

Dynamics of Religious Diversity:
The Study of Different Religions and Religious Difference in
Postcolonial Configurations

Conference of the Dutch Association for the
Study of Religion
(*Nederlands Genootschap voor
Godsdienstwetenschap NGG*)

&

Thematic Seminar of the Netherlands School for
Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion NOSTER

19 & 20 October 2017

Utrecht University
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies



NOSTER

Nederlandse Onderzoekschool voor Theologie en Religiewetenschap
Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion



Utrecht University



KNAW



BRILL

Table of Contents

Practical Information.....	4
Outline.....	6
The Program at a Glance.....	8
Keynote Lectures: Abstracts and Bio-Notes	10
Abstracts of Contributions to Opening Plenary Panel on Key Figures in the Study of Religion From Postcolonial Perspectives.....	14
Detailed List of Parallel Sessions.....	16
Abstracts of Panels and Papers in Parallel Sessions	21
Slot I: Thursday, 19 October, 11.30-13.00h.	21
Slot II: Thursday, 19 October, 13.45-15.15h.....	24
Slot III: Thursday, 19 October, 15.45-17.15h.....	29
Slot IV: Friday, 20 October, 11.30-13.00h.....	35
Slot V: Friday, 20 October, 14.00-15.30h.	39

Practical Information

Conference Organizers and Support

Christoph Baumgartner, Utrecht University.

Birgit Meyer, Utrecht University

Markus Davidsen, Leiden University.

Support: Biene Meijerman, Suzanne van Vliet, Jeannette Boere and Pieter van der Woude.

Students of the Research Master's Program *Religious Studies* at Utrecht University.

We wish to thank the sponsors of this Conference: The Department and the Research Institute of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University, the NWO- and KNAW-funded research project Religious Matters in an Entangled World, the Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienstwetenschap NGG, the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion NOSTER, and the publishing house Brill.

Conference Venue

The conference venue is Zaalverhuur 7, Boothstraat 7, 3512 BT Utrecht.

Zaalverhuur 7 is a location right in the heart of the city. The venue is a former church building from 1900 that is now used for conferences, workshops and other meetings

The team of Zaalverhuur 7 donates 10% of their profit to an orphanage in Haiti.

All plenary sessions and some parallel sessions will take place in the *Kerkzaal* (ground floor).

Parallel sessions take place at the *Spiegelzaal* (first floor) and the *Grote Zolder* (second floor). Unfortunately these rooms are only accessible via stairs. The stairs to the *Grote Zolder* are very steep.

Internet access

The name of the network at the conference venue is Zaalverhuur7

The password is voeljethuis

At some corners of the building Eduroam is accessible as well.

How to get there

The conference venue Zaalverhuur 7 is located in the heart of the city and just around the corner of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies (Janskerkhof 13).

It is ca. 20 minutes walking distance from Utrecht Central Station. You can also get there by bus from Central Station. Buses run very frequently. Take the stop "Janskerkhof" and walk to the conference venue:



Coffee breaks and lunches

All coffee breaks and lunches are included for participants of the conference. Vegetarian food is available at lunchtime.

Coffee and lunch breaks will be held at the Huiskamer and the Kerkzaal on the ground floor.

Conference Dinner Thursday, 19 October at 19.30h

The Conference Dinner will take place in the Senaatszaal in Utrecht University Hall, Domplein 29, 3512 JE Utrecht, about 10 minutes walking distance from the conference venue. Please note that you need to be registered in advance for the Conference Dinner in order to be able to attend. Dinner starts at 19.30h.

Reception at the end of the conference

The conference will close with a reception to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the *Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienstwetenschap* NGG. The NGG invites all conference participants to toast the academic study of religion in the Netherlands and everywhere.

Outline

In 2017, the *Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienswetenschap* NGG (Dutch Association for the Study of Religion) will celebrate its 70th anniversary. This is an apt occasion to look back and ahead from our present moment.

The NGG was founded upon the instigation of Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950) with the aim to develop the academic study of religion as an interdisciplinary field outside of Christian theology. Comparing the historical moment in which the NGG was established with our present conflict ridden time in which religion has become a major bone of contention, striking differences with regard to the role and place of religion in society and its study appear. Then the Dutch study of religion was still positioned in a majority Christian nation with overseas colonies whose inhabitants professed other non-Christian (Islamic, Buddhist, indigenous) beliefs. Nowadays the study of religion faces the rise of a highly diverse and dynamic religious field as well as the decline of mainstream Christianity and the rise of atheism and agnosticism.

The change of the broader social-political configurations has also influenced the epistemological, theoretical and methodological orientations of the study of religion. Seventy years ago, the central focus of research on the part of scholars involved in the NGG and similar associations were non-Western religions outside of Europe and in the distant (European) past. Today the study of religion is situated in an entirely different field: The old colonial frontier areas where researchers encountered non-Christian religions have dissolved, and people from "there" got ever more on the move to "here." Contemporary cities in the Netherlands, and Europe at large, form the new frontier areas where various forms of religious expression coexist with each other and amid strong secularist and atheist positions.

The current postcolonial configuration in which the study of religion is situated poses substantial challenges for the future orientation of our research, but also evokes important questions with regard to the past. Challenges and questions concern the study of co-existence and mutual interaction of highly divergent forms of religion in urban space, such as various forms of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Neopaganism, and unaffiliated spiritualities, to name only a few. Which concepts, theories and methods are needed to understand the dynamics of this complex field and analyze this co-existence as a whole? How to engage in categorization and comparison so as to grasp this new diversity? How to spot and circumvent repercussions of resilient colonial formats – in scholarship, policy and public debate – in studying religiously plural settings?

Answers to such questions, and future approaches of religious studies that are able to address the intricacies of religious diversity in current postcolonial configurations, depend on a critical examination of the epistemologies, concepts and approaches that have been transmitted from the past study of religion into our scholarly thinking. This is the basic proposition that informs this symposium.

The need for such an examination pertains especially to the theorization of religious difference and diversity. Over the past twenty years, the concepts developed in the study of religion since its formation as an academic field have been subject to sustained critique, involving a fundamental questioning of the notion of religion itself, the concept of world religion, the tendency of privileging text above other religious forms of expression, and the tracing of a post-enlightenment "Protestant bias" within the modern study of religion. In this critical endeavor, the possibility to speak about religion in general terms (that is to say across its diverse manifestations in past and present) has been challenged. In this context, approaches such as the phenomenology of religion as deployed by Van der Leeuw and others that long

offered a backbone for the study of religion have been subject to fundamental critique. And yet, notwithstanding constant calls to foreground specificity, particularity and historicity, the issue of comparative approaches to religion, which on the one hand seem to presuppose certain generalizations, and on the other hand make it possible to speak in general terms, across difference and diversity, is ever more pertinent in the face of the current highly plural religious field.

The central aim of this conference is to discuss the possibility of generalizing concepts and methods, including comparison, for the future study of religion in the light of past, and now heavily critiqued models for generalization.

On the one hand, we explore how towering figures as Van der Leeuw and others approached non-Western, non-Christian religions in the context of the colonial worlds in which they lived and wrote. The central question here is how the study of a diverse set of religions across a colonial world was incorporated into a general understanding of religion (e.g. as a human phenomenon). What level of abstraction from lived religion and politics of regulating religious expressions was required to make generalization across diversity at all possible? Which hierarchies informed the categorization and valuation of non-Christian and non-western religious traditions? What were the "costs" involved in establishing generalization within, e.g., the phenomenology of religion? In how far did the colonial configuration in which the study of religion was situated impinge on its modes of generalizing?

On the other hand, we aim to reflect about the (im)possibility and (un)desirability to generalize and engage in comparison from the standpoint of the current postcolonial nexus of religion and society. In how far does this new configuration require, and possibly open up possibilities to develop modes, ways and means – even if pragmatic – to speak about religion in general terms? How and where do current moves in the study of religion that emphasize the corporeality and materiality of religion, for instance, overlap with, but also differ from earlier approaches such as the phenomenology of religion? What difference does it make to conceptualize and study religion (and religions) in a postcolonial configuration?

Taking the 70th anniversary of the NGG as an occasion to reflect about these issues, the symposium will not be confined to the situation of religious studies in the Netherlands. The central question, as outlined, is to explore past and present theories and modes of generalization and comparison with regard to highly diverse and hierarchized religious fields.

The Program at a Glance

For a full list of speakers and papers see pages 16-20.

Thursday, 19 October 2017						
9.15- 9.45h	<p>Arrival, registration, coffee and tea. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal (ground floor)</p>					
9.45- 11.20h	<p>Welcome Plenary Panel on Key Figures in the Study of Religion from Postcolonial Perspectives Contributions by Johan Strijdom (G. v.d. Leeuw), Ernst van den Hemel (A. Kuyper), Arie Molendijk (Max Müller). Chair: Birgit Meyer. Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>					
11.30- 13.00	<p>Parallel Sessions I.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session I.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor). </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session I.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor). </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session I.c. Grote Zolder (second floor) </td> </tr> </table>			Session I.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Session I.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor).	Session I.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)
Session I.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Session I.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor).	Session I.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)				
13.00- 13.45h	<p>Lunch. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>					
13.45- 15.15h	<p>Parallel Sessions II.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session II.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor). </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session II.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor) </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session II.c. Grote Zolder (second floor) </td> </tr> </table>			Session II.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Session II.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor)	Session II.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)
Session II.a. Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Session II.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor)	Session II.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)				
15.15- 15.45h	<p>Refreshments. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal (ground floor)</p>					
15.45- 17.15	<p>Parallel Sessions III.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Session III.a: Kerkzaal (ground floor). </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Sessions III.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor) </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> Sessions III.c. Grote Zolder (second floor) </td> </tr> </table>			Session III.a: Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Sessions III.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor)	Sessions III.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)
Session III.a: Kerkzaal (ground floor).	Sessions III.b. Spiegelzaal (first floor)	Sessions III.c. Grote Zolder (second floor)				
17.30- 19.00h	<p>Keynote Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eva Spies: <i>Being in relation. A perspective on multiplicity in the field of religion.</i> • Kim Knibbe: <i>Conceptualizing religious diversity in a post-colonial Europe.</i> <p>Response: Annalisa Butticci. Chair: Christoph Baumgartner. Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>					
19.30-	<p>Conference Dinner. Academiegebouw, Senaatszaal, Domplein 29.</p>					

Friday, 20 October 2017

10.00-11.15h	<p>Keynote Lecture</p> <p>Peter van der Veer: <i>What is 'Comparison' in Comparative Religion?</i></p> <p>Response: Katja Rakow.</p> <p>Chair: Nella van den Brandt.</p> <p>Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>		
11.30-13.00h	<p>Parallel Sessions IV.</p> <p>Session IV.a.</p> <p>Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>	<p>Session IV.b.</p> <p>Spiegelzaal (first floor).</p>	<p>Session IV.c.</p> <p>Grote Zolder (second floor).</p>
13.00-14.00h	<p>Lunch. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal.</p>		
14.00-15.30h	<p>Parallel Sessions V.</p> <p>Session V.a. (<i>In Dutch</i>).</p> <p>Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>	<p>Session V.b.</p> <p>Spiegelzaal (first floor).</p>	
15.30-16.00h	<p>Refreshments. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>		
16.00-17.00h	<p>Panel and Plenary Discussion: 'Afterthoughts' – how to move on?</p> <p>Contributions by Johan Strijdom, Matthea Westerduin, Mayfair Yang, and Christoph Baumgartner. Chair: Birgit Meyer.</p> <p>Kerkzaal (ground floor).</p>		
17.00h	<p>Close of Conference and Reception. Huiskamer and Kerkzaal.</p>		

Keynote Lectures: Abstracts and Bio-Notes

Kim Knibbe

Conceptualizing religious diversity in a post-colonial Europe.

