

World Secularisms at the Millennium

INTRODUCTION

Dreaming Secularism

Critical theory encourages us to look closely at the binaries that construct meaning and to consider the interrelations of pairs that supposedly name oppositions. Investigating and potentially destabilizing the religion/secularism opposition, however, has proven to be a tricky proposition in an academy that is often leery of any appeal to things religious. Part of the reason for this skepticism is that the religion/secularism opposition is fundamentally implicated in claims about reason. Specifically, secularism represents the Enlightenment reason that overcomes religious dogmatism. Accordingly, to set critical pressure on the religion/secularism binary is to shift further the already shifting grounds of the intellectual enterprise, including the Left's intellectual enterprise. Moreover, for many on the Left, the secular is seen as a bulwark against the irrational, regressive aspects of religion. (When you're facing the Christian Right, secularism can look pretty good.)

Nonetheless, this secularism—posed against religion and for reason—has imperatives other than simply those of freedom from dogmatism. Modern secularism in its promises, at least, provides a broad emancipation. As Weber observes, secularism's freedom from religion was also freedom for the market. This market freedom was not fully secular but was, in fact, tied to a specific form of religious activity—reformed Protestantism—and the practice of “worldly asceticism.”¹ By *worldly asceticism*, we mean those processes of body regulation, what we might call (with Foucault) bodily disciplines, that emerged in modernity. Because worldly asceticism in its market form was only indirectly related to the religious (one practiced it not to gain salvation but merely to demonstrate an already achieved salvation promised in Calvinist predestination), it could form a practice at once secular and religious.

Secularism and religion were in this sense co-implicated. Recognizing the co-origination of secularism and market-reformed Protestantism unmarks the national and religious particularities that have come to pass as a universal “secular.” This secularism was linked at its origins to a particular religion and a particular location, and it was maintained through a particular set of practices.

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These novel, specifically modern disciplines of the body have served to connect the laboring body at once to new forms/practices of capital and new forms/practices of religious life and, importantly, to do so in ways that naturalize the disciplined body, the market as secular site of freedom, and religion as morality. Body regulation has thus been a crucial pivot in the religion/secularism relation. The newly secularized state enforced specifically religious ideas about, for example, “natural” versus “unnatural” sexual acts and appetites, precisely through enforcing body regulation. However, the state did so no longer in the name of religion, but rather in the name of morality. Although secular in name, these body regulations are religious in form, and thus allow for the continuation of the co-implicated religion and secularism described by Weber. Indeed, as Rob Baird makes clear in his essay in this issue, one of the most striking transformations effected post-Enlightenment was the invention of religion *as* morality.

The body’s pivotal place in the religion/secularism couple helps to illuminate just why and how some bodies cannot win (women, for example, or homosexuals), no matter which “side” of the religion/secularism divide they come to occupy. We will come back to this point.

In light of the implication of the religious in the secular, and vice versa, has there ever been anything that could accurately be called “secularism”? And is “secularism” only one thing? If, as Edward Said has suggested, secularism can be a habitual majority practice or a willed minority practice, then learning to distinguish among secularisms, rather than simply distinguishing the secular from the religious, could be crucial to new political configurations.² What difference does willed minority practice make to majority habits? If secularization is an uneven process producing something akin to “scattered hegemonies,”³ what exactly does *uneven process* mean? What kinds of connections can be made among scattered secularisms that might articulate possibilities for *another* hegemony than the one we currently face?

In this special issue, we attempt to complicate secularism’s Enlightenment narrative. This complication does not aim to produce the “true” narrative of secularism (a goal that would yet keep faith with the Enlightenment) nor does it seek simply to revivify the secular in the face of newly empowered movements on behalf of the religious. Rather, by questioning what is meant by *secular*, as well as by *religion*, we hope to disturb the academic order of things, a disturbance that might lead to new support for secularism and, perhaps, to new secularisms, but could also lead to a new relation to religion.

At the Millennium, but Whose?

This move to reexamine and complicate the religion/secularism story seems especially warranted at this historical juncture. Is the year 2000 a religious or secular event? The method of timekeeping officially shared around the world (with regard to financial markets, for example)—a method that is, in some fundamental sense, secular—just happens to be the calendar of a particular religion: Christianity. What are the relationships among religion, secularism, nationalism, and the inter- or transnational?

To be sure, there is no natural or necessary set of relations among these terms. There is instead a complicated set of historical interactions that have naturalized the Christian calendar as the calendar of nations. While these interactions might be easily named in broad brush strokes, they are not so simply traced in their details. For example, we might tell a story something like the following: It's obvious that the supposedly secular calendar, the one shared by nations, is really a specifically Christian means of telling time, because the modern nation developed in a specifically Christian-European context and was then exported around the world through colonialism and its aftermath. Christianity played a crucial role in colonialism itself, and thus it is not surprising that the vestiges of this Christian dominance remain.

But even in this simple story slippages abound. Nationalism is as much the counterdiscourse to as it is the product of colonialism. The establishment of a "nation" in the postcolonial situation was often an attempt to overcome the claims connecting civilization and Christianity that accompanied colonialism and to manage and negotiate non-Christian religious claims that might or might not predate colonialism.

The very story that might be offered to explain the connection between religion and secularism—religion is merely a historical trace of that which has been overcome by secularism—depends on what it explains. The progress tale in which secularism starts in Europe and is exported around the world as freedom from the dogmatism of religion makes the nonfreedom of colonialism disappear or become the unfortunate but necessary means of achieving the freedom of secularism. Hence one of the fundamental problems of modernity: Are the violences that accompany modernity and remain even in the "post"-modern moment signs of a failure to fully institute secular freedom? Or are they the signs that secular freedom carries its own dominations, which are not simply left over from a specifically religious history?

And what of those "Christian nations" whence the millennial means of counting supposedly comes? Of what does their secularism consist?

Secularism is not just supposed to confirm the connection between Christianity and civilization, but to overcome Christianity as well. But does it?

In order to ask such questions, we have to disorient, and perhaps more importantly dis-Orientalize, much more than our method of counting. The question of time in relation to secularism is not just an accident of history, the confluence of academic interest and the somewhat arbitrary shifting of the calendar from 99 to 00. The secularization narrative is itself fundamentally about time. It is a progress narrative, at once descriptive and moral. The morality of progress connects the passage of time to social relations and implicates secularization in the basic problematics of modernity. Modernity, after all, is not simply the name of a time period. It names a set of social relations and their legitimation: Enlightenment. Secularization is at the heart of the intertwined Enlightenment narratives of modernization, rationalization, and progress, all of which depend on the overcoming of religious dogma by reason. Thus, secularization has proven difficult to separate from these other narratives.

