



Journal of Religion **bulletin**

British Association for the Study of Religions

137—November 2020

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WWW.BASR.AC.UK

ABOUT THE BASR

The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) was founded in 1954. It is a member association of the International Association for the History of Religions (founded 1950) and of the European Association for the Study of Religions (founded 2001). The object of BASR is to promote the academic study of religion/s, understood as the historical, social, theoretical, critical and comparative study of religion/s through the interdisciplinary collaboration of all scholars whose research is defined in this way. BASR is not a forum for confessional, apologetic, or similar concerns. BASR pursues its aims principally through an annual conference and general meeting, a regular Bulletin, and a Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions. Membership of BASR is open to all scholars normally resident in the United Kingdom.

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editorial

I don't remember ever being so aware of the passage of time. I feel both harried and rather aimless at the same time. You know the quote, "the days are long but the years are short"? Well, that's now.

It has been seven years and fourteen issues since I became co-editor of the BASR Bulletin. I was still a PhD student then. In that time, I've been able to reinvigorate it into a publication befitting one of the oldest societies for the academic study of religion in the world. As well as overhauling the design, I introduced some new features series - ReThinking, From Our Correspondent and a regular Teaching and Learning feature from the annual Fellow. The contributions from our conference Bursary awardees too have grown to include photography, artwork and articles. On an infrastructural level, moving to

a fully electronic publication has made production smoother and faster, saved the BASR around a thousand pounds a year and lowered our carbon footprint.

But I think I have reached the limits of what I am able to do with it. So the time has come to pass it to someone who can bring new energy and new eyes. Theo Wildcroft joins me in this issue, and I am showing her the ropes, as David Wilson did for me. She will be taking the lead with the next issue, and after that, I will bow out.

Thank you. It's been a privilege, for seven short years.

David G. Robertson
12/11/2020



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news, etc

Correspondence | Worldviews & Religious Studies

Following the BASR Conference's panel on the Worldviews approach to the study of religion, and the related Reports of Commission on Religious Education 2018, and the Theos Worldviews in Religious Education 2020, I thought it might interest colleagues to know something of the 'worldviews' trajectory within the syllabus of Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion, especially its compulsory and large first-year module on 'Religion'. This note is, also I suppose, something of a personal intellectual trajectory. Having known Andre Droogers a little over many years I was delighted to hear of his joint edited collection with Anton van Harskamp—*Methods for the Study of Religious Change: From Religious Studies to Worldview Studies* published in 2014. A hot-line contact with the publishers ensured that it was available, and it immediately went on the 2015-2016 reading list for the then named 'Introduction to the Study of Religion'. By the following year, 2016-17 the 'worldviews' concept was pinpointed in the opening lecture as the overarching concept for the module, the same happened in 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. However my thinking was rapidly evolving and plans were submitted for changing the name and syllabus content of that module: that was agreed, and the 2019-2020 Level 1 module appeared as Worldview, Faith, and Identity. Intrinsic to it was both a cluster of theoretical ideas concerning meaning-making, emotions, and identity theory, and—most significantly—a Worldviews Typology. This Typology was fully explained to the undergraduates as an experimental scheme, inviting them to analyse and question it as a way of studying 'religion' as well as secular, 'spiritual but not religious' and 'non-religion' and so on. The Droogers-Harskamp

book was, still, much highlighted with some chapters set as seminar reading. Feedback from students indicated that this approach helped them gain a perspective on the great diversity of materials inevitably involved in such an introductory module. The current 2020-2021 module Worldview-Faith-Identity is, largely, keeping to the theoretical and typological format of 2019-2020 even though my own thinking is, just now, developing it further. The students have, in effect, been provided with a kind of unpublished textbook on this module of some 55,000 words, with chapters directly linked to each lecture. They are encouraged to read only one chapter a week, so as not to overload themselves in this Covid19 year. I am, at the time of writing (October 14th) giving the lectures face to face under Durham University's rules of engagement, but all seminars are online with our Teaching Assistants.

Although it may be a slight hostage to fortune I thought it might be of interest to give the briefest of sketches of but one of the key theoretical drivers behind this meaning-making and emotions-grounded approach (others include ritual symbolism, mood and tonality, identity theory). The root 'formula' for the module starts with an approach I have already developed elsewhere, focussing on how, amidst the multitude of 'ideas' (doctrines, ideologies etc.) in the world, it sometimes happens that if and when an 'idea' is pervaded by an 'emotion' it becomes a 'value'; that if such a value helps constitute a person or group's sense of identity it becomes a 'belief', and if such a belief provides a frame of destiny it becomes a religious belief or a destiny-factor. This scheme allows for ordinary levels of 'values', and for the 'spiritual but not religious' (identity but not destiny linked), for sec-

ularization (where destiny factor is depleted), and for conservative and fundamentalism turns (where destiny factor is intensified). It also brings the notion of destiny into play, something often absent in religious studies grammar of discourse now that 'salvation' is also less frequent in use,

As for the typology, it currently consist in this sevenfold form; each a 'worldview'. 1 - Natural (including environmentalism, old and new animism, Shinto and others). 2 - Ancestral. 3 - Karmic. 4 - Prophetic-sectarian. 5 - Mystical. 6 - Ideological (Including Marxism, Sex-Gender, and others). 7 - Ludic (including Sport, Theatre, Gaming. Other issues include, for example, conspiracy theories.

One final point concerns provenance and distribution of this perspective, at least from my personal intellectual outlook. Provenance-wise it goes back to my *Meaning and Salvation in Religious Studies* (1984), and 'spread' includes the worldview direction cited as underlying my *Mors Britannica: Lifestyle and Death-style in Britain Today* (2015), where the 'style' approach echoes a worldview perspective. I mention this since some religious studies scholars may not, perhaps, venture too far into 'death' issues! But, the 'death factor' is also of the essence as far as a typology of worldviews is concerned. Let me leave you with these pinpointed issues as our general discussions on worldview-religious studies continues to develop. I'd be delighted to get any feedback on these thoughts.

Douglas Davies

UPDATE ON INFORM

The next Inform Online Seminar will take place on Thursday 14th January 2021, 17.30-19.30 GMT. The theme is "Becoming religious: How and why beliefs and practices are transmitted".

This seminar will explore the motivations of minority religions and spiritual seekers to transmit and learn, and the processes they employ. As ever, speakers will include academics and members and former members of minority religions.

The Summer Seminar, Sexual Abuse Framed by Faith or Belief, is now available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/5itTMZadh0c>

Inform staff have also filmed a series of interviews with academics on issues relating to health and healing and ideas of immortality. These can be seen at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWrL53MHFxZQ1ac2iHKhrrg>

and on our website: <https://inform.ac/Inform-Ayuryog>

Staff have written a number of fact sheets for the Religion Media Centre and are in the process of updating the 16 Inform leaflets on individual minority religions and themes.

Please consider supporting Inform by becoming a Friend of Inform, through a regular subscription, or by making an anonymous donation at <https://inform.ac/donationstoinform>.

You can also donate through Amazon Smile by nominating us as your beneficiary charity—Amazon will give us 0.5% of every purchase.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

News Items	Up to 150 words
Conference Reports	500-1500 words
Conference Announcements	Not more than a single page
Book Reviews	700-1000 words
Features	Around 1000 words
Members' Recent Publications	Maximum 5 items

PLEASE SEND MATERIAL FOR INCLUSION TO david.robertson@open.ac.uk
DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER 2020 ISSUE IS **31 APRIL 2021**

Call For Papers | BASR Annual Conference 2021

6-8 September, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh

“From Religious Studies to the Study of Religion/s: Disciplinary Futures for the 21st century”

We warmly invite contributions to the BASR annual conference 2021. The 2021 conference falls in the 175th anniversary year of the foundation of New College, home of the School of Divinity, and marks the 50th anniversary of the teaching of Religious Studies at Edinburgh. The conference is also designated a IAHR Special Conference and we look forward to welcoming international colleagues.

The aim of the conference is to discuss disciplinary and interdisciplinary pasts and futures in Religious Studies or the Study of Religion/s, with a particular focus on the future shape of the field in the 21st Century. After a period of sharp critique of many of the field's basic categories and axioms, it feels timely now to reflect upon what the field has positively achieved, the challenges it has faced (and overcome), and the direction(s) it should now pursue.

The scope of the conference is the post-1960s period up to and including the present moment, during which Religious Studies emerged, consolidated and diversified as a recognised disciplinary field or 'brand'. Local and regional histories of the field during this period are welcome, particularly where they identify problems or strengths for the future, or can illuminate regional or international developments. We are particularly interested in exploring the grounds for positive disciplinary futures for the field, based on concrete research and teaching methodologies. Questions to consider include: What intellectual benefits does the Study of Religion/s bring to academic research in colleges and universities? What are its particular strengths in teaching, what pedagogical contributions does it make to secondary school and adult education, and how might its curriculae be improved? What kinds of impact does the field have in wider society, and in what ways should its impact be developed? Who are the different audiences for the Study of Religion/s, and how can we engage new audiences whilst fostering existing strengths?

We are delighted to announce that keynote papers will be presented by Professor Emeritus James Cox, University of Edinburgh, and Professor Wanda Alberts, Leibniz University Hannover.

We particularly welcome proposals for themed panels of 3 or 4 (max) lasting 1.5 hours. Individual paper proposals are also welcome. Abstracts for papers should be no longer than 200 words and carry a title plus author's name and institutional affiliation. Panel proposals should also include a 200 word abstract for the panel as a whole, and should identify a panel chair as the point of contact. All papers should last no more than 20 minutes with Q&A time to follow.

We encourage proposals to address these broad themes as far as possible, but we will also make room for presentation of BASR members' research on alternative topics.

All papers should contribute to the remit of the BASR as a member organisation of the International Association for the History of Religions: specifically, to advance research and education through the academic study of religions by providing a forum for the non-confessional, critical, analytical and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present.

Please submit proposals via email attachment by 5pm March 15 2021 to Dr Claire Wanless
Claire.Wanless@ed.ac.uk

Proposals will be considered by the conference committee - Dr Steven Sutcliffe, Dr Claire Wanless and Dr Chris Cotter, in consultation with the BASR Executive Committee. Outcomes will be communicated in early April. Further details of conference arrangements, including information on BASR Early Career Scholarships, will follow in early 2021.

BASR Annual General Meeting – 14.00-16.00 - 07/09/20

The Open University (via Zoom)

British Association for the Study of Religions
Registered Charity Number 801567
(Affiliated to the IAHR and EASR)

Welcome (Bettina Schmidt). BS welcomed everyone, outlining original plans to meet in Milton Keynes, but due to Covid we have had to go online. The two excellent panels this morning have shown how successful this has been, as it is vital to continue to discuss the place of the study of Religion in Universities and schools. BS confirmed quoracy—DR asked virtual attendees to note their attendance for the record in the Q&A boxes. BS noted to audience that they can also ask questions this way.