In recent years, the sociological and anthropological study of religion in Europe has moved well beyond the notion that religion is inevitably declining. There are several flourishing subfields that study religion in the public sphere, transnational and migrant religion, the spiritual turn, and also, religion in relation to secularity. Each of these fields offers interesting conceptualizations and insights, but there are also wide gaps that may lead one to wonder whether they are talking about the same geographical area and whether it is possible to say anything very useful about 'religion in Europe'. Former 'comprehensive theories' on this topic have tended to focus only on Europe as a collection of discrete nation states, where religion has become privatized and spiritualized, and whatever religion one finds is in fact 'migrant religion', carried by 'alien bodies' that will either secularize or remain 'alien'. In addition, as Manuel Vasquez has argued, religion quite often remains the epistemological 'other' of sociology.¹ How then can we develop concepts and epistemologies that reconfigure the sociological relationship to religion? Recent discussions have turned again to the notion that the modernity of Europe needs to be analyzed also in terms of its coloniality. If we conceive of Europe as a geographical area marked by a long history of colonialism, giving rise to different notions of modernity marked by coloniality, how can this help us to make sense of religious diversity and the epistemological, or as some would say, 'ontological' challenges of religion? Through discussing ethnographic material, usually located within different subfields, I will explore these questions.



Kim Knibbe is a senior lecturer in the anthropology and sociology of religion at Groningen University. She is currently directing the 5-year research project *Sexuality, Religion and Secularism. Cultural encounters in the African Diaspora in the Netherlands* (funded by the Netherlands Foundation for Research, NWO). Previously, she has carried out ethnographic research on Catholicism and spirituality in local life in the Netherlands and on Nigerian Pentecostalism in Europe and the Netherlands. Furthermore, she has published a series of theoretical and methodological reflections on studying religion that address how the experience of lived religion, as a mode of experiencing reality that is somehow identified as 'different', can be approached in ethnographic research.

¹ Manuel Vásquez, "Grappling with the Legacy of Modernity: Implications for the Sociology of Religion," ed. Courtney Bender et al., *Religion on the Edge: De-Centering and Re-Centering the Sociology of Religion*, 2012, 23-42.

Eva Spies

Being in relation. A perspective on multiplicity in the field of religion.

This paper takes a look at the dynamics of religious diversity with the help of a relational perspective. Starting from the assumption that religious traditions continuously constitute and transform through their interrelations, the study of diversity should focus on relations and practices of relating rather than on given entities (religious traditions) that come into contact, and mix or repel each other. Thus, I propose a praxeological approach to studying such processes of coming into being in and through practices of relating. My example revolves around a Pentecostal pastor and his wife who are trying to establish a branch of their church in a Malagasy town and “to win the place for Jesus”. Looking at their ways of doing religion shows that actors, places, practices as well as religious communities constitute relationally. Moreover, the ways of doing religion (again) point to the fact that the field of religious studies is not restricted to “religion” only, but includes all kinds of temporary entities and relations. Understood this way, diversity does not refer to the many sub-forms of the one (religion) or the parts of a whole. We may rather conceptualize it as multiplicity, i.e. as historically and culturally located, temporary effects of relations that in turn afford multiple new relations and ways of relating.



Eva Spies is Junior Professor for the Study of Religion with a special focus on Africa at the University of Bayreuth, Department for the Study of Religion.

She has done fieldwork in Niger and Madagascar. Her current research focuses on empirical and theoretical questions of religious diversity, especially on the encounters and mutual perceptions of religious groups in Madagascar in the context of Christian South-South mission. Moreover, she is interested in the interplay of religion and development (cooperation). Here she introduced the concept of religious engineering to analyse the diverse ways of how religious actors work on the ‘improvement’ and future shape of a given society.

Publications directly connected to her lecture: (2013) *Coping with Religious Diversity: Incommensurability and other Perspectives*. In: Janice Boddy und Michael Lambek (eds.): *A Companion to the Anthropology of Religion*. Wiley- Blackwell, 118-136 and (2016) with Ruediger Seesemann: “Plurality and Relationality: New Directions in African Studies”. *Africa Today* 63 (2), 132-139.

Peter van der Veer

What is 'comparison' in Comparative Religion?

This paper deals with the use of comparison in understanding religious phenomena across the world. It offers a critical examination of the location of comparative religion in the social sciences and humanities. Considering the fact that religion is of huge political concern the question is why comparative religion as a discipline is so marginal. The paper tries to answer this question by looking at the changing political context of comparative religion, at the construction of its object and at its methods. It also examines the use of comparison in other relevant disciplines in order to develop a perspective on making comparative religion a more critically important discipline.



Peter van der Veer is Director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity at Göttingen and Distinguished University Professor at Utrecht University. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. He received the Hendrik Muller Award for his social science study of religion.

Van der Veer works on religion and nationalism in Asia and Europe. He has just published *The Value of Comparison* (Duke University Press, 2016). Earlier book publications are *The Modern Spirit of Asia. The Spiritual and the Secular in China and India* (Princeton University Press, 2013), *Gods on Earth* (LSE Monographs, 1988), *Religious Nationalism* (University of California Press, 1994), and *Imperial Encounters* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

Abstracts of Contributions to Opening Plenary Panel on Key Figures in the Study of Religion From Postcolonial Perspectives

Ernst van den Hemel – Meertens Institute

Abraham Kuyper and the Janus face of Dutch pluralism

The figure of Abraham Kuyper is truly a towering figure in the fields of Dutch religious and political history. Generally acknowledged as one of the chief architects of the modern Dutch political system, the impact of Kuyper on famed Dutch pluralism is well-documented and often repeated.

However, due to relative isolation -and sometimes hagiographic tendencies- of Kuyper expertise on the one hand, and a lack of knowledge of religious history in social scientific publications on the other, Kuyper is virtually absent from recent academic efforts to critically revisit the nature and limits of Dutch pluralism. The result is that in times of polarizing debates on pluralism and its concomitant practices of in,- and exclusion, critical insight into one of the foundational figures of the Netherlands is underdeveloped. By discussing postcolonial critiques of Dutch pluralism and contrasting these with existing scholarship on Kuyper's views on colonialism, this paper outlines some of the benefits that might be reaped when this divide is bridged. The paper argues that the case of Kuyper is an example of the need to innovate and combine expertise in contemporary Dutch academia. Kuyper is of central importance for understanding the roots of what I propose to call the Janus face of Dutch pluralism: not pluralism or exclusion but rather pluralism and exclusion.

Arie Molendijk – University of Groningen

Friedrich Max Müller and the Sacred Books of the East

In my talk I shall discuss one of the most ambitious editorial projects of late Victorian Britain: the edition of the fifty substantial volumes of the Sacred Books of the East (1879-1910). The series was edited and conceptualized by Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), a world-famous German-born philologist, orientalist, and religious scholar. Müller and his influential Oxford colleagues secured financial support from the India Office of the British Empire and from Oxford University Press. The series of the Sacred Books of the East contributed significantly to the Western perception of the 'religious' or even 'mystic' East, which was textually represented in English translations. The series was a token of the rise of 'big science' and textualized the East, by selecting their 'sacred books' and bringing them under the power of western scholarship.

Johan Strijdom – University of South Africa

Gerardus van der Leeuw at the Voortrekker Monument: A postcolonial critique of his concept of sacred space.

This paper offers a postcolonial critique of Gerardus van der Leeuw's phenomenological concept of sacred space, by problematizing the message that he delivered at the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, South Africa, on 16 December 1949. On this most sacred day in the calendar of Afrikaner nationalists celebrating the victory of the Voortrekkers over the Zulu king Dingaan a bit more than a century earlier, Van der Leeuw shared the podium with prime minister DF Malan, whose National Party had come to power in 1948 introducing a history of more than four decades of apartheid in South Africa, and delivered a message from

the Dutch people to Afrikaner nationalists. What did Van der Leeuw make of that inauguration? How should we understand the message that he conveyed? In searching for an answer, his speech will be analysed by relating it to an extensive report that he had written after his 11 week visit to South Africa in 1947, when the Smuts government was still in power, as well as pertinent concepts in his phenomenology of religion, particularly his phenomenological concept of sacred space. By comparing and contrasting Van der Leeuw's concept of sacred space with David Chidester's critical concept of sacred space, focusing on the Voortrekker Monument as case study, I will offer a critique of Van der Leeuw's concept of sacred space from a postcolonial perspective and South African location.

Detailed List of Parallel Sessions

Thursday, 19 October

Slot I: 11.30-13.00

Session I.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Social Imaginaries between Articulate and Inarticulate Religion: Questioning the Possibility of Generalization across Religious Diversity

- Laurens ten Kate, University of Humanistic Studies: Introduction and chair.
- Hans Alma and Christa Anbeek, University of Humanistic Studies: *Social Imaginaries and the Dynamics of Worldviewing*.
- Erin Wilson, University of Groningen: *Social Imaginaries and the Challenges of Post-Colonialism*.

Session I.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Can Religion Speak? Three Case Studies from Historians

- Babette Hellemans, University of Groningen: Medieval Monotheism from a Pluralistic Angle: Overcoming the Hegemony of Roman Catholicism in the Middle Ages.
- Clemens Six, University of Groningen: *Decolonizing religious pluralism and secularism in South and Southeast Asia after 1945*.
- Ya-Pei Kuo, University of Groningen: *Religious Pragmatism and Utilitarianism in Modern China*.