The traditional narrative of secularization is part of a broader sociological narrative about societal development or evolution (depending on the version). Expounded quintessentially in the American context by Durkheimian social theorist Talcott Parsons and, following Parsons, Robert Bellah, the narrative focuses on processes of social-structural differentiation. In “Religious Evolution,” Bellah states the evolutionary thesis very succinctly: “Evolution at any system level I define as a process of increasing differentiation and complexity of organization that endows the organism, social system or whatever the unit in question may be with greater capacity to adapt to its environment, so that it is in some sense more autonomous relative to its environment than were its less complex ancestors.” Specifically with regard to religion, Bellah writes that “religious symbolization of what Geertz calls ‘the general order of existence’ tends to change over time, at least in some instances, in the direction of more differentiated, comprehensive, and in Weber’s sense, more rationalized formulations.” This narrative, like so many others, is tied to fundamental Enlightenment assumptions, not just that rationalization, social differentiation, and complexity are better because functionally more adaptive; these terms are also taken to represent emancipation. In this sense *autonomous* is both a descriptive and a moral term. The modernization theory is tied to the basic Enlightenment narrative of liberation, and the primary point of liberation is freedom from religious dogma. As Bellah says to open an essay entitled “Meaning and Modernization,” “Modernization, whatever else it involves, is always a moral and religious problem.”⁴

Virtually no one today would subscribe to this narrative in its evolutionary terms, but nonetheless the basic plotlines are hard to escape.

When Bellah first published “Religious Evolution” in 1968, he noted that there had already been significant criticisms of the concept of evolution, but nonetheless maintained that evolution provides important insights about religion in the present moment, which he characterized as “modern religion,” a religion that is no longer dependent upon belief or faith, but that still provides moral order.

Our purpose in presenting this classic form of the narrative is not to present “dated” thinking in relation to which we as readers can assure ourselves that we have progressed, but rather to ask why secularism continues to be a site of serious investments (including our own) despite empirical evidence that raises doubts about secularization and theoretical critiques of developmental theories of society. Some clues to these investments can be found in the ways our topic of secularism at the millennium raises questions about the intertwining of moral and temporal narratives in the secularization story. As Baird points out, in this time that might be called “late secularism,” a secularized religion, one that is in Bellah’s terms “beyond belief,” still provides a sense of moral order, and does so precisely through a progress narrative that is not so easy to shake. Part of the dilemma is the widespread commitment to progress, including progressive politics, and part of the dilemma is also presented by the ways in which progress both asserts and contains diversity, thus making it difficult to do anything differently.

Geeta Patel’s essay in this issue describes some of the ways in which this intertwining of moral and temporal narratives is particularly powerful. She shows how the linear narrative of progress in postcolonial India can be used to maintain a specific set of subject positions. Patel considers the co-implication of the following kinds of temporality in the production of a contemporary militarized Indian nation: Christian, Christian-secular, Hindu, and Hindu-secular. Through a close reading of a slogan from Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Patel shows how the production of time that is based in a progressive past-present-future narrative requires certain forms of subjectivity: the “farmer” who establishes a rural-urban progress narrative; the militarized “youth” as the embodiment of a future that is at once fragile, in need of protection, and necessary or determined; and a domesticated gender relation in which “woman” desires and represents both timeless tradition and modern commodities. The power of Patel’s argument is its demonstration of the ways in which Hindu nationalist temporality depends on both mission (read Christian) and postcolonial (read Christian-secular) time. That which is supposedly counter to Western secularism—Hindu nationalism—is not. Rather, it works with the production of secularism, particularly secularism as financial time, and enforces certain

relations in the form of gender to ensure that the relations between Hindu nationalism and secular capitalism work. Particular bodies, then, are here produced and regulated via this conjunction of different forms of temporality and secularism.

Implication in the progressive method of counting time is one of the central problematics of the secularization narrative. As Patel's article indicates, and several other essays also explore in depth, progress narrates a story in which it is difficult to materialize substantive differences. Modern diversity is narrowed to a set of positions that can be lined up horizontally and then compared along a path of development or evolution.

The conjunction between changes in social formation and the particular meaning ascribed to the passage of time is what provides the moral framework for secularization. Moral interests drive much of the contemporary concern about secularization, and, not surprisingly, these interests can be contradictory. Moral concerns drive critiques of the secularization thesis. Specifically, the narrative of religious evolution is just one of the many developmental or progress narratives that funded the colonial project. Only with such a narrative could the violent imposition of colonial administration be legitimized as both functionally helpful and morally beneficial to the societies that were colonized. But, in a fundamental paradox, critiques of secularization often themselves depend on a set of values, such as the equality of all persons, that are related to Enlightenment. One of the questions that the essays in this special issue explore is how critique is related to Enlightenment. Specifically, they explore questions of ambiguity and contradiction. Is it possible to be related to Enlightenment values without being encompassed by them? Do Enlightenment values form a coherent and necessarily emancipatory set of values? What is the relationship between Enlightenment values as the dominant and at times dominative values of liberation and the value of emancipation?

Aamir Mufti has elsewhere provided an extensive meditation on Edward Said's suggestion that secularism is a "minority practice," one that enables critique without reifying its own position as either dominant or liberated. In this issue, he explores the possibilities for "an ethics of secularism," asking which values are invoked by both the critique of secularism and by secularism as critique.

The World and Its Religions

Rethinking the relation of religion and secularism gives us another means of understanding the problem of difference and modernity. As Baird points out in his close reading of David Hume's *The Natural History of*

Religion, the category of “world religions” that has grounded the study of religion condenses a number of conceptual and social relations, even as it naturalizes the object of the field. Baird argues that the category of “world religions” was constituted in the eighteenth century on the basis of a Protestant model. We come to know which social formations constitute “world religions” by comparing them to Protestantism. So, for example, social formations that may have been organized around ritualized practices become “religions” by being recognized (and thus partially constituted) as being about belief. The “no god problem” in the study of Buddhism—in which scholars asked how Buddhism could be a “religion” without a god—is a “problem” only if religion is understood within this Protestant-defined framework.

