TIMES LIKE THESE

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This volume began its life as a special issue of the journal *Social Text* in the year 2000 entitled "World Secularisms at the Millennium."[1] The timing was no accident. The year 2000 is anno Domini, the second millennium after the birth of Christ. Thus, at a time when the entire world was supposedly focused on the turn in the calendar from 1999 to 2000, we wondered how a particular way of telling time had become so unremarkably universal. What, we asked, were the implications of the fact that the world secular calendar—the calendar of global finance and world politics—was also specifically Christian time? Wasn't secularism supposed to be a discourse of universal influence precisely because it was free of the particularities of religion? How did it come to pass that secularism as a "world" discourse was also intertwined with one particular religion? This opening paradox became the occasion for a far-reaching set of inquiries into the way the religious and the secular have been constituted in relation to each other in modernity and, indeed, *as* modernity. It was not our intention to tell the one supposedly true narrative of secularism. Rather, by questioning what is meant by *secular* and what is meant by *religious*, we had hoped to disturb the academic order of things, a disturbance that might lead to new support for secularism and, perhaps, to new secularism*s*, but could also lead to new relations to religion.

This hope remains, but it also seems to us that the stakes of such a disturbance have been ratcheted up by more recent historical events. Although the Y2K bug that was feared to endanger computer transactions with the turn from '99 to '00 never materialized, the beginning of the new millennium brought new fears with the attacks of September 11, 2001. Along with these fears came a new interest in secularism. While the level

of violence that these attacks represented was not new for people in many areas of the world, the attacks did represent a major change for the United States. Destroying the World Trade Center and damaging the Pentagon, the attacks of that day were directed against the economic and military power of the United States, the sole superpower in the world. Because the response of the country was to establish an ongoing "war on terrorism," the attacks also initiated a major shift in geopolitics, one that has led to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and to major shifts in domestic policy in the United States and Europe in the name of "security." Moreover, because the attacks were often understood to be motivated by a politicized form of Islam, the question of secularism took on a new intensity.

If religion is taken to be one of the primary roots of "terrorism"—and religion is written about much more frequently than economics, racism, or the aftereffects of colonialism as an explanation for terrorist violence—is secularism the answer to the problem? The idea that religion, and specifically politicized Islam, is responsible for the problem of violence in today's world is deeply indebted to the fact that what is called the "secularization thesis" in academic parlance is accepted as common sense well beyond the boundaries of the academy. Secularism, with its promise of universal reason, is widely hailed by both the right and the left as the most powerful protection from the dangers of fundamentalism.[2]

Specifically, secularism is central to the Enlightenment narrative in which reason progressively frees itself from the bonds of religion and in so doing liberates humanity. This narrative poses religion as a regressive force in the world, one that in its dogmatism is not amenable to change, dialogue, or nonviolent conflict resolution. This Enlightenment narrative separates secularism from religion and through this separation claims that secularism, like reason, is universal (in contrast to the particularism of religion). However, this narrative also places secularism in a particular historical tradition, one that is located in Europe and grows out of Christianity.

The most famous argument for this connection between the development of what came to be called secularism and a specifically Christian culture is probably that of Max Weber in his now classic text, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. 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 what Weber terms "worldly asceticism."[3] *Worldly asceticism* means those processes of bodily

regulation or bodily disciplines (to shift to Michel Foucault's terms) that emerged in modernity.[4] 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. Thus it could form a practice at once secular and religious. Secularism and religion are in this sense coimplicated. Recognizing the co-origination of secularism and market-reformed Protestantism unmasks 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.

Our argument is not that this secularism is really (essentially) religion in disguise, but rather that in its dominant, market-based incarnation it constitutes a specifically Protestant form of secularism.[5] The claim of the secularization narrative is that the secularism that develops from these European and Christian origins is, in fact, universal and fully separate from Christianity. As a number of critics have now argued, however, and as we shall see below, there are reasons to doubt this claim.[6] Secularism remains tied to a particular religion, just as the secular calendar remains tied to Christianity. This volume thus sets out to critique the concept of secularism in this specifically Protestant form. We focus on Protestantism not to the exclusion of other possibilities, but because this dominant narrative forms the collective imagination of what the supposedly universal secularism is, thereby constraining imagination of what other possibilities might be.

If what gives secularism its moral import is its promise of universality and reasonableness as distinct from the narrowness and fanaticism of religion, what does it mean that this universalism and the rationality that it embodies are actually particular (to European history) and religious (Protestant) in form? If secularism is a "world" discourse, what kind of world does it imagine, and what kind of universalism does it put in place? Does secularism protect against conflict? Or, if secularism is not, in fact, universal, is it one of the terms through which the conflicts of today's world are enacted? 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? *Secularisms* explores these questions. In so doing, we hope to open up new ways of thinking about the challenges of our contemporary moment.