Apologies (Stephen Gregg). Steve Sutcliffe, Ursula King & Marion Bowman.

Minutes of the previous AGM (Stephen Gregg). BS confirmed minutes were published in Nov 2019 edition of bulletin. Asked for corrections or comments. None, so accepted as accurate record of meeting.

Matters arising (Stephen Gregg). None that are not covered by today's agenda.

Presidential Address (Bettina Schmidt). BS sad not to be with everyone in person, but keen to keep everyone up to date with activities behind the scenes. BS noted it has been a difficult year, amplified by lockdown—not just closure due to lockdown, but threats to the subject and departments across our discipline and sector. BS noted we had lost colleagues in the last 12 months, and noted fear of impact in the coming years—recently, redundancies and course closures have been at the fore. When the BA report came out last year, it was focused upon Theology, but now the problems are wide-spread across the whole of Humanities. We have written to support departments under threat, and seek the continued support of members as, unfortunately, this will happen again in the future. BS noted the support we have from the EASR and IAHR. A positive aspect of this international support is that the next BASR conference has been awarded special IAHR conference status. The cancellation of the IAHR this year meant that the publishers stands went online for a virtual book fayre, so please attend that to get good deals. The Women's Scholars Network also planned to hold a major event in NZ, but when that was cancelled, online webinars will be held to celebrate the importance of our foremothers in the history of the Study of Religion. BS will advertise these in due course on the mailing list. The recent IAHR election saw Tim Jensen stays on as President and a new body of committee members, including James Kapalo—our colleague from the IAASR who has been elected. When BASR went online, there was the postponement of a celebration for Peggy Morgan's 80th birthday and in honour of her contribution to the BASR over many years. This will now be celebrated in Edinburgh 2021. BS noted her personal thanks to PM, who played a large part in welcoming BS into the BASR fold and encouraging her to become involved. Struggles lay ahead, but BS is confident that we can ensure that our discipline is heard beyond our institutions.

Secretary's Report (Stephen Gregg). SG started by thanking BS & DR for covering secretary admin duties whilst he had been away on a short research sabbatical. He noted the impact of lockdown on the sector, and our membership—particularly those in small and vulnerable departments or institutions. SG reported on his attendance at the TRS-UK AGM, noting the need for a strong voice for RS in our collaborative work. SG encouraged BASR members to stand for the upcoming secretary va-

cancy at TRS-UK, and asked for any suggestions for BAME RS graduates who may wish to appear in employability videos. SG noted that the committee had promised £500 of support to Michael Dudek (2019 Bursary Recipient) for an art installation at the Edinburgh conference, with the hope of attracting local media and to use the images in future BASR literature and campaigns. SG noted thanks to Moojan Moomen for volunteering to attend London meetings if the Exec cannot travel. SG noted that archival project to update Bodleian collection has paused due to lockdown. SG responded to IAHR questionnaire on future online conferences, relating member responses received, and finished by stating that all IAHR costs had been recouped, and that he had voted in IAHR elections as one of the two BASR nominees, along with BS.

Treasurer's Report (Chris Cotter). CC shared accounts summary on screen. Noted usual anomaly of two insurance payments in alternate years. Response to BA report included one-off cost of data purchase. Income was £4,786 and expenditure £9,069. Balance of £19,026 at year end. The conference at LTU was profitable. 179 paying members (down 16 from last year, but 15 new members have joined). The IAHR being cancelled actually saved us a lot of money (nearly £7,000) although that would all have been 'normal' for the quinquennial year costs. CC noted he is currently completing a Gift Aid return, which will appear in next year's accounts. CC reminded members that we have funds to help with day conferences and encouraged members to get in touch with the committee. Our financial position continues to be healthy, but we should be conservative in the next year or so to ensure this continues. CC noted that committee always welcomes comments and questions on spending plans, and applications for support. BS reiterated committee's keenness to support day conferences.

Teaching and Learning (Stefanie Sinclair). SS noted T&L Fellow has been in place since 2017. SS confirmed Mel Prideaux from Leeds as this year's recipient. SS welcomed MP, highlighting her work with the Community Religions Project at Leeds, which has led on the active engagement of students as researchers and fieldworkers. MP noted her thanks, and desire to contribute to the discussion with the BASR in the next year and beyond. SS noted committee's decision to continue support of Fellowship noting that committee are keen to receive nominations from less established scholars, where we will judge impact and innovation not just experience or seniority. Full details will be in the May bulletin. SS thanked DLI and MP for their help in organising the T&L panel this morning—SS confirmed the committee's commitment to the continuing focus on T&L, including noting a special issue of JBASR on T&L. BS noted her congratulations to MP on her Fellowship.

JBASR Co-ordinating Editor's Report (Suzanne Owen). SO reiterated that JBASR has led as an online, open access journal far ahead of the sector move to that format. The edition based on last year's conference is near completion—final stages of review and proofing, and aiming for Nov 2020 publishing date. Next issue will focus on T&L as it is some years since Stephen Gregg & Dominic Corrywright's previous special edition and the landscape has shifted considerably. SO noted reflective and discussion pieces are welcome as well as full articles. SO announced that Jonathan O'Donnell will assist her on future issues of JBASR as editorial assistant. SO will advertise call for material. BS welcomed JO'D.

Bulletin Editor's Report (David Robertson). DR confirmed we will also be bringing in Theo Wildcroft as assistant editor on the next issue with the plan to co-edit by the May edition. Always looking for contributions, so please do send in. Success of bulletin depends on vitality of membership. Update is short, as reorganisation of last few years (especially move online) has made process much easier and streamlined. DR noted that, as there are no photos of the conference, please take a photo of your desk, and we can share those—just a bit of fun to show life as an academic in lockdown.

Website and Social Media (Angela Puca). BS noted that Vivian Asimos had stepped down, but that Angela Puca had taken up the role to great effect already, especially helping to update the website and help post for the conference on social media. BS thanked VA and welcomed AP to the role.

Religious Studies Project (David Robertson / Chris Cotter). CC noted RSP gratitude to BASR as founding sponsors of RSP. A year ago, DR & CC stepped back from daily editing to become charity Trustees. The new editors have done a marvellous job, bringing a wealth of experience and drive. CC urged members to go to the RSP website to see the changes and updates, including revitalisation of older parts of the archive and the creation of playlists. Major drive now is for commissioned content and greater diversity of contributors; hopefully this is now easier that people are more comfortable with virtual conversations and the use of technology. CC reminded members that donations are accepted to the charity to continue the aims of the RSP, and also noted that the 'Discourse' feature has moved from behind a paywall into the free section, in the hope that it will raise the voice of RS. The one millionth download is due in the next few weeks. BS congratulated CC & DR on their achievements.

BASR Response to HEA TRS Report (David Robertson). DR noted lockdown had impacted, as with all projects, but a final draft has been shared in the last week with the committee and several BASR members who had specific areas of relevant expertise. DR asked if any members present had particular expertise in changes in AHRC funding post 2008 and after reorganisation in 2012, as more data required to back up that section of the report. Whilst it had been hard work, DR noted it had been a privilege to work on it—it is exactly the sort of project the BASR should be doing in its remit as a charity and lobbying group for our discipline at this troublesome time, hopefully helping members fight any cuts or attacks on departments and our wider discipline.

BASR Conference 2021 (Bettina Schmidt). BS confirmed Edinburgh as a BASR and special IAHR conference. Theme to be 'From Religious Studies to the Study of Religions: Disciplinary Futures for the C21st' from 6th-8th September 2021 at New College, which is the 50th anniversary of RS at Ed and 175th anniversary of New College, home to the School of Divinity. Steve Sutcliffe will be the local coordinator, and CC will be the BASR committee local Rep. BS noted CC's history project will also report at the conference—so lots to celebrate. BASR is planning for conference in person. BS also asked members who are interested in hosting 2022 or 2023 to contact SG. BS noted that EASR previously announced dates for 2021 that clashed with Edinburgh but, after a prompt, they kindly moved the dates so that there is no clash. BS confirmed BASR 2021 keynotes as Jim Cox and Wanda Alberts.

Nomination of President Elect (Bettina Schmidt). BS confirmed nomination of Stephen E. Gregg as President-Elect 2020-21 and President 2021-24, nominated by Prof. G. Harvey and Prof. B Schmidt. Supported by the membership and elected.

Any Other Business (Bettina Schmidt). None.

Date, time and location of next AGM (Stephen Gregg). Tuesday 7th September 2021, Edinburgh.

BASR TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 15th AUGUST 2020

Dr C.R. Cotter, BASR Honorary Treasurer, Open University [online], 7th September 2020

1. General income for the year was £4,786. This is significantly lower than last year (£7,085) but much more in line with preceding years—2017/18 (£5,864) and 2016/17 (£5,604). It is still lower, and that is explained by a slight drop in subscriptions, and a profit-share with ISASR (for Belfast 2018 conference) and a profitable (but less so) conference at LTU in 2019.

2. Subscriptions: Slight decrease of £149 due to a rise in defaulting payments. Quite a few of those defaulting are active members so this should be easily rectified. We currently have 179 paying members (down 16 from last year) and 13 life members. 15 new members joined in the past year.

3. General expenditure for the year: £9,069, an increase of £3,314 on last year. However, in comparison with previous years, this was typical. The increase in one-off expenditure is explained by our BA report project, and two insurance payments falling within the same accounting period.

4. Committee expenses are £199 lower than last year at £1,614. Another typical year, with savings being made due to the President combining our January committee meeting with External Examining duties.

5. Insurance remains in place, with 2019/20 and 2020/21 paid during this accounting period.

6. The BASR continued to sponsor the Religious Studies Project at £500 per year.

7. Our subscription payments to the EASR and IAHR are down slightly (by £33 combined) due to our slight decrease in membership numbers.

8. Expenditure on the website and journal is significantly lower than last year (where extensive work had been undertaken) and represents a more typical baseline.

9. 2019 conference at Leeds Trinity University was a financial success, with a surplus of £567.

10. £540 was paid to Dr J. Tuckett for research work conducted in the production of our response to the infamous BA report. £3007.20 was paid to HESA for access to the full dataset. This was higher than we expected, but the executive committee decided that it was necessary to produce a full response, and a justifiable expense given our financial health. It was also within the £3-4000 range we had indicated at last year's AGM as the full costs for the project.