This is not a simple problem of misrecognition, however. It is not the case that the “real” Buddhism is something other than a religion, and is a religion only in the imagination of Westerners like Hume. Rather, because the discourse of religion has historically carried with it significant forms of social power, there are pressures from a number of directions for practitioners of Buddhism to constitute themselves as members of a religion. One of the ways in which the Chinese occupation of Tibet can become a cause célèbre in the United States is by the recognition of the Dalai Lama as a spiritual, not just a political, leader.⁵

A similar dynamic may be at play in the way China’s repression of Falun Gong has been framed to fit American assumptions about freedom of religion. At a recent meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Angela Zito tracked the *New York Times*’ reporting on Falun Gong. She showed that over the course of many months of coverage the *Times* has variously categorized Falun Gong as a kind of exercise, a form of meditation, a sect, and, finally, a religion, arriving at this last category at about the same time Chinese state persecution of it was being codified. But to what extent does American recognition of and worry over the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners depend on its having been named a religion, and no longer a cultic practice, for example?⁶

In the United States the discursive power of religion in relation to the state leads many social organizations to constitute themselves as “religious” when they might not be so in much more than name only. The contemporary battles over whether organizations like the Christian Coalition are or are not religious organizations are not simply about tax status, but about the legitimating power of the claim to speak for Christians and Christianity in America.

But religious groups are not the only ones interested in redefining the religion/secularism boundary and appearing under the sign *Christian*. Insofar as the U.S. government has become dedicated to dismantling the

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“welfare state,” religious organizations have become a target of interest for the state. For example, much political rhetoric, which the welfare “reform” act of 1996 backed up with institutional authority, has been directed toward the role that “faith-based organizations” can and should take in providing both direct services formerly provided by the state, and a sense of “community” and “values.”⁷

Appeal to faith-based organizations and to specifically Christian values continues apace in the ongoing and seemingly endless presidential campaign of 2000. During the Republican primaries, it was sometimes difficult to tell just which office the candidates were running for, congressional chaplain or chief executive officer of the United States. In one televised debate among the Republican contenders, George W. Bush went so far as to name Jesus Christ his favorite philosopher. Nor was he alone in such testifying practices. We now know that Vice President Al Gore is born-again and that he asks “What would Jesus do?” whenever he is confronted by especially wrenching policy decisions.

The contemporary nature of these battles shows that the issues raised by Baird’s historical study remain lively today. How are participants in various types of social struggle induced (and compelled) to constitute themselves as “religious” on a model that is recognizable in Protestant terms? How have religious identifications and national identity become mutually constituting in modernity? How does a Protestantized category of “religion” influence the possible shapes that secularism(s) can take?

Perhaps most importantly, how do the questions shift when secularism is considered in multiple contexts? In Geeta Patel’s and Banu Subramaniam’s essays on India, the questions they raise about the rise of a self-identified Hindu Right are not about whether the BJP is an accurate representation of historical Hinduism; rather, these authors study the ways in which particular kinds of power can circulate under the name of Hinduism, and they consider how this circulation can both constitute and constrain what either Hinduism or secular India might be now and in the future. What can be named “Hindu” and the relationship between that Hinduism and any form of Indian secularism will be in part determined by the outcome of these struggles.

There are deeper problems here. If the form of secularism depends on the form of religion to which it is related, what difference does it make that the category of religion itself depends on the Protestant model? The problem that Hume is addressing in *The Natural History of Religions* is the central Enlightenment problem of how to deal with cultural differences, and the outcome that established the category of religion was a typical Enlightenment solution in which similarity and difference were simultaneously attributed to non-Western cultures. By making all religions fit a

model established by Protestantism, what was supposed to offer a means of recognizing differences among “religions” in fact ensured that these different “religions” were the same. And yet “other” religions also could never be fully the “same.” They would always at best be poor imitations of the original.

This positing of simultaneous difference and similarity is part of the central mechanism of Enlightenment equality. Enlightenment equality is supposed to be universal, applicable to all human beings, but this very claim to the universal allows for a simultaneous positing of inequality, of the specifically moral superiority of Enlightenment values and those who adhere to them in comparison to those who adhere to the exclusionary values of a particular religion.

Secularism is the category that allows for this particularization of any religion’s universal claims. From a religious perspective, those who adhere to a religion “different” from one’s own are not equal to oneself, while from a secular perspective all persons are equal no matter to what religion they adhere. Only a secular view of religion as an object of knowledge can provide the external perspective that reveals any religious claim—despite its own assertion of universalism—to be particular. Secularization is thus supposed to provide the means (and the only means) for creating social relations that allow for differences in worldview among members of a society. Only the establishment of a secular public sphere, the story goes, can provide the basis for nonviolent relations to substantive difference; this public sphere allows for and encompasses different forms of religious belief without inducing the violence exemplified by the wars of religion after the Protestant Reformation in Europe. And yet secularization has also been one of the means of evacuating possibilities for substantive difference.

The strictly liberal terms in which secularism solves the problem of difference in modernity also imply a paradox. The relation between the secular and the religious that makes for secular equality and nonviolence creates another set of inequalities between those who are religious and those who are secular. The assertion of universal equality that solves the problem of religious difference institutes a problem of difference between the secular and the religious.

This second layer of the problem of difference is narratively resolved through the concept of progress. A series of relations that are coincident in time are strung out as if across time. This allows for the assertion of equality among all persons, even as some are simultaneously superior to others. Time and space become conflated. Differences across space that make for cultural differences become differences in time, so that all those living in the unenlightened world become the history of those who live in

the enlightened world. Thus, persons from “different” cultures are simultaneously included in, and excluded from, the equality of “man.” What cannot be said in this moral narrative is that progress, too, is impossible because those who are supposedly in need of development are forcibly dominated by the enlightened.

Different Narrations

Comparative Secularisms

One means of dislodging this linear developmental narrative has been to pull the category of “secularism” out of its position as the telos of the progress narrative and move it into a historical context. This move has provided some important insights into and revisions of the secularization narrative. The main points of the traditional narrative—that secularization is happening, that it is central to modernity, that it represents development or emancipation, and that it is (virtually) inevitable—remained strong in Western social theory through much of the twentieth century.

Even major theological centers in the United States through the 1960s espoused the view that secularization was the inevitable denouement of religion, symbolized by Thomas Altizer’s “Death of God” theology.⁸ But there were also pressures on the feasibility of this narrative. The questioning of Enlightenment narratives generally that was part of the political landscape in many areas of the postwar world and that took hold from the late 1960s, whether from the perspective of critics of the colonial and formerly colonial powers or from post-1968 European concerns, brought into question part or sometimes all of the secularization narrative. Moreover, worldwide recession in the 1970s put the developmental aspect of the narrative into deep question. Were postcolonial nations “developing” through the adoption of modern capitalism? Certainly, for many people in many parts of the world it was clear that this narrative was not an accurate description of reality.

