused on religion other than Roman Catholicism. Actually, in Lithuania in the early

nineties, the Roman Catholic Church actively participated in the establishment of the study programs that currently provide diplomas of studies of religion, and in the beginning majority of the teachers were clergy. In some study programs, they continue to teach until now. The only other possible teachers for these study programs in the early nineties would have been former teachers of scientific atheism and the history of religions as was taught

"The only other possible teachers for these study programs in the early nineties would have been former teachers of scientific atheism and the history of religions as was taught during Soviet period, and in some universities these teachers still run courses focused on religion. Thus, in both cases, the study of religions does not avoid ideological agendas, and so are far from the Western model of the study of religion."

during Soviet period, and in some universities these teachers still run courses focused on religion. Thus, in both cases, the study of religions does not avoid ideological agendas, and so are far from the Western model of the study of religion.

Secondly, studies of religion are marginalized by the rest of academia. Although the Lithuanian Council for Research has funded some research projects, the majority of them were carried out by scholars who

do not work directly within the field of Studies of Religion and do not teach within programs of Studies of Religion, leading me to wonder what the actual situation of studies of religion in the scientific area is. The fact that studies of religion are still not included into Lithuanian Science Classification gives another clue that studies of religion are not treated equally with other scientific disciplines - although this might be not without reason.

Instead of a conclusion, I would like to state that studies of religion and their place and role in the academia and society in general might be one of the indicators of its social change, and the development of its civil society. The Lithuanian case shows that studies of religion are undergoing a process of identification and acceptance in academia and society, and international cooperation, concern and support are of high importance in this process. This October, the Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions will host its first international conference, "Life Here and Hereafter: Beliefs and Practices" at Vilnius University. You are welcome to contribute to the internationalization and development of studies of religion of Lithuania and this region. See you in Vilnius!

1 Barker, Eileen. 1995. The Scientific Studies of Religion? You must be joking! The Journal for the Scientific Studies of Religion. Vol. 34 (3), 287-310.

DEVELOPING THE STUDY OF RELIGION AT DURHAM

Mathew Guest,
Reader in the
Sociology of
Religion, Durham
University

The Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University has had its fair share of successes over recent years. An expanding academic staff, buoyant student numbers, and its recent success in the REF have all cemented the department's status as one of the leading centres for the subject in the UK. This success has brought with it many exciting new areas of development, one of which is the extension and ongoing enrichment of the study of religion alongside more traditional strands of theology. In this respect it reflects a tendency across UK universities, whereby subject groups falling within the area of theology on the one hand and religious studies on the other are almost universally combined within a singular department of Theology and Religious Studies (or Theology and Religion). For a variety of reasons, I believe this to be a positive development and can see the fruits of this in Durham.

Founded in 1832, Durham's Christian Theology and Biblical Studies is widely known; in addition to this its burgeoning scholarship in the social scientific study of religion is also happily progressing. This innovation emerged in 1997 with the appointment of Douglas Davies as Professor in the Study of Religion, who brought a background in both anthropology and theology, offering a bridge between more traditional areas of scholarship and his own, more empirically driven approach to religion as a complex, lived phenomenon. With his appointment came new undergraduate modules, including specialist courses in 'Death, Ritual Belief', 'Religious Innovations' and 'Emotions, Identity and Religion'. Fresh research initiatives and postdoctoral

opportunities for junior scholars opened up, as when I joined the department in 2001 as a postdoctoral research fellow, working alongside Douglas on the 'Clergy and British Society' project before being appointed to a lectureship in 2004. My own sociological work on British evangelicalism enabled connections among different aspects of the department to be enhanced further, and my social scientific training fed into initiatives in practical theology, including the now well established professional doctorate in Theology and Ministry. Flourishing student interest allowed for anthropologist of religion Dr Jonathan Miles-Watson to join the team in 2012, bringing expertise in myth, structuralism and the religions of India. Durham has now appointed a fourth full-time staff member in the study of religion, Dr Sitna Quiroz, who brings additional expertise in the anthropology of African religions, especially Pentecostalism. Durham now has more full-time academics focused on the social scientific study of religion than any other UK department, and with growth has come positive development on a number of levels.

One obvious area of development worthy of note relates to innovation on a conceptual level. Davies' foundation of the Centre for Death and Life Studies reflects his long-standing interest in death and funeral rites, and has hosted a number of ground-breaking projects in recent years. For example, an AHRC doctoral award, part of the AHRC-ESRC Religion and Society Programme, brought Hannah Rumble to work on woodland burial, resulting in the volume *Natural Burial: Traditional-Secular Spiritualities and*

Funeral Innovation (Davies and Rumble, 2012) and in the documentary film made by Sarah Thomas, *Natural Burial and The Church of England*. Other funded projects have included a major interdisciplinary study on cremation in Scotland funded by Leverhulme, with a major volume due out in 2016 integrating anthropological, sociological, legal, and theological perspectives, as well as studies in the history of architecture. An AHRC network grant also supported the *Emotions, Identity and Religious Communities* venture which has resulted in a monograph and two edited collections. Current projects include collaboration with Durham's Archaeology department on 'The Invisible Dead', and with some UK and USA scholars exploring the *Anthropology of Christianity*.

Until the late 1990s, Durham's Theology degree had followed a traditional curriculum geared toward Christian ministry, structured around Biblical Studies, Church History and Systematic Theology. Its undergraduate programme now looks quite different. With Douglas Davies came expertise in Mormonism, and his decades of experience researching the Latter Day Saints introduced a variation on the Christian mainstream that has fostered innovative discussion among staff and postgraduates. Jonathan Miles-Watson's fieldwork in India has fed into undergraduate modules in 'Landscapes of Religion in Asia', including Hindu religion, 'Structuralism' and 'Fieldwork Methods'. Sitna Quiroz brings

expertise in religion on the African continent, including traditional African religion and Islam. While he was at Durham as an academic Dean, Seth Kunin also contributed courses on Structuralism and Myth and also on Judaism. Growth in the study of religion has enabled undergraduate and postgraduate teaching to incorporate the empirical realities of religious phenomena, including movements beyond the Judaeo-Christian mainstream.

These developments in the study of religion also enrich and extend existing work on Christianity across the globe. My own ongoing research into the evangelical movement covers the UK and USA, including alignments with neo-liberalism and relationships to educational institutions. The AHRC-ESRC funded 'Christianity and the University Experience' project (2009-2012), which I undertook alongside Kristin Aune, Sonya Sharma and Rob Warner, collected the first national

data on the lives of Christian students in England. The project generated a nuanced, empirically based picture of Christianity as a lived, cultural phenomenon, and important insights into how Christian identity is shaped by the experience of higher education.

Engaging with broader debates about the status of religion within education across western cultures, the project has also generated new opportunities for collaborative research with scholars from across the globe. Miles-Watson continues to build on anthropological fieldwork on Christians in North India, extending theoretical interests in pilgrimage, visual culture and the religious configuration of space. In Sitna Quiroz, Durham has recruited an emerging voice in the global study of Pentecostalism, including its relationship to economic and cultural change, while her earlier work also includes relationships between Roman Catholicism and traditional religion in Mexico. Add Davies' engagement with the

missiological successes of global Mormonism, and there is huge potential for both a mutually enriching community of scholars and collaborative research into global Christianity

It is an exciting time to be working in Theology and Religion at Durham. Since I arrived 14 years ago, things have changed significantly, and it is a great pleasure to have witnessed the growth and development of the study of religion as one of those changes. Things are not easy within higher education in the UK at the moment, and many departments are facing an uncertain future. Within this context, it is a great privilege to work in a department of supportive colleagues which has a buoyant research culture. I look forward to a future in which Durham will make further innovative contributions to scholarship and teaching in the study of religion.

Mathew Guest

BOOKS RECEIVED

The following titles have been received by the editors and are presently available for review.
If interested, please email d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk

The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora. Adogame, A. (ed.),
Ashgate/INFORM, 2014.

God, Mind and Knowledge. Moore, A. (ed.) Ashgate, 2014.

Christianity in the Modern World: Changes and Controversies. Vincett, G. and Obinna, E.
(eds.) Ashgate, 2014.

Freedom of Speech and Islam. Kolig, E. (ed.). Ashgate, 2014.

Exile and Embrace: Contemporary Religious Discourse on the Death Penalty. Santoro, A.
Northeastern University Press, 2013.

