

Congrès 2013/ Congress 2013

University of Victoria

Société canadienne pour l'étude de la religion

Canadian Society for the Study of Religion

1 juin–4 juin 2013/June 1–June 4, 2013

Annual CSSR Meeting: @ the edge

Adam, Martin (University of Victoria) "**Hierarchy and Equality in the Pali Canon.**" This paper examines early Buddhist understandings of the differences among men. It is well known that the Buddha's teachings reject any notion of hereditary purity associated with social class; they nevertheless do endorse the notion of a hierarchy based on merit (*puñña*) and spiritual purity. I examine possible structural parallels with the brahmanic conception of hierarchy, noting the manner in which the latter schema is, in a fashion typical of the Buddha, subverted to serve his own purposes. I examine the Buddha's model of a spiritual hierarchy running from the ordinary person, to the noble disciple, right up to the liberated being or "worthy one" (*arahat*). Indeed Buddhist cosmography is based upon the idea of a hierarchy of beings existing on various levels according to their karma. Buddhist thought is thoroughly hierarchical, lending credence to Dumont's characterization of our species as "Homo hierarchicus."

Alimoradi, Pooriya (Concordia University) "**About Mani's lameness; Notes on description of Māni in Fihrist and Dēnkard.**" It is always interesting to have some ideas about the physical body of famous religious leaders. Having a perfect, handsome, manly shape has been a must for the society forerunners either political rulers or religious leaders from ancient times to even modern era. According to Iranian traditional history, Māni, the founder of Manichaeism, was lame. This notion is generally based on two passages from Fihrist and an interpretation of a Pahlavi epithet in Dēnkard by A. V. Williams Jackson. In this article, I try to focus on one of the descriptions of Māni in Fihrist and comparing it to Māni's epithet (*drūj astak, drūj hastag*) in Pahlavi Dēnkard. By crosschecking other historical facts about Māni and providing another descriptive passage about his body in Acta Archelai, I challenge this notion of lameness and finally suggest another reading for Māni's epithet (*drūj astak, drūj hastag*) according to Middle Persian complicated alphabet.

Andrews, Pamela (Memorial University of Newfoundland) "**Religion @ The Edge: The Nation of Gods and Earths.**" The Nation of Gods and Earths are an obscure offshoot of the Nation of Islam, from whom they borrow much of their theology. Though NGE is often discussed in relation to the history of Islam in America, to call the NGE an Islamic organization is a misnomer. The NGE use Islamic language and imagery as a means of signaling legitimacy, but have more in common with nineteenth century Spiritualism and Freemasonry than with orthodox Islam. The main teachings of the NGE are centred around the idea that the Black man is Allah incarnate. Proponents of the NGE deny that they are a religious organization, choosing instead to call their practices a "way of life". This paper will use Catherine Albanese's "four C's" model of religion to discuss ways in which the Nation of Gods and Earths fits into the larger

discussions of both Religion in North America and Implicit Religion.

Apple, James B. (University of Calgary) "**Phylogenetics and Philology in the Study of Tibetan Kanjurs: The Case of the Tibetan Dunhuang version of the *Sūtra of Jayamati*.**" This paper addresses recent interdisciplinary developments in the philological study of Tibetan Buddhist canonical works, including cladistic computer-based phylogenetic analysis, through a study of the Tibetan version of the *Sūtra of Jayamati*. The *Sūtra of Jayamati* is a brief work whose versions are preserved in one Sanskrit manuscript and found in multiple editions of the Tibetan canonical collection known as the Kanjur. A Tibetan version of the *sūtra* is also preserved among the manuscripts from the ancient Central Asian city-state of Dunhuang. The paper discusses results of philological and phylogenetical analysis of the Tibetan Dunhuang version against a collation of ten different Kanjur editions providing clear evidence for the genealogical transmission of the *sūtra* from the eighth to eighteenth century among Tibetan scriptoriums and printing houses. The paper concludes with a brief summation of the implications of phylogenetic analysis for future philological study of Tibetan Buddhist canonical works.

Ashley, Sean (Simon Fraser University) "**Celestial Marriage and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.**" Mormon fundamentalists subscribe to a theology set down by Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which includes the practice of polygamy. In a well-publicized reference decision handed down in 2011, the BC Supreme Court ruled that while Canada's criminalization of polygamy conflicts with the religious rights of Mormon fundamentalists, the law was constitutional. The trial grew out of a struggle between the BC government and the utopian fundamentalist Mormon community of Bountiful, BC, but was framed more generally to include discussions of polygamy in Muslim communities. This paper examines the gendered construction of harm within this trial, with particular attention paid to the marginalization of Mormon fundamentalist women's experience and the arguments of evolutionary psychology, which made the universal sex traits of males and females, with their reputed propensity towards polygamous relationships, the central social harm at issue within the case.

Barua, Deba Mitra (University of Saskatchewan) "**Pressure to be Friends: An Emerging Trend in the Hierarchical Relationships in an Immigrant Community in Toronto.**" Data derived from ethnographic research demonstrate that Sri Lankan Buddhist immigrants in Toronto are increasingly feeling a pressure to be friends in hierarchically defined monk-laity and parents-children relationships. Some respond the pressure with adopting an egalitarian role of friendship while others resist the pressure with maintaining the traditional top to bottom interactions. This paper queries where does this pressure come from and how Buddhists' rationalize their responses to the pressure. Conformers suggest that they are compelled by the ambient egalitarian culture and immigrant nuclear family setting to adopt a friendship role to effectively fulfill their respective duties as parents and monastics. This shift, I argue, does not replace the traditional hierarchical roles of parents and monastics; rather, it illustrates an effective strategy to strengthen their hierarchical roles and what is expected from those roles.

Berg, Richard A. (Lakehead University) "**Reading Plato's *Phaedo* as Mystery Religious Experience.**" Plato's *Phaedo* portrays the last day of Socrates' life against a background of mystery religious views about the fate of the human soul, supporting cosmology, and mystery religious liturgy. This dialogue appears even to include at 69d a confession by Socrates that he is

an enthusiastic practitioner of mystery religion. Elucidating this confession requires first that it be traced successively along Dionysian, Orphic, Pythagorean and Eleusinian lines. Finally by tracing Plato's representation of Socrates over the repeated patterns of his predecessors, we come to experience Socrates as Dionysus, the god himself, Plato as Bacchus the mortal who manifests him, and ourselves as his modern day mystery religious devotees. Through the Platonic literature, Socrates continues to possess us and to live on through us in the literary afterlife provided by Plato as Bacchus in the new religious experience that we now know in its secular form as reading.

Bouchard, Alain (Université Laval et Collège de Sainte-Foy) **Le grand roque du vampire : Twilight, mormonisme et imaginaire contemporain** Plusieurs auteurs ont souligné la présence d'éléments du mormonisme dans la saga Twilight de Stephenie Meyer. Mais que nous révèle cette présence? Pour éclairer cette question, nous tenterons de démontrer que pour comprendre le nouveau visage du vampire qu'incarne Edward, il faut le resituer dans l'imaginaire évolutionniste contemporain. Meyer fait passer le vampire de la bête à l'ange réalisant ainsi, tout comme la religion mormone, le mariage de la religion et de la science.

Bramadat, Paul (CSRS, University of Victoria) **CSRS Open Forum with Doug Saunders.** (Panel Chair) Join CSSR and CSRS colleagues and Globe and Mail columnist Doug Saunders for a discussion of his most recent book, *The Myth of the Muslim Tide*, where he challenges some of the anxieties associated with Muslims in contemporary Western societies. This session follows his "Big Thinkers" lecture during breakfast at the Congress.

Bramadat, Paul (CSRS, University of Victoria) **Religion in the Public Sphere: Eastern Perspectives.** (Panel Chair) This panel explores the theme of religion and public life in relation to 'eastern' traditions. The papers examine the relationships between diaspora Hindus and Buddhists in relation to Canadian ideas of religion and the public sphere as well as the expression of these ideas within Tokugawa era Japan and contemporary India.

Bramadat, Paul (CSRS, University of Victoria) **Religion in the Public Sphere: Western Perspectives** (Panel Chair) This panel seeks to explore contemporary issues related to theories and practices related to secularism within a 'western' and Canadian context. The papers critically examine theories such as open secularism and secularization theories that predicted the end of religion in the public sphere as well as debates related to Islam in the public sphere in Canada.

Bramadat, Paul (CSRS, University of Victoria) **"Callum Brown: Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularisation in Canada, Ireland, UK and USA since the 1960s, London, Boydell & Brewer."** (Roundtable participant, Co-sponsored with the Canadian Historical Association). This roundtable will include a presentation by Callum Brown on his new book, as well as comments on his work from Canadian scholars in a range of fields related to the topic of this book. Scholars will comment on the Canadian content of Brown's new work, focusing on it in relation to their particular areas of expertise, and will also place their discussion in a broader transnational framework. It is hoped that these comments will then spark lively discussion from the audience. Paul Bramadat (CSRS University of Victoria) Nancy Christie (Western University); Michael Gauvreau (McMaster University); Peter Gossage (Concordia University); Lynne Marks (University of Victoria).

Brassard, Brooke (University of Waterloo) "**Two Prophets: The Use of Islam by Nineteenth-Century Latter-day Saints.**" This paper investigates how nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints had knowledge of Islam and used this knowledge to serve themselves and the church. The sworn affidavits and testimonies from a Missouri court of inquiry offer the first case study. Court documents from three Latter-day Saints provide examples of using Islam in an attempt to destroy the reputations of Joseph Smith and the church. In the second case study, two sermons from 1855 reveal a different use of Islam by nineteenth-century Saints. George A. Smith and Parley P. Pratt delivered two sermons that use Islam to instruct their audience and denigrate Catholicism. The concluding section of this paper considers what connections Joseph Smith Jr. had to Islam.