THE TRADITIONAL SECULARIZATION NARRATIVE

We begin this project by briefly outlining the key elements in the dominant narrative of secularization. We do so because this narrative is part of the *doxa* of everyday life in the United States. It is adhered to "religiously" in popular culture, and although there has been a veritable explosion of work on this topic since we published "World Secularisms at the Millennium," the secularization narrative still forms the presumed context in many fields of study. Even in fields like anthropology, in which the narrative has been actively questioned, the problem of how to disentangle the set of associations that make up the idea of the secular is far from resolved.[7]

The secularization thesis makes for a narrative that connects a number of elements—most notably, modernity, reason, and universalism—into a network that has strong moral as well as descriptive implications. The broad historical narrative generally associated with secularization develops these moral implications by describing change over time. The story is usually located in Europe; it often begins with the Renaissance, when the "rebirth of reason" challenged the traditional authority of the church.[8] These challenges were extended with the Protestant Reformation, a great upheaval that broke the hegemonic status of the church. The Reformation was not a uniform development and incited a number of sectarian wars (known as "wars of religion") as different factions fought over which religious framework would be enforced through state authority. These wars could ultimately be resolved only when reason replaced religion as the basis for political power, so that multiple religious communities could coexist in a single society. Religion could remain a force of personal commitment, but reason was needed to create political and legal authority. These moves away from religion and toward the secular reached full flower in the European Enlightenment and in the formation of modern nation-states. Implicit within the narrative is the idea that each step forward in time also marks a moral advance: a move away from religious authority and toward greater intellectual freedom and more knowledge, leading eventually to governance by reasoned debate and ultimately to democracy and peace.[9]

This narrative presents various elements as coming together to produce the process known as secularization. Different versions and traditions focus on different elements; here we delineate those that contribute to the moral and political force of the overall narrative:[10]

(1) *Rationalization*: Secularization occurs as social systems, including religious systems, become more rational over time. Specifically, rationalization implies a movement away from religious dogma and toward the free operation of reasoned inquiry.

(2) *Enlightenment*: The free pursuit of reason produces the possibility of enlightenment, the production of knowledge that is not bound by the constraints of religious dogma.

(3) *Social-Structural Differentiation*: With the evolution of knowledge comes the possibility of differentiating specific tasks into different sections of society, so that, for example, the functions of the church can be separated from those of the state. Such a differentiation can, in the words of Robert Bellah's classic secularization thesis, make a society "more autonomous" in relation to the environment.

(4) *Freedom*: As a descriptive term, autonomy implies transcendence over the constraints of any given environment, but it is also a moral term. Rationalization is thus tied to the idea of freedom—in particular, freedom from religious authority—as well as to broader concepts of emancipation and liberation.

(5) *Privatization*: This freedom must operate in the public sphere so as to produce the possibility of democracy and of the rule of law (rather than dogma). In the modern, secular, and enlightened world, religion is contained in the private sphere of personal belief, and in the strongest version of the narrative, religion will eventually fade away in importance as secular reason becomes a universal discourse.

(6) *Universalism*: The European Enlightenment produces a form of reason that transcends religion and is universally valid. Although many religions make universal claims, these claims are themselves particular to the adherents of that religion, whereas reason, shared by all human beings, transcends such cultural particularities. This form of reason, liberated from the constraints of religious dogma, opens the door to the settlement of disagreement through reasoned debate rather than through enforced belief.

(7) *Modernization and Progress*: All of these elements together produce the modern era, which is marked by progress over the past. Secularization implies movement forward in time, which is what allows for

the strange common sense that some societies are "stuck in time" or "caught in a different century" despite the fact that they exist contemporaneously with societies understood to be more modern.[11]

The conjunction between changes in social formation and the meaning ascribed to the passage of time is what provides the moral framework for secularization. If over time secularization allows societies to increase in autonomy, then secularization implies progress, whereas the continuation (or, still worse, the reassertion) of religion maintains constraint and implies stasis or even regression. This temporal division implies a simultaneous moral division. Those societies that are "ahead" are also understood to be "better"—more rational and freer, for example—than those that are "behind."