Beyond Rastafar!. Coltri, M. A. Peter Lang, 2015.

Shamanism, Discourse, Modernity. Alberts, T. K. Ashgate, 2015.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS: Writing Book Reviews

George D.
Chryssides,
Honorary Research
Fellow, York St. John
University

A book review may not be as prestigious as an article in a learned journal. It does not count for purposes like research assessment exercises, and established scholars do not normally put them on their CV – although in early career there is no harm in indicating that you do this kind of work. If you are not already a published writer, a review can boost one's confidence in the knowledge that it is possible to break into print. You also get a free book for your services!

Although some readers like to know what a "famous name" thinks of a new book, postgraduates can often write better reviews. You don't have to wait to be discovered as a potential reviewer. Reviews editors like me are often desperate to find competent reviewers in various areas, and are only too pleased if someone gets in touch, either to express a general interest in becoming a reviewer, or to identify a new book that might be relevant to the journal. It is best to negotiate the review in advance. Although *Fieldwork in Religion* (for which I am Reviews Editor) states that it might accept unsolicited reviews, it is important to check that another reviewer is not already on the job.

A good review takes account of what the reviewing process is for, and guides the reader accordingly. Reviews are there to alert readers to new books on the market, and to indicate what ground they cover. Since we can't read everything that publishers bring out, a good review performs the important service of giving a concise summary and evaluation of a new book. It should give good writers credit for their achievement, and to steer potential readers away from unsuitable (for whatever reason) publications. It can also help to stimulate debate and future research on

the topic.

When reviewing a book, I always look at the front matter – those parts that the average reader probably skips over – since this highlights the author's aims, and the scope and limitations of the work. The reviewer can then assess the extent to which the author has fulfilled such intentions. How one evaluates an undergraduate text, a book aimed at the general reader, or a ground-breaking academic monograph are all very different.

A reviewer should consider the aims of the journal too: for *Fieldwork in Religion* I would hope for some comment about how an author has used fieldwork or how the book is relevant to it.

If you have been asked to write a review, the reviews editor has given you recognition as an expert in the field, and placing it in the context of wider scholarship and other extant writing in the area is important. Does it break fresh ground and, if so, in what ways? Or is it a précis of existing material, which might help a novice student to understand a difficult subject?

Caution needs to be exercised when commenting on omissions in a book. We all have our hobbyhorses and preconceptions but it is important not to impose these on an author. When my *Christianity Today* was published, one reviewer complained that I had not mentioned Christian spirituality. He was a retired Cathedral Dean, whose entire publication record was on spirituality, and I think he found it hard to accept that I was not writing a 'how to' book on Christian devotion. If he had consulted the index he would have found entries on 'prayer', 'saints', 'Mary' and other relevant themes – so always consult the index, especially when tempted to complain that something

is missing!

There are certain circumstances in which one should not agree to write a review. A reviewer should not normally review the same book for more than one journal: an author should expect comment from a variety of perspectives. If a book is unsuitable for the journal – not on target, conflict of interest (helping a friend or avenging an enemy!), not your expertise after all, popular rather than academic, or simply awful – then it is best to contact the reviews editor for advice. Equally, if you cannot meet a deadline, it is best to decline and review something else when you are less busy. Reviews editors need a regular batch of reviews to meet the journal's deadlines, so reviews need to be kept flowing. Efficient reviews editors will provide deadlines for reviewers to meet, and if you have not been given one, you should ask. Most reviews editors can make allowances – but not give indefinite extensions – for extenuating circumstances, so let them know if you are likely to fall behind schedule.

Whatever you do, do not simply fail to deliver. Unlike other academic services, like teaching or examining, reviewers receive their remuneration – the book – in advance, and it is unfair to make off with books that are often quite expensive, without providing the service. It is unfair on an author, who has put in years of research, to have lost the publicity. I don't keep a blacklist of defaulters, but I know who to ask if I need a fast efficient review, and defaulters don't hear from me again! And if you are likely to be a fast, efficient reviewer, please get in touch with me and let me know of your interests.

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE SPALDING SYMPOSIUM

Anna S. King,
University of
Winchester

The Spalding Symposium of 2015 has been a dialogue on dialogue - the conference theme. However, the Symposium has always been about connection. It performs a number of functions, one of which is to enable isolated, hard pressed and often overworked colleagues to encounter each other across disciplines, perspectives and religious traditions. It is also an encounter across time. To look back at earlier Symposia programmes is to see shifting, dynamic interests and concerns which reflect changes within the wider society, and between generations of scholars. We enter and leave the conversation at different times. The Spalding Symposium has always been renowned for the high quality of the papers offered at the conference, and for the fact that nearly every academic seriously engaged in Indian Studies in the UK has presented papers here, but many of us think also of friends made and colleagues encountered.

We owe the inspiration of the Symposium to Professor Karel Werner, the founder, who describes himself as an indologist, orientalist, religionist and philosopher of religion. Born in 1925 in Jemnice, Czechoslovakia, he developed as a teenager a passionate interest in philosophy and the study of religions, particularly Asian traditions. After the communist putsch masterminded by the Soviet Union in 1948 he was branded a reactionary, and following interrogation by the secret police forced into manual jobs, working in coal mining and then in gasworks (1961-64), plumbing (1964) and tram driving (1964-67). To avoid renewed persecution after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia he left his wife and two sons behind, and emigrated to England where eventually he was appointed Spalding Lecturer in Indian Philosophy and Religion in the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham (1969-1990). His retirement coincided with

the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia, and between 1991-1993 he was a corresponding member of the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences and in 1993-1998 he became professor in the Masaryk University of Brno, in the Institute for the Study of Religions, an Institute which he helped to found. He also became an honorary professorial research associate at SOAS which is where I first met him over a Christmas lunch. The reindeer antlers he was wearing made an interesting counterpoint to our discussion about the logical probability or otherwise of the concept of rebirth and of philosophy as clarifying questions related to the meaning of life.

Karel organised the first Symposium in Selwyn College, Cambridge, in March 1975 after chairing the Indian section of the 13th IAHR congress at Lancaster. The conference then moved peripatetically to London, Durham, Oxford and Manchester. Speakers were given a generous amount of time, originally one and a half hours, which enabled them to develop their arguments and inspire lively and informative discussions. The Sixth Symposium was held at the Cherwell Centre where it remained until 2000. My records of the Symposium go back to 1994 when speakers included Gavin Flood, John Brockington, Daniel Mariau, Robert Mayer, David Gellner and Theodore Gabriel. In 1995 Richard Gombrich suggested to Peter Connolly (the then convenor) that he approach the Spalding Trust for funding, and the conference was renamed 'The Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions' in recognition of the Spalding Trust's sponsorship, a sponsorship which has continued ever since. Among those speaking in 1995 were Karel Werner himself on 'The Philosophy of Religion from the Perspective of Indian Religions,' Ninian Smart (then at Santa Barbara) on 'Hinduism as an Offshoot of Buddhism,' (this was to be

the last paper he published), Julius Lipner on 'Ancient Banyan: An Inquiry into the Nature of Hinduness,' Jackie Hirst on 'Images of Śā kara: Interpreting the Other,' Christopher Aslet on 'Images of the Feminine in Indian Art,' Lynn Thomas on 'Women in the Mahābhārata' and John Hinells on 'An Indian MP: Bhowmagree (1895-1905), Politician and Zoroastrian.'

The following year (1996) Ian Harris spoke on 'Buddhism and the Idea of Nature', Hans Bakker on 'Hindu Religion and War,' Geoffrey Samuel on 'Authority and Dissent in Indian Vajrayāna Buddhism.' In 1997 Nick Allen spoke on 'The Indo-European Prehistory of Yoga,' Johannes Bronkhorst on 'The Pedigree of Ascetic and Meditative Practices in Ancient and Early Classical India,' Joy Manné on 'Buddhist and Shamanic Case Histories'; Helen Waterhouse on 'The New Kadampa Tradition in the Context of British Buddhism'; Sandra Bell on 'Shamanic Buddhism in the USA,' Eleanor Nesbitt on 'We are All Equal': Young British Punjabis and Gujaratis' Perceptions of Caste,' and David Smith on 'Hinduism and Modernity.' In 1998 Ian Whicher, Elizabeth de Michelis, Cathy Cantwell, Theodore Gabriel, Peter Harvey and Lance Cousins offered papers. 1999 was the first year in which I gave a paper - on the Hardwar 1998 Mahā Kumbha Melā.