Chair: Mayfair Yang, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Session I.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

- Peter-Ben Smit, Utrecht University: *Generalization – Comparison – Evaluation? Van der Leeuw's Phenomenology and Cultural Criticism Reconsidered*.
- Christoph Gröll, University of Groningen: *Exploring the religious/secular divide in European responses to displacement*.
- Jelle Wiering, University of Groningen: *The Curious Case of the Condom: Sexual Enchantment in the Netherlands*.

Chair: William Arfman, Utrecht University & Tilburg University.

Slot II: 13.45-15.15h

Session II.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Ritual Cities: The Politics of Sacred Spectacle (continues after the break)

- Tammy Wilks, University of Cape Town: *Material Opacity: Preserving Religion for a Postcolonial Viewership.*
- Markha Valenta, Radboud University Nijmegen: *The Fluid and the Solid Monumental (Dalit) Bodies on the Move.*
- Irene Stengs, Meertens Institute: *The Spectacle of Mourning King Bhumibol Blasphemy and the Politics of Commemoration in Present-day Thailand.*

Chair: Irene Stengs, Meertens Institute Amsterdam.

Session II.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Negotiations of Religious and Secular Gender Scripts in Women's Conversions in Contemporary Western Europe

- Nella van den Brandt, Utrecht University: *Producing Differences: Narratives about Women's Conversion across West-European Postcolonial Contexts.*
- Lieke Schrijvers, Utrecht University: *Gender Scripts and the Construction of Sexual Ethics among Evangelical and Muslim Converts in the Netherlands.*
- Mariecke van den Berg, Utrecht University: *Scripting Religious and Gender Transformations: Comparing Transgender and Conversion Narratives.*

Chair: Nina ter Laan, Utrecht University.

Session II.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

- Antonia Ruspolini, University of Perugia: *Being Religious without Religion. Literature as a Way of Representing Religious Diversity in Mozambique.*
- Benedikt Pontzen, University of Bayreuth: *How One Religion Sees Another. Muslims' Framings of "African Traditional Religion" in Asante (Ghana).*
- Nathal Dessing, Leiden University: *No More Boundaries: The Study of Language, Religion, and Diversity.*

Chair: Christoph Baumgartner, Utrecht University.

Slot III: 15.45-17.15h

Session III.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Ritual Cities: The Politics of Sacred Spectacle (continuation of section before the break).

- Duane Jethro, Humboldt University of Berlin: *Of Ruins and Revival: Heritage Formation, Material Religion and Khoisan Indigeneity in Post-Apartheid South Africa.*
- Markus Balkenhol, Meertens Institute: *Ancestor Spectacle. Negotiating black citizenship in the Netherlands.*
- Ernst van den Hemel, Meertens Institute: *Dutch Passion for 'The Passion' How to Understand the Unexpected Popularity of Religious Spectacle in Postsecular Netherlands.*

Chair: Irene Stengs, Meertens Institute Amsterdam.

Session III.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Religious Diversity and Hegemonic 'High Modernism' in China

- Adam Chau, University of Cambridge: *Modalities of Doing Religion as Model of Religious Diversity and Religious Pluralism.*
- Mayfair Yang, University of California: *Gendered Religiosity: Patriarchal Structures and Women's Agency in Coastal China.*
- Xiaoxuan Wang, Max Planck Institute of Religious & Ethnic Diversity: *The Logic of "Development" and New Religious Governance in China.*
- Bram Colijn, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. *Religious Diversity and the Individualization of Chinese Society.*

Discussant: Peter van der Veer, MPI for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen.

Chair: Mayfair Yang, University of California Santa Barbara.

Session III.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

- Arjen Buitelaar, Tilburg University: *Religious Empathy: A New Style Phenomenological Approach to the Study of Religion.*
- Rodrigo Toniol, University of Campinas / University of Utrecht: *Capturing Spirituality and Settling Religion.*
- Lieke Wijnia, University of Groningen: *Envisioning the Spiritual. Theorizing Mondrian's Path to Abstraction.*

Chair: Markus Davidsen, Leiden University.

Friday, 20 October

Slot IV: 11.30-13.00

Session IV.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Beyond critiquing the liberal-Protestant bias in religious studies; getting racialization, securitization, and coloniality into focus

- Yolande Jansen, University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *'A crooked and passion laden mirror'; Jewish and Muslim Minorities in Europe as a European Question.*
- Anna Blijdenstein, University of Amsterdam. *Liberalism and Religion's Dark Sides. Laborde's Disaggregative Approach to Religion.*
- Matthea Westerduin, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *How supersessionism undermines claims for equality. Exploring relations between Christian theological tropes, race/coloniality, and the secular in Western Europe.*

Chair: Pooyan Tamimi Arab, Utrecht University.

Session IV.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Lusospheres: Global Trajectories of Brazilian Religion

- Martijn Oosterbaan, Utrecht University and Linda van de Kamp, University of Amsterdam: *Lusospheres: Global Trajectories of Brazilian Religion.*
- Cristina Rocha, University of Western Sydney: *How Religions Travel: Comparing the John of God Movement and a Brazilian Migrant Church.*
- Joana Bahia, State University of Rio de Janeiro: *The Transnationalization of Afro-Brazilian Religions in Germany.*
- Andrea Damacena Martins, Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná: *Reshaping Belonging and Religion: Meanings and Practices of the Brazilian Charismatic Catholic Movement in The Netherlands.*

Response by Katja Rakow, Utrecht University.

Chair: Linda van de Kamp, University of Amsterdam.

Session IV.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

- Ulrike Brunotte, Maastricht University: *The "Beautiful Jewess" as Frontier Figure in Europe's Internal Colonialism Some Remarks on the Intertwinement of Orientalism and Antisemitism.*
- William Arfman, Utrecht University & Tilburg University: *On Borders: Reconsidering Liminality in Religion (-ious?) Studies.*
- Pieter Boersema, University of Leuven: *A pluralistic society needs an empiric non-normative cultural comparison model open to religions.*

Chair: Lieke Wijnia, University of Groningen.

Slot V: 14.00-15.30

Session V.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Rondetafeldiscussie: Onderwijs over religie in een pluralistische wereld (*in Dutch*)

Bijdragen van

- Markus Davidsen, Leiden University.
- Ammeke Kateman, University of Amsterdam.
- Marleen Lammers, Vereniging van openbare en algemeen toegankelijke scholen.
- Heleen Murre van der Berg, Radboud University Nijmegen & NOSTER.
- Suzanne Roggeveen, University of Amsterdam.
- Joël Valk, Corderius College.
- Paul Vermeer, Radboud University Nijmegen.
- Guido Versteegh, Radboud University Nijmegen.

Chair: Gerard Wiegers, University of Amsterdam.

Session V.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Common pathways: Directions and challenges for the ethnographic comparison of Muslims and Christians.

- Hansjörg Dilger, Free University of Berlin: *The Desire to Order: Moral, Political and Epistemological Uncertainties in Doing Fieldwork on Christian and Muslim Schools in Dar es Salaam.*
- Daniel Nilsson DeHanas, King's College London: *Routes of Participation: Developing Comparative Vocabularies for Muslim and Christian Civic Engagement in London.*
- Daan Beekers, Utrecht University: *Pursuing a Religious Path under Secular Conditions: Construing Muslim-Christian Comparability and the Politics of Distinction in the Netherlands.*

Discussant: Peter van der Veer, MPI for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen.

Chair: Birgit Meyer, Utrecht University.

Abstracts of Panels and Papers in Parallel Sessions

Slot I: Thursday, 19 October, 11.30-13.00h.

Session I.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Social Imaginaries between Articulate and Inarticulate Religion: Questioning the Possibility of Generalization across Religious Diversity

The call for papers for this conference states that the possibility to speak about religion in general terms has been challenged. How can we do justice to religious difference and diversity in our research and conceptualizations? Approaches that do justice to the multi-dimensionality of religions and worldviews are more promising in this regard than approaches that privilege text above other religious forms of expression. Within a religious studies framework Ninian Smart distinguishes seven dimensions in religious and non-religious worldviews on which they can both differ and show similarities. Comparative approaches to religion can do far more justice to the complexity of the matter when such multi-dimensionality is considered.

Charles Taylor provides another approach that does justice to the diversity in religious forms of expression: he stresses that human experiences only acquire (religious) meaning, when they are articulated and shared with others. We need 'subtle languages' to accomplish this: poetry rather than rational argumentation, art and other material expressions, music, ritual, narratives. These are part of 'social imaginaries' that are highly diverse across (sub)cultures and that work largely on an implicit level, but are very influential in shaping religious life. Social imaginaries enable us to study religion as a dynamic practice - rather than a phenomenon with strict boundaries - in which the person is both an actor in finding religious forms of expression, a recipient of culturally acquired meanings, and a witness to that which transcends articulation.

In our panel, we will address the (im)possibility of generalizing concepts and methods for the study of religion from the point of view of its multi-dimensionality and the social imaginaries shaping practical spaces for this multi-dimensionality. Christa Anbeek and Hans Alma introduce the notion of a 'dynamics of world viewing' that understands the search for religious forms of expression as a continuing practice that can be examined in its diverse dimensions and in its polarity of agency and vulnerability, of activity and receptivity. They stress the importance of 'world viewing dialogues' in the face of the current highly plural religious field. Erin Wilson will place these questions in the context of the study of religion (and religions) in a postcolonial configuration.

Contributions:

- **Laurens ten Kate – University of Humanistic Studies Utrecht:** Introduction and chair.
- **Hans Alma and Christa Anbeek – University of Humanistic Studies Utrecht:** *Social Imaginaries and the Dynamics of Worldviewing.*
- **Erin Wilson – University of Groningen:** *Social Imaginaries and the Challenges of Post-Colonialism.*

Session I.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Can Religion Speak? Three Case Studies from Historians

In historical scholarship the turning point of the period of the Enlightenment has often been claimed to shed a fatal light on the continuous existence of religion. Fatal, that is, because from this period onward the understanding of religion was to be connected with irrationality, superstition and the cloudy world of the ancien régime. As a result, the meaning of the concept of religion has become defensive as being forcibly opposed to rationality. The effect on theology – and more general theological discourse, under the aegis of the so-called Protestant bias – has been huge. This approach has been focused on an exclusively Christian scope too. Thanks to the emergence of interest in comparative approaches of religion in the post-WWII era, and especially since post-colonialism, scholarship has developed a much more pluralistic approach of religion by taking models from the social sciences, economics and semiotics as a new point of departure. Our panel seeks to open up a discussion on the implications of this pluralistic approach for the discipline of history.