11. Due to the IAHR being cancelled, we 'saved' quite a bit of money. This includes the 4x£500 bursaries we awarded for BASR members to attend, and about £4700 to cover the costs of sending the President and Secretary. Our finances would be significantly more precarious if we had taken this £6700 "hit". The Treasurer will focus this year on reclaiming defaulted membership payments, completing the long-promised Gift Aid return (which has now started) and perhaps rationalizing some of our other expenditure.

12. BASR members are reminded that they are encouraged to contact the committee if they would like small amounts of financial support for events. At present these will be handled on a case-by-case basis and judged against the BASR's constitutional aims. If the volume of applications increases significantly, we will need to develop a policy on such support.

13. Bank Accounts: As of August 15th, Bank Accounts totalled £19,026, a decrease of £4,283. This decrease is largely explained by points 3 and 10 above.

14. Summary of Financial Position: Overall, the finances of the BASR are still good with adequate reserves, but we may need to be more conservative in the coming years. Our healthy bank balance has allowed the BASR to continue investment in postgraduate bursaries, collaborative research, inter-association networking, the production of a response to the BA report, and to maintain the teaching fellowship, history project, website and branding. We always welcome comment on spending decisions, as well as suggestions/applications from members for the future allocation of funds in keeping with the BASR's constitutional aims.

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS
ACCOUNTS as at 15 AUGUST 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2019-20	2018-19		<i>Notes</i>	2019-20	2018-19
Balance at 16 August 2019		23309	21979				
RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS			
Subscriptions	<i>i</i>	4152	4301	Printing & Postage Bulletin		-121	0
Bank Interest		23	25	RSP		-500	-500
				Committee Expenses		-1614	-1815
				Society Subs		-789	-822
				BA Report	<i>ii</i>	-3547	0
				Insurance	<i>iii</i>	-811	-405
				Journal		0	-251
				Bank Charges	<i>iv</i>	-22	0
				Teaching Fellowship	<i>v</i>	-584	-300
				Website		-109	-785
				Birmingham Conference		0	-500
2019 Conference Receipts		277	390	2019 Conference Expenses		-100	0
2018 Conference Receipts		334	711	2018 Conference Expenses	<i>vi</i>	-872	-375
2017 Conference Receipts			1658	2017 Conference Expenses			0
Total		4786	7085	Total		-9069	-5755
Balance at 15 August 2019		19026	23309				

BALANCE SHEET as at 15 August 2019

Cash Funds: Bank Accounts

Lloyds Current	7199	1984
CAF Gold	10970	19947
PayPal	832	1353
Petty Cash	25	25
Total	19026	23309

FINANCIAL SUMMARY UP TO 15 AUGUST 2019

	23309		667
Balance as at 16th August 2019		Conference 2019	
Total Receipts	4786	Total Receipts	667
Total Payments	-9069	Total Payments	-100
Net Receipts/Payments	<i>vii</i> -4283		
Balance as at 15th August 2020	19026	Deficit/Surplus	567

NOTES TO ACCOUNTS

- i* Another slight drop-off in membership.
- ii* Getting data from HESA proved much more expensive than initially thought (£3007)
- iii* 2019/20 and 2020/21 paid in this accounting period
- iv* Treasurer error led to a bounced cheque and unauthorized overdraft.
- v* £300 + conference fee.
- vi* As noted in last year's accounts, this year's expenditure includes £872 sent to ISASR as their share of the profits. £960 was 'spent' on bursaries, meaning that the BASR 'profit' for 2018 conference was £1140.
- vii* This was a fairly typical year, with the high deficit explained by planned additional expenditure on BA Report, and two insurance payments falling within the accounting period.

features

Re-Imagining the RS/RE Curriculum: Reduction without Reductionism

David Lewin
**Senior Lecturer in Philosophy of
Education, University of Strathclyde**

The relations and intersections between religious studies research, education studies research, and subject representation of Religious Studies in universities and Religious Education in schools are multifaceted. Readers of this bulletin will be familiar with the ongoing efforts to de/re-construct the discipline of Religious Studies within universities with, for instance, Cotter and Robertson's edited collection (2016). This excellent and timely collection is notable because of the focus on different pedagogical approaches in Higher Education. Pedagogies of RS in HE are seldom treated systematically and although the discussion of pedagogy is refreshingly direct and engaging in this book, it is not (I hope they won't mind me saying) quite systematic. This is hardly surprising given that "the field of didactics [pedagogy] has been neglected in the study of religions in many countries for a long time" (Alberts 2007, 2). Looking more broadly, it has been persuasively argued that systematic pedagogy in the tradition from which Wanda Alberts comes (Germany) does not have a direct equivalent in Anglo American educational theory (Westbury, Hopmann, and Riquarts 2014). So it is little wonder that pedagogies of RS are not given a firm foundation within a general educational theory. Despite widespread discussion of pedagogies of school-based Religious Education, much the same could be said of RE in schools.

But do we really need a 'systematic pedagogy' for RS or RE? Don't we learn most from the experiences of teaching than from theoretical reflections? I concede that for those of us that teach in universities or schools, our relation to educational theory is often ambivalent. Early career lecturers are encouraged, sometimes coerced, to engage in pedagogical reflections as they embark on academic careers at university with mixed results. Similarly, it is commonplace for students on teacher education programmes to express some impatience with theoretical analysis of education, asserting that school placements provide the most relevant educational experience. The primary dignity of practice indicates that the value of educational theory cannot be assumed, a point not lost on the founding figures of systematic pedagogy, Johann Herbart and Friedrich Schleiermacher. But theoretical reflection on educational practice is valuable where we are otherwise prone to repeat the habits encountered in our meandering experiences. Persuading the reader of the value of educational theory might take more space than I have in this short piece, though allow me to fly the flag for a few innovative theoretical discussions from educational philosophy and theory that could assist educators of RS/E within universities and schools to reflect on what they do and how they do it. I will briefly discuss three interrelated concepts of particular relevance:

grammatization, pedagogical reduction, and the example.

The concept of grammatization describes the processes by which the flux and complexity of space, time, the world and its contents becomes organised, named and defined so as to become educational subject matter. Music, for instance, can be listened to and enjoyed; it can also be studied where the notes and intervals are interpreted and understood: “we make something that cannot be studied as such (e.g. the performed music) into a pedagogical object (e.g. the music score, the sounds of individual instruments)” (Vlieghe and Zamojski 2019, 138). This scholastic operation entails the formation of a relation—a kind of distanciation—between the student and the thing. Different metaphors express the process of ‘making school’; of transforming the thing into an object for study and education, a popular metaphor being to place something on the table around which students are gathered (Masschelein and Simons 2013). Vlieghe and Zamojski (2019) illustrate the encoding of the continuous (e.g. music) into the discrete (e.g. notes and intervals) in their discussion of the music pedagogy of the American composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein. In the case of the ‘subject matter’ of religion, the encoding, or grammatization, of certain beliefs, practices and performances to make them sufficiently alien that they become subject matter, is worthy of attention. Müller’s oft-quoted dictum comes to mind “He who knows one [religion], knows none.” Through the distanciation or alienation brought about by grammatization, something is put on the table as a pedagogical object. The concept of grammatization is closely related the second concept I will discuss: pedagogical (didactic) reduction.

Ever since Johan Comenius’s hugely influential general picture/textbook for children *Orbis Pictus* published in 1658, the idea of presenting an account of the whole world through selection and simplification, often through a combination of text and image, has been fundamental to the development of education. As the complexity of culture increases, and the very idea of encompassing all knowledge into a single system is abandoned, two forces increasingly come into operation: extending the time needed to spend at school (now we all need a higher degree); compressing the curriculum so that we do more with less. The concept of pedagogical reduction theorises the activities designed to focus the attention of students on a particular pedagogical object (Lewin 2019). The textbook is the... er... textbook form of the pedagogical reduction, since it is designed to select, simplify and engage. The pedagogical representations in textbooks can be neatly

summarized in the following terms: knowledge is stable, not provisional or contested; exceptions and contradictions are avoided; elements are presented in discrete parts or units; the presentation itself is often attractive or entertaining in some way. Of course, contemporary scholars of religion are at pains to point out the problems with precisely this kind of textbook presentation of religion/s, arguing that religious traditions are precisely not discrete, stable, homogenous entities. Since we must use pedagogical reductions, a robust theory can help us to define criteria by which such reductions are best developed and deployed. It is vital that such theory take account of a wide-range of critical voices: feminist, post-colonial, anti-racist, queer and other voices must be engaged in developing criteria towards inclusive pedagogical representations and reductions. But how do we square this circle: how can be represent all while being selective? Whose voices will be marginalized?

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Criteria for selection are determined partly by educational intentions: what should the students learn? Some educators might wish to complicate the assumption that students need to acquire a breadth of knowledge in all the 'world religions', preferring to focus less on breadth of content than on process. In other words, we can move away from conceiving inclusion in terms of scope. Here studying religions can be fundamentally reflective, concerned with the development of something like historical consciousness (the awareness that my own historical circumstances are the product of considerable contingency). Learning about religions then becomes a mode of self-inquiry intended to alienate the self from its own self-assured historical (and religious) conditions. For instance, we could refer to the notion of encountering the self through alienation of the self (von Humboldt's notion of *bildung*). I am tempted to agree with Jonathan Z. Smith where he states that self-consciousness constitutes the foremost object of study for the student of religion (Smith 1988, xi), as long as the other is not thereby negated by being absorbed as a facet of the self; this should not be allowed to become 'all about me'.

A related dimension of pedagogical reduction that Smith and many other scholars of religion discuss is the concept of the exemplary: what are examples? what are they for and of? The concept of the exemplary is of huge significance to educational theory and careful analysis is well-rewarded though for reasons of space I will reference just one dimension: the entry point (Einstieg). Wagenschein (2015) suggests that the initial entry point into a subject ought not to be just a simple element onto which more knowledge can be piled, but something like an aperture, a perspective which can mirror the whole. Korsgaard (2017, 165) offers the following summary: "we do not need to begin at the bottom of the 'knowledge pyramid' and work our way to the top. Rather, we should begin at what may be a complex problem or object that can challenge the student's spontaneity, regardless of their prior knowledge about the subject. It is about gripping and maintaining the student's attention, rather than beginning a process of knowledge accumulation."