The Spalding has in fact had four convenors. Karel Werner (1975- 84), Peter Connolly with Joy Manné and Peter Harvey, and then Jennifer Haswell and Sue Hamilton (1985-1999), me (1999-2014) and now of course Naomi (Appleton) (2015-). Dermot Killingley kindly organised the 2014 Symposium in Manchester at the Luther King House, a theological college welcoming all those wanting to study Christian contextual theology. Karel chaired the Symposium for what then seemed the final time in 1984

when Peter (Connolly), Joy and Peter (Harvey) took over. Joy and Peter Harvey were heavily committed to other things, and eventually Peter Connolly ended up running the Symposium alone. For many years Christopher Aslet was our gentle, self-effacing Treasurer, a huge emotional support to me, and someone who could never resist pleas of poverty whether from students or retired professors. He used to leave the Symposium with pockets bulging with notes and coins. I never knew quite how we managed to balance the books. In Professor Werner's day the Spalding was a kind of élite club. Karel selected the speakers, ordered the programme and chaired each paper. He once told me sympathetically that he would have found a committee an impossible inconvenience. Peter succeeded Karel, presiding over the Symposium with relaxed good humour. He was interested in all forms of altered states of consciousness, particularly in the psychology of possession and yoga.

My earliest memories are of the Cherwell Centre, 14-16 Norham Gardens. The Centre was then run by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, whose rule was founded on that of St Ignatius of Loyola. The sisters offered 'Christ-centred hospitality in an atmosphere of freedom and peace.' However they also, particularly Sister Wendy, treated guests as august as Richard Gombrich as very naughty boys, scolding us for placing coffee cups on the piano or opening a window even slightly inviting opportunistic theft or even worse. Guests were asked to bring their own soap and towels. Oxford seen through Sister Wendy's eyes certainly invited the attentions of Inspector Morse and Sergeant Lewis (later Detective Inspector). On Saturday afternoon UKABS held their annual committee meeting, allowing the rest of us to escape to Blackwells. Saturday evening was often spent at the Eagle and Child (Baby and Bird) in the company of the shades of C.S.Lewis and JRR Tolkien and, in my case, E.P. (E.E.Evans-Pritchard) and revered anthropological ancestors. The Symposium at that time was one of the very few places where students could gain valuable feedback

from established scholars. There were excellent papers, good discussions, conviviality and magnolia blossoms. When the Cherwell Centre closed in 2000 I had to find another venue. The Symposium had by then lost UKABS and the number of competing conferences was growing. To survive financially we had to appeal to a younger generation of scholars and go global. I remember spending much time wooing key speakers like Klaus Klostermaier (2000) whose paper attracted unusually strong audience reaction, Diana Eck (2001), Arvind Mandair (2002), Rachel McDermott (2002, 2007), Madhu Kishwar (2004), Pratap Kumar and Alleyn Diesel (2005), Jeffrey Kripal and Christopher Helland (2006), Tracey Pintchmann and Knut Axel Jacobsen (2007), Ruth Vanita (2009), Anant Rambhachan and Christophe Jaffrelot (2013). We also began to take very seriously our responsibility to support Asian scholars and also doctoral and post-doctoral students by the careful offer of bursaries and grants. Despite this internationalisation the Symposium remained at its heart a very intimate and clubbable institution with lively argument spilling over from the lecture room to the Bear, Turf Tavern, or Turl (now closed).

Recognising that it was as important for colleagues to enhance their cvs as it was important for us to encourage as many people as possible to attend the Symposium, I began to programme speakers on Saturday afternoon (unpopular with some colleagues) and introduced the Saturday night lecture or performance on art, culture or music which could subvert the solemn boundaries of the conference format. One of the most distinctly memorable of these sessions was David Smith's illustrated talk on Indian erotic art. It was far more priapically interactive and phallically engaged than the equally interesting paper given by Jessie Pons in 2015 which was unremarkably entitled 'Visual Dialogues: The Archaeology of Inter-Religious Encounters in Pre-Modern India.' There was therefore surprise when the paper was found to be focused on the commonalities or otherwise of the male genitalia of the Buddha, the Jain tirthankaras and Śiva. Those of the

Buddha and the Jainas were found to be 'withdrawn,' 'veiled' or 'absent.'

The Symposium first found a home at Regent's Park College (2001-2004) but after some years the lure of wealthy Americans proved too much and we had to find other venues - in turn Harris Manchester College (2005, 2008, 2010, 2011), Jesus College (2006, 2007), and Merton College (2009, 2012, 2013). My memory of Regent's Park College is almost entirely happy but really eccentric. In 2001 for the first time we were given plastic keys to get in and out of the College, but the entire staff disappeared at night leaving behind one doughty woman who popped up as receptionist, cook, bartender and housekeeper. However even she had to sleep, and one night Ron (Geaves) and Theodore arrived very late and spent an hour or so hammering on the outer door. Eventually I heard faint knockings and after a struggle with the lock let them in. Then Theodore in fedora, dark glasses, raincoat and suitcase, Ron in an Indiana Jones-style bush hat and I filed along shadowy corridors in search of beds.

Noiselessly we opened unlocked bedrooms to the startled gaze of occupants. In the morning Diana Eck's carefully planned slide show on 'Sacred Geography: Pilgrimage and the Land of India' was immediately interrupted by a catastrophic explosion from the College carousel which ejected the slides in a fountain describing a perfect arc, but deposited them on the floor in chaotic disarray. Diana remained utterly composed and carried on. Regent Park's Principal was forced to rush out before breakfast the following day to buy a brand new carousel so that Richard (Shaw) could deliver his slide presentation on 'The Iconography of Ascetic Images in the Vijayanagara Empire.' This of course was before the days of PowerPoint.

The nomadic period of the Symposium in Oxford was always slightly unnerving but for me justified by the beauty of the College quads, the formal grandeur of the Dining Halls and the sense of collegiate intimacy which produced so many lasting friendships. The overseas visitors appreciated the April

blossom, the sense of history and the quirky antiquity of the accommodation (and sometimes the plumbing). However, by then we had a wonderful committee. I had become (unknowingly) seriously ill in 2002 and decided that I must be replaceable. So Chris and I were joined by Dermot and Lynn, and later Catherine (Robinson) and Mahinda (Deegalle). For some years I had toiled on alone addressing and stuffing hundreds of envelopes with posters and calls for papers, and sending them out through our College postroom. Now Lynn organised email shots and set up our embryonic website.

When Chris retired we were joined by our amazingly efficient Treasurer, Nick Swann. In recent years two of the standout Symposia for me have been the 2010 35th Symposium when we celebrated Karel's 85th birthday in Harris Manchester College. Karel selected the speakers (often from what he called 'the old guard'), and chaired each paper with the stamina and energy of a thirty year old. Marian, his wife, a self-proclaimed Doggerelist, asked if she might read a poem for Karel. I had already instituted the custom of a Toast to the Founder (a ritual which instantly gained the patina of age), and we decided that the poem should be delivered before the Toast and the pudding in the magnificent late-Victorian baronial-style Arlosh Hall. The poem was undeniably McGonigalesque, but Marian's love for, and devotion to, Karel as guru and soul-mate with the lively mind, pure heart and piercing gaze shone out radiantly and unforgettably. Afterwards Karel stomped off saying, 'That was completely unnecessary!' But I think he was pleased. The conference in 2013 (5-7 April) in the shiny new TS Eliot Theatre in Merton College was themed: it was on Peacebuilding, Conflict and Non-Violence in Indian Religious Traditions, a topic dear to my heart. The papers from our key speakers, Ananta Rambachan, Christophe Jaffrelot and Peter Friedlander, were excellent, but I remember in particular the awe-inspiring arrival of the band of Sikh warrior scholars and entourage led by Arvind-Pal Mandair, Navdeep Mandair, and Balbinder S Bhogal who swept in magnificently for their allotted

panel and just as suddenly disappeared afterwards. Their very radical analyses of postcolonial violence aroused great interest, but also passion in the normally placid Spalding audience. Professor Werner could be heard saying loudly 'Get them off!'