The power of this narrative comes from the network of binary oppositions established by its central terms. Each term stands in contradistinction to its opposite, and these distinctions are linked together in a mutually reinforcing manner. A secular society is one not bound by religion. Thus a network of associations is established between the religious-secular opposition and that between bondage and freedom. Similarly, the division between universalism and particularity ties secularism to the universal and religion to the particular. Universalism as a marker of modernization and progress then situates religion as opposed to progress. As Catherine Bell has persuasively demonstrated, such networks of oppositions form "a loosely integrated whole in which each element 'defers' to another in an endlessly circular chain of reference."[12] Because of the circular nature of the network, the normative value ascribed to any one element as its opposite also accrues to the other elements. The secularization thesis remains a site of manifold academic and political investments precisely because of this set of associations. To give up on the idea of secularization is to raise the specter of abandoning the concepts of freedom, universalism, modernization, and progress.

These are high stakes. And this is why the empirical question of secularization per se is not the focus of our project. Secularization can be defined in a number of ways—as the progressive shift of theological concepts into nonreligious forms and contexts (such as the idea of the sovereign God moving into the idea of the sovereign state) or simply as the decline of religion, that is, the progressive retreat of religion from social significance. There are extensive sociological debates, and interventions that attempt to mediate those debates, over whether secularization is or is not happening

(or perhaps both is *and* is not happening).[13] We are interested instead in the question of *secularism*. Specifically, we are concerned with secularism as a discourse that invokes powerful moral claims and evinces manifold political effects. We hope to intervene in the sets of binaries that give secularism as a discourse its moral force and that legitimate the political power deployed in its name.

Secularism in this regard can thus be thought of as a political project that deploys the concept of the secular, and it may do so regardless of the empirical state of secularization. Another way to put this is that we take secularism as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense: a set of material and linguistic practices that work across multiple institutions. Thus, although the state and the law are central to the discourse of secularism, secularism is not reducible to doctrines like that of the separation of church and state. Rather, secularism works across other institutional sites like that of the mainstream media, civil life and ceremony, and the market.[14]

The very fact that secularization is not empirically verifiable or complete can establish secularism as a moral and political goal, one that can be used to enforce the projects of those who desire secularism against the moral claims and political projects of those who do not match this standard. Secularism is itself part of a larger political project, one that aims to establish modernity as a hegemonic "political goal," to use the terms of Talal Asad.[15] Asad argues that "the secular" is a concept "which emerged historically in a particular way and was assigned specific practical tasks" within the political project of modernity.[16] This volume, with its stress on plural secularism*s*, investigates the way in which these particular tasks have worked themselves out in a variety of specific contexts in relation to the overarching narrative that gives them both political authority and affective power.

Because it works through oppositions, the traditional secularization narrative does not just establish the meaning of secularism; it also by implication makes claims about the meaning of religion. As recent critiques of the category of religion have shown, and as Robert Baird's essay in this book makes clear, the idea of religion as a universal category of human experience does not precede the Enlightenment, but is, instead, an Enlightenment project.[17] In other words, the production of the category of religion as we know it today was also part of the production of secularism. In a close reading of David Hume's *The Natural History of Religion*, Baird shows that Hume elaborated the category of religion as part of the universal experience that marked the unity of human beings. This univer-

sality of religion could only be seen from a point of view that was outside of any particular religion, from a perspective that was secular. Conceptualizing religion as universal gave Hume a means of solving the problem of cultural differences presented by eighteenth-century explorers' reports of cultural variation. All of this variation "just" represented particular instances of the universal category.

This meant, however, that practices across cultures had to be assimilated to the category of religion. The problems of assimilation are acute. Hume modeled the category of religion on Protestant Christianity. As a result, practices and commitments that may not even involve reference to a god are nonetheless drawn into and through a Protestant understanding of religion, with belief and faith at the conceptual center. This way of recognizing other religions produces conceptual and practical distortions. Buddhism, for instance, is nontheistic and yet is widely regarded as one of the major "world religions." The use of this Protestant heuristic can be seen today in U.S. public discourse where the most common way of speaking of multiple religious groups is to refer to "faiths" (as in the "Jewish faith," despite the fact that most forms of Judaism prioritize practice over faith).