It was the Iranian revolution in 1979, however, that upended whatever complacent consensus had existed about secularization. A successful revolution undertaken in the name of religion was not part of this narratively constructed modern or even postmodern world. There were, of course, attempts to incorporate the revolution into the narrative as an anomaly or the exception that proves the rule, but overall, particularly with the persistence of the revolutionary government through time, the secularization narrative needed serious reevaluation. As time passed, it became clear that the Iranian revolution was one of a number of powerful

contemporary social movements in many parts of the world that were organized in the name of religion. These events presented problems for both the secularization narrative and the theory of modernization of which it was a part.

One of the major responses to these phenomena on the part of some American scholars was to pose them as antimodern, as challenges to the “West” and the modernization that it hoped to “export” to the rest of the world. The Iranian revolution came to be identified as representative of Islamic “fundamentalism” and was placed in opposition to the supposedly “secular” West. This pairing has had particularly powerful ramifications, making it seem that the alternative to secularism is fundamentalism and, thus, ultimately that any public religion is dangerous.

The preoccupation of American scholars with fundamentalism was prompted not just by newly powerful political movements tied to Islam. The increasing power of religiously conservative Christian movements within the United States was also at issue, and analogizing the Iranian movement to American fundamentalism created a means both of understanding Iranian anti-Western rhetoric as tied to an antimodern regression and of emphasizing the dangers of conservative religious movements in the United States. These implications should not surprise us; within the traditional secularization narrative, any religion, if not completely privatized, does become configured as antimodern and dangerous.

As recent events in the United States have shown, a focus on fundamentalism abroad can also screen out the sometimes violent practices of organizations and movements internal to the United States. Thus, the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 was initially attributed, with no evidence, to unnamed Islamic terrorists. During Timothy McVeigh’s trial, his defense tried to reanimate this specter of an anti-American conspiracy of foreign origin. Additionally, other instances of domestic terrorism—such as bombings of abortion clinics or lesbian bars—are rarely characterized as instances of terrorism, never mind as terrorism connected to Christian “fundamentalism.” The category of fundamentalism, especially as it has been anchored to Orientalist fears of Islam, offers little critical purchase for understanding the contemporary moment and may even shore up, in the American context, Christian conservatism.

But perhaps we should not really be surprised at the critical shortcomings of the category “fundamentalism.” They may even point to some of the limits of comparative secularism. Comparative secularism, like its counterpart comparative religion, faces the danger of taking secularism as an already constituted object waiting to be subjected to study, as the universal category underlying specific instances of secularism. What is lost

when scholars ignore the question of how the object is constituted is any means of articulating the power relations that are implicated in the process of categorization itself.

Thus, how is the creation of “fundamentalism” as a worldwide category related to the construction of contemporary secularism(s)? This term developed in the early to mid-1920s in the United States, part of a specifically Protestant controversy. It was invoked in a pair of documents entitled “The Fundamentals” and “Will the Fundamentalists Win?,” from the conservative and mainline branches of Protestantism, respectively.⁹ The use of *fundamentalism* to describe a worldwide set of religious movements came into being only in the late 1970s and was solidified in the 1980s with studies like the three-volume series produced through the University of Chicago, beginning with “Fundamentalisms Observed.”¹⁰

While the term *fundamentalist* shifted its object beyond the bounds of the Protestant, it maintained its initial implication of threat. Obviously, from the point of view of the mainstream, it is a bad thing if the “fundamentalists” win. Moreover, the sense of who is threatened by fundamentalists also remains operative in most uses of the term. “Fundamentalists,” at least in contemporary popular media, are those who threaten the modern West, and the mainstream United States (whether mainline Protestant or secular) in particular, with terrorism and revolution. Yet legitimate opposition to fundamentalism cannot be sustained simply by invoking the threat to U.S. geopolitical interests, and so fundamentalism is also represented in the media as a threat to a variety of human rights, most frequently those of women and political dissidents. According to this logic, the role of the modern, secular state is to protect itself and these various Others from the really other Others, just as it was the role of the Christian colonial state to protect various Others, like “woman,” from the other Others who threatened her. Although comparative secularisms may challenge the single developmental narrative, the assumption that either “secularism” or “fundamentalism” are simply available to be observed can help to constitute the modern power relations between that which is “free” or “emancipated” and that which is “dangerous” or “unliberated.”

Of course, the dynamic of positing threats can go both ways. Secularism itself is sometimes the direct target of conservative Christian activism in relation to the state. Several conservative Christian groups in the United States have taken up the issue of what they call “Christian oppression” in a number of “foreign” countries, most notably China. While this issue has yet to play itself out fully, one of its most interesting aspects is that the conservative Christians accuse the U.S. government of an aggressive secularism. If the United States were not so thoroughly (and mistakenly) secularized, this line of argument goes, Christian oppression

would be recognized as the human rights violation that it is. Following this logic to its bitter end: if the U.S. government can abide Christians being tortured abroad, then it cannot be trusted to defend Christian interests at home either. This scenario is used to assert that specifically Christian religious belief provides a better epistemological grounding for human rights than does the secular framework with which human rights are usually associated. The hope here of conservative Christians is precisely, and in the name of Christianity, to take over the secular site of that which is “free.” Thus, we must ask what is implied by naming some phenomena fundamentalist, others religious, and others secular.

None of this is to say that comparative secularism as a critical project doesn’t have much to offer. Indeed, one of the major insights of the project of the comparative study of secularism(s) has been to challenge the holistic nature of the secularization narrative in which any secularism represents development along a single path. By differentiating the secularization narrative itself, historical sociologists have shown that secularism need not always be read as the telos of development. The comparative study of secularism has thus intervened not only in the linear narrative of secularization, but also in its accompanying narratives: development, modernization, evolutionary inevitability. By interrupting secularism’s just-so story, the comparative study of secularism challenges the view that either nations had moved through the process of modernization or they had not, they were either developed or undeveloped, modern or antimodern.

José Casanova, for example, makes the important point in his 1994 comparative historical sociology of Spanish, Polish, Brazilian, and American Catholicism that scholars often overlook a set of religious movements from the late 1970s and 1980s that are not fundamentalist but are rather tied to both democratization and even radical left-wing politics:

Throughout the decade [of the 1980s] religion showed its Janus face, as the carrier not only of exclusive, particularist, and primordial identities but also of inclusive, universalist, and transcending ones. The religious revival signaled simultaneously the rise of fundamentalism and of its role in the resistance of the oppressed and the rise of the “powerless.” Ali Shariati, the intellectual father of the Islamic revolution, in translating Frantz Fanon’s *Les Damnés de la Terre*, chose the resonant Koranic term *mostaz’afin* (the disinherited). . . . Gustavo Gutiérrez, the father of liberation theology, effected a similar transvaluation from the secular back to religious categories when he turned the proletariat into the biblical *los pobres*.¹¹

Casanova is making a number of important points in his descriptions of these “transvaluations.” First, he points to the seemingly obvious, but all too often overlooked, fact that not every expression of religion in public is

conservative. The other major set of revolutionary movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Marxist revolutions in Central America, were sometimes influenced by a radical Catholicism organized around base communities. Second, religion is not always the site of the exclusive and particularistic. One of the things that makes religion so powerful in the contemporary world and so confounding for modernization theory is that religions often speak in terms of the transcendent and universal. Of course, modernization theory has claimed that religious universals are particular universals, while secular reason is the universal universal.