The temptation to aspire to an all-encompassing RS/E curriculum, one that is fully inclusive of the complex and multifaceted traditions and cultures that form our political and social communities, is hard to resist. But teachers can be exhausted by the relentless responsibilities that follow. In this short article I have suggested some possible avenues for reflection as something of an entry point into the wider discussions of how we can develop and deploy pedagogical reductions without being reductionist. Readers may be interested to know that I am developing a larger project of initially theoretical research that brings together expertise in RS, RE and Education Studies, to develop a theory of pedagogical reduction within RS/E. If this resonates with your interests, please get in touch (david.lewin@strath.ac.uk). Project website: <https://www.exet.org/religion-and-reduction>

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conferences

BASR 2020 | THE OPEN UNIVERSITY (ONLINE), 7th SEPT 2020

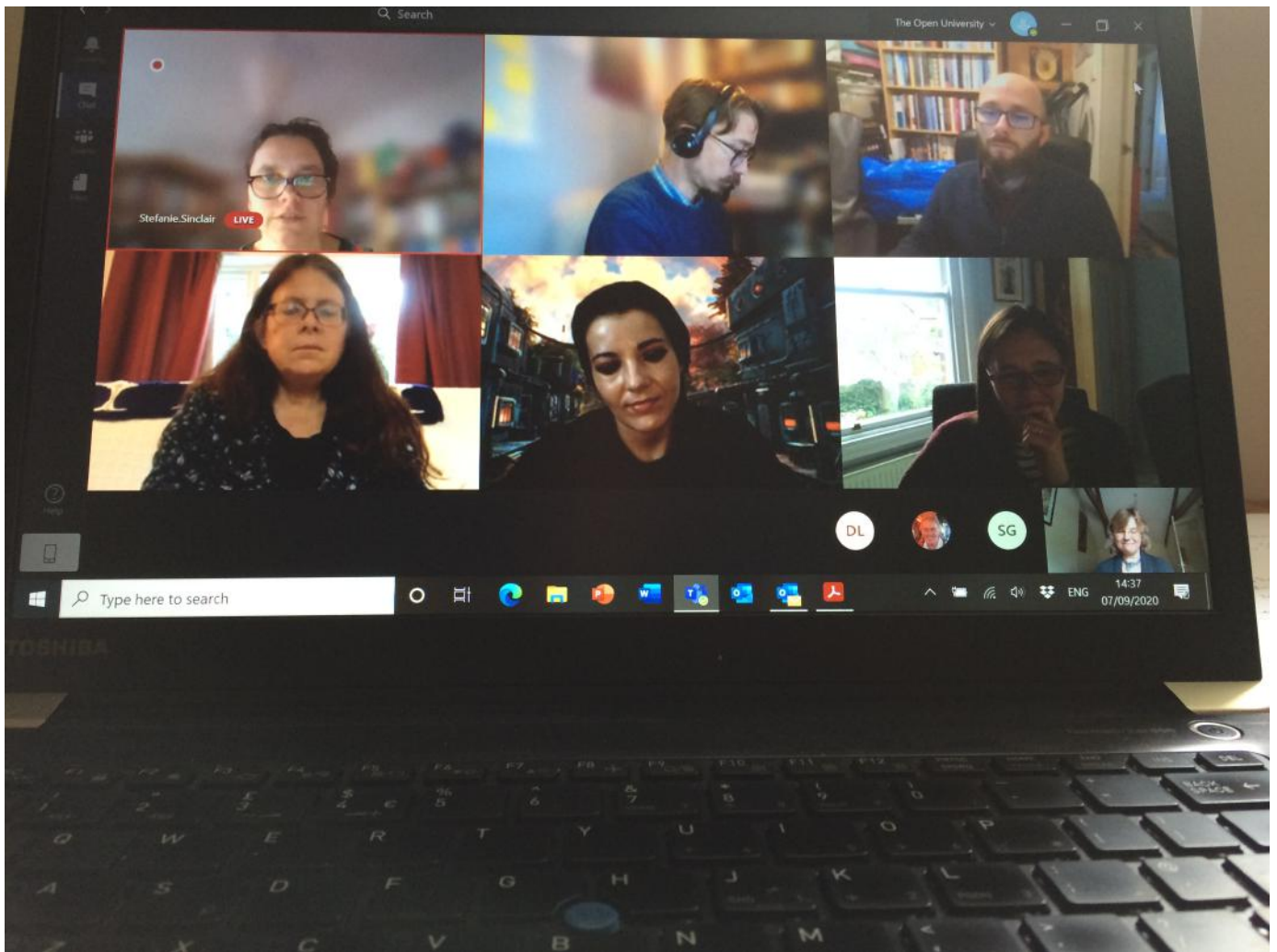
The annual conference of the BASR was a bit different this year for some reason (something to do with the US election perhaps...). A day conference was held online on the 7th of September thanks to the technical know-how of the Open University. It consisted of two panels: the morning panel on Teaching and Learning, chaired by Stefanie Sinclair (Open University) and Dawn Llewelyn (Chester), and Worldviews in Religious Education in the afternoon chaired by Wendy Dossett (Chester). As always, the proceedings of the conference were followed by the society's AGM and by much-needed social time.

The Teaching and Learning panel opened with a paper co-presented by Mel Prideaux, lecturer in the study of religion at Leeds, and Natasha Jones, a third-year undergraduate student at the same institution. The paper argued that undergraduate students should be encouraged to get their teeth into the issues of research ethics early, as a vital part of developing the next generation of researchers in our field. As she rightly remarked, undergraduate students are all too often ignored or treated as an after-thought in these discussions (relevant only in relation to final year dissertations or field work). Prideaux linked the need to expose students to research ethics to the turn towards lived religion and away from the conception of religions as bodies of doctrines, anticipating the debates in the next panel about the long shadow of the world religions paradigm rather well. This point was encapsulated by the quote from Gregg and Schofield 2015 that "religion isn't lived in a textbook." Undergraduate dissertations, placements and trips after all often depend on relationships

with specific local communities and encounters with the practice of religion in the local environment can be exceptionally formative for undergraduate students. Prideaux also highlighted how assigning students to discuss existing research ethics frameworks such as those recently released by the BASR, can help to cultivate critical thinking by encouraging them to draw out the assumptions and practical applications of these texts. It can also make them aware of the study of religion as an active community of practice rather than a passive process of reception of knowledge.

Natasha Jones spoke about her role as the project intern working with the department to develop a web resource on teaching and learning research ethics for students at Leeds. Part of her task in this project was evaluating the relevance of the BASR guidelines to construct the web resource and then make use of student focus groups to assess their needs. Jones found some room for improvement in the society's guidance in that it was unsurprisingly orientated towards professional academics and postgraduate researchers. Nonetheless, she was able to make use of the guidelines as a template and tailor it to undergraduate needs. It was very valuable and refreshing to hear from an undergraduate student on these issues and Jones presented this material capably and professionally.

The second part of the panel was taken up by a discussion of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on teaching and learning. Attendees had been asked to submit a word or phrase which encapsulated teaching during the current crisis for them, which was displayed as a Covid-19 word cloud which served as a useful discussion point.



As one would expect, the word 'anxiety' was prominent along with 'tech fails', 'cortisol' but on a more positive note terms like 'opportunity' made an appearance. My personal favourite by far though was 'institutional agenda'.

Participants in the discussion highlighted many pertinent issues such as student camera shyness, lack of engagement or attendance, privacy issues, the pros and cons of recording class-time, how chat boxes might negatively impact students with learning difficulties, the difficulty of staff to 'read the room' online and the loss of face to face social time. The common assumption that students were completely technically proficient and would prefer to learn online has been confirmed to be a largely false one (not news to many of us). Clearly, this has had a big impact on all forms of student research but especially those later in their studies while assessments have largely been cancelled for first years. Participants shared advice on how best to

teach in these circumstances which boiled down largely to: keep it simple, give students the space to informally socialise on their own and be aware of how much they might be intimidated by interacting directly with lecturers. The use of anonymous polls to gauge problems was a useful suggestion by Stefanie Sinclair because otherwise students may not speak up.

The second panel, chaired by Wendy Dossett (Chester), discussed a recent report by the Commission on Religious Education which offered some promising suggestions which could help to bring Religious Education in England and Wales closer to academic Religious Studies (the commission does not relate to Scotland or Northern Ireland). The 2018 report was based on two years of consultation involving scholars of religion including many of the contributors to the panel. During her opening remarks on the report, Dossett invoked J.Z. Smith's maxim that writing the syllabus is the

most important writing that a scholar engages in. She hailed the report as a clear step in the right direction with its acknowledgement of the vast plurality of 'worldviews' (problems with that terminology notwithstanding) outside and alongside the 'big six' and the World Religions approach common in the subject, and the stipulation that children are entitled to "balanced and critical studies of religions". All contributors to the panel acknowledged that this was quite a bold step for school-level Religious Education (and that RE has needs distinct from university-level RS), that the report held promise but there were many aspects requiring critique.

Suzanne Owen (Leeds Trinity) voiced her initial scepticism about the shift to worldviews as merely a kind of rebranding of religion and a potential privileging of belief or cognitive elements of religious traditions over other significant factors. As a long-time critic of the world religions paradigm, she pointed to the influence of Ninian Smart on the current RE curriculum who also tended to use 'religion' and 'worldviews' somewhat interchangeably (while acknowledging the work that the world religions approach did include non-Christian religions in the subject). Nonetheless, the focus on worldviews may allow students to grasp that people derive meaning from a variety of sources some generally labelled 'non-religious' or 'secular' such as ethical veganism. She pointed to the participation of several scholars of non-religion as a beneficial influence on this process.

Academic scholars of religion can at times gloss over the practical needs and the fraught politics of RE. Just as the previous panel benefited from an undergraduate voice on undergraduate issues, this panel benefited from the contribution of someone involved in the high-level administration of Religious Education—Rudi Elliott Lockhart, former CEO of the RE Council of England and Wales. The conference organisers should be particularly praised for extending its gaze beyond the ivory tower. Lockhart demonstrated thorough engagement with academic critiques of the subject and the report itself, balanced with a realistic assessment of how RE could be brought closer to academic RS.

The report does certainly seem quite sincere in

its desire to move away from a 'silo' approach to religious traditions, its desire to include non-religious worldviews and to embrace a more lived religions approach which recognises internal diversity distinct from institutional or mainstream 'answers to the big questions'. As Owen mentioned, the report does acknowledge non-religious worldviews but also recognises the differing degrees to which worldviews may be coherent or incoherent and differing extent to which they may be held consciously or unconsciously. In my view what was perhaps most radical is the contention that all people will hold multiple worldviews and that both 'religious' and 'non-religious' persons will frequently draw from both 'religious' and 'non-religious' worldviews despite the inculcation of the dichotomy.

A crucial distinction between personal and institutional worldviews was also introduced which does much of the work in substantiating this new paradigm, as well bridging the old and new approaches.

This distinction was perhaps useful in assuaging the concerns of some of the religious communities involved that institutional doctrines will still be taught but now with a conscious awareness of the potential distinctiveness of personal worldviews which may or may not draw on several institutional worldviews. The appreciation of the importance of socio-cultural context, media, lived experiences and historical events in shaping the personal worldviews of even the most orthodox was laudable. The report also leaves room to explore the connections or intersections between religion/non-religion and other factors such as gender, sexuality, nationality and ethnicity. The fact that religion (and non-religion) is at least implied to be of only relative and situational importance rather than overwhelmingly important all of the time does appear to be a fairly radical step, even if it is only a single step so far.