One of the great achievements of the Spalding has been the publication of its collected papers, particularly by Karel and Peter, but also by me.¹ Today Religions of South Asia, felicitously named RoSA, is a development of that work. Founded in 2007 by me, with the support of Dermot, Ron (Geaves) and Karel, RoSA is now an international peer-reviewed journal published three times a year. That RoSA has received global recognition is due to the scholarship of the authors and the meticulous editing of my fellow editors, Dermot Killingley and Simon Brodbeck, and Reviews Editor Suzanne Newcombe, and before Suzanne, Lynn Foulston. RoSA publishes articles and reviews on some of the most vibrant and dynamic religious traditions of the world, religions which continue to influence the patterns of thought and ways of life of millions of people, and which are integral not only to the development of the cultural identities of India and South Asia, but to those of many diasporic communities globally. RoSA draws considerably on selected papers from the Symposium and welcomes guest editors. An excellent example of the often symbiotic relationship between Symposium and Journal is 'The Animal Question in South Asian Religions: A Post-Modern Pañcatantra,' edited in three volumes by Fabrizio M. Ferrari and Thomas Dähnhardt (*Religions of South Asia* 2013. 7: 1-3).²

I have now handed the convenorship over to Naomi who is already regenerating our ageing Symposium. Instead of clinging to the Oxford tradition which I have so loved, she has imaginatively reconfigured the Symposium bringing in new audiences and speakers. Richard Gombrich recently remarked on Naomi's amazing energy, and I know that the Symposium is in very safe hands. At Lance (Cousin)'s funeral at the Oxford Crematorium, and the subsequent gathering

at Wolfson College (28 March 2015), I felt the grief that so many felt. Lance had faithfully attended the Spalding Symposium each year, giving detailed feedback to speakers, especially students, and sharing his knowledge, wisdom and experience with a gentle and sometimes mischievous directness. Looking around I recognised many great scholars, discerning teachers and challenging guides who, like Lance, had enriched the Symposium. I am grateful that so many have become friends. It is hard sometimes to see the extraordinary in the ordinary, but I have come to realise that a Symposium really does what it says. It brings people together in a quite extraordinary way, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Spalding's past, present and future.

Notes:

1 Perspectives on Indian Religion: Papers in Honour of Karel Werner (*Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica* No-30), ed. Peter Connolly and Karel Werner, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986; *The Yogi and the Mystic. Studies in Indian and Comparative Mysticism* (Durham Indological Series 1), ed. Karel Werner, London: Curzon Press, 1989; *Symbols in Art and Religion: The Indian and the Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Karel Werner, London: Curzon Press, 1990; *Love Divine. Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*, (Durham Indological Series 3), ed. Karel Werner, London: Curzon Press, 1993; *Indian Insights: Buddhism, Brahmanism and Bhakti: Papers from the Annual Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions*, ed. Peter Connolly and Sue Hamilton, London: Luzac Oriental, 1997; *Indian Religions: Renaissance and Renewal: The Spalding Papers in Indic Studies*, ed. Anna S.King, London: Equinox, 2006.

2 Later published as *Charming Beauties and Frightful Beasts: Non-Human Animals in South Asian Myth, Ritual and Folklore*, ed. Fabrizio M. Ferrari and Thomas Dähnhardt, Sheffield: Equinox, 2013.

P.E.A.R.S.: The Religious Studies Project and Undergraduates



Hello readers of the BASR Bulletin! My name is Ian Blair and I'm a senior undergraduate across the pond at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, USA. I've been asked to provide some feedback on employing the Religious Studies Project in your classrooms. In reflecting on my time at Lewis & Clark and around the globe, I've found utilizing the Religious Studies Project has been an incredibly helpful and worthwhile resource.

I initially discovered the Religious Studies Project while looking for opportunities for the summer in the field of religious studies; when my peers in biology and political science were easily obtaining internships in their respective fields, I found that religious studies was lacking. Fortunately, if you are unaware, the Religious Studies Project has a monthly digest available for a variety of upcoming opportunities in the field. However, this is an appeal to open up your classrooms to the benefits of utilizing the Religious Studies Project. Keeping it short and sweet, there are a number of reasons for implementing material in and outside class. I'll enumerate these below as PEARS:

Perspective

Being an American student, we typically read American authors. The Religious Studies Project extended the width of my acquaintance of authorship to thinkers outside the US that my professors don't explicitly focus on. A great example of this, an example that I'm actually thinking about incorporating into my undergraduate thesis, is the podcast by Birgit Meyer, professor at the University of Utrecht, in The Netherlands, on how visual culture can be implemented in the

study of religion. While Meyer specifically works with field research of how video is used through the act of meditation in Ghana, her example helped conceptualize what work outside of textual studies could look like. Following the works of other scholars working on the line of visual culture and religion is both supportive and empowering, and I have used it as a jumping off point for my own undergraduate thesis.

Engagement

In my introductory theory class, we read and discuss Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Clifford Geertz. Most of the theorists that beginning students are introduced to are dead, fostering this deceptive idea that there really is nothing to add to religious studies. Fortunately, RSP shows otherwise, revealing an accessible platform where some of the top scholars discuss their current work. Through listening and, if one feels inclined, commenting, undergraduates are able to engage and contemplate with these scholars to get a better grasp on what's happening around the field.

Approachability

Rolling off the idea of engagement, RSP really hits hard with its approachability: being able to be understood by someone with an undergraduate level. As a senior undergraduate reading and currently working with assignments, I have a better sense of the field; when I am reading something by an author I also know the argument s/he is referencing or refuting. But for younger students, everything is new and the implicit nod to other scholarship is not readily accessed through writing. Listening to these podcasts can sort of be like a middle step for undergraduates as they situate

theories and thinkers within a larger web of scholarship, especially since how scholars write and how scholars speak are typically vastly different. Whereas academic writing can be overly convoluted with unnecessary nominalizations, the basic ideas of the authors' arguments are able to come out through these accessible dialogues that the RSP puts on.

Relevancy

When people ask me what I'm studying, as I'm sure many of you have experienced, there is that moment in the conversation where relevancy of the discipline is questioned. Religious Studies Project demonstrates the other side of that discourse, showing that people are still talking, theorizing, and discussing, not only dead thinkers, but thinkers who are very much still alive and flourishing.

Supplemental Resources

This may be the most difficult to implement, as it depends on the vim and vigour of the student, but I have typically used the Religious Studies Project to supplement readings and perspective in class. Whereas I realize that the syllabus my professor has provided is a carefully constructed pathway to understanding the subject matter and the objective of the given course, I've found that supplementing with interviews and extra information available on the RSP has helped me to formulate original research project ideas that resulted in my final research papers.



CONFERENCES

SPALDING SYMPOSIUM ON INDIAN RELIGIONS, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, 10TH-12TH APRIL 2015

For the 40th anniversary Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions scholars from across the UK and overseas gathered in the beautiful New College in Edinburgh for a weekend of stimulating discussion on everything from Krishna's dialogues in the Mahabharata to contemporary debates surrounding the slaughter of cows in India. With each speaker given forty minutes to present their arguments and further twenty minutes to engage with the audience, the Spalding Symposium formed a platform for in-depth explorations of various themes connected with Indian religions and this year's theme 'dialogue'.

The first keynote lecture, 'So Near Yet So Far: Sri Lankan Strategies for Superseding Indian Cultural Forms' delivered by Stephen Berkwitz, discussed the influences of Indian literary forms on Sri Lankan literati and the strategies Sinhala Buddhist authors employed to transcend their anxiety over Indian cultural influences in the 9th-13th century Sri Lanka. The second, by Uma Chakravarti, was entitled 'Contentious Dialogues: Three Moments from an Argumentative Past', and was a lively discussion of dialogue between Buddhists and Brahmins over the subject of caste at three very different points in time: the Buddha's lifetime, first century CE, and the 19th and 20th centuries. Both keynote lectures thoroughly embraced this year's symposium's theme 'dialogue' as

did all other papers, which tackled this subject from a variety of angles.

Elizabeth Harris (Liverpool Hope University) gave the audience an insight into the way some Christian groups in Sri Lanka incorporated local Buddhist practices into their religious liturgies. Jessie Pons (Ruhr Universität Bochum) presented her project on inter-religious encounters of Buddhism, Jainism, and Brahmanism in the area around Mathura, giving an illustrating example of how Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmin forms of artistic expression influenced each other.