That claim to the doubly universal status of Western secular reason is one that has been challenged repeatedly by various types of scholarship and social movement. The readings of multiple secularisms in this issue suggest that we consider the possible implications of shifting this particularity/universalism foursome: that we consider the implications of recognizing the universal claims of religion and of recognizing the particularistic aspects of secular reason.

For example, one of the shifts in perspective to which we hope this issue will contribute is a reconsideration of the possibility that in some instances the secular realm is not the broader of the two in the religion/secularism binary. The sociological assumption correlative to the universality of secular reason is that the religious (private) realm is encompassed by a broader (public) secular realm. Or, in the case of India, secular law is supposed to be broad enough to contain the specifically religious personal laws. And yet as Rajeswari Sunder Rajan points out in an essay that will appear in the next issue of *Social Text*, many feminists in India fear that establishing a uniform civil code, while addressing some problems of sexism in the personal laws, will also establish a “secular” sphere that is fundamentally Hindu. The move toward secularization will not necessarily undo the intertwining of religion and secular reason, nor will it necessarily make secular reason the framework for public life as a whole. Rather, Hinduism (and there is much debate about what such Hinduism might be) will provide the frame for secular law.

With regard to the United States we have argued elsewhere that secularization can be contained within (rather than containing) the religious through a sometimes marked and sometimes unmarked religious understanding of ethics. The invocation of the Judeo-Christian ethic is so important in U.S. public life, because Judeo-Christian ethics expresses the claim that the secular realm of the United States is contained within a religiously ordered moral universe. The hyphenated term *Judeo-Christian* expresses religious pluralism even as the narrow bounds that it indicates close still further through the work of the hyphen, which seems to limit diversity to these two linked traditions. *Judeo-Christian* asserts at once

relation and assimilation. This implicitly Protestant framing of U.S. public life is currently visible in Supreme Court decisions with regard to homosexuality, where the Court, the institution charged with the protection of the separation of church and state, has repeatedly used “Judeo-Christian tradition” as the basis for upholding sodomy laws.¹² Given these arguments, it is not clear that religion has been removed from the public sphere as a result of secularization, although the configuration of religion in public may have shifted.

Nor do we know that religious belief has necessarily declined.¹³ For example, we really don’t know how much different religious belief was in the premodern period in Europe compared to the contemporary United States, where surveys repeatedly report that virtually everyone “believes in God.” The relationship between that “belief” and the contours of daily life are anything but self-evident, but then again, as Weber points out (and Foucault as well), before the Reformation the all-encompassing nature of Christianity meant that it did not need to be enforced in any highly regulated manner or even practiced in any daily way. Similarly, the assumption that Europe and the United States are currently less religious than other parts of the world is difficult to sustain under scrutiny. Fatima Mernissi makes this point illustratively by describing her travels from Morocco to England. While in England, she is regularly bombarded on television and in the newspapers with religious language, descriptions of religious events, and appearances by religious leaders. Yet when she speaks to people on the street and in her professional interactions, they articulate a self-perception that they are secular. Mernissi concludes that all of this daily, highly visible religion is somehow made transparent to British Christian self-perception.¹⁴ The implication of such transparency in its strongest sense is that religion in the West (still) maintains a version of its (presumably lost) hegemonic status. Its dominance is secure enough to be invisible to those who live within it.

Among the discomfoting implications for the Left of this hidden hegemony of secularized Protestantism is that the Christian Right is not necessarily wrong when it asserts its marginalized status in American public life. To admit this is not, however, to accede to the self-representations of Christian conservatives that Christians are the most oppressed of “minorities,” because the least recognized as oppressed. Rather, in the United States currently, we have a three-part relation among Christian secularism, mainline Protestantism, and conservative Protestantism. The Christian Right develops its cultural power both by drawing on its connection to the Christian aspect (itself supported by mainline Protestantism) of hegemonic Christian secularism and by claiming to be oppressed by that same secularism.

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How do these reflections on secularization fit with the indicators that religion has declined? These indicators include, for example, the facts that the social status of the clergy has declined and the system of higher education in the United States is no longer so directly tied to churches.¹⁵ Casanova delineates three different aspects of secularization, a delineation that can help explain why it seems as though secularization both is and is not happening:

The core and the central thesis of the theory of secularization is the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres—primarily the state, the economy, and science—from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.¹⁶

Casanova thus maintains the core of the secularization theory, the differentiation and emancipation of the religious from secular realms, but he discredits the corollaries that generally accompany this thesis: the privatization of religion and the decline or disappearance of belief. In this sense, secularization is both happening and not. There are spheres of life, like the production of knowledge in the academies, that are increasingly secularized, but these changes do not imply the disappearance of religion or even its disappearance from the public sphere.

A fundamental question in shifting the secularization narrative is the relations of secularism to the state. In the United States the facility of the phrase “the separation of church and state” supports the assumption that religion is not part of the state apparatus. Casanova takes a Habermasian stand, distinguishing the public sphere and civil society from the state itself, and thus accepting that the state is the site of successful differentiation and secularization. A number of scholars have recently argued, however, that many nominally secular states are not necessarily fully secular but are rather institutionalized implicitly along the lines of the dominant or hegemonic religions. Maureen Fitzgerald has argued with regard to the United States that the institution of the welfare state between 1880 and 1930 was also the institutionalization of a specifically Protestant form of American secularism.¹⁷ Taha Parla and Andrew Davis make related arguments with regard to Turkey, the case that is most often invoked as representative of enforced secularization.¹⁸ They show that the Kemalist regime did not institute a completely secular state, but rather that it simply differentiated religious functions, not into the private sphere but into a separate section of the state.

In considering the theory that locates secularization in the state, it is important to consider more than just the empirical question, however.