Paul-François Tremlett (Open University) offered a critical close reading of the report which drew attention to some of its blind-spots. The concept of 'worldview' which the report is based on was dependent on what was not fully fleshed out in his view, nor was what counts as a worldview made especially clear. Tremlett drew attention to the irony that in spite of its ambiguities, the re-

port engages in some questionable boundary policing. Confucianism is named both as a religion and as a non-religious worldview which can be studied alongside humanism and existentialism. However, the report categorically stated that certain phenomena were not appropriate for study including capitalism, communism and nationalism. As Tremlett argues this rather obscures the influence of capitalism on the context in which contemporary worldviews are encountered and constructed, namely a model of personal choice between nominally equal worldviews based on rational consideration. While Tremlett praised the report as the potential basis for a more fluid, 'Deleuzian RS', the fact that its own boundary making and assumptions about religion are placed beyond scrutiny serve to undermine its overall point.

In a somewhat similar vein, Malory Nye (affiliated with the University of Glasgow) highlighted the lack of discussion of race, racism and colonial history in the report. This is in spite of the deep ties between religion-making and colonial history and the frequent racialisation of religions in the contemporary UK. Nye uses this report as an example of the much more pervasive race blindness and presumed 'racial innocence' of the study of religion (though he touched on the isolated counter-examples of teaching about the Holocaust, antisemitism and Islamophobia as pervasive prejudices). Both RS and RE are frequently presented as a remedy for prejudice through 'religious literacy', which he identified as an under-theorised term in itself, but which all too often reproduces the concept of racism as an individual problem rather than a systemic and endemic issue in the UK. Nye acknowledged that there is no easy solution to these issues but argued that much more serious consideration needs to be given to what needs to be taught and how, whether that includes or prioritises religion or not. Whatever form these changes does take, tackling the questions of race, racism and colonialism openly would be necessary to establish an anti-racist education system.

The discussion which followed the panel highlighted the concern that this may end up as an elongation of the world religions paradigm which could be exacerbated by the fact that few practical suggestions have been given for how to im-

plement these recommendations. Another crucial point that reforming RE in a meaningful way depends on negotiating with some fairly entrenched stakeholders—religious communities, faith schools but also importantly the state. The discussion raised the problem of how much our subject is contested and determined by ideological commitments, but this is also useful in highlighting its vitality and significance to the critical humanities generally.

Liam Sutherland,
University of Edinburgh

'IMMORTALITY: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES', INFORM-KINGS COLLEGE LONDON SEMINAR. 1 FEB 2020. KING'S COLLEGE LONDON.

On the 1st February 2020, INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements), with the department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London, hosted a day-long seminar. Inform seminars have been taking place for over thirty years now and are unique in bringing together academics with other interested groups (i.e. 'stakeholders') on thematic subjects relating to minority religions. In addition to academics and students, a typical Inform seminar might include speakers and audience members from religious movements, former members and critics of religious movements and those whose professional work involves religious movements such as counsellors, social workers, civil servants, police officers, legal professionals and other interested members of the public.

The theme for this seminar was 'Immortality: Beliefs and Practices' drawn from Honorary Director, Dr Suzanne Newcombe's ERC Horizon 2020 Project AYURYOG (2015-2020), which is exploring the entanglements of yoga, ayurveda and rasaśastra (alchemical and longevity practices) in South Asia. The day opened with Dr Newcombe (Open University) presenting on 'Immortality as Aspiration, Belief or Practice?' addressing the different ways 'immortality' appears in religious and popular culture. She then discussed the pragmatic value of immortality as a concept, as well as the ways that beliefs and practices relating to it can transform

people's lived experience and their choices, with some examples from the Indian traditions.

Then, Mark Singleton (SOAS, University of London) discussed 'Yoga, Immortality, Technology', highlighting the range of novel technologies relating to the practice and culture of yoga such as 'smart mats' and several forms of wearable technology. Singleton went on to posit the implications of such technologies and whether they are compatible with the tradition of yoga, which has itself been commonly referred to as a 'technology' for overcoming the perceived undesirable 'natural' occurrences in human life, from sickness, old age and death, to suffering and even cognition itself. Singleton concluded by drawing parallels between yogic practices and the contemporary 'tech-religions' of Silicon Valley which envision several possible modalities of immortality: biological immortality, postponing death for as long as possible; partial biological immortality whereby humans transform into cyborg-like beings; and cyber immortality where immortality is achieved by mapping or uploading the self onto a server.

After this was the first of several perspectives on immortality offered by those coming from a faith perspective. Megan Long, national president of The Greater World, spoke from a Christian Spiritualist perspective, on 'Immortality—The Gateway to Life'. Long shared her belief that the soul is immortal and that death is by no means the end of life. Once we know this, Long argued, it is a matter of free will to allow such knowledge to transform our lives in the here and now. This reiterated the introductory point that beliefs about immortality are not just predictions about the future but can change how we choose to live in the present.

Returning to the academic perspective, Mikel Burley (University of Leeds) gave an exceptionally clear talk comparing 'Competing conceptions of immortality and nirvana among interpreters of Buddhism.' He explored the multiplicity of Buddhist interpretations to the idea of immortality. Drawing from a typology devised by Carl Becker, Burley discussed four possible interpretations of nirvana as a form of annihilationism, eternal life, an ethical state in this world, and a transcendent, ineffable state. Burley argued for changing the focus of Buddhism "from ontology to axiology" defending all four possible interpretations as valid.

Then the charismatic founder of the W TALK Network, Tobi Olujinmi, stated her position that we are 'Created in the image of the infinite'—that the essence of who we are as people is immortal, and death is what separates time and eternity. She went on to explicate her belief that the soul is immortal as it was created in the image of God and that it is pertinent to consider where one will exist beyond time within the eternity.

In one of the most engaging presentations of the day, Dr Peter Fenwick (King's College London) drew on qualitative interviews, survey data and clinical experience to explore 'What do near death experiences show us about the actual process of dying?' Drawing from his extensive research on near death experiences (NDE) he detailed the parallels between individuals who had reported having an NDE and accounts of end of life experiences. Fenwick described the common elements of NDEs, as well as the effect geographical contingencies can have on the interpretation of them. According to Fenwick, the transformation of consciousness experienced by people who have had NDEs, as well as those experienced by the dying, suggests a change in consciousness in the direction of non-duality, and the continuation of consciousness after death becomes a real possibility.

After lunch, Lindsley Cash and Tracey Hood, co-owners of Clearly Destiny, a spiritual centre in Euston, provided a demonstration of spirit channeling. For the demonstration, Lindsley channelled communicators from the spirit world, who spoke about the continued existence and communication of spirit after returning to the Spirit world. During this, she touched on the idea of an immortal soul, as well as the comfort afforded to their clients who can still communicate with their loved ones.

Aled Thomas' (Open University) talk, "I Know I'm Immortal... I don't Fear Death": Approaching Notions of Immortality in Free Zone Scientologist Spheres', highlighted the growing number of Scientologists practicing in the so-called 'Free Zone' (outside of the institutional Church). Thomas also illuminated that Scientologist notions of immortality and spiritual development (via auditing) are being adopted by 'spiritual counsellors' who do not identify as Scientologists, yet still choose to utilise L Ron Hubbard's teachings in their practices.

Thomas demonstrated how nuanced approaches to the immortal self directly inform innovative methods of using Scientologist technology.

The final formal presentation of the day was anthropologist Susannah Crockford who explored 'How the 1% Plan to Survive Climate Change and Live Forever: Immortality as the Teleological Outcome of Hyperinequality'. In her talk, Crockford, focusing on the US context, suggested that the bifurcation of wealth in a late-stage capitalist society, in the face of ecological disaster, will likely lead to opportunities for immortality being open to the richest members of society, whilst staying closed to others. To illustrate her point, Crockford used the examples of present day 'elite survivalists' or 'doomsday capitalists' as people who can avoid the impact of climate change due to factors such as increased mobility, access to private companies that can provide life-saving services (e.g. firefighters, healthcare etc.) and greater ability to stockpile food and resources, all the while profiting off capitalist trends which are often seen as exacerbating climate change. Crockford used her talk to consider the focus of some tech billionaires on forms of immortality such as transhumanism or biological life, in the context of climate apartheid, where the poor suffer and die from extreme weather events and food scarcity while the rich use technology to extend their lives forever.

The day ended with a panel discussion of the speakers taking questions from the audience. This, as always in an INFORM seminar, was one of the most interesting parts of the day as the perspectives of many different people interact and engage publicly. Much of the discussion on this day focused on the ethics of technological life extension, to which most of those coming from a faith perspective voiced remarkably similar and serious objections. However, interesting questions were also raised about how the possibility of immortality relates to Platonic distinction between materialistic and essentialist understandings of what it means to be human—and that these are issues for which many, both with faith and without, struggle to come to definite conclusions.

Abineash Barathan,
King's College London.
Sarah Harvey,
Inform, based at King's College London.

'PLACE, SPACE AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY', 17-18 FEBRUARY 2020, THE INSTITUTE FOR RELIGION AND CRITICAL INQUIRY, AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE.

The two-day conference 'Place, Space and Religious Identity' was organised by Dr Sarah Parkhouse, a research fellow at ACU's Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry. It was originally scheduled for 29-30 October 2019. Given that Covid-19 appeared in Australia in late January and the borders were closed to non-residents on 20 March 2020, I am fortunate to have very positive memories of 'Place, Space', the only academic conference I've attended in person this year. The conference began at 9 AM on Monday 17 February with acknowledgement of the traditional Indigenous owners of the land on which ACU stands, and a welcome by Sarah Parkhouse. There was one keynote address on Monday, Professor Len Collard (School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia) on "Nyungar Placenames: Looking out from Kaart Geenunginyup Bo," which was a lesson in Indigenous environment and identity formation, as well as a wealth of information regarding Nyungar/ Noongar culture. All other speakers were given 45 minutes to present and take questions.

With no parallel sessions, every participant had the opportunity to listen and discuss, and to think carefully about connections between topics that appeared to be entirely unrelated. Monday's papers included: Victor Counted (University of Western Sydney), who presented on "The Psychology of Religion and Place: Theories, Research and Practice"; Kiran Shinde (La Trobe University), who spoke on "The Production of Sacred Places: Views From Historical Geography"; Georgia Curran (University of Sydney), who addressed the topic of "Place-Based Identity and Shifting Performance Spaces for Warlpiri Songs"; and Jenny Spinks (University of Melbourne) who discussed "Locating the Devil: Sixteenth Century European Missionaries and the 'Global' Supernatural". At 4 PM that afternoon there was a tour of the award-winning Mary MacKillop Chapel (dedicated to the first Australian saint, Saint Mary of the Cross, canonised by Pope Benedict XVI on 17 October 2010). After viewing this architecturally beautiful structure, dinner was held at Ladro's, a local restaurant.