The assimilation of such a wide variety of practices to a single category did not just produce conceptual distortions; it also justified colonial violence. Working from Protestantism as the generic model of religion entails that other particular religions must either conform to this model or suffer for the comparison. This is because the category of universal religion can simultaneously allow that all humans are alike in their propensity toward religion *and* serve to differentiate among humans on the basis of their different religions. For example, David Chidester has shown that at different stages in the colonial project, the peoples of southern Africa were treated as if they had no religion at all, had a religion similar to the ancient roots of Christianity, or exhibited a fundamentally different species of the genus religion. In this last stage, when colonial rule was consolidated, southern Africans were seen as essentially like European Christians in that they "had" a religion, but also as essentially different in their particular religion. In this, the religion of Europeans is understood to be both reasonable and on the path of civilization's progress toward secularism. The religious difference of the southern Africans did not so much set them outside this progress narrative as place them "behind" and in need of Europe's civilizing mission. The positing of religious difference thus formed a crucial component in legitimating unequal treatment for

southern Africans—and all in the name of progress and emancipation. freedom that is supposed to be extended in the shift from religion to secularism.[18]

According to conventional ways of telling the story, secularism does not just promise the progress brought about by emancipation. It also promises peace, or at least a more peaceful resolution to conflicts. Because secularism is based on a rationality shared by all human beings, it provides a universal discourse, whereas religions are held to be the expressions of particular cultures. Conflicts that arise between particular cultures seem irresolvable except through violence because there are no shared terms on which to base a resolution. By contrast, the universality of rationality implies that conflicts can be resolved, as Jürgen Habermas posits, "by the force of the better argument."[19] Such reasoned debate paves the way for modern democratic government, allowing political debate to take the place of religious authority in the formulation of state policy. If secularism represents rationality, universality, modernity, freedom, democracy, and peace, then religion (unless thoroughly privatized) can only present a danger to those who cherish these values. So the story goes, but how adequate is it in either historical or ethico-political terms?

SECULAR CHALLENGES

The main points of the traditional secularization narrative—that secularization is central to modernity, that it enables progress toward universalism, and that it represents development or emancipation—remained strong in Western social theory during 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.[20] However, there also emerged numerous pressures on the feasibility of this narrative. Enlightenment narratives were subject to intense questioning in the latter part of the twentieth century, both from postcolonial critics and from critics in Europe influenced by the changing intellectual climates that resulted in the upheavals of 1968. Moreover, a 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?[21] Certainly, for many people in many parts of the world this narrative did not accurately describe their realities.

It was the Iranian revolution in 1979, however, that ultimately upended

whatever complacent consensus had existed about secularization.[22] 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, the secularization narrative came under increasing pressure. As time passed, it became clear that the Iranian revolution represented 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 required a major reevaluation of the secularization narrative.

One of the early and most powerful reevaluations was José Casanova's 1994 historical sociology of Spanish, Polish, Brazilian, and American Catholicism.[23] It is perhaps not an accident that Casanova's study focuses on Catholicism, which stands in complex relation to the Protestant genealogy of dominant secularism. Not only does Catholicism remain connected to the state in some areas of the world, but Catholicism's public and communal aspects, even where it is not established as a state religion, do not track easily with the public-private split that marks Protestant secularism. Casanova points to the seemingly obvious, but all too often overlooked, fact that not every expression of religion in public is conservative. In addition to the Iranian revolution, 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. In fact, Casanova concentrates on the distinction between a state-based religion and public religion, arguing that while secularization may divide religion from the state, this division does not necessarily entail removal from the public.

Our major concern in *Secularisms* is to question not just the specific aspects of the secularization narrative but to undo the religion-secularism binary itself, so as to open new configurations in the political debates structured by these terms. Take the debate in the United States over the role of Islam in geopolitics. Although there appears to be an opposition between a religious right—which holds that the religious values of Christianity advance civilization, while a "politicized Islam" constitutes the great enemy of civilization—and a secular left—which militantly advocates for a secular public sphere—these two "sides" actually come together around the idea that civilization can be found in Europe and the United States, while Islam, particularly when not contained in the private sphere,

threatens this civilization and leads to violence. This consensus between left and right produces a rhetorical structure with only a limited number of positions. Liberal advocates of religion, for example, are left with the choice of either siding with secularists, who deny the import of religion to public life, or with conservative Christians, who admit religion to public life but deny the import of liberal values to religion. Similarly, those who would oppose both the colonial thinking that posits Europe and North America as the sites of modern civilization as opposed to the supposedly medieval Middle East, as well as the various forms of violence promoted in the name of radical Islam, find few openings for articulating this double position.[24]

Interrupting this binary rhetoric and challenging the ways in which the secularization narrative is told are thus more than academic exercises in terminological precision. The ways in which the terms *secularism* and *religion* frame contemporary debates mean that possibilities for moving out of these impasses are obscured. The critique generated by *Secularisms* implies that the very idea that politics can be simply divided between a religious right and a secular left is mistaken.[25] More broadly, the choice between secularism and religion represents a false dichotomy. This is so because religious and secular formations are profoundly intertwined with each other. As a result, the easy presumption that secularism is necessarily more rational, more modern, freer, and less dangerous than religion is not sustainable.