Three historians from different fields – medieval Europe, modern China and early-postcolonial South-East Asia – will present a pitch-talk in which they sketch the essence of the question of religion in their own field and how (post-)colonial studies have contributed in taking a fresh approach of religion as a concept. The title of the panel refers to Spivak's famous article on the subaltern and will function as a leading question throughout the discussion.

Babette Hellemans will give a brief overview of approaches in historical anthropology within the field of medieval studies. She will furthermore discuss the impact of a long-term approach on history as a historiographical device. *Clemens Six* asks what historians working in the field of contemporary global history could contribute to a theoretical and empirical understanding of religious diversity. The history of South and South-East Asian societies after the Second World War provide some valuable lessons on the contested meaning of religious pluralism in the context of decolonization. *Ya-pei Kuo* discusses China's recent ideological shift from militant atheism to religious tolerance, and argues that the Chinese Communist Party, since the 1920s, has consistently deployed multiple secularist accounts to construct religion's social meaning. Insofar as these accounts continue to frame the current conciliatory policy towards religion, "can religion speak?" remains a pertinent question in China.

- **Babette Hellemans – University of Groningen:** *Medieval Monotheism from a Pluralistic Angle: Overcoming the Hegemony of Roman Catholicism in the Middle Ages.*
- **Clemens Six – University of Groningen:** *Decolonizing religious pluralism and secularism in South and Southeast Asia after 1945.*
- **Ya-Pei Kuo – University of Groningen:** *Religious Pragmatism and Utilitarianism in Modern China.*

Session I.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

Peter-Ben Smit – Utrecht University & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *Generalization – Comparison – Evaluation? Van der Leeuw’s Phenomenology and Cultural Criticism Reconsidered.*

When reading Van der Leeuw’s *Phänomenologie*, as well as other early works of from the phenomenology of religion as it emerged as a discipline indebted to the encounter of Christianity with other religions, it is apparent that for him a generalizing approach serves the aim of enabling the (Western) scholar to compare various religious traditions. The term religion functions as an umbrella concept to facilitate comparison and the phenomena appertaining to religion enable more detailed comparison. Implicitly, between the lines, and explicitly, although less frequently, Van der Leeuw also moves beyond comparison and engages in the evaluation of religious traditions. His criterion seems to be what he holds to be the essence of true religion. In his work beyond the phenomenology of religions strictly speaking, Van der Leeuw positioned himself as an outspoken cultural critic. It can even be said that his phenomenology of the religions was both an expression of this role as a critic and public intellectual and part of the intellectual foundation of the positions that he took. Contemporary religious studies do not commonly position themselves as evaluators of religious traditions, rather, the aim is description, understanding and underlining the societal significance of religion and the need for better insight into it. Yet, scholars certainly do have their preferences, their likes and dislikes in relation to religions. In fact, scholars of religion frequently play roles as public intellectuals as well. This paper outlines key aspects of the interrelationship between generalization, comparison and evaluation in Van der Leeuw’s work and addresses the question as to whether a similar move would be legitimate in contemporary religious studies and the history of Christianity, with a starting point in the material approach to religion, which in many ways reminds of Van der Leeuw’s own emphasis on sacramentality, both in his phenomenological and in his theological work.

Christoph Grüll – University of Groningen: *Exploring the religious/secular divide in European responses to displacement.*

In this theoretically informed paper, I will examine the interrelation of secularism and current European responses to displacement. While religious institutions and organizations participate in a long tradition of decentralized practices of asylum and sanctuary, they are excluded from most public and academic discourse on the challenges that European nation-states and their societies face in the current crisis. Central among these challenges is the task to find middle grounds between state-centric and cosmopolitan approaches to forced migration, that is, to negotiate between national interests and international obligations, between communal well-being and the protection of individuals as bearers of human rights. While the impasse between both approaches is well-known in debates on migration and justice, the impact of secularism on this debate is yet understudied.

Based on literature, I will argue that one of the particular challenges that EU states face in their responses to the global displacement crisis lies in their particular history of secularization. One of the effects of this is that religious and faith-based actors are rarely considered in terms of their experiences, resources, and potential contributions to political and societal responses to humanitarian crises, but also that vital elements of encounters with the other are marginalized or suppressed. I will demonstrate that central concepts in responses to displacement such as hospitality and solidarity are open to more inclusive interpretations in both state-centric as well

as cosmopolitan orientations once the secular/religious binary is included in our investigations. I suggest that a particular potential for empirical studies lies with faith-based societal actors and community initiatives situated below the level of the nation-state while operating with conceptions of justice and hospitality that look beyond the nation-state.

Jelle Wiering – University of Groningen: *The Curious Case of the Condom: Sexual Enchantment in the Netherlands.*

Many sexual health-care organizations in the Netherlands consider the condom a crucial contraceptive, which helps to prevent all kinds of sexual problems, and which is therefore in need of spread among people. The findings from my fieldwork among such organizations illustrate however that some religious people that these organizations encounter in their work, maintain different views. These people, who themselves or their (grand) parents have a background in Syria, Eritrea, Morocco, or Turkey, rather perceive this object as a representative of secular perceptions of sexuality, and hence as an unwanted 'gadget' that actually stimulates people to urge their engagement in sex. Inspired by this notion of the condom, this paper analyzes the object as a manifestation of the secular, as a secular material form. In doing so, it illustrates that this disapproval of the condom is in fact part of a larger dismay among some Dutch about what they take as an ongoing violation of the enchanted status of sex. This dissatisfaction, the paper argues, is one side of a largely implicit Dutch debate going on, which is shared by people of different geo-historical backgrounds and worldviews. This debate about the enchanted status of sex becomes particularly clear in sexual educations: on the one hand, sex educators are required to 'break taboos', explicitly pointing out all physical details of sex. On the other hand, the educations are to be taught cautiously, not unraveling the beautiful mystery of sex, which might, for instance, happen as a consequence of an incorrect introduction of the condom. Highlighting this paradox, the paper illustrates the importance of examining secular materialities for religious studies.

Slot II: Thursday, 19 October, 13.45-15.15h.

Session II.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Ritual Cities: The Politics of Sacred Spectacle (continues after the break; the description includes Session III.a.)

This panel offers a comparative, critical engagement with contemporary spectacles that religion and the nation. The practices considered in the different papers take shape in widely divergent urban settings that range from Europe to Asia. All, however, share a context in which religious and secular dimensions overlap and interact in complex contestations of national identity, power, resources and destiny. Correspondingly, these spectacular events highlight the religious workings of modern national communities alongside the secular workings of religious identity politics.

The purpose of the panel is to juxtapose four case studies the better to tease out both their local/national specificities and their commonalities across the boundaries of civilization, nation-state and religion. The presentations all highlight different dimensions of sacred spectacle: *The Passion* in post-Christian Leeuwarden, the Netherlands; nationalist commemoration of Khun Bhumibol Adulyadej in Buddhist Bangkok, Thailand; the Dalit neo-Buddhist social reformer BR

Ambedkar in religiously pluralist Mumbai, India; and the ancestral spirits of the Afro-Surinamese Winti religion in postcolonial Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

All papers entail the public commemoration of (semi-)deified historical figures through processions tied to sacred sites, icons, relics, images and monuments. Moreover:

1. the ritualized venerations all take place within urban settings that historically were shaped by their embeddedness in colonial relations and networks, even as in recent decades their lived and built environment has been subject to the exigencies of a global neoliberalism that has intervened, sometimes deeply, in the material, socio-economic, political and religious fabric of the cities;
2. the contests over national identity that the spectacles stage all take place within different iterations of the modern nation-state in which religion and nation are articulated in particular ways; and
3. each event is spectacularly mediated and mediatized by (photographic/filmic/digital) media that constitute global technologies whose effect has been simultaneously to homogenize and diversify the national, religious and political life-worlds into which they are incorporated.

Notwithstanding significant divergences of religion, culture, politics and geography, the events addressed in our papers are collectively embedded in a global field in which neoliberal (post-colonial) urbanity, mediated nationalism, and religious-secular politics are reproduced as a common repertoire of practices with divergent effects. This allows all of us to engage the panel topic not just individually but in dialogue with one another while addressing the ways in which secularization and sacralization, the religious and the national are vitally entangled in contemporary politicized practices of mass veneration in countries as different as the Netherlands, Thailand and India.

Tammy Wilks – University of Cape Town: *Material Opacity: Preserving Religion for a Postcolonial Viewership.*

This paper explores the recent intensification of projects to restore and preserve religious sites in Kenya. It will be shown how the opacity of form in the restoration and preservation of religious sites, crafts bounded notions of history and identity through their prescribed materiality, that subverts conversation and engagement since their opaque aesthetic directs a very linear relationship between the viewer and the form. In *Fort Jesus* in Mombasa, opacity is outlined in the neatening of crude corrosive lines and in the smoothing of jagged curvatures to confirm intension rather than suggestibility. Similarly, the *Colour in Faith* project envelops Nairobi's 'sacred space' in yellow paint to restore national unity. In both cases, Kenya demonstrates how the anxiety to preserve and restore the primacy of material form in religious sites, helps reference religion from its abstraction and complexity as an opaque concept and experience. The affect will be discussed through a new retrograde pilgrimage tourism of local religions during high tourist seasons (Fort Jesus) or days of commemoration (Colour in Faith) to offset the opacity of identity the state has defined.

Markha Valenta - Radboud University Nijmegen: *The Fluid and the Solid Monumental (Dalit) Bodies on the Move.*

This paper will consider the dynamic relation between three iconic Ambedkarite sites in Mumbai and the traffic in Dalit bodies and politics that they engender. The analysis begins from the

argument that modernity is not so much distinguished by its secularism as that modern secularism masks the religiosity of modernity. Taking seriously the fluid relation between religion, politics and modernization enables, in turn, a richer and more incisive engagement with the core topic: the dynamic between the physical, social, symbolic and existential mobility of neo-Buddhist Dalits put into motion by Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism; the furious violence of those seeking to keep them "in place"; and the ways Ambedkarite "urban monumental emplacements" enact complex relations to an Indian nation-state that simultaneously eviscerates and brutalizes, grudgingly accommodates and slyly coopts revolutionary Dalit Buddhist engagement.