The second day of the Symposium was opened by Jonathan Geen (Western University, Ontario), who contrasted various Jain and Hindu versions of similar characters and stories and suggested that the boundaries between the two traditions would better be understood as more porous, and a presentation by Brian Black (Lancaster University) which looked at different dialogues Krishna had before and after the war in the Mahabharata and explored how they inform each other. After lunch, Martin Farek (University of Pardubice, Czech Republic) examined the nature of encounters between Europeans and Indians during the British colonial rule, and asked what was specifically colonial about the questions the Britons were asking their Indian counterparts. Deborah Nadal presented her insights into the contemporary interreligious debates over cow slaughter and beef consumption in India and the voices raised by Muslim, Christian, Hindu,

Dalit, and tribal communities in response to the tightening legislation over the issue.

On the last day, Lisa Wessman Crothers (College of Wooster, USA) looked at dialogic expressions of deception and disguise used in one of the jataka stories, in which the Bodhisattva used tactical deception in his courtship to his marriage interests. Nathan McGovern (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München) problematized the brahmana-śramana dichotomy and argued that the distinction between Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic was less solidified in ancient India, and colloquial religious identities showed more complexities that the brahmana-śramana dichotomy leads us to believe. Hepzibah Israel and Matthias Frenz (University of Edinburgh) concluded the Symposium with an exploration of Indian autobiographical conversion accounts, their use for missionary purposes and the interplay between conversion and translation studies.

To push the theme of the Symposium further, the Spalding Trust generously subsidized three postgraduate papers and enabled a dialogue between these younger minds and more seasoned scholars. James Morris (University of St. Andrews) took his audience outside of South Asia and looked at the interaction between Buddhism and Japanese animism in the 6th century CE; Anja Pogacnik (University of Edinburgh) presented the marital practices and family lives of Jain women living in the English city of

Leicester; and Lucian Wong (University of Oxford) explored bhadralka's (Calcutta's elite) criticism of Bengali Vaisnavas and their perceived moral deviance, especially in the late 19th century.

This year marked the 40th anniversary of the Spalding Symposium. Prof. Karel Werner launched the Symposium in 1975, and with the financial support of the Spalding Trust the Symposium has been an annual event ever since. Most of the forty events were held in Oxford, but last year the Committee decided to make the symposium peripatetic and move it to different places where Indian religions are studied each year. At the end of the second day of this year's Symposium, fond reflections of its history were made by Naomi Appleton, Anna King, and Dermot Killingley, and a message from Werner was read, as he was unfortunately unable to attend due to prior engagements.

The whole symposium ran smoothly thanks to the new Convener of the Spalding Symposium Naomi Appleton of the University of Edinburgh, who tirelessly worked to make everyone feel welcomed and that every last detail of the Symposium was perfectly in order. The organization set a relaxed mood amongst the attending researchers, who chatted over meals at New College and eventually drinks in the local pub. In such a relaxed and intellectually stimulating atmosphere, ideas flowed freely in lively conversations, old friendships were renewed, and new academic bonds forged. The next Spalding Symposium will be held at Cardiff University in spring 2016 and you can access more information on the Spalding Symposium's website (www.spaldingsymposium.org).

Anja Pogacnik,
University of Edinburgh

BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (BSA), GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY, 15-17 APRIL 2015.

The annual conference of the British Sociological Association took place at Glasgow Caledonian University from 15th to 17th April. The theme of the conference was "Societies in Transition: Progression or Regression?", presented as deliberately broad and all-encompassing to "appeal to the entire range of sociologists and stimulate lively debate". This theme worked well, in providing a framework for a wide variety of perspectives on contemporary society. This review focuses in the first instance on presentations in the Sociology of Religion stream.

The Sociology of Religion presentations took place over four sessions in the first day and a half of the conference. Yvette Taylor began the first session with a fascinating account of the complex role played by music in the religious experience and expression of young queer Christians, bringing out both its embodied nature and the wide range of personal responses. Anja Pogacnik followed up with a very interesting intergenerational perspective on Jain women in Leicester, suggesting that the smallness of the Jain community increasingly allows young women to create their own interpretations and make their own choices about marriage. Titus Hjelm highlighted how scholars of religion-state relations can tend to take a political science approach focusing primarily on policy outcomes, and argued persuasively for a more sociological approach which examines and analyses the discursive processes and power relations implicated in policy in this area.

The second session comprised three

compelling presentations on education and schooling. Peter Hemming presented the findings of a study on rural church primary schools, highlighting issues of dissent and pupil agency (around practices such as praying), utilisation of ideas of appropriate childhood, and the complexity of relations with wider communities. Rachel Hanemann presented a revealing exploration of how teachers in a Catholic secondary school navigate the tension between aspects of doctrine seen as intolerant and their goal to promote values and individual autonomy among the students. Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist of Inform finished the session with an overview of the diverse landscape of religious schooling, highlighting how negotiation of rights between parents and the state can occur at the expense of those of the child.

Alex Smith kicked off the third session with a report on ethnographic fieldwork in a liberal-to-moderate church in Kansas City, focusing on how its progressive self-image informs its sense of mission, and on its use of moderation as a "civic discipline for engagement". Annette Schnabel and Heiko Beyer reported on an analysis of European Value Survey Data attempting to make sense of the interface between religion and *weltanschauung*, and suggesting a close correlation between the two. Stratos Patrikios looked at why episcopal churches invite lay members to participate in high-level advisory bodies, suggesting a process of internal secularisation. Dominika Motak concluded with a look at Georg Simmel's theory of religion, suggesting this is an under-appreciated aspect of Simmel's legacy.

The fourth session, on the second day, consisted of only two talks. Olave Thumala reflected critically on the use

of Bourdieu in the study of cultural and religious change, arguing that the concepts of habitus and field leave little space for understanding meaningful religious transformation. Tim Hutchings finished up with a fascinating analysis of authority in the field of digital religion, looking at the way bible.com makes use of informal social control and arguing that persuasive technology is an example of how authority can work “behind the scenes”.

The Sociology of Religion roundtable presentations provided a valuable opportunity to discuss research projects in a more informal and “hands-on” way, with presenters using a variety of handouts and visual aids to aid their presentations and discussions. Larisa Vdovichenko presented a quantitative analysis of the relationship between religious beliefs and political orientation in Russia, arguing that the growing attraction to religion has not led to changes in political culture. Patricia Mahon-Daly and Ken Smith’s thought-provoking talk applied Weber’s concept of Salvation to help explain the motivation of blood donors. Al-Karim Datoo gave an interesting discussion on the dialogue between tradition and modern values in three generations of the Ismaili diaspora in four Canadian cities. Finally, Niki Papageorgiou gave a fascinating account of the role of women as carriers of identity and ideology in Orthodox and Catholic communities in Thessaloniki.

Outside of the Sociology of Religion stream there was much else of value, including the opportunity to attend, and be stimulated by, sessions from outside of one’s own field of study. Particular gems I attended included a Sociology journal special event on everyday life, a presentation on autonomy in young

people’s educational decision-making, and one on cosplay in the folk-religion of suburban Taoist spaces in Singapore.

The conference included for the first time a format of presentation sessions originating from Japan, known as Pecha Kucha sessions. In this format, presentations take the form of twenty slides each showing for exactly twenty seconds, with exactly five minutes available for questions before the next presentation starts. The idea is that the



Titus Hjelm and Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist at the BSA in the Glasgow City Chambers

presentations have a greater sense of energy and involvement, and in the session I was in this certainly turned out to be the case. Focusing on social media, topics in this session included “inclusive masculinity” among YouTube video bloggers, race and class in social media activism, and an analysis of online jihadism.

The Conference Plenaries provided an opportunity for the whole conference to get together and hear about internationally significant work from top names. Alice Goffman gave an

electrifying presentation about how the high levels of incarceration and contact with the justice system impact on the lives of young men and their families in segregated Black neighbourhoods in US cities. Colin Sampson gave a detailed and eye-opening presentation about the ways in which indigenous groups in Canada are still being affected by the acquisition and industrialisation of their land by the Canadian Government. Finally, Guy Standing gave a persuasive presentation of his argument that a new class has emerged defined by high levels of insecurity and effectively reduced to supplicant status (the “Precariat”), and of his proposal for a “Precariat’s Magna Carta”.

However, the highlight of the conference for me came at the end of the very last day, in the form of the Sociology of Religion Stream Plenary. Steve Bruce gave a fascinating presentation of his defence of the Secularisation Thesis, engaging with the work of a wide number of other scholars of religion. His arguments were persuasive and detailed, providing a strongly argued case and referencing a wide range of qualitative and quantitative evidence. Whatever one’s view about secularisation, this is an

important body of work that must be engaged with.