This claim does not mean that *Secularisms* advocates simply shifting allegiances from the secular to the religious. In fact, some of the essays, particularly those by Ranu Samantrai and by Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, strongly argue for the importance of supporting and extending secular discourses. Nevertheless, even these two essays, which advocate secular discourses, do not simply accept a binary division between religion and secularism. Ultimately, in providing new ways of thinking about the relation between religion and secularism, this volume seeks to provide new ways of thinking about social and political possibilities including new secular configurations. Such openings are urgently needed, but to find them we must question received understandings.

SECULARISMS: FROM SINGULAR TO PLURAL

We argue that the secularization thesis misrepresents our world and the role of both religion and secularism in that world. We make our interven-

tion at the level of the secularization story itself to show that the problem is not simply one of historical events moving away from narrative prediction. The narrative itself is also fundamentally incoherent. And yet, despite this incoherence and despite the factual swerve, the narrative continues to exert great political force. Thus it is to the narrative that we turn our attention.

The contributors to *Secularisms* confront the secularization narrative at its main points. To take just a few examples, the essays gathered here include challenges to the claims that secularism provides a coherent rationality (Baird and Subramaniam); that secularism provides freedom from the constraints of religion (Najmabadi and Samantrai); that secularization entails the privatization of religion (Parla and Davison); and that secular progress produces gender and racial equality (Fessenden). Perhaps most important, the essays cumulatively challenge the idea that secularism represents universalism in contrast to the particularity of religion. As a number of our contributions show, forms of secularism tend to vary with the religious formation in relation to which they develop. In other words, the secularism that has developed in India in relation to a dominant Hinduism (see Patel, Subramaniam, and Sunder Rajan) is not the same as either the secularism that relates to Islam in Turkey (see Parla and Davison) or the Christian secularism that predominates in the United States (see Levitt, Fessenden, Roberts, and Sands).

Again, this is not to say that secularism is somehow religion in disguise; it is a separate social formation. But it is a formation that develops in relation to religion. This is not a matter of previous and somehow completed historical processes. For example, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's essay argues that contemporary secularisms continue to develop in relation to religion. She makes this argument in relation to the uniform civil code proposed to replace religious personal laws in India. Sunder Rajan shows how the secular code would still remain entwined with the dominant Hinduism of Indian politics.

Not only does secularism develop in relation to religion but it also has an impact on the development of religious formations. Religious transformations such as the development of a politicized Hindu nationalism in India may push new secular formations like the possible uniform civil code. And secular discourses may prompt religious change as well. In his important 2003 study *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Talal Asad has argued that in nineteenth-century Egypt, secularism and religion remade each other. Asad is critical of the narrative

that secularism is simply "a particular cultural import from the West," arguing that secularism and religion interacted to produce mutual transformations in the colonial situation. As Asad argues vis-à-vis the Egyptian case, religious transformation may be "both the precondition and the consequences of secular processes of power." Thus one alternative means of thinking about the contemporary relation of religion and secularism is to consider not just how secularism remains intertwined with religion, but also how religion is being remade in relation to secular phenomena.[26]

If secularism is constituted in relation to religious formations, then secularism is not the universal discourse emanating from the European Enlightenment, but is in fact multiple, as are religions. We might then more aptly speak in terms of secularism*s*. Thinking of secularisms as plural in this way challenges the dominant narrative of secular universalism, but we still cannot think of secularisms as simply free from this narrative. Particular secularisms are not just autonomous units grounded in their national contexts, or in relation to particular religious formations; precisely by being called "secularisms," they are also articulated in relation to the dominating discourse of universal secularism, which is tied to the Protestant secularism of the market. This does not mean, however, that individual secularisms are merely particular instances of a singular overarching phenomenon called secularism. Neither does a relation to the dominant discourse of secularism mean that all secularisms are always and only Christian.