Irene Stengs – Meertens Institute: *The Spectacle of Mourning King Bhumibol Blasphemy and the Politics of Commemoration in Present-day Thailand.*

Upon the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (October 13, 2016) it was made mandatory by order of the military junta for each individual to express grief and mourning when appearing in public space. Within 24 hours, the Thai nation had turned black & white: clothing, television, social media. Backed by the world's most rigid and most severe lese majesty law, people who – to the opinion of certain others – did not sufficiently comply with the obligations were subject to witch-hunts. In the meantime, images of thousands of people, chanting, in tears, singing, lighted candles, wearing only black or white and carrying portraits of the king went global, confirming stereotypical, (western) romantic ideas about the special, affectionate relationship between Thai kings and their subjects. The Tourist Association of Thailand's use of recordings of a mass commemoration held at Bangkok's sacred center (sanam luang) to promote Thailand with a voice-over telling that 'the nation demonstrated its solidarity in their celebration of Thainess' (Philips 2017) are but one demonstration of the orchestration and political use of 'mourning spectacles' in a country tormented by increasing political division and suppression. This paper addresses the ambiguous and complicated relationship between Thai perceptions of Buddhist kingship and the increasing threat of being accused of blasphemy under the power of the lese majesty law. Foregrounding the aesthetics of a mourning nation, I aim to shed light on the functioning of the rule of the state, and how this rule works through both repression and concealment.

Session II.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Negotiations of Religious and Secular Gender Scripts in Women's Conversions in Contemporary Western Europe

This panel takes up the challenge of discussing the (im)possibility of generalizing concepts and methods in the study of religion in contemporary Western postcolonial contexts. It approaches the issue of the comparative study of religion in an innovative way: going beyond a traditional approach in which religions are studied as separate entities, this panel intervenes by setting up a comparative approach at three different levels: it thematises the production of religious differences in visual culture; the experience of religious difference and change in female converts lives; and the construction of notions of transformation in various (non)religious narratives. The panel innovatively proposes the concept of gender script as enabling the study of religious diversity from a critical gender and sexuality perspective. We argue that this concept provides a comparative framework to discuss simultaneously the production, construction and experience of religious and secular discourses about difference, conversion

and trans/formation. The panel understands gender scripts as encompassing explicit and implicit norms, rules and guidelines about men and women's position and roles; as regulated by authority structures, and as often constructing an ideal subject. In the context of researching visual culture, female conversion, and narratives of trans/formation, we investigate to what extent secular or religious scripts overlap or conflict, and if and how conversion could be understood as a change of such scripts (Davidman & Greil 2007; Jouili 2015). The panel emerges from a research project on women, emancipation and conversion that aims to understand the construction, negotiation and contestation of religious and secular discourses through using various methodological approaches. Over the last decades, in academic and public debates situated in Western postcolonial and (post)secular contexts, the idea that women's emancipation and religion are fundamentally conflicting has gained plausibility. The question why women are attracted to and supportive of religious groups that seem designed to perpetuate their subordination (Chong 2006: 697) implies a paradox. Not religious women per se, but rather the paradox suggested by the question, we argue, needs to be unpacked in order to further understand the production and interactions of religious and secular discourses. While public understandings especially problematize Islam in relation to women's emancipation and sexual freedom, we broaden the discussion through a comparative analysis of the framings and experiences of various religious traditions. Such a broadening of research in our postcolonial context is crucial, we argue, as it starts from: the assumption that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are both similar and different when it comes to social positions and experiences; as well as the recognition and insistence that all belong intrinsically to European societies and histories. The first paper analyses public debates and visual culture about women's conversion to theorize the ways in which multiple religious differences across West-European contexts are produced. The second paper concerns the daily life negotiations of gender scripts by a close reading, based on ethnographic research, of the construction and negotiation of sexual ethics among Islamic and Evangelical converts in the Netherlands. The third paper compares the role of scripts in transgender narratives and narratives of religious transformation.

- **Nella van den Brandt – Utrecht University:** *Producing Differences: Narratives about Women's Conversion across West-European Postcolonial Contexts.*
- **Lieke Schrijvers – Utrecht University:** *Gender Scripts and the Construction of Sexual Ethics among Evangelical and Muslim Converts in the Netherlands.*
- **Mariecke van den Berg – Utrecht University:** *Scripting Religious and Gender Transformations: Comparing Transgender and Conversion Narratives.*

References:

- Chong, K.H. (2006). Negotiating Patriarchy: South Korean Evangelical Women and the Politics of Gender. *Gender & Society*, 20(6), 697-724.
- Davidman, L, and Greil, A.L. (2007). Characters in Search of a Script: The Exit Narratives of Formerly Ultra-Orthodox Jews. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46(2), 201-216.
- Jouili, J. (2015). "'My Label Is Not a Feminist: It Is Simply Muslim': Beyond Emancipation Versus Submission', chapter 4 in: *Pious Practice and Secular Constraints: Women in the Islamic Revival in Europe*, Duke University Press.

Session II.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

Antonia Ruspolini – University of Perugia: *Being Religious without Religion. Literature as a Way of Representing Religious Diversity in Mozambique.*

Religion has always been utterly important for the attempt to understand a foreign culture, as well as ours. Religion can be undoubtedly considered as a common ground for many cultures throughout the world, no less than a cross-cultural universal, according to some scholars. By consequence, it is evident how religion, the study related to it and the analysis of its implications must be taken into account in that peculiar and difficult process which is the assessment of a certain culture or, generally speaking, a human dimension.

Colonialism altered and subverted all hues of culture in the invaded nations, causing contaminations and huge changes in the way people perceived themselves, their culture and their religion. But, even before the era of colonialism began, one of the typical traits of Africa was its multiple and diverse religious pattern. The result was the coexistence, not always peaceful, of many religious and spiritual feelings, beliefs and thoughts.

In fact, post-colonial contexts are now characterized by a unique and fascinating hybrid culture in which religion cannot be considered a mere monolithic component; on the contrary, the issue of religion and its categorization have been profoundly changed and they found a place of living in the written page.

The aim of this paper is to cast a light on the fruitful bond between literature and religion in the post-colony and to discuss how and why poems, novels and short stories provided and are still providing a chance and a mean of representation and problematization of religious diversity in post-colonial context.

The case study of this present work is a lusophone country, namely Mozambique. It is a peculiar example since it is not only characterized by multiple beliefs and worships, but also because in the epoch of the war against Portuguese empire and the civil war that broke up shortly after, ancestral and atavistic religious beliefs were condemned and in some cases even challenged because they were seen merely as a folkloristic dimension that could not be brought into the modern nation.

In order to achieve a broader understanding of the liaison represented by the written page and religion, it is my intention to highlight some meaningful features of Mozambican literature by influential authors, such as Mia Couto and João Paulo Borges Coelho, trying to demonstrate that literature is an effective location for representing religious diversity since religion, spirituality and "otherworldliness" possess a central and pivotal role in fiction.

Benedikt Pontzen – University of Bayreuth: *How One Religion Sees Another. Muslims' Framings of "African Traditional Religion" in Asante (Ghana).*

As an ethnographic contribution to the critical reflection of scientific concepts to study the dynamics of religious diversity in postcolonial configurations, my paper discusses what one can gain not only from describing the various takes of those involved in these dynamics, but from considering these as actual theory. In a religiously diverse country like Ghana, where Christianity, Islam, and "African Traditional Religion" co-exist in the same settings, actors from these traditions constantly interact with and relate to each other. In these open and, at times, conflictual processes, they do not only relate to but conceive of each other and their religious traditions. In this paper, I discuss the ways in which Muslims in Asante conceive of "ATR," drawing on ethnographic fieldwork. In (local) Islamic discourses, "ATR" is commonly referred to

as *bōkā* – a Hausa term, which is difficult, if not impossible, to translate into English, referring to specific dealings with spiritual entities. The term “religion” is not of much help here, as neither Muslims nor “ATR” practitioners conceive *bōkā* as religion. There is no conceptual equality between the two traditions on that level; but Muslims also employ Islamic vocabularies, speaking of *jinni* or *shirk* when referring to “ATR.” Thus, Muslims’ conceiving of “ATR” in Asante is at once a process of differentiations and translations that are made in one-for-one exchanges and not by a universal middle term. Conversely, Muslims also mobilize “ATR” conceptions and narratives in their Islamic discourses. Thereby, “ATR” has its reverberations in these too, either as critique or affirmation of certain imaginaries and practices. I discuss how considering these local categorizations and comparisons not only poses a challenge to pre-established Western terms and concepts but also prompts one to rethink them.

Nathal Dessing – Leiden University: *No More Boundaries: The Study of Language, Religion, and Diversity.*

This paper will take major shifts in the study of language and diversity as its starting point. The study of language has seen a paradigmatic turn from assumptions of homogeneity, stability, and boundedness of languages to concern with mobility, mixing, language ideology, and contextualization. I will discuss the relevance of this turn for the study of religion. For example, does it make sense, following language studies, to denaturalize the idea of distinct religions? And if there are no “native speakers” of a specific religion, how can we then best study religious belonging? This paper aims to offer a deep comparison and to provide on that basis new insights for the study of religious diversity.

Slot III: Thursday, 19 October, 15.45-17.15h.

Session III.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Ritual Cities: The Politics of Sacred Spectacle (continuation of section before the break).

Duane Jethro – Humboldt University of Berlin: *Of Ruins and Revival: Heritage Formation, Material Religion and Khoisan Indigeneity in Post-Apartheid South Africa.*

Taking up the relationship between material religion, heritage and indigenous identity in post-apartheid South Africa, this paper discusses how religious resources were mobilised to ‘revive’ ‘lost’ forms of Khoisan indigenous identity in urban Cape Town. First, the paper shows how Khoisan indigenous identity was ‘rediscovered’ and ‘revived’ by a small group of stakeholders through the enactment of reinvented indigenous religious rituals, the adoption of indigenous styles of dress and the redeployment of indigenous language. This indigenous activist campaign was thoroughly material and entangled in discourses of heritage and belonging, reflected in particular, the destruction of monuments and the building of indigenous homes on important heritage sites in the city. The paper draws on David Chidester’s work on the construction of knowledge about religion in South Africa to show how, historically, the recognition of Khoisan indigenous religion shifted according to the expansion of the colonial frontier and the containment of the local population. Mobilising their revival in contemporary South Africa, however, Khoisan activists explicitly invoked a colonial imaginary, using Birgit Meyer’s (2015: 14) notion of ‘an interlaced sets of representations around particular issues that govern

people's ways of being in the world', to frame their struggle for recognition as a marginalised minority suffering the burden of ongoing historical violence. For this group, then, post-apartheid South Africa was a post-colonial arena for the re-imagining and re-materialisation of indigenous religion and identity. Second, I spotlight how the state seized upon Khoisan indigenous cultural motifs, 'reviving the ruins' of Khoi language and images, translated and up-scaled them for national heritage projects and sovereign signification. Ultimately, the paper contributes to the debate about religion in diverse contexts by signaling a practical example of how religion, religious ideas and post-colonial imaginaries are mobilised for indigenous revival and renewal.