Part of Casanova's commitments, for example, is to the moral aspects of the Enlightenment narrative, even as he is critical of the full secularization thesis. His use of the phrase "differentiation and emancipation" is crucial because this conjunction maintains the connection between sociological description and moral commitment. His distinction between civil society and the state and the attribution of secularism to the state allows for the maintenance of a moral narrative in which Enlightenment values structure the teleology of the story. He writes: "It has been maintained throughout this study that ultimately only public religions at the level of civil society are consistent with modern universalistic principles and with modern differentiated structures."¹⁹ While he has shifted the empirical structure of the secularization thesis, the moral structure is maintained intact. This narrative does not allow for the ambiguities of either secularization—that states can promote religion without the kind of established state church that Casanova criticizes—or Enlightenment values.

Genealogies

The alternative to the comparative secularisms approach has been a genealogical approach that allows for an investigation into the power relations that are established by naming phenomena in a particular way. But the genealogical approach has its own dangers. If focused on the construction of large categories like "secular" and "religious" it can tend toward its own form of totalization in which all instances of the category are understood along a particular genealogical path. So, for example, genealogical investigations into the power relations that have produced the present moment can tend to focus only on the path of colonial and postcolonial history. As Afsaneh Najmabadi has elsewhere pointed out, to focus only on colonialism can leave a place like Iran, never directly colonized, at an "unavailable intersection," out of space and time.²⁰ While the formative power of the context of colonial history on the secularization narrative cannot be denied, it would be a mistake to take it as determinative. To do so risks conceptualizing all secularisms only as extensions of European colonialism.²¹

If, however, genealogy focuses on particular instances of secularism it can devolve into a form of pluralism in which the very diversity of forms and histories elides the dominating power relations in which this diversity is formed. A focus, for example, on diversities within Europe, diversities which are no doubt powerful and extensive, can shift the spotlight away from the power of the European imagination in which many Europeans imagine themselves as secular and others as religious (despite the fact

that to “others” in Europe it appears, as Mernissi has described, that European culture is saturated with religion). Not all genealogies fall into these dangers, just as not all comparative sociologies fall into the danger of naturalizing their object of study. For example, Talal Asad’s groundbreaking *Genealogies of Religion* (1993) was itself a comparative study exploring, as the subtitle states, “discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam.”²²

The power of the genealogical method in relation to historical sociology is that it gives us purchase on the problems of the progress narrative and the morality on which it depends. In the traditional narrative, we know differentiation to be progress because it allows for functional complexity and because it allows for an ethical advance—emancipation. The ethics of emancipation, and of secularization itself, is precisely what the genealogical method questions.

Secularism is supposed to address major problems in modern social formations and ethics. The first problem that is supposed to be overcome by secularism is force and violence. Secularism addresses not only the violence of wars of religion but also the force of religious dogmatism, which does not allow for the autonomy of secularism. To take the Habermasian formulation, reason allows for persuasion by the force of the better argument alone. If, however, secularism is itself born in and enacted through the violence of modernity, particularly the violence of colonialism and the violence of the imposition of the secular over the traditional, then such claims for the value of the secular over the religious or the traditional lose their legitimacy.

Among many other such critiques of Enlightenment reason, Asad’s *Genealogies of Religion* addresses this problem, arguing, for example, that the response in Britain to the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* was a continuation of a colonial relation to Islam. Asad also provides a genealogy of rationalization itself. For example, in his essay “Pain and Truth in Medieval Christianity,” Asad intervenes both in the basic method of the study of religion and in the progress narrative that forms so much of the basis for narrating Western history. In the progress narrative, the twelfth-century shift from the use of the “ordeal” to determine the outcome of certain types of legal cases to the use of confession (produced through torture) is seen as a step forward along the path of rationalization. This narrative of rationalization is tied to a secularization narrative, in which the rationalism of torture allowed for a move from superstitious dependence on religion to “an elaborate system of purely human proof.”²³ Asad argues, in contrast, that religion remained central to the system of proof by confession, that what we see in the twelfth century is not a move from religious superstition to secular rationality, but a redefinition of reli-

gious rationality. In this contrasting narrative, the history of rationality is marked by discontinuities, shifts in the meaning of rationality itself. The implications of this metanarrative shift are so large because they undo the set of connections that has made the secularization narrative so powerful and so difficult to give up. The ties among secularization, rationalization, and emancipation make it difficult to undo the secularization narrative without also losing a grounding in the emancipatory values that make for the “progressive” aspect of progressive politics.

And yet without Enlightenment values what basis is there for critique? As Asad notes, the pain that is associated with confession through ritual torture is regarded by “most moderns, whether they are religious or not,” with “suspicious disapproval.”²⁴ The reasons for this modern disapproval vary depending on whether one is working with the traditional secularization narrative or taking a genealogical approach. With the secularization narrative, the failure of judicial torture was a failure in rationalization, a failure to provide a purely rationalized means of attaining a confession, of bringing the truth to light. A more rationalized system would eschew the force of torture and allow as evidence only freely given confessions. With the genealogical reading the suspicion may be part of the method, but whence the disapproval? On what grounds is it based? Does the genealogical method leave one without adequate grounds for critique?

Aamir Mufti’s reading of Asad in this issue questions whether Asad carries his genealogical critique as far as is required by the contemporary situation. For example, Mufti inquires into the political implications of Asad’s defense of Islamist critics of *The Satanic Verses* in Britain. While Mufti agrees with Asad that the liberal British defense of “freedom” against Islamist critics of the book is, in Mufti’s words, part of the “dynamics of [the] storytelling through which the West is produced as a universal project,” Mufti also worries that “when it comes to an examination of the Islamists themselves [as being] above politics and simply in continuity with religious ‘tradition,’ we get no demystification of *this* particular story.”

While Asad is incisive with regard to his critique of the power relations between a liberal British public and the Islam that it wishes to contain, he fails to examine the power relations among various contested positions within contemporary Islam, some of which are minoritized. Ultimately Asad’s genealogical critique of “religion” as a modern category (rather than as the category that marks the outside of modernity) actually participates in the production of religion as that which ignores internally minoritized positions. Mufti has argued elsewhere that religion is not the only possible response or alternative to an elite and imperialist or neo-

colonialist secularism.²⁵ In this issue he raises the question of an ethics of secularism that can critique both dominating secularism and dominating religion.

The Woman Question

To take this argument further, Ranu Samantrai considers the implications of the Rushdie affair with regard to a specifically patriarchal Islam. Secularism is supposed to address not only irrational religious violence, but also the violence of sexism. Sexism has a special place in the relations of domination that accompany modernity. Traditional forms of sexism are the identifiable evil within traditional systems of values that secularism is supposed to overcome. A focus on overcoming gender subordination can thus serve to legitimate other dominations, including those of colonialism. Moreover, the secular discourse of overcoming can work not only to reinforce other forms of oppression, but also to obscure specifically secular forms of sexism. This does not mean that certain forms of secularism cannot be deployed to fight given instances of sexism effectively. It does, however, mean that secularism can ground its own form of sexism, even as it is deployed against “other” forms. This contradictory set of effects—where secularism can have effects that both resist and extend sexism—is precisely what makes the “woman question,” as well as the secular question, so complicated.