The essays in *Secularisms* chart a path between the presumption that because the concept of the secular originates in a European and Christian-dominated context this origin *determines* the shape of secularisms throughout the world and the presumption that particular secularisms can be constituted independently of this dominant discourse and its originary context. Rather, if religious and secular formations are mutually constitutive in particular historical moments, we can think of this relation as inflected by a variety of power relations, including those of European colonialism. As we have learned from Foucault, these power relations may be dominating, but they are not determining.[27] Power relations are productive: productive of resistance, of reverse discourses, and of new combinations. These productions are driven by a variety of conflicting social groups and interests that may take up dominating discourses or resistances to those discourses to varying effects. So, for example, Banu Subramaniam's essay on Hindu science shows how Hindu nationalists took up the discourse of science (rather than religion) neither simply to align

themselves with the West and its scientific heritage nor to differentiate themselves fully from the West. Rather, they did so, she argues, in order simultaneously to make such an alliance with and distinguish themselves from the West. Subramaniam calls this alternative formation "archaic modernity." Ranu Samantrai argues, alternatively, that advocates who claim to represent the "Muslim community" in response to the British state have used the language of religious community to continue certain colonial paradigms, including a colonial patriarchy, rather than to differentiate themselves from the colonial heritage. In other words, we cannot read the influence of the discourse of European secularism, no matter how dominant, as simply unidirectional.

RISKING GENEALOGY

Secularisms is interested in how attention to the multiplicity of secularisms can break open the discourses, particularly the political ones, that are organized by the presumptions of the secularization thesis. To do this we use a genealogical method, a method that offers the opportunity to interrogate the discourse of secularism at the level of its assumptions—at the level, that is, of the binary categories religion and secularism.[28] Genealogy allows for an investigation into the power relations established by naming phenomena in a particular way. The step that the genealogical method takes is to reveal that the discourse of universal secularism—based on transhistorical reason—is not just a factual error; the discourse of secularism constitutes a way of framing data so as to align with a particular set of assumptions.

Genealogy offers several advantages over a strictly comparative approach. It helps us ask not just how particular religions or secularisms compare to each other, for example, but how the categories of religion and secularism were developed and how specific cases come to be understood as particular instances of these general categories—religion and secularism—in the first place. In addition, genealogy puts pressure on the assumption that whenever people, in any part of the world, take up secularism, they must be taking up a singular phenomenon with universal resonance. In contrast, although comparisons can sometimes break open dominant discourses, the very discovery of difference from the normative narrative can also simply reinforce the centrality of that narrative. This held true in European encounters with southern Africa documented by

Chidester, and as some of our contributors show, the containment of difference within a particular narrative frame can be as much of a problem for the secular as for the religious.[29] If this problem is not addressed, then other possibilities, alternative ways for "doing" secularism or religion, are rendered invisible because we are looking for a particular type of difference. Rather than merely comparing differences *within* the framework of the secularization narrative, the essays in this volume move to question the framework itself. We want to know what becomes possible by shifting the focus of our inquiry.[30]

To be sure, the genealogical approach has its own dangers. If focused only on the construction of large categories like the secular and the 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.[31] 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.[32]

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.[33] A focus, for example, on diversities within Europe or between Europe and the United States, diversities no doubt powerful and extensive, can shift the spotlight away from the power of the Euro-American imagination in which many Europeans and Americans see themselves as secular and others as religious (despite the fact that to others in Europe or the United States it can appear, as Fatima Mernissi has written of her experiences as a Moroccan Muslim visiting Europe, that European culture is saturated with religion).[34]

Secularisms is cognizant of such tensions and risks. By placing multiple secularisms in relation to the dominant narrative of secularization, *Secularisms* charts a course that acknowledges the power and influence of colonialism and the European conceptualization of secularism without succumbing to the idea that secularism is, as Asad says, only "a cultural

import from the West." Rather, it is precisely the interactions of various religious formations with various cultural imports that make for the complex secularisms that mark today's world.

Our essays make visible cross-cultural variation even as we seek to mark the limits of comparative study. We are interested not in covering "the world" (as if it were possible to produce a fully comprehensive compendium of world secularisms), but in questioning the narrative that gives the category of secularism "world" import, and the essays were chosen accordingly. In criticizing this dominant discourse we hope to make visible alternative ways of inhabiting and embodying both the secular and the religious, ways that are simply blocked from view within the usual framework.

In short, we advocate multiple shifts in perspective. The first is to acknowledge that secularism is inflected by religions (and vice versa), thus fundamentally undoing the binary opposition between (secular) universalism and (religious) particularism. Such a move entails a shift from a singular, universal idea of the secular to the idea of multiple and varied secularisms. In making this shift, we must incorporate the fact that the recognition of cross-cultural variation is not enough because the recognition of variation alone does not in itself dislodge the idea of a single unifying discourse within which this variation occurs. Acknowledging the lack of such a singular discourse also implies that there is no single moral framework for conflict resolution and ethical judgment. Dispensing with such a framework involves a turn to the question of relations among differences, a question that cannot be resolved simply or through a single method.