Brown, Callum (University of Dundee) "**Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularisation in Canada, Ireland, UK and USA since the 1960s, London, Boydell & Brewer.**" (International Speaker and Roundtable Co-sponsored with the Canadian Historical Association). This roundtable will include a presentation by Callum Brown on his new book, as well as comments on his work from Canadian scholars in a range of fields related to the topic of this book. Scholars will comment on the Canadian content of Brown's new work, focusing on it in relation to their particular areas of expertise, and will also place their discussion in a broader transnational framework. It is hoped that these comments will then spark lively discussion from the audience, with respondents, Lynne Marks (University of Victoria), Nancy Christie (Western University), Michael Gauvreau (McMaster University), Peter Gossage (Concordia University), and Paul Bramadat (CSRS University of Victoria).

Bullivant, Spencer (University of Ottawa) "**Nonreligious Summer Camps: Creating a Non-religious Identity in the United States.**" The nonreligious people found at Camp Quest Montana, an explicitly nonreligious summer camp for children and parents of all ages, use a variety of conceptions about religion to form and maintain their nonreligious identity. These conceptions, which were remarkably similar between camp attendees, reveal points of tension between themselves and religious sentiment in the United States. These nonreligious individuals assume religious people to be against same-sex marriage and somewhat hostile to the LGBT community in general, more open to the idea of young earth creationism, and less likely to question these beliefs. By framing their nonreligious identity and the expression of that identity as a part of a reaction to religion, as they perceive it, provides insight into the creation and maintenance of a nonreligious identity.

Caufield, Catherine (University of Alberta) "**Inculturation: Mapping A Path of Struggle to Inclusivity and Diversity.**" Oblates changed the Canadian north through building infrastructure. And, the north changed them. Recently Bishop Murray Chatlain outlined some of the gifts he has received through his ministry, including a deepened connection with the spiritual realm. An Aboriginal participant addressed the mixed gathering: "We reached out to them to join our families; we did that. What can we do so religious come with us again?" Inculturation is related to differing symbolic life. Roger Hutchinson observes that inculturation is a social issue which "go[es] beyond the mere search for solutions to particular problems [. . .] the apologies issued by churches and finally by the government are more usefully understood as contributions to ongoing dialogues than as solutions to problems (2008, 43-51)." This presentation focuses on the gifts of inclusivity and diversity, as theorized by inculturation policy and as actualized in the work of Oblates.

Chomyn, Lauren (University of Alberta) "**Riddles From the Margins of the Strange Sex: The Wisdom of Solomon's Judgment Story (1 Kgs 3:16-28).**" The story of Solomon's judgment of the prostitute mothers (1 Kgs 3:16-28) explores the link between knowledge and sex, both signified by the root עָרָה . Here female sexuality serves as the ultimate test of Solomon's wisdom, as the women embody the full spectrum of femininity, the mother and the whore. Whereas most readings focus on the distinction that Solomon creates between the two women and his subsequent ability to establish order out of an otherwise chaotic situation, mine will explore the ways in which the text subtly undermines the tidy categories of mother/whore, and Eros/Thanatos that Solomon—and the reader—would seek to forge. *MA graduate student essay contest winner.*

Colorado, Carlos (University of Winnipeg) "**Maximalist Challenges to an Inclusive Public Sphere: The Limits of Open Secularism.**" Charles Taylor's recent scholarship advocates for an "open secularism" (hereafter OS). Unlike "restrictive" or "closed" secularisms, which exclude "certain forms of religious expression in the public sphere," OS, while maintaining state neutrality and separation of church and state, emphasizes the principles of equality and freedoms of religion and conscience in the public sphere. I take up the concept of OS and consider its implications for the public sphere. While acknowledging the normative force of an "open" public sphere, I explore ways in which certain kinds of religious fundamentalism can be anathema to the explicit demands of the public sphere as a deliberative liberal political space. I consider briefly how some "maximalisms"—Bruce Lincoln's term for the ideological view that religion should provide the structure for all aspects of life, including politics—may or may not present limit cases to an open public sphere.

Derbac, Mihai (University of Calgary) "**Phylogenetic Analysis of the bSam gtan mig sgron's rDzogs chen Sems sde Quotations.**" The *bSam gtan mig sgron* text, by gNubs chen (9th/10th cen.), is one of the earliest accounts of the rDzogs chen tradition (8th cen.). It contains a series of quotations from rDzogs chen Sems sde texts. Despite its importance, the text has not been included in any major Tibetan collection and it was unknown to scholarly community until it was published in 1974. This paper attempts to establish whether the text is indeed an ancient text that preserves ancient readings. The study will rely on two phylogenetic methods, Maximum Parsimony and Neighbor-Net (as implemented in PAUP and SplitsTree), to establish stemmatic (phylogenetic) relationships. It will analyze the quotations and the quoted body of text as found in several manuscripts. The second aim of the paper is to ascertain whether the extant Sems sde texts are the same texts that gNubs chen had access to in the 10th century.

Dold, Patricia (Memorial University of Newfoundland) (Roundtable Chair) "**After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion, University of Calgary Press.**" The book, *After Appropriation* is a collection of twelve essays that in diverse ways address the problem of how comparative philosophy and religion would change if the concepts and categories of non-Western philosophies and religions were taken as being of equal importance. While the division between the two disciplines of Religious Studies and Philosophy is commonplace in western academia, this bifurcation does not necessarily apply in non-Western settings, where religion and philosophy tend to be integrated. As a result, when the disciplines are virtually mutually exclusive, as in the West, a full appreciation of non-Western approaches to either religion or philosophy is not easily attained, and distortions, such as appropriation, often occur. This project is conducted with full awareness of the post-colonial critique of such

enterprises.

Dold, Patricia (Memorial University of Newfoundland) "**Voices of Protest in Puranic Accounts of Sati.**" As an account of the origins of the Kamakhya pilgrimage site, the myth of the goddess Sati both confirms and challenges Hindu ideals of the "good woman/wife." Because Sati does not eliminate her separate female identity through the burning of her body or by melding with her husband in death (as human "satis" do), the goddess does not represent the "perfect wife" and becomes identifiable with the presiding deity of a Tantric center. Drawing upon the arguments of Loriliai Biernacki and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, this paper explores alternate discourses in puranic accounts of Sati as the goddess of Kamakhya. While such discourses do not overcome all that is problematic in narratives about Sati/sati, they do represent evidence of protest against readings that present Sati as the perfect wife who dies for her husband's honor.

Dong Qiumin (Henan University) "**Confucius: Ethos and the Integrative Nature of Early Chinese Rhetoric.**" Rhetorical practice is universal, but it demonstrates distinctive cultural features in its function to inform, persuade, and shape individuals and society. However, the domination of Western rhetoric has led to the mistaken notion that rhetoric is the sole property and invention of the West. Consequently, non-Western rhetoric has been largely marginalized in our field that cherishes equality, diversity, and inclusivity. In challenging the Eurocentric views of rhetoric and expanding our knowledge of non-Western rhetoric, this article explores the Confucian concept of ethos in the Analects. Adopting the method of cluster analysis, it examines the key terms of ethos and other supporting terms that are relevant to the integrity of individuals at social, political, and personal levels. The article claims that while the Chinese perception of ethos shares its commonalities with the corresponding Greek rhetorical appeal in its function, it presents cultural uniqueness in its expression and interpretation.

Fast, Kerry (Independent Scholar) "**Keeping the (Old) Order: Corporeal Punishment Among Old Colony Mennonites.**" Old Colony Mennonites have been returning to Canada from Mexico for half a century. They originally left the Canadian prairies for Mexico in the 1920s in order to preserve their right to educate their children in ways consistent with their religious beliefs. My paper is based on ethnographic research conducted among these return migrants and will examine the practice of corporal punishment of children. In Canada Old Colony families encounter a fundamentally different understanding of child rearing and socialization than they are used to in Mexico which threatens their core religious/cultural values. Drawing on Natalie Zemon Davis' insights that religious violence has structure and purpose (even as it is often destructive) from her seminal article, "The Rites of Violence," I will examine how corporal punishment in schools on Mennonite colonies in Mexico functions to maintain Old Colony Mennonite religious society.

Feltmate, David (Auburn University at Montgomery) "**Meanings, Methods, and Religion and Mass Media: Contributions of the Yale School of Cultural Sociology to the Study of Religion and Media.**" Scholars studying mass media and religion are certain that mass media is significant, but how to study that significance is constantly debated. In social scientific circles we have seen moves towards audience reception theories as ways of opposing the ideological analyses that characterized "culture industry" approaches in previous generations. Concurrently, there are attempts to apply interpretive frameworks which attempt to connect sociological theories to hermeneutical methods of analysis. Methodologically, these approaches fall between

“humanities” and “social sciences,” making it harder to categorize and evaluate the research according to established standards in either discipline. In this paper I argue that religious studies scholars studying mass media could profit from critically engaging the Yale School of Cultural Studies approach as a way of bridging social theory and the hermeneutical approaches to mass media texts that are more characteristic of the discipline.

Freyne, Sean (Trinity College, Dublin) **“Roman Period Galilee: The Task of Recreating the World of Jesus and his First Followers.”** (Craigie Lecture) The academic interest in Roman period Galilee over the past 50 odd years has been largely, but not wholly associated with the renewal of the quest for the historical Jesus in the same period. However, there are dangers associated with such an agenda, and there is, as we shall see, a tendency to conflate the quest for Galilee with the quest for Jesus, thereby ignoring the other important aspects that study of a particular region in antiquity has to offer historians and theologians alike. This paper will focus on Galilean life under Roman rule in order to read modern scholarship against the backdrop of older anti-Semitic tendencies in scholarship and in order to situate the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism in the same area and period.