I came away from the conference stimulated and energised by the sheer range of work that was presented. I would wholeheartedly recommend this conference to anyone who is interested not only in encountering a wide range of work in the Sociology of Religion, but also in being invigorated and challenged by engagement with meaningful and relevant work from a much broader sociological context.

Claire Wanless, The Open University

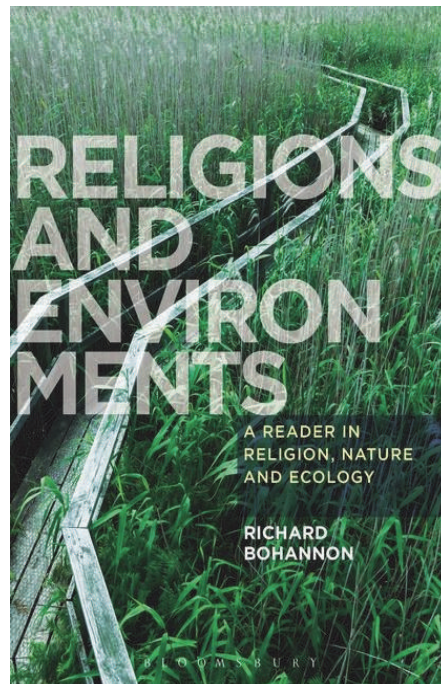
REVIEWS

RELIGIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS: A READER IN RELIGION, NATURE AND ECOLOGY. RICHARD BOHANNON, (ED.), BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 2014, 384 PP. ISBN 978-1-78093-802-8, US\$ 42.95.

Our changing climate and progressive environmental degradation have made the environment a focus of concern for governments and for all societal institutions. As major forces in cultures and societies, religions can be a basis for engagement with environmental challenges. Religions and Environments: A Reader in Religion, Nature and Ecology provides a starting point for examining religious responses to nature and ecology.

Given the range of world religions and their variants, and the range of indigenous traditions from widely varying environments across the globe, Richard Bohannon's task in selecting readings for Religions and Environments is challenging. Selecting material is one challenge; another is organising it. Bohannon has created three sections representing different stages in the relationship of humankind to the world around us. The first set of readings represents responses to the natural world as untouched wilderness. The second focuses on the environment as garden, in other words the cultivated environment manipulated and managed by human beings. The third is religious responses to the urban environment.

The book's primary intended audience is American students. This is reflected in both the structure of the book and in its opening section on "Wilderness". Some of the first readings – Henry Thoreau, John Muir, and John Burroughs, while classics of American nature writing, can be found readily elsewhere. More interesting to those



familiar with these writers are the experiences of Australian ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood (1939-2008) in escaping from becoming crocodile prey, an encounter guaranteed to challenge romanticised concepts of nature, and the reactions of American environmentalist Edward Abbey (1927-1989) to his first morning alone in 33,000 acres of the Arches National Monument, Moab, Utah. The concept of the North American land mass as wilderness does not go unchallenged. A reading from theologian, activist and executive

director of the National Congress of American Indians Vine Deloria Jr. (1933-2005) argues that for his antecedents the vast land mass was not wilderness to be overcome, but a seamless web of abundant life, of which human beings were but a part.

While the first section contains much of interest, the book's strengths lie in its selection of contemporary readings that reflect religious responses to environmental degradation. The second section "Garden: Cultivated and transformed landscapes" explores land management and stewardship. It includes readings on deforestation, with interesting writing by Vandana Shiva on India's Chipko movement and by Wangari Maathai on Africa's Green Belt movement, as well as a contribution by Sarah Darlington on Thai Buddhist tree ordination.

The final section on "City: Natural and human environments" includes reactions to the built environment and initiatives for greening cities. The book ends with a powerful selection of readings that make explicit links between environmental sustainability, social justice and liberation theology. These connections are readily traceable, but they are particularly important for religious groups that are sceptical about climate change and for whom it is important to distance religious environmentalism from accusations of worshipping the creation.

How does this new anthology stand up against other comparable texts, notably Roger S. Gottlieb's (2003)

edition of *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, and the Environment*, and Clifford Chalmers Cain's (2012) *Many Heavens, One Earth: Readings on Religion and the Environment?* Gottlieb's more weighty tome contains a wealth of material from which to choose, but much more than could be covered in a standard course. Students might prefer the more streamlined Bohannon or Cain texts, both of which have the advantage of being more up-to-date. Of the two, for this reviewer, Bohannon's volume has the edge in having a much wider range of readings and themes for discussion.

Overall, Bohannon has produced an attractive, accessible, and interesting anthology that can serve as a useful adjunct to courses on religion and the environment, a topic of growing interest to students in religious studies departments and beyond. The collection of contemporary writings is particularly strong and the emphasis in the latter part of the book on urban environments will have great resonance with the life experiences of the majority of today's students. A caveat must be added, however. The anthology includes readings from many religious traditions, but a notable gap is contemporary Paganism. Indeed, the brief references to Paganism are somewhat derogatory; for example Laurel Kearns in her section on "Religion and Environmental Justice" (page 299) points out that for some, "religious environmentalism is primarily a type of nature spirituality filled with tree huggers, star gazers, outdoor recreationists and 'pagans'". The book would be less suitable therefore for broadly-based Religious Studies departments with Pagan students.

Vivianne Crowley

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CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS. JAMES L. COX (ED.), 2013, LONDON: ASHGATE. 214 PP (HB) 978-1-4094-4500-5 £60.00

The comparative study of indigenous religions, long regarded as the preserve of cultural anthropologists, has become increasingly significant within religious studies. A field dominated by the legacy of the 'world religions' paradigm has struggled to find either the space or the tools to incorporate it. Indigenous religions however have always been conceptually significant in relation to the world religions against which they are implicitly or explicitly contrasted.



This makes the task of critically reflecting on 'indigenous religions' crucial to the study of religion as a whole. This is exactly what James Cox sets out to do as editor of *Critical Reflections on Indigenous Religions* bringing together scholars with a range of specialties while shaping the volume into one which provokes the reader with key theoretical questions. The volume is impressive because of its range and its ability to test the boundaries of the category

'indigenous religion' with novel cases. While the cases discussed would provoke debate on their own, the volume remains theoretically grounded; reflecting on scholarly categories, indigenous and colonial perspectives and the dynamics of power in which these are caught.

The first section of the book addresses methodology, in his opening chapter Cox discusses the problematic attempts to 'fit' the religions of indigenous societies into the world religions paradigm. He provides a solid introduction to the history of the attempt to establish 'indigenous religions' as a field and the emergence of the very issues in such dire need of critical reflection. He stresses the need to avoid creating an essentialised category of 'indigenous religion' but provides a working definition in order to facilitate comparative analysis without obscuring the specifics of each case. This is very much in the spirit of J.Z. Smith and his call for the self-conscious construction of scholarly categories which nonetheless should never be confused with the data itself. Graham Harvey reflects on the fact that the study of indigenous religions has been so long neglected considering the preponderance of categories absorbed from these traditions: mana, taboo, totem etc.

The laudable inclusion of cases which would not be regarded as prototypically 'indigenous' challenge conceptions of these traditions as remote geographically or historically from 'world religions'. The second section of the book covers Europe, which usually only enters discussion if at all in relation to the Saami. Emily Lyle, Ulrich Berner and Carole Cusack reflect on the indigenous religious context of Europe during the process of Christianisation while Suzanne Owen considers the claims to indigeneity made by modern Druids.

Both of these cases in their own manner are often swept into the separate category of 'Paganism' and rarely fruitfully compared with cases of 'indigenous religions'. However as Jens Peter Schjødt reminds us with his analysis of 'the' ancient Scandinavian religion, even the study of specific indigenous religions is inherently comparative.

Commendably, if there is a line drawn by the authors between cases drawn from the historical records and the ethnographic present, it is treated as thin, porous and no obstacle to fruitful comparison. Berner for example, directly compares the cases of the Christianisation of Early Medieval Germanic peoples and colonial-era Southern Africans to analyse the transition from kinship-based to universalistic religions.