There are strong political and analytical implications to such changes in thought. If there is no universally shared secular discourse that excludes the particularities of religion, but rather many particular forms of secularism that are intertwined with different religions, then the question of how to resolve conflict is brought to the fore. Indeed, this problem is one of the most pressing in the world today.[35] There are no easy solutions here, and it should, of course, be noted that the idea of secularism as the source of conflict resolution has always been more of a promise than a reality. 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.[36] Despite the difficulties of providing any single answer to the problem of conflict resolution in a world of multiple secularisms, a number of the essays in the volume (Roberts, Samantrai, Sands, and Sunder Rajan) take up the

challenge of how to imagine just social relations in what Tyler Roberts terms a "postsecular" world. We cannot even begin to take up this creative challenge as long as we remain tied to either the descriptive or moral components of the standard secularization thesis.

Most of the essays in *Secularisms* explore various means for thinking our way into a world in which the binary between religion and secularism does not frame social and political possibilities. Some of these essays also offer alternatives that might allow for means of thinking our way through the openings created by these critiques. These alternative narratives point not just to different ways of thinking about secularism but also to different ways of living out, of embodying, secular possibilities currently hidden by the reiteration of an opposition between religion and secularism.

OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

As a way to help the reader through the interlocking arguments of the book, *Secularisms* is divided into three sections. The volume opens with a set of essays that criticize at least one element of the traditional secularization narrative: rationalization, universalism, emancipation, privatization, and progress. The next cluster of essays attends to how the metadiscourse of secularism is lived at a microlevel, with especial interest in matters of embodiment. These finely tuned analyses help us imagine secular and religious time outside of the progress narrative, as well as outside both the universal body of secular human rights discourse and the particular body invoked by religious traditions. In the third and final section, these alternatives are expanded to consider how we might approach public issues of religion and secularism anew. This final set of essays explicitly asks: If the traditional secularization narrative is the basis for a politics marked by narrow choices, what other possibilities are there for imagining contemporary political contexts?

This is one way to encounter the volume, front to back, critique to alternatives, but we would also encourage readers to go off map, as it were, and read out of order for a network of interlocking subthemes. Because the power of the secularization thesis comes in part from the associations among its various terms—rationalization with universalism with progress, for example—a meaningful critique and sense of alternatives can be developed through a kaleidoscopic approach to the various terms of argument.

Looking at the ways in which themes relate to each other can enhance our understanding of why it is important to take apart the associations that make for the secularization thesis and show how we might put the world together differently. These subthemes include the "woman question" (Fessenden, Najmabadi, Patel, Samantrai, Sands, Subramaniam, Sunder Rajan, and Zito); state and/or national solutions to the "religion question" (Baird, Levitt, Najmabadi, Parla and Davison, Roberts, Samantrai, and Sunder Rajan); alternative imaginings of the relations between public and private, secularism and religion (Baird, McGarry, Roberts, Samantrai, and Sands); and the meaning of time and alternatives to the progress narrative (Fessenden, Levitt, McGarry, Parla and Davison, Patel, Subramaniam, and Zito). The fact that all of the essays appear in at least two subsections means that even such interlocking divisions cannot do justice to the network of associations that form our understandings of secularisms.

Secular Interventions We begin with the problem that has prompted so much renewed study of secularism: the secularization thesis has been brought into question by events in the world. Religion has not faded away, nor has it remained contained in the private sphere. The places in which the modern narrative most readily shows its incoherence are precisely those in which it is supposed to offer the most powerful explanations: the sites that are supposed to represent religion, like Iran, and the sites that are supposed to represent secular modernity, whether Western or non-Western, like the United States or Turkey.

We lead off with Afsaneh Najmabadi's discussion of Iran. Among other things, this essay importantly complicates any simple alignment of feminism with secularism. Because the discourse of universal secularism equates secularism to progress and claims for itself the mantle of freedom and emancipation, secularism is often promoted as the antidote to women's subordination under conservative religion. The so-called woman question thus becomes a screen onto which is cast a series of mutually reinforcing distinctions: religion/secularism, archaism/modernity, subordination/freedom, fundamentalism/feminism. Najmabadi deftly exposes this series of interlocking oppositions. By providing a careful history of how arguments over secularism, women's rights, and veiling played out in Iran in the first half of the twentieth century, Najmabadi shows not only that it is possible to be both feminist and Muslim but that in the context of Iran the opposition of feminism and Islam has actually hurt feminist politics. In the end, Najmabadi argues, the development of a public discourse

about Muslim feminism in Iran is one of the conditions for opening up a space to be feminist and secular. A space of difference opens when the feminist-Muslim opposition breaks down, creating a space that might be inhabited by secular feminists. Najmabadi's historical analysis of the Iranian case makes clear that feminist possibilities for emancipation do not necessarily require the privatization of religion.