Markus Balkenhol, Meertens Institute: *Ancestor Spectacle. Negotiating black citizenship in the Netherlands.*

In the past 20 years, Dutch citizens of African-Surinamese descent have been actively searching for a diasporic identity in the Netherlands. Through commemorations of slavery, antiracist projects, and art they articulate their position as black citizens in and of the Dutch nation. This paper focuses on the particular case of a 'contemporary' ancestor mask that was introduced into the Afro-Surinamese Winti religion by the Winti priestess Marian Markelo. The mask is based on a wooden Yoruba mask from the Dutch Africa museum's collection, which was digitally reproduced by the Dutch artist Boris van Berkum. The mask now figures in different religious and secular rituals such as ancestor worships, cultural heritage shows, a documentary, a museum exhibition, and the national commemoration of slavery in Amsterdam where it is showcased in front of a national audience. In other words, the mask is a spectacle. Even though the mask itself is not a sacred, let alone an animate object, what to make of the emphasis on religion and spirits? In this presentation I argue that in the mask project the boundaries between the sacred and the profane are fluid and defy a clear cut definition. Investigating this fluidity I show that by employing digital reproduction technology the makers of the mask tap into the secular and religious power of images in an attempt to create a spectacular effect. I suggest that the makers' attempt to mobilize this power of images is intended as an intervention in debates about Dutchness and diasporic identity.

Ernst van den Hemel - Meertens Institute: *Dutch Passion for 'The Passion' How to Understand the Unexpected Popularity of Religious Spectacle in Postsecular Netherlands.*

'The Passion' is a televised spectacle which since 2011 has attracted up to 3.5 million television viewers, tens of thousands of attendants, and hundreds of thousands of participants in the 'virtual procession' who view or take part in the story of the suffering of Christ. 'The Passion', a musical featuring Dutch pop songs, performed by Dutch singers and celebrities and interspersed with social media interactions and references to contemporary secular reality, is a highly modernized and successful version of that medieval European tradition: the passion play.

The unexpected success of 'The Passion' raised questions: is this religion or mere entertainment? These questions are tied to wider debates about the status of religion in contemporary Dutch society. Organizers, churches, and confessional political parties frame the remarkable popularity of the Passion as proof of the unabiding or renewed relevance of the life of Christ and Christianity for a society in crisis. Polling data indicates that a minority of participants experience 'The Passion' as strengthening faith (God in Nederland 2016). Participants frequently indicate that cultural enjoyment and 'togetherness' are important

elements for participating in 'The Passion'. Critics have argued that 'The Passion' is 'mere entertainment' having little or nothing to do with 'real' religion.

In order to shed light on these complexities, this paper focuses on contemporary processes of culturalization, in which both religious and secular dimensions are claimed to be part of Dutch national identity, heritage or 'Judeo-Christian tradition'. 'The Passion' allows us to analyze how religion and secularity are part of the mediation and staging of individual emotions and collective passions in contemporary postsecular Netherlands. The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Leeuwarden during Easter 2016, visual analysis of the televised spectacle and social media data, harvested from the 'virtual procession'.

Session III.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Religious Diversity and Hegemonic 'High Modernism' in China

In modern China, the fate of traditional Chinese religiosities was intertwined with semi-colonialism, postcoloniality, and what James C. Scott called "High Modernism." High Modernism is the set of discourses that upheld the lofty goals and ideals of modernist blind faith in progress, modernization, development, revolution, and grand social engineering. Different ideologies, whether socialism, liberal capitalism, architectural modernism, all shared in the convictions of High Modernism. The social evolutionist push to leave behind "backwardness," the Enlightenment promise of freedom of the individual, or the Marxist narrative of liberation of the peasants and workers, all promised liberation by destroying the traditional Chinese "feudal" culture. Since China was a poor underdeveloped country, it was especially dazzled by High Modernism and in the rush for revolution and economic development, it experienced one of the most radical and systematic destructions of traditional religious culture. Two outcomes can be discerned in this process of revolutionary modernization: 1) the greatest beneficiary and agent of religious destruction and later, religious revival which required religious governance, was the modern expansionary state; 2) the great diversity of religious traditions and innumerable localized religious cultures were reduced into simplified categories by state and intellectual agents who painted the religion landscape as the uniform antithesis of progress and modernization.

This panel assembles four papers to bring back our awareness of Chinese religious diversity and counter the effects of High Modernism. By firmly embedding itself in a different area of China through fieldwork, each paper also highlights the diversity of localities and regions in China's religious terrain. Based on fieldwork in rural Shaanxi, *Adam Chau's* paper challenges the state-imposed classification of Chinese religiosities into the fixed five religions of China, each with their attendant state-governing bureaucracies and discrete constituencies. *Mayfair Yang* shows how, within traditional Chinese popular religions, there are multiple spaces for women's religious agency, including leadership initiatives, that can counter-balance the patriarchal power produced by the patrilineal kinship system. Thus, state feminism and Western liberal feminism are not the sole sources of women's agency. *Wang Xiaoxuan's* paper shows how different religious traditions in Wenzhou have reacted differently to the latest installment of state religious control, where, instead of calling for religious destruction, the language of "development" ushers in a new mode of state governance over religious practice. Based on fieldwork in Fujian, *Bram Colijn's* paper addresses an important aspect of China's religious diversity, how different religious traditions interact, conflict, or challenge each other. He explores how Christians, Buddhists, Daoists, and others relate to each other when they belong to the same family or kinship network.

Adam Chau - University of Cambridge: *Modalities of Doing Religion as Model of Religious Diversity and Religious Pluralism.*

In this paper I shall advocate understanding religious diversity not in terms of fetishized discrete religious traditions (e.g. Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Christianity, etc.) but as concrete, on-the-ground modalities of doing religion (discursive/scriptural; personal-cultivational; liturgical; immediate-practical; and relational). This new model allows us to not only understand Chinese religious practices and development better but also to better conceptualise the modernist attempt to promote some modalities and suppress some others. For example, as the state forcibly bring all the five officially-recognised religions into the same 'religion sphere' for a sort of socialist-style 'inter-faith dialogues', those traditions with better-developed discursive apparatuses will be deemed more 'proper' and 'modern' because they conform to the state's fetishized understanding of what religions should be like. Meanwhile, those aspects of religion that are arguably more central to Chinese religious life, e.g. rituals, are denigrated and targeted for suppression (with complicitous collusion from discourse-oriented and cultivation-oriented religious elites). The modalities model will also help us better understand the rise of more exclusivist religious identities in modern China and Taiwan. The implication is that a genuine understanding of religious diversity understood as the co-existence of different modalities of doing religion will bring forth better scholarly understanding of Chinese religious life and more suitable pluralist religious policies.

Mayfair Yang - University of California, Santa Barbara: *Gendered Religiosity: Patriarchal Structures and Women's Agency in Coastal China.*

This paper will examine how structures of patriarchal power depend on the vicissitudes of human agency to implement their principles, opening them up to subtle shifts and reconfigurations in social practice (Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu). Traditional religiosities, whether Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, or others, are often seen to produce conservative agents of patriarchy, in both men and women. Writing about the women's Islamic piety movement in contemporary Egypt, Saba Mahmood has criticized the narrow definition of women's agency put forth by liberal Western feminism. She suggests that women's agency cannot be understood or defined in terms of oppositionality, critical discourse, or rebellious acts, but must also take into account the modesty, self-effacement, and self-sacrificing ethos of pious women. Here, I will examine the non-oppositional religious agency of pious women in rural and small-town Wenzhou. Two divinities in particular, the regional deity of Chinese popular religion, known as Goddess Chen the Fourteenth, and the Buddhist mother goddess Guan Yin, inspire these women's religious agency. However, I depart from Mahmood, who almost closes herself off from feminist inquiry, by showing how local women have, through their self-sacrifice, religious leadership, and religious transcendence, carved out a public space and role for women. In the absence of feminism, and without directly confronting or resisting patriarchal power, women's religious agency has made a social impact and brought changes in local society.

Xiaoxuan Wang - Max Planck Institute of Religious & Ethnic Diversity Göttingen: *The Logic of "Development" and New Religious Governance in China.*

This paper explores a fundamental turn in religious governance in connection with recent rural urbanization projects to demolish and rectify 'unlawful' buildings in the Wenzhou region, Zhejiang province. These projects bring forth a new type of religious governance that tends to consider the religious sector as a part of "social governance." This new tendency is a critical

departure from the previous approach (which reined in religion in China's long twentieth century) of prioritizing the delineation of "religion" from "superstition" and treating different religious traditions separately. This new type of religious governance claims legitimacy from the discourse of "development," which the authorities use as a universal pretext to demand cooperation and compliance from all religious groups as the authorities forcefully channel religion to designated legal and physical spaces. The rise of the seemingly less ideologically informed discourse of "development" means that "modernization," the mother ideology behind the religious question in modern China, is finally pushed to the forefront without disguise. The sweeping urbanization projects in the name of development, received quite differently by Christian churches, Buddhist temples, village temples and other religious groups, prove to be highly efficient and, ironically, as destructive, if not more so, in shaping the local religious landscape than the religious suppression of the revolutionary years.

Bram Colijn – Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *Religious Diversity and the Individualization of Chinese Society.*

Since China's decollectivization policies in 1979, a greater freedom of choice exists for individuals to commit to various non-governmental collectivities. Individual desires and freedoms have been sanctioned by the centralizing state, as China's High Modernist ideals moved from collectivism to liberal capitalism. Yan Yunxiang (2003, 2009) has referred to this as the "individualization of Chinese society." In Southern Fujian, both a revival of traditionalist ritual communities and a wave of conversion to Protestant Christianity has taken place. My research has uncovered that practitioners of popular religiosity and Protestant Christianity increasingly live together as spouses; as parents and children; as grandparents and grandchildren. I refer to such households as "pluriprax households." Their existence is intimately tied to the fact that Chinese people are encouraged through media portrayals and public discourses to make individual choices regarding participation in ritual communities. While members of pluriprax households generally do not interfere with each other's religious practices in daily life, communal and life-cycle rituals bring their conflicting ritual obligations to the surface. Communal rituals necessitate the household members to come to a unified enactment, lest the ritual fails and the household loses face in front of its church or native-place community. How do people in Southern Fujian maintain pluriprax households despite their conflicting ritual obligations, and what does that suggest about the individualization of Chinese society? The paper demonstrates that Protestant converts in Southern Fujian usually remain embedded in their households and native place communities despite disagreements over communal ritual enactments. I argue that individualization has not necessarily led to an erosion of China's traditional collectivities but to a pluralization of social life, which in pluriprax households complicates shared ritual enactment by kin.

Discussant: Peter van der Veer – Max Planck Institute of Religious & Ethnic Diversity Göttingen.