The third part of the volume turns to the more prototypical heartlands of the study of indigenous religions, South America and Africa; though these are certainly not treated as ahistorical or uncontentious. While the European cases are largely taken from the historical record and the South American and African cases are largely based on ethnography, it is a relief to find that there are exceptions to this. Just as Owen provides an ethnographic analysis of British and Irish Druids, Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz analyses the Christianisation process taking place in Peru through the Quechua language Huarochirí Manuscript (1608). She reveals that the process of conversion cannot simply be characterised as a smooth shift between worldviews but is rather often unsteady and uneven. Bettina Schmidt analyses the Afro-Brazilian movements Candomblé through the ambiguity surrounding its 'indigenous' identity as South American and African. The fact that the indigenous

tradition in question is largely not considered 'indigenous to' the area makes it an especially interesting case.

Gemechu Jemal Geda discusses the worship of the deity Waaqa (Waaqaffanaa) among the Oromo of northern Ethiopia, in which many Christian and Muslim Oromo participate. While hybridity is nothing new to most scholars, it is notable that Waaqeffataa (those that identify as Waaqa worshippers) are just as divided between 'purists' and 'moderates' as the Christians and Muslims. This defies the model of indigenous religions as inherently 'syncretic' compared to 'purist' world religions, perhaps a reflection of an underlying assumed dichotomy between passive and active agents. Lastly Elijah Obinna uses the life cycle rituals of the Amasiri clan of the Igbo people of southeast Nigeria to cast doubt on Frits Staal's assertion that rituals lack any symbolic meaning other than the performance itself, showing how common meanings and values can be expressed by traditionalist and Christian participants.

If any criticism could be levelled at the volume it is simply that many more cases could have potentially been addressed and would have benefited from the approach taken here. This is hardly fair considering the fact that it is the product of a one day symposium but nonetheless there is considerable room to expand. Hopefully this will serve as the springboard for much more extensive collaborations, perhaps addressing more contemporary cases especially the effects of contemporary technology such as the internet or social media on indigenous religions. There is much fertile ground for research on the links between indigenous religions and New Religious Movements, the New

Age and counter-culture as well as the contestation of indigeneity and authenticity which continue to surround the topic. If such research is to remain critical and theoretically engaged I can only hope this volume will continue to be read and consulted by serious students of indigenous religions.

Liam Sutherland,
University of Edinburgh

SECTS AND STATS: OVERTURNING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ABOUT CULT MEMBERS. JAMES R. LEWIS.

Lewis argues that scholars of New Religious Movements (NRM's) have failed in recent years to successfully apply or utilise quantitative research methods to support claims made in their work. As a result, Lewis takes statistical research collected from a number of Anglophone countries to demonstrate the validity that current quantitative, longitudinal and quasi-longitudinal research can have in this discipline. With the evidence provided Lewis aims to radically overturn common notions, assumptions and stereotypes about members of NRM's. He particularly focuses upon demographic concerns. For example age, educational background, gender and length of membership of members.

Throughout the book Lewis presents his research in a way that successfully allows for a clear cross-examination and discussion between the different NRM's. He does this in each section by initially dividing demographical factors up into their specific religious milieu, and then carefully bringing them together during the analysis for comparison and further discussion. This approach allows for the less statistically literate among us to

adequately analyse trends and notions about NRM's in general as well as be further illuminated alongside group specifics.

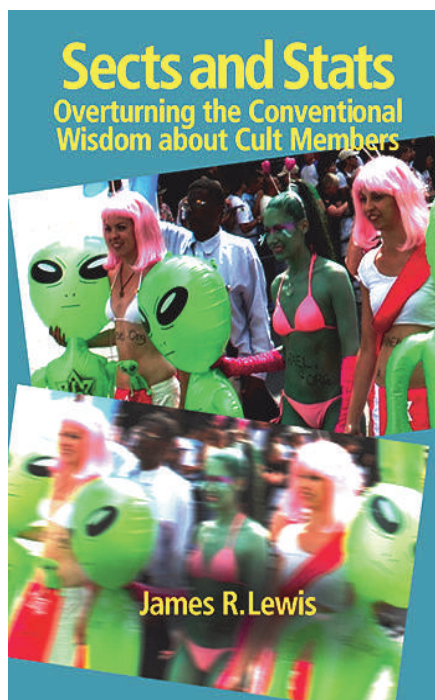
The book is separated into four parts. Three are based on the method of approach and one focuses on post-membership research. Section one is where we see the author's initial attempt to overturn common assumptions of NRM membership. Through his appeal to quantitative, quasi-longitudinal research, Lewis successfully challenges Melton and Moore's (1982) "Youth-Crisis Model" of NRM's. He provides compelling evidence to debunk the theory that converts to NRM's are typically 'between 16 and 26 years of age, that s/he stayed in a NRM for two years, and then left voluntarily' (p13).

In section two Lewis utilises three types of longitudinal research in an attempt to further demonstrate the inaccuracies of previous conclusions drawn in qualitative NRM research. He particularly focuses upon The Order of Christ Sophia and the Movement of Inner Spiritual Awareness. Lewis' focus on these widely different groups help to successfully demonstrate that one should not always make generalisations about NRM's. Often, the sum of their differences may be greater than the sum of their commonalities.

In section three Lewis makes use of mixed-method approaches. He focuses upon particular issues within specific movements, such as scientology and gender, and the 'Teen Witch Fad' in Wicca. The discussions in this section demonstrate the versatility of quantitative and statistical research. A reader who is more familiar with qualitative methods may be able to recognise potential areas of compatibility with his or her own research.

In section four Lewis assesses the reflections and opinions of ex-members of NRM's. From an insider perspective, Lewis is able to forge a persuasive argument that the general notion that NRM members are "brainwashed" is false.

I found that the most compelling elements of the book were when Lewis made use of mixed-method approaches, and when he discussed his own experiences of leaving a



NRM. This willingness to recognise his insider perspective informed his research greatly.

Difficulties that arise in statistical research come to light in the latter part of section one. Here, Lewis provides two examples of NRM's where a means of initial contact is via websites. Lewis fails to realise that contact via the internet could indicate more than just reading a website. His oversight is evident on page 38 as he collapses 'book' and 'website' into a single 'reading' category when making his calculations. Through assuming that 'website' is akin to 'reading', Lewis fails to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of website interaction and the online experience. For example those

who selected 'website' may have had initial contact with an NRM through user-generated content based websites or interactive forums. An oversight like this can skew the research findings in an inaccurate direction. This may be a common concern for the quantitative-shy researchers whom Lewis is hoping to persuade in his writing.

Although Lewis states at the beginning that he will not argue for an interpretation of the research that he appeals to, blatant patterns do emerge in his data which beg for further discussion. I was particularly fascinated by Lewis' research which indicated an unexpected average birth year of NRM members (Chapter 3). One can only hope for a further sequel to analyse and discuss these trends more in-depth.

A final minute but bothersome feature about this monograph that needs to be noted is the misleading cover photo. Although something as superfluous as this does not detract from the content, the front cover only shows members of the Raëlian Movement. There is not even one mention of the Raëlians, or even a reference to UFO religions in general, in this book at all.

Overall, Lewis writes in a lucid and informative manor and presents his research in an accessible way. Sects and Stats is an ideal introduction for those who are unfamiliar or have misgivings about quantitative and statistical research, and is a fascinating read for those who are keen to learn more about the latest research on NRM's.

Emma Leverton,
University of Leeds

Members' Recent Publications

Elisabeth Arweck

2015 with Anna Halafoff & Donald Boisvert (eds.), "Education about Religions and Beliefs: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies", special issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 36. 3 April (2015) (in press).

2015 with Gemma Penny. "Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity: Socialising Agents and Factors Emerging from Qualitative and Quantitative Data of a Nation-Wide Project in the UK", special issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies* on "Education about Religions and Beliefs: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies" 36.3 April (2015), edited by Anna Halafoff, Elisabeth Arweck, and Donald Boisvert (in press).

2015 "Brahma Kumaris and Dada Lekhraj", in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. VI, editor-in-chief Knut A. Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill), 100–107.

2013 "The Role of Emotion and Identity in Mixed-Faith Families", in *Emotions and Religious Dynamic: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Douglas Davies (London: Ashgate), 9–25.

2013 "'I've been christened, but I don't really believe in it': How Young People Articulate their (Non-)Religious Identities and Perceptions of (Non-)Belief", in *Social Identities between the Sacred and the Secular*, edited by Abby Day, Christopher R. Cotter & Giselle Vincett (London: Ashgate), 103–125.