It makes sense, then, that a number of essays in this issue deal with feminist questions. Many of the problems that surround secularism are fought out through questions of gender and of women’s roles. In Rajeswari Sunder Rajan’s forthcoming essay, she returns to and reconsiders some of the questions that she discussed with Zakia Pathak in their well-known essay on the “Shahbano” case. She demonstrates how the battles over a uniform civil code in India are fought out between and among religions and secularisms, and in terms of the treatment of women. Sunder Rajan also shows that although *woman* is often invoked as a sign in these arguments, none of the wide variety of positions available in mainstream discourse particularly takes women’s various interests into account, and as a result feminists are left (as is so often the case) mainly with paradoxes.²⁶

In this issue, Samantrai considers a similar set of problems in Britain, although here the question does not concern moving in the direction predicted by progress (from personal law to a uniform civil code). Rather, Samantrai is interested in arguments made from positions claiming the authority of “the Muslim community,” namely, that Britain should move

from a monolithic British secularism institutionalized in the establishment of the Church of England to the pluralistic establishment of multiple “religions,” each with state support like that of the Church of England. This multiple establishment is supposed to act as a means of solidifying a certain form of ethnic pluralism.

In this instance we see the type of social relations that Baird describes played out in contemporary form. “Religion” becomes a stand-in and control factor for cultural diversity, a means of organizing differences so that they look like the established norm, in this case the Church of England. Samantrai argues that the positions advocated from both “dominant” and “minority” communities are embedded in colonial thinking and, further, that the critique of this arrangement comes not from the external disciplining of “tradition” in the name of the “secular,” an all too familiar form of critique that intensifies rather than resists this colonial thinking, but from women’s movements within “communities.” Specifically, groups like Women Against Fundamentalism and Southall Black Sisters provide criticism of a patriarchal Islam, while also criticizing the secular and patriarchal British state.

Samantrai’s essay demonstrates the dangers of trying to address secularism and religion without attending to “the woman question.” To do so risks leaving us either with a dominant discourse in which the invocation of feminism is used to enforce the progress narrative such that *feminism* becomes the marker of both colonial domination and secular patriarchy, or with a “minority discourse” that is itself both patriarchal and colonial.

Banu Subramaniam shows, in fact, that the sexism of modern secularism can be connected to the sexism that is usually associated with “fundamentalist” movements. One of the great problems of the usual reading of fundamentalist movements as antimodern is a glossing over of the ways in which these movements are very much committed to certain aspects of modernity. Certain forms of militarism or modern technology, for example, are often embraced by the proponents of such movements. Subramaniam points out these connections by naming the Vedic science promoted by the BJP an “archaic modernity.” What is rarely mentioned in studies that read fundamentalism only as archaic is that the portions of modernity that are actively embraced by such movements—technology or militarism—have their own patriarchal elements and are part of specifically modern patriarchal formations. Subramaniam’s analysis shows that patriarchy does not have only an archaic source. Patriarchy is not an archaism that modernity automatically dissolves, and modernity is itself a source of (modern) patriarchy.

Once this combination of elements is brought into the picture and both the “secular” and the “religious” are recognized as connected to

forms of patriarchy, then the question becomes: what types of combinations are being formed and to what effects? The combination of technological patriarchy with religious patriarchy could be read as a strategic combination, and such readings run in two directions. The combination can be read as the strategic appropriation of technology by a movement that is otherwise archaic but needs military forms of power; or the combination can be read as a cynical use of tradition, by an otherwise blatantly power hungry movement. The danger of either reading is that one side or the other of the social formation must be taken as “false” or as merely a cynical appropriation, while in fact the strength of such movements may be precisely their commitment to both sides of the combination. A strategic reading fails to explain why and how patriarchy matters for fundamentalist movements and their secular opponents alike.

In his 1993 historical comparative sociology of Protestant fundamentalism in the United States and Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, Martin Riesebrodt argues that not strategy but commitment to patriarchy motivates such choices, and this recognition of commitment opens another possible reading of fundamentalism: namely, that fundamentalist movements are not just resistances to modernity, archaic instances of regression within a progress narrative, but rather a means of organizing movement into the future.²⁷ With this reading, the forms of patriarchy constructed by such movements are not the symptomatic or strategic antitheses of modernity but ways of appropriating modernity and moving forward. This reading puts both technological and religious patriarchies (which may both have premodern antecedents) squarely within the frame of modernity. Since one form of patriarchy is not projected back into the past, the progress narrative is not the necessary leverage for critique. To the extent that the progress narrative is implicated not only in colonial discourses but also in modern (secular) patriarchy, invoking “progress” in order to criticize traditional patriarchy may even be counterproductive.

In her essay on feminism in Iran, Afsaneh Najmabadi puts patriarchy and Islamic fundamentalism squarely within modernity. Among the many contributions of her essay is her suggestion that feminists need not denounce Islam in order to move away from patriarchy. Indeed, a crucial part of Najmabadi’s argument is that Islam and feminism were not always opposed, that the construction of an “Islam” that offers only a patriarchal answer to “the woman question” has a particular genealogy.

Najmabadi considers the ways in which a working alliance between Islamicate (distinguished from Islamist) feminism and secular feminism can actually create more social possibilities both for those women and men who are dedicated to Islam and for those who understand themselves to be secular. The importance of this alliance is not just that an

Islamicate feminism creates legitimate space for “other” (including secular) feminisms in Iran, but also that secular feminism can help to create a space in which Islam does not have to look so much like a Protestant, and in this case specifically a Protestant fundamentalist, version of a religion.

Introductory Conclusions

In the end, the story of secularization is not clean. The ways in which it both is and is not happening cannot be read in terms of a straightforward moral fable in which the “is not” is a sign of antimodern regression or underdevelopment. Nor does the “is not” straightforwardly provide antimodern resistance for those who wish to place themselves in opposition to the West. Even though the supposedly resurgent “religion” of the post-modern period is deployed to counter a modern West that is supposedly “secular,” the essays in this issue suggest that the modern West is not so secular after all. In fact, one could argue that religion has proven to be such a powerful response to the West in part because the only way to avoid the dominant and often unmarked Protestantism of the West is to identify with an alternative and marked form of religion.