Tuesday's presentations covered a similarly broad range of topics, geographical areas, and historical periods. The ancient world was addressed by: Greta Hawes (Australian National University) in "Stepping Foot in Arcadia: The Limits of the Secular in Greek Antiquity"; Tamara Lewit (University of Melbourne) in "Rural Communities, Churches and Community Resilience in the Late Antique Levant: An Archaeological Viewpoint"; and a video-conference paper by Maxine Lewis (University of Auckland) on "Where Space and Gender Meet: Feminist Theories of Place in Roman Studies". Peter Howard's (Australian Catholic University) "The Eye in Motion and Spatiality in the Sistine Chapel" was especially interesting as it revealed a long-term research project with access to the Vatican the like of which I—for one—had never encountered before. Modern case studies were the focus of the afternoon papers: Carole M. Cusack's (University of Sydney) "Invented, Temporary and Playful: European Prehistoric Sacred Spaces and Places in the New World"; Natalie Swann's (University of Melbourne) "Faith in Suburbia: Christian Migrants Re-Creating Home in Suburban Melbourne"; and Rebekah Pryor's (University of Melbourne) "Dear Mr Butterfield: Letters to Architects and Other Artistic Interventions in Religious Space". The conference closed at 4.30.

Sarah Parkhouse kept in touch with participants after the event and circulated Len Collard's keynote text. Kiran Shinde shared the publication of his new book (edited with Daniel H. Olsen [Brigham Young University]), *Religious Tourism and the Environment* (2020). These post-conference communications were appreciated during the coronavirus lockdown and reinforced how privileged we were to have had this interdisciplinary and focused conversation about space and place and how they effect/affect religious identities and experiences.

Carole M. Cusack
University of Sydney

ALT-AC | THE CONFERENCE AT THE END OF THE WORLD. 14 JULY, 2020.

When the Conference at the End of the World was first announced, we were still in "the Before Times", when we still thought that we'd be travelling to Milton Keynes for the BASR and some of us were to fly to the other end of the world for the IAHR in New Zealand. Yet there were still good reasons for conferences to start moving online, even then—time, money, inclusion and the environment—and the inaugural Alt-Ac conference was pioneering something we knew would have to happen sooner or later. Then COVID hit, and there was no doubt that it would be sooner. The CatEotW started to look very prescient indeed. Even the title seemed apropos.

Alt-Ac is a new network which is "a counterpoint to the current state of academia, and support for those academics suffering under it" (<https://www.alt-ac.uk/>). Alt-Ac, short for 'alternative academia' refers to "alternatives to traditional research, alternative ways of pursuing research, and alternative spaces in which research occurs", including making new avenues for academic research to reach the public and education. It was founded by three BASR members (Theo Wildcroft, Vivian Asimos and Aled Thomas) and while it was not an RS-specific conference, there were a large number of the papers on the topic of religion. Other recurring topics were inclusion/exclusion, identity, and deconstruction of different dominant paradigms. Not all of the participants were ECRs or independent scholars, though most were.

Despite the innovative presentation, the format was the familiar parallel panels with four papers, though roundtables replaced traditional keynotes (schedule is here: <https://www.alt-ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Conference-at-the-End-of-the-World-1.pdf>). As there were four parallel panels in each session, I got only a narrow slice of the proceedings. In the first session, I attended the panel on "Protesting Established Knowledge and Understandings" to support my colleagues Paul-François Tremlett ("Religion, the Rhizome and the Body-Without-Organs") and Chris Cotter ("Critical Non-Religion: A Discursive Approach"), though unsurprisingly I also enjoyed Andrew Woods' paper on "the

Beatles and Brainwashing”. After lunch, I attended the session “Authenticity, Authority and Questioning the Dominant” in order to hear Christopher Wells paper on “James Joyce's Challenge to the 'Compulsory Monosexuality' of Sexual Science, 1900-1930”, though Aled Thomas and Theo Wildcroft both gave excellent papers, as always. Other panels during that parallel session included “Applied Interdisciplinarity”, “Borders, Policing Migration”, and “Reform and Institutions of Care”.

The third and final session included panels on “Unheard or Silenced Narratives”, “Arts and Humanities as Social Care”, “Preaching (in) the Millennium” and “Racial and Ethnic Identities”, which I attended to hear BASR colleagues Angela Puca and Liam Sutherland. The program closed with a second roundtable, which I was unable to attend—but happily, the participants have contributed to a piece developing the questions and themes of the conference, which will be published in Alt-Ac’s forthcoming journal, *Rogue*.

It was inspiring to see how much energy and innovation there is among today’s ECRs, as well as frustrating that there are so few employment opportunities. The innovation didn’t extend to the format of the conference, which replicated the traditional (and to my mind, rather stale) format of academic conferences, but in digital form. This raised the question for me of what kind of “alternative” was being offered here—if it is for those who reject (and feel rejected by) academia as it currently exists, then why not drop the accoutrement of parallel panels, twenty-minutes-and-questions papers and journals to create something new? If the purpose is to support ECRs to survive the ever-widening wasteland between graduation and job, however, or indeed to reform academia, then thought will need to be given to how Alt-Ac can work with traditional institutions to create new opportunities. Maybe it’s both, and this is just a first step—after all, if it was easy to create new academic practices, maybe more of us would have done so already. That said, if Alt-Ac can make all the unpaid and invisible labour that ECRs are already doing for our institutions, they will have made their point well.

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Image credits: Cover - Lichfield Cathedral, by George Chryssides. Page 1 - Committee portrait by Maria Nita and David G. Robertson. Page 14 - BASR 2020 by Bettina Schmidt.

reviews

ANDREW DOLE. REFRAMING THE MASTERS OF SUSPICION: MARX, NIETZSCHE AND FREUD. BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, 2019.

Andrew Dole's analysis of the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud relies on Paul Ricoeur's classification of the three Western thinkers as 'masters of suspicion', which is a methodology and mode of explanation Dole sees as influential in many parts of academia, including Religious Studies, and can be encountered in the works of Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault and Edward Said. Dole's overall gist is not as much a focus on the three authors themselves, but more towards distilling a theory of suspicious explanation that can be found in academia, conspiracy theories, religion and politics by analysing the fundamental intellectual operations in the works of the three authors.

To do so, Dole has recourse to the distinction between *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*, and the concomitant juxtaposition of interpretation and explanation, in his analysis of 'suspicion' (Chapter 1, p. 11). He argues, against Ricoeur, that the methodology of suspicion as championed by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud is an 'explanation', and presupposes the existence of 'reasons' (such as Freud's unconscious agents) as real causes for effects in reality, or what Dole calls 'large-scale social phenomena', such as morality, religion and socio-economic inequality. He thus cuts through the distinction between the natural and social sciences, and makes the three authors susceptible to starker criticism.

By suspicious causes, Dole means those that are seen as both 'hidden' and imbued by 'bad-

ness', thus necessitating a negative 'ethical charge'. The three authors thus claim to have access to a special type of knowledge ignored by most that explain real phenomena and they equally hope to redeem a bad state of affairs by accessing that knowledge. There are some strong similarities in Dole's to the concept of Gnosis as developed by the American political scientist Eric Voegelin, which equally deals with hidden causes and a special type of knowledge to redeem a 'bad' situation.

To assess these explanations, Dole employs both the works of the 18th century statistician Thomas Bayes (Dole gets the century wrong) and Peter Lipton, focusing on the plausibility and the explanatory power of these explanations. Whilst the theories of the three writers are 'lovely', and have huge appeal, they regularly lack 'plausibility' and each of the three authors has developed strategies to defend itself from charges of implausibility, such as Marx' idea of 'false consciousness' or Freud's portrayal of every attempt of a criticism of his theories as a proof of them motivated by unconscious motives.

In the case of Marx (chapter 3), he identifies three main strands, namely 'vulgar Marxism', 'historical materialism' and 'vulgar-Hegelian Marxism' that all share common features and at times overlap. Vulgar Marxism implies the greed and lust of individual actors that conspire to create and maintain social inequality, whereas historical materialism looks towards the hidden economic relations of production that cause inequality, and furthermore religion, politics and ideology. Lastly, vulgar-Hegelian Marxism refers to a vast transhuman agent, such as 'capital',

that explains both the inequality and the actions of individuals. His analysis of Marx is at times superficial, and regrettably seen too strongly through the prism of the 'analytical Marxism' grounded in Anglo-Saxon philosophical traditions. Nonetheless, it offers some interesting insights into the explanatory models in Marx' multifaceted works.

As for Nietzsche (Chapter 3), Dole's focus is solely on the 'Genealogy of Morals' in which Nietzsche attempts to portray the hidden reasons for the existence of our moral values through the genealogical method of referring to certain events in human history that brought these values about. The first of these is the 'slave morality' which conquers the aristocratic and chivalric warriors that only know of 'good and bad' through resentment, the introduction of the distinction between 'good and evil' and the concept of guilt. Secondly, he discusses how the concept of guilt has become internalised due to their not being an exterior outlet for healthy and instinctual expressions of violence. Thirdly, he discusses the 'ascetic ideal' as a coping mechanism for a weakened and decadent life. Dole points out that Nietzsche genealogical method is not systematic and rarely provides plausible explanations, but it nonetheless refers to hidden factors as causes for current 'bad' states of affairs.

In the case of Freud (chapter 4), he assesses more generally Freud's work on the individual psychopathologies including the various com-

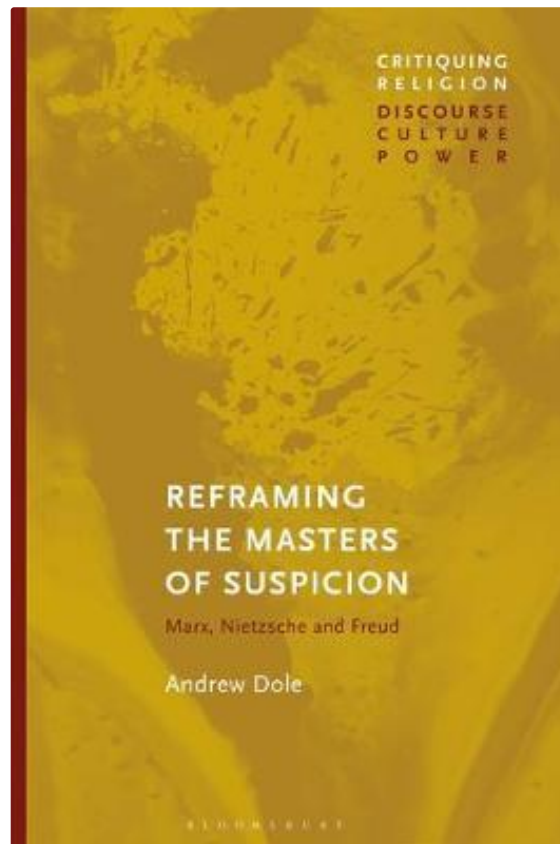
plexes and relations between factors that determine the human psyche. Furthermore, Dole discusses the transposition of these factors onto the collective human psyche through 'social extension', such as in *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*, in which they become collectivised and explain the existence of religion, for instance. The most interesting part is Dole's discussion of the recursive ad hominem defence, which implies that every criticism of

Freud's theory is motivated by a psychopathological factor that would prove his theory again, thus rendering it unfalsifiable even if implausible.