Gaver, Cheryl (Sheridan College) **"RELIGION @ THE EDGE: STILL ANOTHER DEFINITION."** What do we mean by “religion”? The question is fundamental for the study of religion; its implications have far-reaching consequences. For example, rights afforded to legally-recognized religions are denied to groups not covered in existing definitions even when they define themselves as being a “religion.” The problem is that most definitions reflect a Christian bias. The challenge is to develop a definition that moves beyond its Christian roots to be more inclusive and yet not so broad as to encompass everything. I explore the issue and offer the following definition: Religion: a label representing a collective which (1) shares common beliefs, practices, rituals, and values that may be interpreted and expressed in different ways and for different purposes; (2) is founded on a particular narrative unique to that collective and (3) is anchored in a worldview that recognizes a reality beyond that accessible through our five senses.

George, Neil (York University) **"The Invention of Science and Religion: Marginalizing Dissent In Nineteenth– Century Debates on Science and Religion."** Although many recent books have traced science and religion back as far as the classical period, the trope “science and religion” was not used until the nineteenth century. At that time definitions of both science and religion changed in ways that made placing them in relation possible. Although the trope was invented multiple times over the century, it was Andrew Dickson White and John William Draper’s late–nineteenth–century reinvention of the trope as a weapon that was most enduring. They sought to marginalize their enemies with the trope, and the increasingly popular concept of religion was their most useful tool. By tracing the usage of “science and religion” in the late nineteenth century and the circumstances of those who used it, I argue that inherent conceptual problems of “religion” and “science and religion,” were useful tools for defining one’s opponents out of authority and into the margins.

Gonsalves, Roselle M. (University of Calgary) **"The Social Diaspora: Maintaining Community at the Peripheries of an Ethno-Religious Identity"** Dancing, food, prizes, friends, balloons, and children running underfoot. These are not the descriptors of a typical Catholic function. In the diaspora though, Goan Catholics native to India, and resettled in Canada, find

their social identity within an ethno- religious community. This paper is borne of ethnographic fieldwork, and examines how engaging in these socials serves not only to maintain, but also to strengthen the religio-cultural identity of this community in the diasporic setting. It investigates the deconstruction of a homeland and the reconstruction of a new identity based on cultural memories that the community partakes of. This social is not something that occurs in the pre-immigrant community: it is a development borne of dispersion. Where once the church parish was the centre of religious life for the Goan Catholics of Mumbai, in its immigrant experience the ‘Goan social’ now serves as the meeting ground for this community.

Gow, Andrew (University of Alberta) "**Commensality, “convivencia” and models for every-day interaction in a pluralist society.**" After the forced conversion of hundreds of thousands of Spanish Jews and Muslims between 1391 and 1502, both the Inquisition and neighbours watched to see that everyone ate pork: if anyone did not, it was clear that they were Jews or Muslims. Without suggesting that contemporary Spanish food choices are directed against Jews or Muslims, I will reflect on how ‘food cultures’ structures relationships between communities of religious observance/non-observance. I will address David Freidenreich’s *Foreigners and Their Food. Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (UC Press, 2011) to ask about how quotidian religious practice relates to religious law, to pose difficult questions about living together in the context of an every-day activity in which we must all engage, and to air possibilities for commensality as an embodied practice for pluralistic ‘living together’.

Greifenhagen, F. V. (Luther College, University of Regina) "**Qur’an and Bible: From Geiger to Reynolds.**" This paper surveys the development and changes that have taken place in Eurowestern scholarship on the intertextuality of the Qur’an and the Bible in the 180 years since Abraham Geiger’s seminal (and somewhat misleadingly titled) *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen* (1833). Tracing trajectories from Geiger’s work through to the equally important current work of Gabriel Said Reynolds (e.g. *The Qur’an and Its Biblical Subtext* 2010), this paper briefly highlights transformations in the views of these scriptural texts from valorized and discrete entities to historical and cultural intersecting discourses; several examples serve as illustration.

Guignard, Florence Pasche (University of Toronto) "**Gender-Reveal Parties as An Example of A New Ritualization of Pregnancy.**" A “Gender-Reveal Party” is the occasion during which future parents have the gender/sex of the gestating fetus revealed to them, amongst friends and relatives. The organization of this festive event depends on information obtained through medical technology (ultrasound). In most cases, the “reveal” action follows an elaborate ritual process involving several actors and the manipulation of artifacts bought or created for this specific occasion (such as cakes or balloons). Pictures and videos of the event can then be shared, simultaneously or later, through social networks and other communication tools. My contribution will look at this 21st century pregnancy rite from the point of view of the study of religions informed by theories of ritual studies and of gender studies. After describing the principles and the various performance modalities of this rite, I will discuss the importance of medical and communication technologies in the emergence of new ritual processes.

Hale, Mary I. (St. Mary’s University) "**Quakers, Tree Huggers, and Idle No More: Comparisons, Contrasts, and Speaking to Power in the Canadian Public Sphere.**" How do

groups with urgent social agendas further their causes under regimes that seem to turn a deaf ear towards their concerns? Can groups that either once held power or had free access to those who wielded power partner and develop new strategies with groups who have never had such access? Such diversity may provide for strengthened voices. This study first examines environmental activism and Christianity in Atlantic Canada to ascertain how these groups found ways to effect change in a political climate that has shifted in the last forty years. The study then compares and contrasts environmental groups and Mainline Protestant Churches in Atlantic Canada with the Canadian Aboriginal “Idle No More” movement—a population that has never had the ear or voice of power—to see what each group may have learned, or may potentially learn, from the other in terms of advocacy efficacy and collaborative activism.

Harding, John (The University of Lethbridge) john.harding@uleth.ca **"Revisiting Global Buddhism's North American Debut."** Modern Buddhism are shaped simultaneously by Asian origins, global influences, and local conditions, whether in North America, Europe, or Asia. Not merely Westernization, the first modern forms of Buddhism arose in Asia in the late 1800s and gave birth to global Buddhism. This paper analyzes presentations of Buddhism by Asian representatives at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions to explore the interplay of Western influence and Asian origins that form modern, global Buddhism. The primarily historical method—focused on the content and form of the representation of Buddhism as well as the context, motives, travels, and connections of the Asian representatives—will be supplemented by ethnographic observations of contemporary dynamics of Buddhist modernisms to assess family resemblance among modern Buddhist movements through time. The enduring relationship between global Buddhism in its infancy and now, 120 years later, suggests that this early representation of Buddhism was formative and enduring.

Hawley, Michael (Mount Royal University) **"Navigating Heteronormativity: The Case of the KY / 3HO Community in Calgary."** Scholarly work on Sikhism in Canada has largely been limited to the geographic areas of the lower mainland British Columbia and the greater Toronto area. Even less has been done on Sikh groups that might be considered non-normative or outside the ‘mainstream’ tradition. This paper makes a preliminary attempt to address both of these gaps by exploring the kundalini yoga (KY) / 3HO communities in Calgary. While it has become commonplace to understand KY / 3HO in terms of a new religious movement (Khalsa 1986; Dusenbery 1988; Jakobsh 2008), or to draw attention to the worldly, material success of the tradition (Khalsa 1986), this paper proposes an alternate framework in which KY / 3HO religiosity is an analogue to the episteme and accompanying discourse of an enduring precolonial Sikh tradition in the diaspora.

Hawley, Michael (Mount Royal University) (Panel Chair) **"Utopian Visions, Social Reform, and the Gendering of Utopian Communities."** The envisioning of alternate and exemplary forms of society is commonplace among religious projects. Among their ideals, religious utopias often extend and champion egalitarianism. This panel examines the utopian visions of three religious communities - Theosophical, Mormon, and Sikh - with particular attention to the ways in which new forms of social equality intersect gender practice. Our papers suggest that utopian visions may variously encompass gender equity or create new forms of gender inequality, or yet, espouse doctrines of gender equity while engendering new forms of inequality. Moreover, the gendering of utopian religious communities must be situated within the wider socioreligious contexts in which they originate and amid such social forces as the state.

James, Bill (Queen's University) "**Two Novels about Vietnam: Karl Marlantes' *Matterhorn* and Kim Thúy's *Ru*.**" If recent American novels about Vietnam continue to revisit the failure of the "American War," their Canadian counterparts explore the cultural dimensions of that period from the side of the Asian victims and refugees. This paper (part of a project on religious responses to war in 21st-century Canadian fiction) examines two contrasting examples in terms of structure, theme, and religion. Karl Marlantes' *Matterhorn* (2010), acclaimed as the first great Vietnam "war novel," details the futility and desperation of marines in combat. His linear epic narrative recalls western (especially Christian) sacrificial ideals of heroism. In contrast, the slight and poetic *Ru* (2012) by Kim Thúy offers an interlaced series of vignettes, detailing the life of boat people fleeing Vietnam for Quebec in the 1970s. In theme and structure *Ru* exhibits a Vietnamese Buddhist familial and communal ethos that offers a different view of meaning and destiny.