Session III.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

Arjen Buitelaar – Tilburg University: *Religious Empathy: A New Style Phenomenological Approach to the Study of Religion.*

As a convert to Shi'ism researching Shi'ite rituals, wandering in between the different Shi'ite migrant communities in the Netherlands, all with their own identities and dynamics, and being religiously related yet ethno-nationally (and often philosophically and ideologically) unrelated to my research subjects, I came to understand very well that the position of the researcher has become an ambiguous and fluid concept; the archetypical insider and outsider positions no longer exist and have become heavily contested. Kristensen appropriately broke with the Christian centered consideration of other religions, but unlike Waardenburg, who argued that the researcher should change from an outsider to an insider position during his research and then back to an outsider for a rational analysis, I would argue that the researcher should be immersed in the faith and philosophy of life of his research subjects. It would, in my view, be the correct way to use the phenomenological term bracketing or *époche* as an attitude that makes a detachment from sympathy but not from empathy, rather than 'vaguely' interchanging between insider and outsider positions since neither of the archetypical positions guarantees rationality over subjectivity. This Religious Empathy, as I would like to call this, is a cognitive form of empathy rather than an emotive (sympathy), and should be achieved if not affiliated or sympathy should be given up on in case of affiliation. Religious Empathy should encompass a sense of true understanding of the subject's ontolog(y)(ies), of historical context(s), of economic and social dynamics, etc. through *Perspektivenübernahme*, or even *standplaatsgebondenheid*, as this is practised within certain fields in the study of history. The religious subjects' relation to Macht is of key importance in contemporary research, though should be taken wider than faith related Macht as Van der Leeuw proposed; the connection between all forms of spiritual and profane Macht should be researched but can only be well understood through immersion in the subject's faith and community. (Sub)religions, concluding, should be understood from within themselves, reduced without generalisation of their own identities and theologies, and their historicities and social constructs should be acknowledged in the new style *époche* through Religious Empathy.

Rodrigo Toniol – University of Utrecht: *Capturing Spirituality and Settling Religion.*

This paper aims to discuss the uses, appropriations and varied repercussions of the category of spirituality on the medical sciences. Precisely, my concern is to reflect about the way in which this category has emerged as a variable in clinical research. Research conducted by the medical scientists of these groups use a wide range of technologies that aim to identify, isolate and interpret the spiritual condition of people and the effects of spirituality on their health conditions. In this paper I'm especially interested in the creation and use of these technologies, ranging from questionnaires to the mapping of brain activity, by scientists in Brazil. The emphasis in the mentioned technologies and instruments is due to the fact that, besides being a form of "access" to spirituality, questionnaires, magnetic resonance imaging and brain activity mappings are important mediators for spirituality to emerge as an entity clinically visible and assessable by doctors and researchers. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the technologies, used by medical scientists, of assessment of spirituality and then reflect on how the category spirituality has been articulated and has mobilized actors and institutions dedicated to the promotion of health care. Through this empirical frame, this paper also presents reflections

about the way in which the idea of spirituality, in healthcare settings, have configured a special set for the religion in the public space.

Lieke Wijnia –University of Groningen: *Envisioning the Spiritual. Theorizing Mondrian's Path to Abstraction.*

The 1936 catalogue cover of the MoMA exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art displayed director Alfred J. Barr's scheme of the development of modern art between 1890 and 1935. Via a complex web of arrows, he outlined how the colors of Van Gogh and essential forms of Cezanne had led to various forms of abstract art. One year earlier, The Netherlands saw the publication of the book *Directions in the Visual Arts*, containing a scheme created by painter Jacob Bendien, organized by emotional and philosophical considerations. While Barr used formal analysis, Bendien focused on the spirituality of art. In both schemes the art of Piet Mondrian, and his De Stijl colleagues, had prominent position. As 2017 is not only the 70thNGG anniversary, but also the 100th anniversary of De Stijl, it seems timely to look at Mondrian's work as an example of how the spiritual in modern art has been approached over the past decades. The two schemes reflect the duality of Mondrian scholarship. Formalist approaches explore his transition from one artistic period to another. Spiritual approaches usually explore theosophical symbolism, in which Mondrian had a profound interest, on his visual language. However, as I argue in this paper, at some point these two histories have to meet - in order to create an inclusive understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and the visual in Mondrian's art. I will explore the role of vision, and the visual, in Mondrian's aim to unveil the spiritual dimension underlying visible reality. Until now, his paintings have been primarily approached as texts, as objects to be read. However, for an inclusive understanding, a move beyond symbolic reading is required, to grasp how Mondrian's art does not aim to represent, but rather constitute a spiritual effort in itself. It concerns a move relevant not only for the study of modern art, but even more so for the overall study of religion in a world dominated by visual culture.

Slot IV: Friday, 20 October, 11.30-13.00h.

Session IV.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Beyond critiquing the liberal-Protestant bias in religious studies; getting racialization, securitization, and coloniality into focus

Fundamental criticisms of the legacies of post-Enlightenment Protestant biases in religious studies have outlined several hierarchies produced by the category of religion itself, such as a preference of belief over practice, of textual over visual religious expressions, of internal over external forms of religion. In this panel, we will explore the thesis that the relation between Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and secularity in Western Europe cannot be properly addressed from a perspective in which the category of religion remains central. Instead of pointing to religious hierarchies, we will shift the question to ask how we can conceptualise and interpret relations between religion, racialization and securitization with regard to Islam and Judaism.

Critical studies of religion do outline the way in which religion as a category was separated from politics and power, thereby depoliticizing its own history. We will argue that we need also to bring into focus the political dimensions of European Christianity itself, and its relation to its non-Christian others. This panel will thus show how the critique of Protestant-bias still remains

within the religious/secular framework, thereby obscuring the genealogies of the framework itself: its relation to the way in which especially Islam and Judaism have been framed as problematic religions, its relation to the racialization of Muslims/Arabs and Jews, and its relation to Orientalism and the Jewish question. If we want to understand the political context of Muslim and Jewish presence in Europe in terms of religion, racialization and securitization, we should start by addressing how the political and racial dimensions are related to constructions of Islam and Judaism as religion.

Yolande Jansen – University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *'A crooked and passion laden mirror'; Jewish and Muslim Minorities in Europe as a European Question.*

In his work on the history of Jews and Judaism in European intellectual traditions, Yirmayahu Yovel once wrote that Jews. . . provided Europeans with a mirror, a crooked, passion-laden mirror, in which to see a reflection of their own identity problems. The Jewish problem was basically a European problem (...). In my paper I will discuss in what ways critique of religion, and, more generally, a religious-secular perspective on questions concerning the position of Jews and Muslims in Europe, is helpful today for understanding controversies concerning religious practice in Europe. I will address and relate traditions of artistic play with the visibility, invisibility, hypervisibility of Jewishness, Muslimness and secularity as complex cultural difference in the work of Marcel Proust, Edward Said, and Rachida Lamrabet.

Anna Blijdenstein- University of Amsterdam: *Liberalism and Religion's Dark Sides. Laborde's Disaggregative Approach to Religion.*

The second paper discusses Cecile Laborde's recent answer to critiques pointing out liberal theory's inadequate and biased construal of religion. While Laborde's disaggregative approach to religion successfully avoids most pitfalls identified by critical religious scholars, she presents a rather narrow account of the critical religion challenge. The paper argues that liberal theory can be assessed more thoroughly and critically when one is aware that the history of liberal thought did not only bring forth a contested idea of what religious *is or should be*, but also contested ideas about which aspects of religion pose a problem or danger –ideas often projected on Judaism and Islam.

Matthea Westerduin -Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: *How supersessionism undermines claims for equality. Exploring relations between Christian theological tropes, race/coloniality, and the secular in Western Europe.*

Despite the growing interest in critical genealogies of the way in which the secular has produced religion and its related hierarchies, what has been understudied is the way in which Western European Christian vocabularies were not only constitutive in the construction of the secular, but also in the construction of race. This paper discusses insights from both critical race theory as well as medieval studies that re-evaluate notions of both race and religion, and foregrounds the importance of Christian categories, such as supersessionism, in processes of racialization, particularly of Muslims and Jews in the history of Western Europe.

Session IV.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Lusospheres: Global Trajectories of Brazilian Religion

Past decades have shown the global spread of Brazilian born religious forms and practices throughout the world. In themselves the product of intersecting religious traditions from Europe, Africa and Latin America the global mobility of people and knowledge have turned Brazilian religions into one of the world's most appealing and widespread religio-cultural forms. Ranging from Afro-Brazilian religious practices to Capoeira, Santo Daime and Neo-Pentecostal worship, to name but a few, Brazilian religions have turned up in all continents of the world, attracting both natives and migrants of all sorts.

The proliferation of multi-directional and multi-scalar religious flows and networks from and to Brazil, offers a unique opportunity to investigate and expand current conceptualizations of the nexus between globalization, religion and post-colonialism. It strikes us that concepts such as religious transnationalism, diaspora and religion, or missionization do not adequately cover the processes we are witnessing. Rather, it has become obvious to us that the hybridity of Brazilian religious forms offer rich templates for localized recreations of religious practices, attracting Brazilian and non-Brazilian crowds in different places. Especially but not exclusively in Europe we find that post-secular publics are re-inventing and reproducing religious practices in search of new spiritual, authentic and/or charismatic ways of relating to the world and it is striking that Brazilian religious forms are among the most popular. Brazilian religious practices, objects and media play a central role in the making of the present-day transnational Lusophone sphere. In this dynamic space of historical and cultural production connected to the former Portuguese colonial empire, Brazil is presented, imagined and re-created as the "cool territory" - authentic, spiritual, tropical and sensual - highlighting new modes of cultural, religious and political cross-fertilizations.

Through different case studies, this panel examines the multi-directional character of Brazilian religious flows. It underlines that religious circulation is constituted by cross-cultural infrastructures and histories that involve and create particular post-colonial configurations, including specific regional, national, and global places and actors that together shape the diversity of Brazilian religiosities in transnational spaces.