Essentially, Dole applies a hermeneutics of suspicion to the masters of suspicion, and tries to dissect common features that they share with conspiracy theories (without accusing them of being conspiracy theorists, but only of being conspiratorial at times). His comparison with conspiracy theories is rather compelling, and the dissecting of conspiratorial elements in the three authors, such as Nietzsche's antisemitism in his description of the

Jewish revolt borne out of resentment against the Roman spirit, gives additional weight to the idea.

One of Dole's appeals is the inclusion of philosophical valuation in his assessment of this hermeneutical tradition, and it makes for interesting reading of the three authors by assessing why their theories are so appealing, without necessarily passing judgment on their truthfulness. While the treatment of religion is



rather peripheral in the book, and mostly occurs when discussing the treatment of religion in Marx, Nietzsche and Freud (along other large-scale social phenomena), there are some useful insights in Dole's conclusion. Following Pascal Boyer (Chapter 5, p.194), he identifies suspicious explanations, such as those of religion, as being cognitively appealing and 'ensnaring', and thus having a high chance of being transmitted socially. The book is a useful overview for anyone working on the cognitive science of religion, conspiracy theories and critical theory. Whilst it does not offer any particularly or 'revolutionary' insights, it offers a good overview and toolbox for scholars to help identify 'suspicious explanations' by being cognisant of how widespread they are and how the general mechanisms behind them operate, and by being aware that a theory being appealing does not necessarily make it plausible.

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JONATHAN MILES-WATSON AND VIVIAN ASIMOS (EDS.). BLOOMSBURY READER IN THE STUDY OF MYTH. BLOOMSBURY, 2019.

A Reader is a form of text with a specific purpose in mind, and it is important to consider them in that context. A good Reader should provide a comprehensive guide to the subfield it covers, and provide a thorough introduction to the subject for the unfamiliar reader, whether

that be an academic on an interdisciplinary adventure, or an undergraduate just starting out in the subject. A Reader has therefore both a pedagogical and introductory purpose, and the selections it includes need to be not only comprehensively chosen, but also situate those inclusions within the development of ideas.

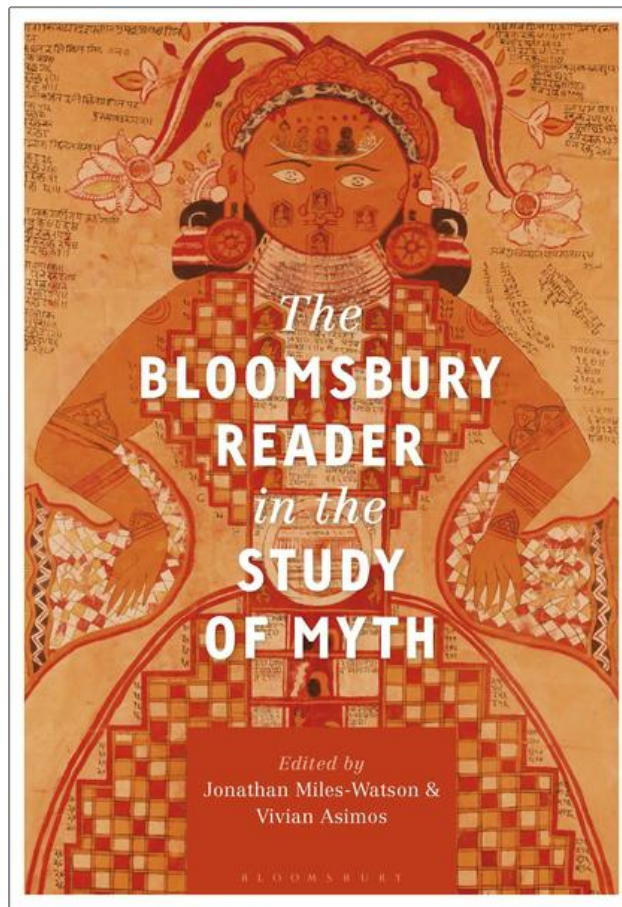
The new *Bloomsbury Reader in the Study of Myth* manages these tasks well, with careful

choices, editing, ordering and editorialising. It begins with definitions.

The study of myth as a scholarly field is located via contributions from C. Scott Littleton, Dan Ben-Amos and Bronislaw Malinowski. This is followed by a section that introduces the most prominent attempts at global theories of myth-making, via extracts from the works of James Fraser, Otto Rank and Joseph Campbell. Each of these is introduced with reference not just to its importance, but also key debates in the development of the field, in this case the problems that result from producing globalised theories

from a narrowly situated academic context.

The next two sections are on myth and dreams, and myth and history, respectively. In moving away from grand unified theories of myth, these sections can include a wider diversity of perspectives, even in just a few chapters. In the section on Myth and Dreams, 'modern' myths are considered first with an extract from Carl Jung. Next is a psychoanalytic analysis of vampires by Alan Dundes, and finally Amba J. Sepie



provides the first indigenous and non-‘Western’ perspective on myth, translating traditional ecological worldviews into an academic context in order to provoke a deeper consideration of animal and human natures as explored through myth-making.

The Myth and History section brings together the well-known scholars Mircea Eliade and Max Muller, together with a more unusual piece by Nicholas J. Allen. The framing text here recognises the troubling contributions of some mythology scholars to Aryan ideology, and provides the latter extract as an example of how to explore Indo-European mythological connections without sliding into support for such essentialist and extreme political ideologies. In just three extracts, then, the book both acknowledges and begins to frame a more critical and politically aware relationship between the study of myth and far-right mythologisation.

Subsequent sections are concerned with different perspectives on the role that myths play in society. They begin with extracts introducing structuralist approaches from Claude Lévi-Strauss, Edmund Leach and Manuel Aguirre. These are logically followed by critiques of and responses to structuralism, including neostructuralist perspectives that complicate the binaries set up by the former. Seth Kunin, Stephen Hugh-Jones and Mary Douglas are all sensibly included here.

But perhaps more interesting is the following section on spatial theories of myth. Extracts from Frances Harwood, Jonathan Miles-Watson himself (one of the co-authors) and Miriam Khan mark the transition from perspectives that seek to decode myth, to perspectives that seek to understand myth in context. The relationship of emplaced myth to sacred space within a globalised and post-colonial world is particularly clearly and insightfully made.

The final sections of the book—one on myth and popular culture and the other on the future of myth—bring the collection neatly into a contemporary and then speculative setting. Extracts from Ika Willis, Lauren Dundes et al, Marilyn and Thomas Sutton, and Robert Segal consider subject matter such as Disney’s *Frozen*, science fic-

tion, and fan fiction. It is in this section perhaps that the book finds the space to be much more interesting to the more established scholar, especially one who already has a thorough understanding of the more canonical theorists included earlier.

In fact, while one could always wish for more contemporary and alternative perspectives, more marginalised and particularly indigenous voices, and perhaps even more critical analysis, in any book on myth, a Reader, as I said at the start of this review, is a specific text for a specific purpose, and this one does a very good job of balancing the classics with less well-known writers. I would in addition be very interested to read a text by the same authors that is not confined by such constraints.

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GRAHAM HARVEY (ED). INDIGENIZING MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE. EQUINOX, 2020.

This book is a collection of essays from various authors all concerned with what might reasonably be called new religious movements, many of which are ‘pagan’ in nature, although some, such as the Lithuanian Anastasians of chapter 8 and the ‘Powwow’ culture of chapter 6 are less obviously within this category.

As Harvey explains in the introduction, the main concern of the book is a comparison between what might be regarded as ‘new’ religious movements and ‘Indigenous’ religions. In itself, this might be a project doomed to failure, since the differences between the two are all too apparent, and, as Tafjord comments in the concluding chapter, the comparison could easily be construed as disrespectful of Indigenous religions and the difficulties they have traditionally faced. However, the book takes as its starting point Paul C. Johnson’s *Migrating Bodies, Circulating Signs: Brazilian Candomblé, the Garifuna of the Caribbean, and the Category of Indigenous Religions* (2002). In this Johnson argues that religions display, in greater or lesser proportions, both ‘indigenising’ and ‘extending’ tendencies.

Indigenising is the emphasising of local and ancestral tradition, including the adaptation of ideas and practices from outside to fit with a local model. Extending, by contrast, is the presentation of local ideas as having universal or global significance and usefulness. The essays in this book discuss the extent to which these two tendencies are present from the perspective of a number of contemporary movements in Europe. As Harvey explains (p1) ‘...the relevant comparison hinges on the question of whether European movements which are not Indigenous in a particular sense do, nonetheless, indigenize in ways that might be comparable with practices of Indigenous peoples.’ Harvey identifies three ways in which the movements discussed in the book could be said to ‘indigenize’. Firstly, by claiming continuity of belief or practice with an ancient pre-Christian past in the locality in which they operate; secondly, by learning, or being influenced directly or indirectly by Non-European Indigenous peoples and thirdly by emphasising connection to a particular locality such as a sacred landscape. These forms of indigenising are discussed over the course of seven case studies: Irish Paganism (Jenny Butler), British animist spirituality in the form of Bear Feasts (Graham Harvey), Goddess devotion in Glastonbury (Amy Whitehead), Druidry (Suzanne Owen), European Powwow enthusiasts (Christina Welch), Italian shamanism (Angela Puca) and Lithuanian Anastasians (Rasa Pranskeviciute).