Jensen, Christopher (McMaster University) "**Oneiric Visions, Social Expectations and Editorial Agendas: Using Lotus Sutra Miracle Tales To Explore Sleep and Dreaming in Medieval Chinese Buddhism.**" Scholarship on medieval Chinese Buddhism has been largely silent on the role of sleep and dreams in shaping the waking experience of religion: an odd lacuna, given that oneiric visions were thought to represent meaningful interactions between humans and the panoply of ghosts, gods, and spirits. This paper represents a preliminary foray into these issues, where I have translated and analyzed all references to dreams in two medieval collections of Lotus Sutra narratives: the *Hongzhan fahua zhuan* (T. 2067) and *Fahua jing chuan ji* (T. 2068). Using the narratological methods of Robert Ford Company and the discourse analysis techniques of narrative sociology, I argue that such materials allow for a more nuanced understanding of lay/monastic roles, Buddhist material culture, and the proselytic power of miracle accounts in medieval China, while also providing insight into the editorial agendas of the particular discourse communities that collected, preserved, and disseminated these tales.

Jones, Tamsin (CSRS, University of Victoria) "**Bearing Witness: Responding to trauma and religious experience.**" One speaks of "witnessing" to both religious experience and traumatic events because both are excessive experiences – experiences 'at the edge' of ordinary life – that can be testified to but not necessarily explained. By drawing a distinction between explanation and witness, I examine the different understandings of the "truth" pursued by both. The paper looks at the different ways "witnessing" is conceptualized in trauma theory and in contemporary philosophy and religious studies before examining, more concretely, how it functions in societal responses to intergenerational trauma on a national scale, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada. In this context, I will argue that trauma theory proves to be a particularly helpful lens through which to consider the contentious question of the status of religious experience.

Joose, Paul (University of Alberta) "**The Presentation of the Charismatic Self in Everyday Life: Reflections on a Canadian New Religious Movement.**" Taking inspiration from Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor of sociality, this paper explores the dynamics involved in the presentation of the charismatic self in everyday life, with a focus on the new religious movement led by John de Ruiter. The concept of "the everyday" was central to the thought of both Erving Goffman and Max Weber, and I illustrate how a marriage of insights from both thinkers can provide new opportunities for understanding the causes of charismatic disenchantment.

Specifically, I focus on instances of discrepancy between de Ruiter's charismatic and noncharismatic roles. Among the various alternative, noncharismatic images of de Ruiter that are in circulation, those of psychological and moral deviance produced and propounded by the counterculture movement are less germane to processes of deconversion than simple "ordinary guy" roles that devotees glimpse during backstage encounters with him. *Doctoral student essay winner.*

Joy, Morny (University of Calgary) "**Women's Rights and Religions: Explorations in Comparative Philosophy and Religion.**" Morny Joy's paper introduces the topic of women's rights as human rights in order to promote intercultural discussion in both philosophy and religion. At stake is the shifting boundary between public and private as this affects the secular/religious divide. In many recent instances, fundamentalism has attempted to interfere in the public and political sphere, while keeping women under tight private control. At the same time, many feminists have proclaimed "the personal is the political." Such diverse impulses would only seem to confuse the situation. As yet there has not been much work done on a comparative basis that would bring scholars of different religions and philosophy into dialogue with activists from the different regions and religions of the world to address this most important issue. This paper is an attempt to start such a conversation.

King, Rebekka (Emory University) "**The Bible and Beyond: Evangelical Material Culture, Experiencing and Exhibiting History.**" This paper explores evangelical Christian interactions with and interpretations of ancient material culture (biblical artifacts, ancient texts, reconstructed pilgrimage sites and scholarly interpretations of the history of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity). This research is based upon fieldwork conducted at the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto in 2009 and currently being undertaken at the Passages Bible Exhibit in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum in Ohio. This paper focuses on ongoing evangelical discussions concerning the roles that extra-biblical materials (e.g. the Dead Sea Scrolls) might play in theological and socio-political conversations and church identity construction. I draw upon scholarship that engages with material culture (McDannell 1995; Morgan 2010; Keane 2007) and suggest that these innovative evangelical readings of history create new directions in thinking about the current and future location of the Christian subject.

Klassen, Justin D. (Independent Scholar) "**Secularism and Ideology.**" Western social theorists have long predicted the decline of religion's relevance in the public sphere. For such theorists, this decline was not only predictable but inevitable, insofar as they assumed that as more and more factors of human experience became comprehensible through reason alone, the importance of religious language in individual and social formation would diminish. Today though, even as all manner of technological applications of instrumental rationality would seem to justify its overwhelming authority, evidence of religion's resilience in public life is ubiquitous. What can account for the failure of secularization theories to identify this possible outcome? Drawing on various figures this paper argues that many of the most familiar predictions of religion's decline in the modern West misunderstood the relationship between religion and empiricism, and failed to recognize the function of ideological thinking in their view of secular reason.

Kleeb, Sarah Lynn (University of Toronto) sarah.kleeb@mail.utoronto.ca "**Meaning and Violation: On the Exclusive Character of Narratives of Loss and Redemption.**" Drawing on

insights offered by moral anti-theodicy, and building on Lynne Arnault's critical analysis of the "will to happy endings," this paper suggests that the redemptive logic which motivates a narrative of development or growth via experiences of suffering may result in marginalization of those who are unable to find meaning in their sorrow. This has led to the establishment of norms which privilege responses to grief deemed socially appropriate, anticipating a conclusion in which individuals are invariably believed to benefit. Those incapable of following this trajectory are often resigned to the periphery, their expression of loss considered invalid, if entertained at all. This unintentional, but potent, form of exclusion can be found in forms of reasoning common to many Western theodicies, which often inform broader cultural attitudes toward mourning. In this way, genuine attempts at inclusivity may betray individuals who express suffering differently, obscuring those who remain inconsolable.

Kline, Scott (St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo) "**Pinellas Hope: A Catholic Response to Homelessness.**" During the Great Recession of 2008, the number of homeless in the United States increased dramatically. High poverty rates and increased unemployment, coupled with the lack of affordable housing, contributed to roughly one million new people becoming homeless at the height of the economic crisis. The influx led to the formation of tent cities near areas hardest hit by the recession. One such example is Pinellas Hope, a program of Catholic Charities in St. Petersburg, Florida, a city that has the highest rate of homelessness as a percentage of its overall population in the US. This paper examines the social, political, and cultural context that gave rise to Pinellas Hope and its responses, as a Catholic organization, to the crisis. A particular focus of this paper is a phenomenon known as "creaming," which is what occurs when the newly homeless enter a program with personal resources relatively close at hand.

Landy, Francis (University of Alberta) (Roundtable Respondent) "**After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion, University of Calgary Press.**" *After Appropriation* is a collection of twelve essays that in diverse ways address the problem of how comparative philosophy and religion would change if the concepts and categories of non-Western philosophies and religions were taken as being of equal importance. While the division between the two disciplines of Religious Studies and Philosophy is commonplace in western academia, this bifurcation does not necessarily apply in non-Western settings, where religion and philosophy tend to be integrated. As a result, when the disciplines are virtually mutually exclusive, as in the West, a full appreciation of non-Western approaches to either religion or philosophy is not easily attained, and distortions, such as appropriation, often occur. This project is conducted with full awareness of the post-colonial critique of such enterprises.

Larm, Jackie (University of Edinburgh) "**1,000 Tibetans. Tibetan Immigration and Religion Then and Now.**" In 2010, the Canadian government announced that Canada would welcome 1,000 displaced Tibetans as Canadian landed immigrants. This vulnerable population now live in from Arunachal Pradesh, India, a poverty-stricken area lacking in educational opportunities. Tibetans began immigrating to Canada in 1971. The Canadian government's attitudes towards these new immigrants was one of cultural assimilation, despite the Dalai Lama requesting that Tibetans be given the opportunity to preserve their cultural and religious identity. Tibetans were undoubtedly "@ the edge" of Canadian society. Curiously, formal Tibetan Buddhist organizations established during the early immigration period were founded by Tibetan refugees, but served non-Tibetan converts. Generally, Tibetans and non-Tibetans maintained separate religious spaces.

Now, this division may be lessening. Previous research has either explored religious spaces of Tibetans or those of converts. This paper investigates the connection between Tibetan and convert communities, and how immigration affects each group.

Laughlin, Jack (University of Sudbury) and Kornel Zathureczky, (University of Sudbury) "**Codifying Pluralism: The Supreme Court of Canada and World Religions discourse.**" The February 2012 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *S.L. v. Commission scolaire des Chênes*, should be of significant interest to those among us who have an interest in theory and method in religious studies. The decision is remarkable for its virtual codification of the terms under which religion(s) may be taught in Canadian public education as mandatory. While, of course, we university instructors are free to present religion(s) as we see fit, we feel increasingly constrained by the public conception of World Religions, reflected in the Supreme Court decision itself, one which our discipline and its antecedents are largely responsible for creating. This presentation is meant to be a first step towards the possibility of reclaiming the imagining of religion along with a sense of self-reflexivity for greater public consumption, without going the distance of more *avant-garde* theorists (Fitzgerald, *et al.*).

Lemieux, Angelika Maeser (Vanier College, St. Laurent, QC) "**Writing from the Margins : Female Protest and Empowerment in I, Hanuman**" Roger Buckley's historical novel about the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, explores issues of nationalism, religion, culture, race and gender in the form of a veteran of the 22nd Bengal Infantry's memoir about the uprising against the British in which he led an attack at Lucknow on 16 January, 1858, masqueraded as Lord Hanuman of the Ramayana. Bedasee Singh's historical existence was recorded in the British Army archives, but aside from the citation of this extraordinary fusion of nationalism and faith, nothing further was stated. Buckley's fictionalized memoir probes into the sepoy's life and that of his lover-friend, Basundhara Rani, an outcast who joins the freedom struggle and later helps the blind Bedasee to write his story, in the process adding her own commentaries in the margins. This narrative recounts the aspiration to liberation and empowerment of both sexes but shows how doubly challenged woman's condition is within patriarchy.