- **Martijn Oosterbaan – Utrecht University and Linda van de Kamp - University of Amsterdam:** *Lusospheres: Global Trajectories of Brazilian Religion.*
- **Cristina Rocha – University of Western Sydney:** *How Religions Travel: Comparing the John of God Movement and a Brazilian Migrant Church.*
- **Joana Bahia – State University of Rio de Janeiro:** *The Transnationalization of Afro-Brazilian Religions in Germany.*
- **Andrea Damacena Martins – Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná:** *Reshaping Belonging and Religion: Meanings and Practices of the Brazilian Charismatic Catholic Movement in The Netherlands.*
- **Discussant: Katja Rakow – Utrecht University.**

Session IV.c. (Grote Zolder, second floor):

Individual Papers

Ulrike Brunotte – Maastricht University: *The "Beautiful Jewess" as Frontier Figure in Europe's Internal Colonialism Some Remarks on the Intertwinement of Orientalism and Antisemitism.*

According to Said, Germany as a country without many colonies, didn't play an important role within the scholarly and political enactment of orientalism. Referring back to the prestigious German Orientalist scholarship of the nineteenth century, but also to processes of internal orientalization as central tools of Germany's minority politics, this paper will explore Western discourses on the "Orient" as a prominent way to create Internal Others. Moving beyond Said's dictum that orientalism, is "a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism" (1979, 27), I investigate into the plural history of topical discourses, hybrid figures and recurrent narratives of theorizing and symbolizing intra-European religious difference and diversity. A starting thesis is "that historical orientalism has been based on the Christian West's attempts to understand and manage its relation with both of its monotheistic Others – Muslims and Jews" (Kalmar, 2005). Historically, Jews have been seen in the Western world often concurrently as occidental and oriental. I'll focus on the liminal figure of the "Beautiful Jewess", analysed as the gendered and affective embodiment of the "Jewish Question". Starting from the presupposition of her situatedness on a frontier zone between religions and cultures, the paper compares her depiction in literary, visual and scholarly media. Western discourses on the "Orient" will be presented as a multilayered and ambivalent ensemble of relational references. The very nature of Germany's exceptionalism had a decisive impact on the perception of a 'racial' and religious Other within the contact zone of an internal colonial encounter. To connect internal and external orientalism offers new perspectives on the study of colonialism, gender, religion and orientalism, past and present. The paper will also ask for resilient colonial and oriental formats in today's (neo-)orientalism.

William Arfman – Tilburg University & Utrecht University: *On Borders: Reconsidering Liminality in Religion(-ious?) Studies.*

Within the interdisciplinary field of ritual studies, the concept of liminality is often considered an outdated one. Outside of this field, however, the notion of being on a threshold, divorced from its original ritual context, has actually been gaining popularity. Here, it is used to discuss issues of international relations, deal with problems of victimization or even with the woes of late modernity in general. In this paper it will be argued that reconsidering the concept of liminality for a wider application within religion studies will help us reexamine important challenges associated with religious difference in an increasingly globalized and superdiverse landscape. In the paper, this reconsidering will take place in three steps. First of all, the history of the concept will be critically assessed, in particular in relation to its European origins and its further development in colonial settings. The guiding question here will be to what extent the concept has to be redefined in order to counterbalance this heritage. As a second step, some of the newer applications of the concept will be discussed in order to see what heuristic value it has when applied in these new ways. Here, the guiding question will be how the notion of liminality deals with tensions between specificity and comparison. Finally, as a third step, the concept will be put to the test by applying it in the analysis of a small Dutch case study concerning a Christian commemoration for refugee deaths. Here, the guiding question will be how the concept of liminality relates to existing bridging concepts such as mediation or materiality. The

paper will be concluded with some general recommendations for paying more attention to the importance of borders in the study of religion.

Pieter Boersema - University of Leuven: *A pluralistic society needs an empiric non-normative cultural comparison model open to religions.*

The Multicultural-religious approach in the Netherlands was finished by the event of 9/11 but no new academic way of comparing religions in a cultural context took over the discussion between migrants and primordial citizens. The complexity of individual cultural networks with an economic paradigm and the fear for neo-colonial generalizations decreased the social cohesion in the pluralistic society. Although not described as a culture, the Nation has a cultural dominant say through the project of integration. In this case the national education system is the instrument of an enlightened economically rational formation structure, which is visible in exams and diplomas and where there is little room for religion. Paradigm conflicts between cultures, religions and generations needs to be analyzed in a constructive way whereby the richness of diversity in a pluralistic society can be generated. This can be done in a comparison model with the following basic agreements. In a democratic pluralistic society we need to have a common understandable language about cultural data retrieved in an empirical way, not normative but measurable. Therefore we use the anthropological system of etic communication. These conditions are difficult for explaining religion which happened often in an emic way. Consequently the comparisons, which are always partly and open to flexible changes, are about a particular religion as it is contextualised in a specific (sub) culture and visible in the society under research. To make this theoretical model more understandable in practice, there will be an example of a research project how this is applied to a migrant case in Rotterdam. To analyse the paradigm conflict as mentioned above, there are interviews with teaching staff of a Dutch secondary school, with their migrant students from different cultures and religious denominations and their parents, the first generation in the Netherlands.

Slot V: Friday, 20 October, 14.00-15.30h.

Session V.a. (Kerkzaal, ground floor):

Rondetafeldiscussie: Onderwijs over religie in een pluralistische wereld (*in Dutch*)

Hoe kan het onderwijs over religie en levensbeschouwing op de beste manier worden vormgegeven in het middelbaar onderwijs van de 21^{ste} eeuw? Hoe kan dit onderwijs recht geven aan de pluralistische karakter van het religieuze en levensbeschouwelijke veld in Nederland, in Europa en wereldwijd? En hoe kunnen religiewetenschappers goed onderwijs over religie/levensbeschouwing ondersteunen en helpen ontwikkelen in het vo? Over deze vragen gaan in deze rondetafeldiscussie een aantal religiewetenschappers, docenten en bestuurders in discussie met elkaar en met de zaal. In drie gespreksrondes stellen we de volgende vraagstellingen aan de orde: (1) Wat voor kennis over religie hebben leerlingen vandaag de dag nodig, hieronder welke religies en welke aspecten van religie/religiewetenschap dienen te worden behandeld in het middelbaar onderwijs en waarom? (2) Zijn er recente religiewetenschappelijke inzichten of doorbraken die ook in het bijzonder en openbaar middelbaar onderwijs in Nederland moeten worden verdisconteerd om deze bijdetijds te houden? (3) Welke concrete interventies zijn wenselijk/nodig om het religieonderwijs te versterken (bv. een expertisecentrum, een vakdidactisch handboek, meer nascholing, meer vakartikelen in *Narhex* en meer Nederlandstalige boeken, meer onderzoek naar het veld,

betere docentenopleidingen, beter lesmateriaal, een lobby in Den Haag, nog meer) – en welke van deze mogelijke interventies kunnen en willen we als veld prioriteren op de korte termijn?

Deelnemers aan de conferentie die zich van te voeren willen inlezen in de discussie rond religiewetenschap en religieonderwijs, worden uitgenodigd contact op te nemen met Markus Davidsen (m.davidsen@hum.leidenuniv.nl). Geïnteresseerden ontvangen een pakket met artikelen van de deelnemers aan de rondetafel discussie over hun standpunten en ideeën over het thema.

Bijdragen van Markus Altena Davidsen, Leiden University (convener), Ammeke Kateman, University of Amsterdam, Marleen Lammers, Vereniging van openbare en algemeen toegankelijke scholen, Heleen Murre van der Berg, Radboud University Nijmegen & NOSTER, Suzanne Roggeveen, University of Amsterdam, Joël Valk, Corderius College, Paul Vermeer, Radboud University Nijmegen, Guido Versteegh, Radboud University Nijmegen (convener), Gerard Wieggers, University of Amsterdam (convener and chair).

Session IV.b. (Spiegelzaal, first floor):

Common pathways: Directions and challenges for the ethnographic comparison of Muslims and Christians.

There is a growing awareness among qualitative researchers of religion that the field is troubled by an unproductive separation of scholarship on Islam and Christianity – the two largest and most widely studied religions across the world. This separation results from the historically grown specialization in distinct fields and sub-fields such as religious studies and Islamic studies, the sociology of religion and migration studies, and the anthropology of Christianity and the anthropology of Islam. Each characterized by its own academic community and theoretical debates, there has been little exchange between these fields. This has limited not only recognition of the convergences between Muslims and Christians who today often coexist with each other and within modern secular institutions, but also a nuanced and detailed understanding of their differences. Moreover, the bifurcated scholarship has come with a lack of theoretical cross-fertilization between work on Islam and Christianity. This disciplinary split further risks (inadvertently) reproducing prevalent political discourses and institutional arrangements that emphasize the difference between, or even assumed incommensurability of, Muslims and Christians.

This panel investigates attempts to move beyond this bifurcated field. In contrast to scholarship that focuses on Muslim-Christian relations or encounters, and notwithstanding the merits of such work, the panel foregrounds research on Muslims and Christians who do not necessarily interact much, but coexist in a shared socio-political space. By placing Muslim and Christian lived religion alongside each other, such work has the potential of analytically undoing the alleged incommensurability of these groups. Despite earlier calls for such a 'transversal' approach to Muslims and Christians in Europe (Roy 2004) and Africa (Larkin and Meyer 2006), work in this direction has remained remarkably underdeveloped. Yet a number of studies published in recent years points to a growing interest in such ethnographic comparison. Bringing together scholars who have in recent years conducted comparative fieldwork on both Muslims and Christians (in either European or African settings), this panel discusses the potentialities and challenges of ethnographic comparison, examining what conceptual and methodological tools might help to move the transversal study of Muslims and Christians forward. Three main questions guide the discussion:

1) Following discussions on ethnographic, 'thick' comparison (Scheffer and Niewöhner 2010), a key question concerns the construction of comparability. What is the common measure (tertium

comparationis) that makes comparison possible and productive? How do we find an adequate 'language' of comparative analysis across different religious groups?

2) How can we negotiate, in the field and in writing, powerful political practices and discourses that emphasize interreligious difference and set Muslims apart as a problematic exception – be it in terms of integration, radicalization or rights? Differently put, how do we deal with the ethics and politics of construing comparability?

3) Given the ethnographic emphasis on intimacy with – and immersion in – one's research group, what are the merits and challenges of conducting comparative fieldwork as a single researcher – as compared to joined fieldwork or collaboration in writing? Approaching these questions from such different vantage points as piety, civic participation and education, the contributors to the panel will reflect on the ways in which the ethnographic comparison of Muslims and Christians can be productively developed.

- **Hansjörg Dilger – Free University of Berlin:** *The Desire to Order: Moral, Political and Epistemological Uncertainties in Doing Fieldwork on Christian and Muslim Schools in Dar es Salaam.*
- **Daniel Nilsson DeHanas – King's College London:** *Routes of Participation: Developing Comparative Vocabularies for Muslim and Christian Civic Engagement in London.*
- **Daan Beekers – Utrecht University:** *Pursuing a Religious Path under Secular Conditions: Construing Muslim-Christian Comparability and the Politics of Distinction in the Netherlands.*
- **Discussant: Peter van der Veer – MPI of Religious & Ethnic Diversity Göttingen.**