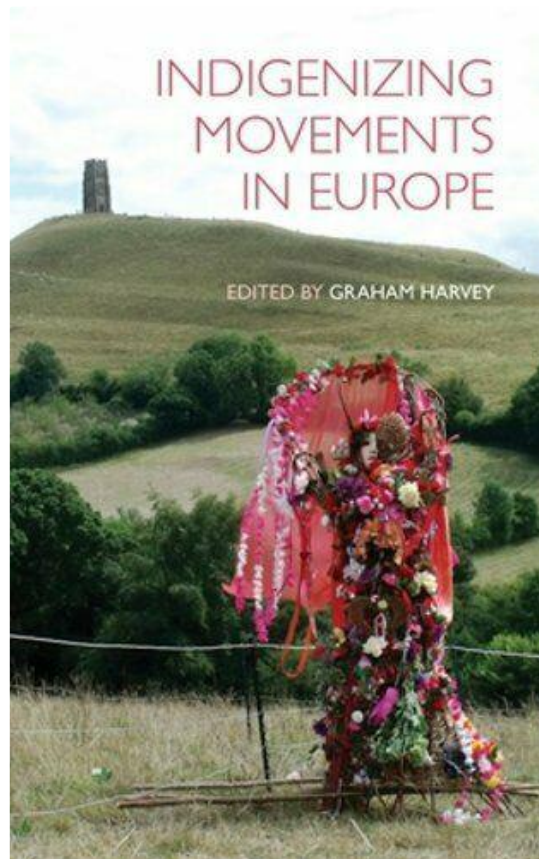
Each of the case studies presents an outline of the tradition under discussion for those that are

unfamiliar with it, together with a discussion of the ways in which the idea of indigenizing can be applied within that tradition. Of particular interest to me is Suzanne Owen’s discussion of Druidry and indigeneity in chapter 5. Druidry is an interesting case in that it has at least an imagined connection to an Iron Age religious group that seem to have been suppressed by invading Romans. This leads to a fascinating debate with

in different Druid traditions of the degree to which it can be seen to have been, and arguably to be, indigenous. Certainly, all of Harvey’s three forms of indigenising activity are to be found within British Druidry, and Owen navigates the complex narrative and discussion within modern Druidry in a way that is both engaging and enlightening, concluding that it is the uncertainty of modern life, and the constant need to move for work and education that has led to a craving for connection to place, and so for the need to indigenize.

The concluding chapter of the book is a powerful and challenging response to the largely positive conclusions of the

chapters that precede it from Bjørn Ola Tafjord. He suggests that the discussions in the book could only have taken place within the context of Western scholarship, and would have been deemed offensive, or at least amusing if presented in a context where Indigenous people such as the Sami or Native Americans could have engaged with them. He further argues that the movements described in the book indulge in what he calls romantic or ‘imagined indigeness’ (p143). He does not, however, engage with



the distinction which the book draws between 'indigenous' and 'indigenizing,' which would have been a very useful arena in which to address the notion of 'imagined' or 'romantic' indigeneity.

This book successfully demonstrates that comparisons such as it makes between new and indigenous forms of religiosity are a helpful model for increasing the understanding of both. It will be a useful addition to the library of anyone interested in Indigenous religion, new religious movements, Pagan Studies or the category of religion generally.

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GALADARI, ABDULLA. QUR'ANIC HERMENEUTICS: BETWEEN SCIENCE, HISTORY, AND THE BIBLE. LONDON: BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, 2018.

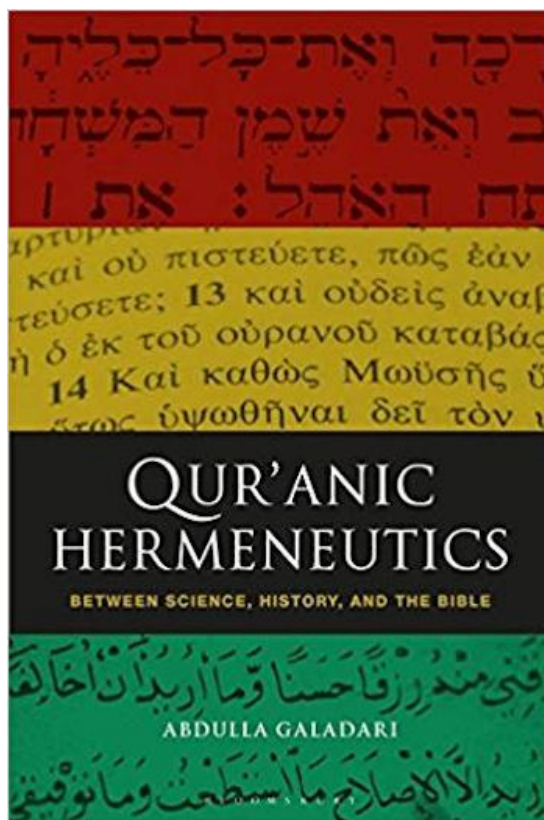
In a relatively short but thoroughly cited book, also available as an open access title, Abdulla Galadari enters a field of heavy debate with his central claim: Muhammad wrote the Qur'an, and it is on account of his particularly sophisticated "creative genius" and understanding of the Bible and other works that he was able to develop the highly sophisticated linguistical forms present in the Qur'an. Galadari argues for an investigation into the authorial intent of Muhammad through evidence in the Qur'an, and commits to an investigation through neurotheology, neuropsychology, and intertextual polysemy. He engages with the research of major figures in Islamic reform such as Nasr Abu Zayd (d. 2010) and Abdolkarim Soroush, but in the author's stated positivistic mission, he searches for truth alongside the reader

without making a convincing conclusion regarding the authorship and genius of the Qur'anic text.

This book contains 9 chapters, including the conclusion; it also features an index of Qur'anic verses and passages cited. The chapters vary widely in length and organizational method. The first chapter, "The Science Behind Revelation," sets out the author's interest in hermeneutical

methods of investigating the Qur'an through intertextual polysemy. It is in this first chapter that his engagement with the thesis of the scientific rationale for Muhammad's creative genius is most thoroughly investigated, while other chapters have incisive perspectives on polysemy within the Qur'an and comparative approaches to the Biblical texts. At times he references authors and redactors of the Qur'an in the plural; in other instances, the agency is on the Qur'an as author (the Qur'an intends...), and finally, a singular Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an. Galadari argues

that these authors applied a highly sophisticated interweaving of intertextualities including Biblical references, and that this intent was drowned out by later Qur'anic interpreters who intended to read the development of Islam as an exclusive religion with little intentional exchange between the Bible and the Qur'an. The author emphasizes the primacy of a linguistic study that looks at symbology in Arabic as the primary source for understanding the Qur'an over circumstances of revelation that have more recently informed contextual understandings of the Qur'an, even as their claims to authenticity



are debated (19). Chapters 4 through 7 of the book are primarily organized around comparisons through intertextual polysemy between the Qur'an and the Bible. Here he outlines how the Qur'an uses Biblical meanings and illusions to offer a better perspective on how a comparative study between "Christian and Muslim scriptures" could best be undertaken (103).

The book should be lauded for its explanation of some detailed fields in Qur'anic hermeneutics. Galadari, in Chapter 2, brings up Mu'tazila and Ash'ariyya theological concerns as well as important discussions concerning the root-based morphology of the Arabic language. Regarding polysemy, Galadari is right to note the helpfulness of consulting other scriptures for use in Qur'anic exegesis, even as he notes some "confessional" audiences may balk at such a move (62). Qur'anic Hermeneutics also features representation of Shi'a theological points, and especially esoteric approaches, concerning issues such as divinity, intercession, and the possibilities of those ideas as alluded to or explained in the Qur'an. Such diverse representations of scholarly inquiry are welcome in religious studies and Islamic studies that has often promoted Sunni interpretations as standard.

The author's reluctant conclusions, issues of agency in the text, organizational design, and citational practices at times detract from the effectiveness of the book. On conclusions, throughout the book Galadari makes statements such as "I am only providing observations. Ultimately, you will need to decide yourself what to conclude from it. We are in search of the truth. I simply happened to stumble upon observations that may provide us with some insights..." (151). This language appears consistently throughout the book and undercuts the author's provocative thesis concerning authorship of the Qur'an. As mentioned above, the agency Galadari assigns to Muhammad or the Qur'an as author of the Qur'an varies throughout the book. Sometimes he ascribes agency to Muhammad, such as, "I am assuming that Muhammad is the author, and that the Qur'an is formulated in Muhammad's mind" (50). Other times, the Qur'an is an active agent, such as when he discusses the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Qur'an; "The Qur'an [...]

is attempting to interpret John's Gospel" (83). Such agency must be consistent and carefully marked when posited as a central concern in the book.

Organizationally, the chapters vary greatly in length; Chapter 3 is but five pages and has no conclusion, other chapters have inconsistent headings, subsections, or conclusions. For example, Chapter 7 begins with one long section marked with organized subheadings and a section conclusion, followed by another long section titled "The Water of Life, the Logos, and the Messiah", with no other subheadings. Abruptly, the chapter ends with no conclusion to the chapter or summary of what we just read. Finally, given current discussions in academia regarding citational politics, this book suffers from an extreme lack of women's scholarly voices. Occasionally women's works are cited in the book, but I found only one substantial, in-text engagement with a woman scholar, that of Jane I. Smith. The prevalence of discussions over representation and citational practices make this an important issue to highlight.

Debating the authorship of the Qur'an and whether or not Muhammad had a role in the making of the text, as Soroush, Abu Zayd, and many others have debated, is a vital line of scholarly inquiry. Was Muhammad simply a vessel for transmission of the verbatim word of God, a co-creator of the text, or as Galadari has presented, a creative genius of sorts who could have only made the Qur'an such a sophisticated book with his high level of knowledge of the Bible and other neurological traits? Yet, the book's lack of consistent organizational structure, matched with a promising neurotheological thesis that is often left unfilled throughout chapters concerning inquiry over polysemy between the Qur'an and the Bible leave this book less than fulfilling when examined in conversation with such robust scholarly and theological debates. As noted in this review, there are some moments of excellent information, but the information would be better arranged as a number of journal articles rather than a cohesive book promoting an argument "between science, history, and the Bible."

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Members' Recent Publications

Louise Child

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Christopher Cotter

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- 2020 (with Alison Scott-Baumann, Shuruq Naguib, Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor and Aisha Phoenix) *Islam on Campus: Contested Identities and the Cultures of Higher Education in Britain*. Oxford: OUP.

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- 2020 "Indigenous rituals re-make the larger than human community" in Harvey, G., S. Pike, M. Houseman, and J. Salomonsen (eds). *Reassembling Democracy: Ritual and Cultural Resource*, 69-85. London: Bloomsbury.
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- 2019 (with MT Miller) "The Name of God and the Name of the Messiah: Jewish and Christian parallels in Late Antiquity." *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 15: 148-72

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Paul Weller

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<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/4dfc9b51-dfd7-4f02-a1f0-54ea2095cd4c/coventry-university-research-and-evaluation-report.pdf>

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“ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, about and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.”

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*
(1966 [2002], 5).