Lewis, Justin Jaron (University of Manitoba) "**Miracles Trouble.**" An increasingly popular position in the study of religion is that we must adopt a scientific outlook, forthrightly rejecting belief in miracles. This paper argues that, on the contrary, miracles trouble our field in ways that are "good to think with." Against the argument that we must deny miracles to be taken seriously in the academy, I present examples of recent, rigorous scholarship open to possibilities beyond a rationalist framework. As a specialist in Hasidic Judaism, with interests in Cree and Anishnaabe spirituality, I take the discussion beyond Christian contexts. Beyond the study of religion, other human sciences also grapple with anomalous narratives and experiences. The incompatibility of miracles with a scientific world-view can expose that world-view itself as a fitting object of our study. And intellectually honest, non-theological encounters with miracles can enrich our field, leading to new understandings of diverse or marginalized ways of knowing.

Lindenburger, Sharon (Western University) slinden@rogers.com "**READING WHO WE ARE, NOT WHO THE OTHER IS: Is Psychoanalytic Identity Theory applied to sacred texts a factor in religious strife?**" Does who we are—our core identity—determine how we subjectively interpret texts deemed to be sacred? The literary critic, Norman Holland, adopted

psychoanalytical reader-response theory to interpretative processes based on the psychoanalyst Heinz Lichtenstein's identity theory. Although Holland's hermeneutical process focused primarily on literature, his findings have implications for the way in which readers read sacred texts. Lichtenstein hypothesized that constellated in each person is an unconscious identity theme that colours everything a person reads, and that this unconscious core identity theme remains constant throughout one's lifetime. *Does one's unconscious core identity contribute to the often highly conflictual interpretations of sacred texts, leading to difficult inter-religious conflicts?* What does psychoanalytical reader response theory imply regarding the authority of texts we deem sacred? This presentation will explore the interface between psychoanalytic identity theory and our attributions of meanings to texts, particularly conflictual readings that lead to conflictual actions.

Loewen, Nathan (Vanier College) "**Teaching an Introduction to the Global Philosophy of Religion.**" Currently, the recent history of the field shapes the content of introductions to the philosophy of religion. In order to substantively engage students, whose experiences and destinies are already shaped by global realities, such teaching must undergo revision. A proposed shift from the problems of theism and Christian theology towards active learning analyses of ostensibly religious phenomena is the means by which the field can gain pertinence for general education and the humanities. This presentation first explores the rationale for teaching differently, and then works out a pedagogy that has students themselves aim to practice a global philosophy of religion. Active learning, both in-class and through homework, is centered upon a hermeneutical process of "venturesome rational reconstruction" (Arnold 2005, 7) that works with sources generated by the teacher, the students and via interaction with global media. Students are thereby introduced to a global philosophy of religion.

Malyon, Morganna (Brandon University) "**Understanding the historical interplay of performance, religion and racism in rural Manitoba from 1880 to 1950.**" Utilizing local histories, this paper examines the interplay of performance, religion and racism in terms of regional trends in rural Manitoba from 1880 to 1950. Summarizing the findings of my preliminary research, this essay demonstrates where ethnic drag as "Chinamen" was most and least severe and how that compared to blackface. With a specific focus on the structures and processes related to the habitus and cultural fields, I work to uncover the covert religious aspects that influenced regional trends of performative ethnic drag in rural Manitoba.

Mann, Richard (Carleton University) "**Of Cultural Complexes and Temples: The Use of Public Space in a Global Hindu Context.**" This paper studies the use of public and private space and ideas of secular and sacred space in relation to two Swaminarayan (BAPS) temples in Toronto and Delhi. Both examples raise questions about similarities and differences between Canadian and Indian approaches to the intersection of politics, space and religion. At the opening of both temples the respective Prime Ministers of India and Canada gave talks, both governments gave money/support to help establish the temples, and at both temples the line between what is a 'cultural centre' and a 'religious centre' is blurred to accommodate the ties each has with national 'secular' governments. I will argue that the Delhi centre embodies the fluid nature of the division between religious and public found in Indian visions of secularism and that this is the model employed at the Toronto temple.

Marshall, Alison (Brandon University) **Serving others was your life-long ambition: Chinese**

Buddhism and identity in pre-1950s prairie Canada. This paper offers a glimpse of Chinese Buddhism beyond Chinatown from British Columbia to Manitoba. Focussing on the intersections of religious identity, Chinese nationalism, communism, and gender, I offer a preliminary discussion of the meaning of and implications for Chinese Buddhist involvement by power brokers, the elite and non-elite labourers and women between 1890 and 1950.

Martel-Reny, Marie-Paule (Concordia University) "**Growing Up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists.**" The forthcoming publication, *Growing up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists* (June 2013), is the first major study of religion among second generation Canadians and is an important contribution to understanding religious diversity and multiculturalism in the twenty-first century. Contributors consider how relating to religion varies significantly depending on which faith is in question, how men and women have different views on the role of religion in their lives, and how the possibilities of being religiously different are greater in larger urban centres than in surrounding rural communities. Interviews with over two hundred individuals, aged 18 to 26, reveal that few are drawn to militant, politicized religious extremes, how almost all second generation young adults take personal responsibility for their religion, and want to understand the reasons for their beliefs and practices. This panel will provide a forum for select contributors to reflect and to engage with scholars about its implications.

Martel-Reny, Marie-Paule (Université Concordia (Montréal)) "**Le programme éthique et culture religieuse au Québec: Perspectives des étudiants.**" Notre étude doctorale porte sur la religiosité des jeunes Québécois. Au moyen d'entrevues de fond effectuées auprès de 17 participants âgés de 14 à 19 ans, nous avons voulu documenter la quête de sens d'adolescents québécois dits « de souche ». Nous avons entre autres étudié l'appréciation qu'avaient les participants du programme d'éthique et de culture religieuse (ECR) implanté dans les écoles québécoises depuis 2008. C'est ce dernier aspect qui sera mis de l'avant dans cette présentation. Nous avons demandé aux participants leur opinion sur ce cours, s'il contribuait à leur réflexion sur le sens de la vie et à leur compréhension du phénomène religieux. Les résultats suggèrent que les participants apprécient leur cours ECR, mais que son succès dépend beaucoup du dynamisme de l'enseignant qui le donne, ainsi que du type d'activités offertes par celui-ci.

McCann, Gillian (Nipissing University) "**Utopian Visions and Canadian Theosophy 1891-1945.**" Zygmunt Bauman has written that utopias "portray the future as a set of competing projects, and thereby reveal the role of human volition and concerted effort in bringing it about." This ability to envision an alternative form for society was a feature of Canadian Theosophy; a movement that developed beginning in 1891. Most popular in cities like Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver these thinkers synthesized many of the strands of Utopian thought and distilled them into what has been referred to as "Theosophical socialism", a combination of religious-spiritual values wedded to radical political action. The work of Joy Dixon and Jill Roe has also demonstrated ways in which the Theosophical Society became a space in which to debate the creation of new gender roles. This presentation will look at the Theosophical contribution to the movements in Canada dedicated to the creation of a more egalitarian, creative and just society.

McLellan, Janet (Wilfrid Laurier University) "**Challenges, Conflicts and Continuities in Small-town Rural Ontario Churches.**" This paper identifies the significant changes occurring within several churches in the Haliburton Highlands, a high amenity area about two hours north of Toronto. While some churches face rapid membership decline and potential closure, others

are developing innovative ways of worship and social outreach to enhance growth as well as service in local communities. New members, especially when they assume leadership positions, can present challenges to traditional attitudes and values, even if they commit to already existing programs and activities. Utilizing Becker's (1999) models of congregations in conflict, one particular incident at a small church is detailed to highlight contentious shifts in local practices that arose following an influx of retiree migrants from the Greater Toronto Area.

Mooney, Nicola (University of the Fraser Valley) "**The Contingencies of Householding: Gender Opportunities and Constraints within Sikhism.**" Regardless of contemporary social facts, Sikhs pride themselves on the egalitarian ideals of their founding gurus. Indeed, Sikhs and religious scholars alike describe Sikhism as a reformist religion that raises a radically egalitarian challenge to caste Hinduism; as well, Sikh gender equality is frequently claimed. Sikhism rejected the ashramas, the stages of life protocols and renunciations of (predominantly male) Hindu religious practice, instead advocating a doctrine of householding that proposes critical socioreligious engagement in marriage and family life at all ages for both women and men. This paper will examine the gender opportunities and constraints that are raised within Sikh ideals of egalitarianism as contingent upon the ideal and practice of householding.

Moreman, Christopher M. (California State University, East Bay) "**A Survey of Jewish Beliefs in and Experiences with Death, Dying, and the Afterlife.**" My presentation examines beliefs and experiences at the edge of life from the perspective of one particular community which has itself existence at the "edge" throughout history. I will present results from a large-scale survey (n = approx. 400) currently underway. This survey inquires into the beliefs and experiences of various North American Jewish communities insofar as they relate to death and the afterlife. There have not been, as yet, any surveys on this topic in this particular community. My research aims to discover 1) the effectiveness of end-of-life / hospice care for Jewish communities in NA; 2) whether current Jewish beliefs adhere to Jewish tradition on death and dying; 3) the range of current Jewish beliefs in an afterlife and the extent to which members of the Jewish community report having had experiences therewith.