George D. Chryssides

2014 *Jehovah's Witnesses: Theological Exchanges, Current Issues*; in Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland and Gerald R. McDermott (eds), *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, pp.481-484. ISBN 978-0-8010-3776-4.

2014 *Jehovah's Witnesses: History, Beliefs, Practices*; in Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland and Gerald R. McDermott (eds), *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, pp.476-480. ISBN 978-0-8010-3776-4.

2014 'Jehovah's Witnesses and Healing'. CESNUR Library Texts and Documents Cyber-proceedings of International Conference organized by CESNUR, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 5-8 June 2014. URL: <http://www.cesnur.org/2014/waco-chryssides.pdf>

2015 *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter. Entries on 'Good'; 'Gospel Harmonies'; and 'Government' Vol.10, pp.628-629, 691, 743.

James L. Cox

2014 (ed. with Ábrahám Kovács) *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion*. Budapest: L'Harmattan.

2014 *Phenomenological Perspectives on the Social Responsibility of the Scholar of Religion*. In Á Kovács and J.L. Cox (eds). *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion*. Budapest: L'Harmattan, 133-51.

2014 Can Christianity Take New Forms? Christianity in New Cultural Contexts. In P. Hedges (ed.). *Controversies in Contemporary Religion. Volume 3: Specific Issues and Case Studies*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, (ABC-CLIO, LLC), 195-222.

2014 *The Invention of God in Indigenous Societies*. Oxford and New York: Routledge (originally Durham: Acumen).

2013 *The Transmission of an Authoritative Tradition: That Without Which Religion Is Not Religion*. In A. Adogame, M. Echter and O. Freiberger (eds). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 308-23.

Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist

2015 *Perfect Children: Growing Up on the Religious Fringe*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mathew Guest

2015 "Evangelicalism and Politics", in Greg Smith (ed.) *21st Century Evangelicals: Reflections On Research by the Evangelical Alliance*, Watford: Instant Apostle, pp. 82-99.

2015 "Religion and the Cultures of Higher Education: Student Faith in the Contemporary UK", in Beaman, L. and L. Aragon (eds) *Whose Religion?: Education about Religion in Public Schools*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 346-366.

2013 *Christianity and the University Experience: Understanding Student Faith* (with Kristin Aune, Sonya Sharma and Rob Warner), London: Bloomsbury.

2013 "Navigating Religion between University and Home: Christian Students' Experiences in English Universities" (with Sonya Sharma), *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 59-79.

2013 "Challenging 'Belief' and the Evangelical Bias: Student Christianity in English Universities" (with Sonya Sharma, Kristin Aune and Rob Warner), *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 207-223.

Rosalind Hackett

2015 *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa* (co-edited with Benjamin F. Soares) Indiana University Press.

2014 "Rosalind Hackett Reflecting on Religious Media in Africa: An Interview." *Social Compass* 61, 1 (March): 67-72.

Suzanne Owen

2015 'The Demise of the Beothuk as a Past Still Present,' *Journal of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions* 2/1, 119-139

2015 (with Taira, Teemu) 'The Category of "Religion" in Public Classification: Charity Registration of the Druid Network in England and Wales,' in, Trevor Stack, Naomi Goldenberg and Timothy Fitzgerald (eds) *Religion as a Category of Governance and Sovereignty* (Leiden: Brill), 90-117



OBITUARIES

Professor Ian Charles Harris
(June 17th 1952 - December 23rd 2014)

Ian Harris had a quick and penetrating mind, an easy smile and a great sense of humour. He made friends easily and was a pleasure to work with. His initial academic interests were in biochemistry, which he studied at the University of Sussex, though after travelling around India and teaching himself Sanskrit he decided to join the MA programme in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster in 1977, which is where he and I met. Even then, Ian was passionate about Buddhist studies and went on to pursue doctoral work on the Madhyamaka and Yogacara schools. We had great fun during those PhD years, studying Tibetan at the Samye-Ling Monastery in Scotland and then with Michael Aris in Oxford, enjoying philosophical discussions about experience and reality and, occasionally, getting high.

After a spell of teaching in schools Ian was offered a lectureship in Religious Studies at the University College of St. Martin in Lancaster, and his research on Buddhism took off. He wrote four books and numerous articles on a wide range of topics within Buddhist studies as well as editing or collaborating on a number of other works in the broader field of Religious Studies. He was a prolific and insightful scholar who enjoyed working abroad as much as in the UK, holding visiting scholarships and professorships in Oxford, Phnom Penh, Vancouver, Singapore, Toronto, and Seoul. He was appointed Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Cumbria in 2005.

In the spaces between these activities he also found time to join Peter Harvey in founding the UK Association for Buddhist Studies in 1996, which he served as treasurer, secretary and then president. In addition, he acted as an external examiner for the Universities of Bath Spa, Bristol, Chichester, Coventry, Lancaster, Leeds, London (SOAS and Goldsmiths), Sunderland and Stirling as well as editing the BASR Bulletin and serving on the Peer Review Panel of the Arts and Humanities Research Board. He was much in demand and his contributions highly valued.

Outside of academia, Ian was a family man. He married Gwen Goulden on August 4th 1984 and they had three fine children, of whom Ian was very proud. His talents also extended to organic gardening and building restoration, both of which he did well. Ian was a good friend, a great scholar and a much-loved human being. He will be deeply missed.

Peter Connolly.

Lance Selwyn Cousins
(April 7th 1942 -March 14th 2015)

L S Cousins, who died on 14 March this year, was a truly remarkable man.

He was born in Hertfordshire, in 1942, and grew up in Letchworth Garden City. As an undergraduate at Cambridge, he initially studied history, but part-way through the course changed to Oriental (Indian) Studies, studying Sanskrit with Professor Sir Harold Bailey, and Prakrit and Palit with K R Norman. After graduating, he went on to do research at the same University, reportedly into the commentary on the Saṅgīyutta Nikāya of the Pali Canon.

He did not complete a PhD at this point, since, with a young family to support, he needed a salaried post. In 1970 he was appointed Lecturer in Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester, where he taught Buddhism, Hinduism, comparative mysticism, Pali and Sanskrit. He remained there, first as a Lecturer and then as a Senior Lecturer, until 1993, when he took early retirement. Shortly afterwards he moved to Oxford, where he remained as active as ever, teaching Buddhism in the Faculty of Theology, and Pali and other Middle Indian languages in the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

Alongside his scholarly work, Lance was committed to the practice of Buddhism, and from the mid-60s was influential in bringing a Thai form of Samatha meditation to the UK and helping it to take root here. He was one of the founders of the Samatha Trust, and was much sought after as a meditation teacher. Though he was careful to keep his Buddhist faith and his academic teaching of Buddhism separate, his practice gave him insights into aspects of texts that had been missed by those approaching them from a purely intellectual point of view; while his scholarship ensured that Samatha practice remained rooted in genuine Theravādin traditions, and avoided the anti-intellectualism that tends to afflict British Buddhist discourse.

Lance served as President of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies and of the Pali Text Society. He published over 40 articles, on topics including studies of Pali, Middle Indian and Buddhist Sanskrit texts; the history of Buddhist schools; and Abhidhamma literature and thought. He was very modest about his own attainments, but they were valued in many countries, especially in the Buddhist world. In 2013 he was delighted finally to receive his doctorate, when he was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies by the Mahamakut Buddhist University, Bangkok.

Lance was a man of strongly expressed and sometimes reactionary opinions - though it was not always clear whether these reflected his actual beliefs, or were intended to challenge current received wisdom (but certainly, he always enjoyed a good argument). In one area, at least, he was ahead of his time: he realised very early the coming importance of computers and the ways in which they would revolutionise academic work in areas such as lexicography and the study of texts. In the 1980s he encouraged the Pali Text Society to invest in computers for use in its work.

He was always very supportive of his students, and gave generously of his time to colleagues, whether studying a text with them, answering endless email queries, or taking part in discussions on Buddhism and Indology Lists. He will be missed by many people throughout the world, and I believe in time will come to be recognised as one of the great scholars of Pali and Buddhism.

A collection of tributes, and links to websites about his work, can be found at <http://www.samatha.org/lance-cousins>

Valerie Roebuck

"the globalisation of society does not lead to the death of God... but the visage of the devil is becoming increasingly indistinct... The morally other is less easily negated as the outsider or interloper" (Peter Beyer 1994: 86)