Nonetheless, even though intellectuals and activists on the Left know the problems with the secularization narrative, secularism remains hard to relinquish in part because it appears to be a defense against the dominations ascribed to religion. Religion appears to be a threat to secular, liberal society, a threat to women, and a source of violence. Secularism is rarely subjected to critique in the academy and in progressive politics because it appears to be the only answer to these problems, the only safeguard against the dominations inscribed in religion.

While there is no doubt that some religious formations are dominating, it is both a poverty of imagination and a continued entanglement in the various assumptions that go along with the secularization narrative that leave us in the bind where we must choose between (supposedly) conservative religion or (supposedly) progressive secularism. Not only does this opposition force us to ignore or deny the ways in which religion can be central to progressive politics and the ways in which secularism can limit such politics, it limits our imagination of secularism to only one narrative.

We raise the question of world secularisms at the millennium in order to open spaces for other possible narratives. Patel, for example, engages the work of two South Asian historians in order to explore ways of narrating time differently. Only through such different narrations and the new practices and relations they open up, she suggests, can substantive

differences in subject positions become available. Nevertheless, the project of transformation she sketches does not come easy; Patel stresses the painful affect engendered by new ways of telling time and history. Yet, as she and other contributors to the issue also stress, the older (and ongoing) colonialist narratives—of, for example, the triumph of universal values over parochial, archaic tradition—are not exactly pain-free either. Affect—painful, animating, enervating—surfaces in several of this issue’s essays: melancholy (Mufti); abjection (Najmabadi); terror (Subramaniam). Nonetheless, this retelling of time and history is also bound up with alternative possibilities for values. The millennial time that conflates the Christian with the secular with the national with the global marks progress because of a conflation between time and value(s). These values prominently include what Raymond Williams has called the “structure of feelings” and what we will here dub “modernity’s affect” so as to mark something of value’s place, time, and feeling.²⁸

We cannot change, then, without considering both secular-religious time and secular-religious values. We may still be implicated in Enlightenment problematics of time and values, but we need not remain completely within the Enlightenment frame. Compare, for example, the call for critique on which Mufti ends to that invoked by Seyla Benhabib in her masterful *Critique, Norm, and Utopia* and the following collection of essays, *Situating the Self*. Benhabib makes a statement in favor of continuous critique very similar to that offered by Mufti, but for her the values that indicate critique are quite different from those named by Mufti. For Benhabib these values are “universalist, egalitarian and consensual ideals,”²⁹ while for Mufti the “ethical imperative” of minority “‘secular’ consciousness [is] a melancholy insistence that this-worldly experience is fragmented and incomplete,” a consciousness that is produced “out of the dialectic of location and displacement, of filiation and affiliation, of belonging and exile.”

Critiques informed by such values don’t simply solve the problematic in which we remain implicated. They don’t provide a new point from which to judge all other practices, whether dominant secular, dominant religious, minority religious, or minority secular. One of the things that the essays in this special issue show is that the boundaries that make for such distinctions are extremely messy. Modernity and the modern establishment of religion as an object of knowledge produce those “world” religions that are both like and unlike Protestantism, religions that cannot be simply named as “dominant” or “nondominant.” In fact, it is a failure to recognize the simultaneous dominance and nondominance of a particular religion—Islam in Iran or Hinduism in India—that often makes the binary opposition between religion and secularism seem self-evident and

incontrovertible. What the connection of critique to values provides is a realization of the need to reengage with ethics as a site of difference and even conflict—the very thing that modernity was supposed to have overcome. One need only look at the world today to realize that modernity has not produced the end of either wars of religion or wars of secularism. To engage with differences in values is a very different project than the modern one.

The interest in secularism, the refusal to give it up despite its various problems, also expresses a hope, a hope that another type of social formation might be produced (might hope, too, be one of modernity's affects?). This hoped-for secularism, one that might be joined to a robust, contestatory, and radical pluralism, may also be one that need not banish religious possibility from its midst.³⁰

Notes

1. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). See esp. chap. 4, "The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism."

2. See the introduction to Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

3. On the term *scattered hegemonies* see Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, eds., *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

4. Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Posttraditional World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 21, 24, 64.

5. In the same way, the antiapartheid movement in the United States was reinvigorated in the mid-1980s around the image of a cleric, Desmond Tutu.

6. Angela Zito (Unpublished remarks presented at the meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Comparative Secularisms panel, Boston, Mass., November 1999).

7. The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act included a provision known as "charitable choice," which expanded the federal government's ability to provide grants to and make contracts with religious organizations for community-service provision.

8. Thomas Altizer, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

9. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1879–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

10. The three-volume series of the University of Chicago fundamentalism project includes Martin Marty, ed., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Martin Marty and R. Scott

Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

11. José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

12. Although the 1996 *Romer* decision struck down Colorado's antigay Amendment 2, the Court's decision did not in any way challenge or shift the ground of its previous decision in *Hardwick* to uphold the constitutionality of Georgia's sodomy statute. See Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, "Getting Religion," in *One Nation under God? Religion and American Culture*, ed. Marjorie Garber and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (New York: Routledge, 1999).

13. As Casanova says, "We may say with certainty that the assumption that premodern Europeans were more religious than modern ones reveals itself precisely as that, as an assumption in need of confirmation." Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 16.

14. See the preface to the English edition of Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991).

15. George Marsden, *The Secularization of the American Academy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

16. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 20.

17. Maureen Fitzgerald, "Losing Their Religion: Women, the State, and the Ascension of Secular Discourse, 1890–1930" (unpublished manuscript).

18. Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, "Secularism and Laicism in Turkey" (unpublished manuscript).

19. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 219.

20. Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Teaching and Research in Unavailable Intersections," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 9 (fall 1997): 65–78.

21. Paul Smith and J. K. Gibson-Graham have argued with regard to contemporary narratives of globalization and capitalism, respectively, that treating such narratives as fully determinative reinforces the dominating social relations that critical analysis is supposed to resist. See Paul Smith, *Millennial Dreams: Contemporary Culture and Capital in the North* (New York: Verso, 1997); and J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

22. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

23. *Ibid.*, 86.

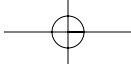
24. *Ibid.*, 83.

25. Aamir R. Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture," *Critical Inquiry* 25 (fall 1998): 95–125.

26. For an in-depth consideration of these paradoxes in the French context see Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

27. Martin Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion: The Emergence of Modern Fundamentalism in the United States and Iran*, trans. Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

28. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); and José Esteban Muñoz's work in progress, "Feeling Brown: Affect, Ethnicity, and Performance."



29. Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm, and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 351.
30. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