Murphy, Trevor (Saint Mary's University) "**At The Edge Of The Ocean: The Role of Religion in Contemporary Acadian Identity.**" What does it mean to be Acadian in 2013? Scholars suggest that throughout the history of the Acadian people, several key elements have been central to defining their cultural identity: the French language, the collective memory of the 1755 expulsion and the Catholic faith. This paper focuses on the latter, presenting preliminary results of a qualitative study that aims to evaluate whether or not young Acadians (between the ages of 16 and 30) continue to identify religion – particularly Catholicism – as an integral part of their cultural identity. Using ethnographic models to guide the interviews and grounded theory to codify the data, this study contributes to a broader conversation examining the ways in which marginalized ethnic groups construct identity within a dominant culture. Moreover, this paper also provides valuable insight on the changing dynamics of Acadian identity in the twenty first century.

Napier, Jonathan (University of Calgary) "**The Metaphors of Multiculturalism.**" Multiculturalism can be understood through its metaphors. Paul Ricoeur describes metaphor as bringing two different things together, thus producing a new meaning from their juxtaposition (Ricoeur, 1975). I will analyze metaphors used to describe multiculturalism and by extension, the

various meaning-making projects underway. Multiculturalism is described as a celebration of religious diversity and as including the marginalized. Such is apparent in the metaphor multiculturalism is a mosaic. A mosaic is a pattern or a picture that brings pieces of different shapes, sizes, and colours together. However, if we emphasize mosaic as a picture it becomes static – all the pieces all have a specific space and there is no room for growth or change. Instead, we ought to understand multiculturalism as a negotiated, dialogical space. As such, we require a picture that is dynamic and ever-changing. As a result, we will need new possibilities for our constructs concerning multiculturalism.

Newmark, Jeff (University of Winnipeg) **“The Other as Activist: Tokugawa Outcastes in the Public Sphere.”** A rigid class system separated Tokugawa Japan’s (1600-1868) society into four groups: samurai; peasants; artisans; and merchants. Beyond this were certain peoples not easily classified: itinerant entertainers, physician assistants, and the *hinin* (非人) or outcaste community. Despite status as non-humans, it was the community of outcastes to whom samurai activists appealed before instigating disturbances in the late Tokugawa Period. Allured by promises of world-renewal and the materialization of a Buddhist paradise on earth, the *hinin* partook in movements that led up to the fall of the Shogunate. In this presentation, I investigate the role of the *hinin* community in the public arena of discontent through both their participation in uprisings as well as in illicit religious pilgrimages to sacred sites across Japan. I contend that the *hinin* were an integral agency in expanding the public sphere into one that was adaptable for the Meiji Period.

Oppenheim, Michael (Concordia University, Montreal) Michael.Oppenheim@concordia.ca **“Not “Any Tom, Dick and Harry””: Heschel and Buber on the Holocaust.”** In the midst of Abraham Heschel’s fervent and enigmatic final book, *A Passion for Truth*, there is a brief reference to Martin Buber. Heschel writes: Martin Buber’s declaration “Nothing can make me believe in a God who punishes Saul because he did not murder his enemy” must be contrasted with the Kotzker’s statement, “A God whom any Tom, Dick and Harry could comprehend, I would not believe in.” (293) Although Heschel merely juxtaposes Buber’s view to that of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, there is no doubt that this constitutes a stinging rebuke. Is this judgment justifiable, is there really so much distance between himself and Buber? We will come to see that Heschel’s assessment was both correct and incorrect. At the end of their lives, both Jewish philosophers were brought to revolutionary, that is, personally unanticipated and unwanted, conclusions in their struggle with that Tremendum which is the Holocaust.

Pankovskiy, Iaroslav (University of Alberta) **“The Ukrainian Orthodox Church: Communicating Via the Web.”** The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has called for cooperation of the state and society to unify their efforts in promoting moral norms and democratic principles. One group that the Church is seeking to address in particular is youth: youth represent the most active segment of the population. However, the number of youth in the Church is decreasing. This study explores how effectively the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is communicating with youth in implementing the principles that the Church has declared. This research explores one specific venue of communication – websites. In addressing its goal, the study is using a linguistic model developed within systemic functional linguistics (SFL). The websites under analysis are examined as complex multimodal entities. The analysis is structured around three integral components of websites: (1) design, (2) content, and (3) navigation tools. This paper will focus on

the content aspect. Both theoretical and practical implementations of the study are discussed.

Pitas, Jeannine M. (University of Toronto) "**Between Beauty and Burlesque: The Virgin Mary in the poetry of Marosa di Giorgio.**" This paper will analyze the figure of the Virgin Mary in twentieth-century Uruguayan poet Marosa di Giorgio's book-length poem, *Los papeles salvajes* (The Wild Papers). Invoking one of the central images from her Catholic upbringing, di Giorgio's portrayal of the Virgin ranges from reverent to ridiculous. At times, Mary is a protector; at other times, she is something of a doll that the child narrator of the poems plays with; at still other times, she is embodied in the narrator and speaks to us in the first person. Analyzing these apparitions, I will suggest that di Giorgio's blending of the sacred and profane in her portrayal of Mary is a strategy of resistance against the patriarchal social structure in which she lived. My theoretical framework for analysis will include Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* and Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

Pleshoyano, Alexandra (University of Sherbrooke in Quebec) "**Restorative Justice You and I: on the edge of a reconciliation.**" For the past twenty years or so, the project of restorative justice has been trying to find its way in the Quebec criminal justice system. Whether it be associated to a faith tradition or not, restorative justice starts with an inner process and is therefore grounded in the basic spirituality of all human beings. How could an offender ask for mercy if s/he is not aware to carry within a genuine and valuable human being? Restorative justice is a long process where we invite the offender to encounter the "other" within her or himself. My argument in this paper is to demonstrate that no genuine reconciliation could ever occur if one does not realize the sacredness of her or his being. How could anyone believe in the offender if s/he doesn't really believe in herself or himself?

Ramji, Rubina (Cape Breton University) "**Growing Up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists.**" The forthcoming publication, *Growing up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists* (June 2013), is the first major study of religion among second generation Canadians and is an important contribution to understanding religious diversity and multiculturalism in the twenty-first century. Contributors consider how relating to religion varies significantly depending on which faith is in question, how men and women have different views on the role of religion in their lives, and how the possibilities of being religiously different are greater in larger urban centres than in surrounding rural communities. Interviews with over two hundred individuals, aged 18 to 26, reveal that few are drawn to militant, politicized religious extremes, how almost all second generation young adults take personal responsibility for their religion, and want to understand the reasons for their beliefs and practices. This panel will provide a forum for select contributors to reflect and to engage with scholars about its implications.

Redden, Jason (University of Manitoba) umredden@cc.umanitoba.ca "**The advent of Christianity, politics and revivals on British Columbia's North Coast in the late nineteenth century.**" Histories of Christian missions to Indigenous peoples of North America have tended to be composed along denominational lines. The framing has been employed by imperial religious historians as well as religionists of Indigenous Christianity. When considering the question of the appeal of Christianity to Indigenous peoples, scholars in both fields have suggested that denominational missionaries were sought out for political reasons (e.g. for assistance in dealings with the Canadian state). While such conclusions are well reasoned, I think that some were also drawn to a particular kind of Christian form: an ecstatic Christianity that they viewed as

equalizing, inclusive, non-discriminatory and local. This paper examines the appeal of revivalist Methodism and enthusiast movements among the Ts'ymesen and their neighbours in the late nineteenth century, and suggests that an exploration of religious form, particularly, enthusiast Christianity, is a useful line of inquiry in future work on Christian missions.

Richmond, Sheldon (Independent Scholar) "**The Rationality of Doing and Then Understanding.**" The principle of believing and then understanding the belief is criticized correctly as irrational. Orthodoxies admit the irrational and say it is a necessary component of Faith or Religion. However, Orthopraxies such as Hinduism and Judaism, where belief is a free choice, say Do and then Understand. This appears irrational but is not. Concepts cannot be understood apart from their embodiment in institutions. Indeed, this is the methodology of social anthropology known as "participant-observation": the observer can only understand a culture and document its mythologies by participating in the culture. In other words, the rational approach to any tradition is to see how its theory is embedded in practice and institutions. Only then can we rationally criticize, improve, adapt and modify the tradition, including the tradition of rationality which itself is an orthopraxy and not an orthodoxy.

Riddell, Kathleen A. (University of Waterloo) "**Beyond Illusion: The Critical Structuring of Religious Experience in the Spectacle.**" This paper examines the emergence of cultural, economic and material structuring of emotion in a cultural event known as spectacle. The spectacle is a unification of society (cf. Durkheim 1912, Debord 1967, Hedges 2010) and a shared experience of emotion (Corrigan 2002). Through spectacle, society reaffirms and celebrates values important to its continuity (cf. Alexander, Giesen and Mast 2006). Engendering of experiences deemed religious (Taves 2009) among participants, occurs through expenditure of emotion, shared values, religious language and secularization. The lens through which I examine the spectacle is the fandom of sporting and music events, namely professional sports and rock concerts. The approach is tripartite. After demonstrating the historical development of the spectacle in North America, I discuss moods and motivations (cf. Geertz 1973) created by professional sports and rock concerts. Variables, such as gender and social class, shape the emotion, collective effervescence and religious experience of groups and individuals.

Rodrigues, Hillary (The University of Lethbridge) "**Great Goddess@the edge.**" While the Hindu Great Goddess Durga is generally viewed as an alluring, powerful deity in South Asia, her character is radically different on the island of Bali. There, Durga's abode is the cemetery, where she presides over illness, death, and black magic, and the rites pertaining to these marginalized activities. However, a few centuries earlier, in Java, Durga's persona appears to have had benign configurations similar to her South Asian counterpart. Drawing upon historical evidence and fieldwork observations, I shall present some of my incipient research on Durga's cult in Southeast Asia offering suggestions as to how her persona transformed as Javanese Hindus migrated to Bali. I speculate as to how she was displaced from a position near the centre of the divine pantheon to the seeming margins of Balinese culture and shall also describe some of the forms that her worship currently takes in Bali and East Java.

Ruparell, Tinu (University of Calgary) "**Locating Comparative Philosophy in Relation to Religion.**" Tinu Ruparell is interested in the question of strangeness and the stranger as a component of intercultural philosophy and religion – the stranger as the Other. As Ruparell attests, the authentic voice of the Other is a subject that has exercised many scholars. At the same

time, there are philosophers, like Emmanuel Levinas, who seek to rectify the failures of the Western ethical code that did not prevent the Holocaust from occurring. Ruparell proposes that Levinas's approach might be of assistance in own search to find a process that would be suitable for intercultural philosophy and religion – one that allows an alienated person or subaltern figure to find his or her voice.

Saenz, Daniel. (Concordia University) "**A Queer Approach to Male Sanctity and Christology.**" This paper argues that Biblical figures and stories can be read queerly to construct a queer space within the Catholic tradition. To this end, I use two theoretical frameworks: Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Queer Theory. I discuss Donald Boisvert's analysis of Caravaggio's St. John the Baptist. By amplifying the painting's implicit homoerotic content, Boisvert argues that this work promotes and celebrates same-sex desire. Based on The Queer Bible Commentary, I provide a queer approach to baptism, the Last Supper, and Jesus' death, and explain how they relate to the lives of queer people. I argue that the lives of Jesus and his disciples are analogous to the lives of queer people, thereby making a place for us within the Catholic tradition. Finally, I use the works of photographer Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin to exemplify particular queer readings of the Last Supper and Jesus' death.

Salmond, Noel (Carleton University) (Roundtable Chair) "**Religion and the Environment.**" From the small decisions to take a reusable bag, to the big decisions to devote one's life to environmental activism, environmental concern plays a role in many peoples lives. This roundtable will examine the growing phenomenon of religious expressions of environmentalism – an often controversial issue that leaves those involved misunderstood and pushed to 'the edge' of political discourse. This panel examines religious attitudes towards nature and it examines the issue of nature as an object of religious veneration. We analyze the intersection of religion and environmentalism in order to better understand the relationship between the two, and to investigate the identity and implications of the growing environmental movement.

Salmond, Noel (Carleton University) "**Incommensurable Discourses on the Environment: The Rhetoric of the Government of Canada versus Idle No More.**" This paper analyses the discursive practices of the spokespersons of the current federal government in contrast with those of the voices of the Idle No More movement. The latter deploys a discourse comfortable with invoking a sacred obligation to protect the streams and the rivers as the veins of our mother the Earth, the latter a discourse about partnering for ('responsible') development in job creation through resource extraction leading to economic growth. I suggest that these discourses are fundamentally incommensurable and that the indigenous voices exhibit a religious environmentalism expressive of a qualitative relationship to nature clearly at odds with the dominant economic ethos, couched solely in quantitative terms, as presented by the State.

Sandness, Adela (St. Francis Xavier University) "**Giving Voice: On water, cows and embodied Speech in the Rg-Veda.**" Amongst the bodies of the Rgvedic Sarasvati are the river, cow and goddess of Speech. Each is a container of sacrificial offering substances manifest on a different plane of the Vedic cosmos whose tripartite structure includes the heaven, the earth and the atmospheric space in-between through which the offerings travel as they make their way to the realm of the gods. The sacrificial flame and related mythic expressions of fire are masculine: the fire animates, transforms and sets the offerings in motion. The embodied container of offering substances is feminine. Yet the poet systematically names the content of this container using

words that are linguistically neuter. This paper will explore usage of the masculine, feminine and linguistic neuter relating to the “container” and the “contained” in the Rg-Veda.

Schiffer-Graham, Katja (Carleton University) "**Successes and Failures of Indigenous Concepts of “Sacred” in Canadian Environmentalism and Conservation.**" This paper will look at the value of, and resistance to, the use of indigenous categories of “sacred” in environmental and conservation discourses in Canada. Through the use of several case studies, it will examine how indigenous perceptions of ecological stewardship have become an important and relevant part of environmental debates, and how legislators, corporations, and the public have responded to the reframing of resources in such religious terms. It will look at the historical basis of indigenous concept of ecological stewardship, and at how this concept has, over the past fifty years, made its way into mainstream discourse on environmentalism. Finally I will argue, that though the category of sacred has failed to be recognized in Canadian courts, it has become a relevant force for conservation in the popular imagination.

Selby, Jennifer. (Memorial University of Newfoundland) "**Performative Effects?: Defining Islam in Canadian Public Commissions.**" Based in a larger comparative project with Melanie Adrian (Carleton University), using media and discourse analysis, this exploratory paper considers ritual and political performativity in two recent Canadian public commissions. Both were initiated following concerns with expressions of Islam in the public sphere and similarly favoured expressive deliberations. The organization and final reports of the 2004 Ontario Boyd Commission and the 2007 Quebecois Bouchard Taylor Commission differ in important ways. This paper examines how they similarly perform versions of multiculturalism and interculturalism to (1) become mechanisms of choice in the “public” management of secularism vis-à-vis Islam while (2) in their organization and deliberation, they remain constrained in how they can treat and depict everyday religious belief and practice.

Seljak, David (St. Jerome's University) dseljak@uwaterloo.ca "**Creed, Multiculturalism and Human Rights in Ontario.**" In response to a number of court cases, human rights tribunal decisions, policy directives and social changes, the Ontario Human Rights Commission is updating its policy on “creed,” that is, its policy on the promotion of religious freedom and protection against discrimination based on religion. According to the OHRC, the evolution of Canada’s multicultural and multi-religious society has made its current policy (updated in 1996) increasingly irrelevant. This paper will outline the new challenges that the Commission has discerned in terms of addressing the changing nature of religious intolerance and discrimination in Ontario. It will show how the Commission attempts to address forms of religious intolerance and discrimination that are structural and largely unacknowledged in earlier policy statements. The Commission’s struggle to define a new policy is a case study in how Canadians are wrestling with the new religious diversity as well as the relationship between secularism and multiculturalism.

Shore, Megan (Kings University College) "**Pinellas Hope: A Catholic Response to Homelessness.**" During the Great Recession of 2008, the number of homeless in the United States increased dramatically. High poverty rates and increased unemployment, coupled with the lack of affordable housing, contributed to roughly one million new people becoming homeless at the height of the economic crisis. The influx led to the formation of tent cities near areas hardest hit by the recession. One such example is Pinellas Hope, a program of Catholic Charities in St.

Petersburg, Florida, a city that has the highest rate of homelessness as a percentage of its overall population in the US. This paper examines the social, political, and cultural context that gave rise to Pinellas Hope and its responses, as a Catholic organization, to the crisis. A particular focus of this paper is a phenomenon known as “creaming,” which is what occurs when the newly homeless enter a program with personal resources relatively close at hand.

Shrubsole, Nicholas (University of Waterloo) "**First Nations Sacred Sites and Section 2(a): Cases from British Columbia and the Challenge of Natural Physical Space for Religious Freedom in a Liberal Democratic Canada.**" For many indigenous communities in Canada, land and religious belief are intimately connected. The dispossession of Aboriginal lands has left indigenous peoples with little control over land, making these areas susceptible to socio-economic development. Although the state demonstrates concern for the protection of indigenous cultures and acknowledges the “sui generis” nature of the indigenous land-person relationship, its priority remains fixed in the socio-economic project of modernity. The state attempts to protect religious and religious sites through the liberal-democratic standard of compromise and negotiation. However, for many indigenous communities, sacred sites are non-negotiable. Like all rights in Canada, section 2(a) is not absolute, but indigenous religiously significant physical space poses two unique problems. First, the intimate connection between land and belief means that indigenous religions are being negotiated. Second, the public pursuit for the protection of sacred sites is often involuntary, a product of dispossession.

Simpson, John (University of Toronto at Mississauga) "**Growing Up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists.**" The forthcoming publication, *Growing up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists* (June 2013), is the first major study of religion among second generation Canadians and is an important contribution to understanding religious diversity and multiculturalism in the twenty-first century. Contributors consider how relating to religion varies significantly depending on which faith is in question, how men and women have different views on the role of religion in their lives, and how the possibilities of being religiously different are greater in larger urban centres than in surrounding rural communities. Interviews with over two hundred individuals, aged 18 to 26, reveal that few are drawn to militant, politicized religious extremes, how almost all second generation young adults take personal responsibility for their religion, and want to understand the reasons for their beliefs and practices. This panel will provide a forum for select contributors to reflect and to engage with scholars about its implications.

Sinclair, Laura (Carleton University) "**The Green and Dark Green of Missa Gaia.**" The *Missa Gaia* is a contemporary Mass written by Paul Winter, in praise of Gaia, the Earth. Using Bron Taylor's definitions and distinctions between Green and Dark Green religion, the *Missa Gaia* is found to exist in both categories of religious environmentalism through an analysis of its form, text, performance and function. As an expression of religious environmentalism the *Missa Gaia* falls somewhere between the two categories Bron Taylor outlines, and challenges the function and form of current environmental expression.

Tansley, Lauren (Carleton University) "**Julia Butterfly Hill's Piety: A Starkian Case Study Arguing That Environmentalism is a Religion.**" This paper uses environmentalist Julia Butterfly Hill's two year-long tree-sit, and subsequent memoir, to demonstrate that environmentalism is a religion. Using Rodney Stark's Conversion Theory, I show that what Hill underwent prior to and during her tree-sit was a religious conversion. Furthermore I illustrate

that, like converts to other religions before her, Hill appropriates aspects of her previous religious affiliation into her environmentalism. The principle of cultural continuity accounts for this. Just as Christianity appropriated aspects of the dominant religion, paganism, in its earliest days, environmentalism is appropriating the dominant religion, Christianity, now. However, while Christianity appropriated aspects of paganism but is not a pagan religious movement, so too is environmentalism appropriating aspects of Christianity but is not a Christian religious movement.

Tapper, Michael. (Saint Paul University, Ottawa) "**Inconsistency among Canadian Evangelicals? An Analysis of Trinitarian Belief in Music Practices.**" Canadian evangelicals express overwhelming support for the doctrine of the Trinity. However, an assessment of whether a Trinitarian framework truly informs Canadian evangelical worship practices remains unexplored. This paper submits that a discrepancy exists in Canadian evangelicalism between stated Trinitarian claims and common ecclesial practices. In particular, it undertakes an analysis of the corporate singing practices (2007-2012) of the largest Canadian evangelical denomination—the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada—in order to identify Trinitarian impulses in their corporate worship. Interpretive criteria for this examination is based on the work of Colin Gunton, who claimed that Trinitarian belief provides a basic picture of the world where diverse entities exist in relation, yet remain particularly themselves. Against notions of inequality and fragmentation, Gunton championed Trinitarian communion and its implications for worship practices. This paper challenges Canadian evangelicals to worship more consistently in accordance with a core confession of their faith.

Tekel, Rose M. (St. Francis Xavier University) "**Hermann Hesse's View of Religion: @the edge or at the centre?**" Hermann Hesse's view of religion while having its roots in German Romantic tradition, also shares similarities and shows affinity with the current debates concerning the place of religion in secular society. Raised in a Pietist family, and being introduced to the religions of India, in his early life Hesse was initially at what one would call the centre of traditional religious life. By his early teens, however, he rejected this view of religion and then spent the rest of his life writing novels and poetry which illustrated his own struggle and journey from the centre to the edge of religious traditions. This journey or pilgrimage, we will argue, helped him shape his understanding of religion and religious experience that foreshadows the current debate concerning the meaning of "spiritual but not religious". Thus, Hesse blurs the distinction between the centre and the edge as the place of religion in secular society.

Touna, Vaia (University of Alberta) "**The Meadows of Artemis and the Marginal Self.**" Euripides's 5th C BCE tragedy, "*Hippolytus*," is the story of the young son of King Theseus and an Amazon, who believes that he can choose a life and create a self different from the expectations and conventions of his time. During the play we see that his attempts not only fail but that they also cause irreparable harm to society's well being. Hippolytus, who spends his days in the margins of his city, is allowed a life in the private world of a carefree meadow—a liminal space that belongs to the realm of the goddess Artemis—only up to the moment that his behavior is seen as a threat to the city's welfare. My paper will examine how an ancient society, through the play of a tragedian, addresses the problem of social diversity and marginality by

communicating gender roles and illustrating the implications of transgressions.

Wall, Scott (Waterloo-Laurier Joint Program) "**Diversity is sacred? – an evangelical ideal and its social context.**" Late in December of 2012, 16,000 university students gathered at one of North America's largest evangelical Christian conferences. More than 2,000 of those attending were from Canada, with the Greater Toronto Area sending more delegates than any other locale in North America. This paper is based on research conducted with second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals from Toronto who attended the conference, and is part of an ongoing project investigating how they negotiate their ethnic and religious identities in multiple social contexts. The paper argues that these students' experience of an intentionally engineered, multi-ethnic religious environment does very little to contribute to a waning of their ethnic identity. It acknowledges (as many ritual theorists have) that large gatherings function as powerful religious "stimulants", but questions the degree to which the conference's use of social displacement and emotional inspiration impacts the perspective or identity of ethnic minorities in attendance.

White, Marybeth (Wilfrid Laurier University) "**Public Space, Religious Place: A Lao Buddhist Community's Re-Creation of Sacred Space in Rural Canada.**" Asian immigrants and refugees who have entered Canada in the past forty years have significantly contributed to religious diversity and place-making in Canada. The re-creation of sacred space by a group of Lao Buddhists in Caledon extends beyond their own privatized religious beliefs and communal practices involving the spiritual realm, to that of a dialectical relationship with the socio-political world. Both contexts, religious and public, occur simultaneously and are part and parcel of identity formation and the politics of representation, which are especially pressing for immigrant and refugee groups. Therefore, attention to the socio-political realm is critical for understanding how a Lao Buddhist community is re-creating their religious place in Canada. The focus of this paper is to demonstrate how the Lao community's re-creation of sacred space and public place are interconnected, each informing the other.

Wilkinson, Michael (Trinity Western University) "**Lonnie Frisbee: The Life and Death of a Hippie Preacher.**" This documentary is about a hippie who has a vision of Jesus while taking drugs, who then preaches to many hippies, leading them to Christianity during the Jesus People movement in the 1970s. Two prominent evangelical denominations experience growth in California at this time because of his work. However, Lonnie Frisbee, the Hippie Preacher, is also a homosexual and eventually dies of AIDS. The church after learning so writes him out of their history. The film is produced and written by David Di Sabatino who asks some hard questions about why they did so but also raises some interesting questions about Charismatic movements and those who lead them. The documentary was nominated for an Emmy Award, was featured at film festivals across North America, and shown on PBS. A clip of the film can be viewed at <http://www.lonniefrisbee.com/>.

Wood, Benjamin (University of Victoria) "**Parent-Child Conflicts in Tibetan Buddhist Autobiography.**" This paper explores recollections of parent-child conflicts in Tibetan Buddhist autobiography. My paper discusses three general types of narratives in which parental antagonism highlights or sculpts a child's exemplary virtue: narratives in which guardians are (1) opposed to a child's religious destiny; (2) cruel; and (3) immoral—generally so, or specifically vis-à-vis their child. When surrounded by a coterie of cruel, immoral, and close-minded parents, a child's Buddhist virtues of compassion, virtue, and insight are dramatically exposed. My paper

suggests that the child might be fruitfully considered a particular type of hagiographical category in sacred Tibetan autobiography—one whose inevitable limitations of agency are best inverted in discrete literary techniques, for instance, within narratives of deficient and antagonistic parenting.

Xavier, Merin Shobhana (Wilfrid Laurier University) "**Praying in Arabic and Singing in Tamil: A Sufi Urs in Toronto.**" The following paper explores a Sufi urs, or death anniversary celebration, of Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (d. 1986) a Sufi saint from Sri Lanka, in Toronto, Canada. Through the analysis of the use of Skype (to connect members from Europe, South Asia and North America) to reading Bawa's teachings in English, singing in Tamil, reciting dua (intercession) and Qur'anic ayats (verses) in Arabic and sharing a communal meal, this study highlights the ritual of urs that has developed within the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship (BMF). In doing so, it situates the eclectic make-up of members who embody various cultural, ethnic and religious identities of this particular Sufi order as reflective of the broader growing trends of Islam and Islamic mysticism in North America.

Young, Katherine (McGill University) "**An Elite on the Edge: Dilemmas of Reversal in a Hindu Tradition.**" In this paper, I will focus on the Hindu religious tradition of Shivaism, which has had an inclusive theology welcoming all castes and those beyond – the "untouchables" - but paradoxically has maintained the status of Brahmins at the head of the caste system. Based on interviews in Tamil Nadu over the past six years, I will argue that today Shiva Brahmins are experiencing radical changes to their status, putting them on the "edge" in the wake of the rise of non-Brahmin political power and extreme affirmative action policies. I will analyze how this has changed the leadership positions and inter-caste dynamics within Shivaism, what strategies Shiva Brahmins use to negotiate this new domain, and whether they perceive the new reality as one of equality or a new form of inequality. In conclusion, I will ask whether there are social and ethical lessons to be learned from such reversals.

Yousif, Ahmad F. (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)) "**Studying the "Others": Muslim Scholarship on World Religions.**" As in the early Islamic period, so today Muslim scholars and students face several challenges in their study of world religions. Some of these challenges are common to Muslim and Western scholarship on the subject, while others are peculiar to Muslim educational institutions. They range from the challenge of delimiting the field to those associated with research methodology. To be impartial, some Muslims are opposed to such an academic exercise, arguing that it will do more harm than good. It is, therefore, necessary to ask what led Muslim scholars, especially in the past, to study "other" religions. This paper examines some of these challenges, drawing upon classical Muslim legacy, experience of Western comparativists, and works of contemporary Muslim scholars in the field. In specific, the paper deals with the question: Why do Muslim scholars need to undertake a serious study of major world religions?

Zathureczky, Kornel (University of Sudbury) "**Codifying Pluralism: The Supreme Court of Canada and World Religions discourse.**" The February 2012 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *S.L. v. Commission scolaire des Chênes*, should be of significant interest to those among us who have an interest in theory and method in religious studies. The decision is remarkable for its virtual codification of the terms under which religion(s) may be taught in

Canadian public education as mandatory. While, of course, we university instructors are free to present religion(s) as we see fit, we feel increasingly constrained by the public conception of World Religions, reflected in the Supreme Court decision itself, one which our discipline and its antecedents are largely responsible for creating. This presentation is meant to be a first step towards the possibility of reclaiming the imagining of religion along with a sense of self-reflexivity for greater public consumption, without going the distance of more *avant-garde* theorists (Fitzgerald, *et al.*).