The dominant secularization narrative assumes that increasing secularism makes religion a private matter. Nevertheless, as our contributors show, the idea that religion is separate from public life or from the state in the modern period cannot be sustained under scrutiny. Taha Parla and Andrew Davison consider secularism in Turkey, the case most often invoked as representative of enforced secularization. They show that the Kemalist regime, which imposed secular law, did not institute a completely secular state. Instead, it differentiated religious functions not into the private sphere, but into a separate section of the state. Their account hardly squares with strict divisions between religion and the state or private and public that are predicted by the idea of enforced secularization.

In the Indian context the question raised by religion and the state is in certain respects the opposite. Given that the state currently recognizes various religions as the arbiters of personal law, should the state move to a secular, uniform civil code? There are reasons to question whether this move toward the secular would support progressive politics, a concern that has been particularly raised by feminists. As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's essay points out, 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 fundamentally reflects the dominance of Hinduism in contemporary India.

Sunder Rajan does not argue, however, that given these problems with moves toward the secular, feminists should simply accede to the religious. Instead, she offers an alternative, one in which the space of civil society—a space between the (secular) state and the (religious) community—might provide a site for women's agency in these debates. Importantly, Sunder Rajan does not offer civil society as a panacea but as a possibility for something outside the bounds of the current options. For our purposes, her insights raise the possibility of reconfiguring the public relation between religious and secular discourses without simply flipping the binary in favor of religious domination of the public.

Laura Levitt returns us to the problem of secularism as a universal discourse that can provide the framework for a public sphere equally open

to everyone. Grounding her argument in an analysis of secular Judaism in the United States, Levitt argues that the Protestant secularism of the U.S. public sphere has difficulty sustaining social differences. Given the universalizing pull of secularism as a discourse, this may not be surprising. However, Levitt's analysis takes another, more counterintuitive step. She argues that Protestant secularism has more trouble sustaining *secular* differences than religious ones. Asking what type of difference secular Judaism entails, Levitt argues that the pressures of American assimilation are surprisingly more destructive to traditions of secular Judaism than to the type of religious observance represented by Orthodox Judaism. To become recognizably American, Jews need not become secular; they need to become more religious. As a result, the possibilities for different ways of "being" Jewish or of "doing" Judaism—including doing secular Judaism—are highly constrained, even illegible, within dominant terms.

If the secular public sphere is not equally open to participation by all persons regardless of their difference from the mainstream, can we sustain the claim that secularization is necessarily a sign of progress? In particular, does secularism produce progress toward democracy and equal treatment? Tracy Fessenden's essay shows how feminist commitments to secularism's progress narrative contributed to the formation of a nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century feminism in the United States that aimed toward universalism but actually reinforced white dominative racism. To make her case, Fessenden turns to the texts of Charlotte Perkins Gilman. One of the most prolific and best-selling authors of her time, Gilman was profoundly committed to progressing "beyond" religion. Fessenden shows that the progress of secular feminism was, for Gilman, dependent on a history of Christian civilization and racialized imperialism. Nonetheless, Fessenden warns us not to let our own commitments to progress dictate our reading of racist feminist texts from times past. Antiracist ends will not be achieved simply by removing Gilman from the feminist canon in the same way that religion is supposedly removed from the secular. Rather, she encourages us to attend to Gilman's example so as to question the constellations of power invoked by secularism and religion.

Our final two essays in this section raise a series of questions about the power struggles that have erupted through political debates over the claims of a universally shared secular rationality. We encounter these questions in a stark way in Robert Baird's discussion of the conceptual and historical landscape of what he calls "late secularism." Baird traces

contemporary U.S. debates over the teaching of evolutionary theory back to Hume's elaboration of the category of religion and, in particular, to the distinction Hume draws between unproven religious beliefs and verifiable empirical knowledge. The demotion of evolution to a hypothesis and the promotion of intelligent design to evolutionary theory's epistemological equivalent, Baird argues, do not signal the end of Hume's theory-fact distinction so much as reveal how the eighteenth-century co-constitution of religion and secularism continues to inform our cognitive landscape. In a sense, secular science has been hoisted on its own petard. As Baird shows in his finely textured reading of Hume, the standards of factuality against which evolutionary theory is now held to be lacking—it is "just" a theory—were, in Baird's words, "dialectically produced in the discourse of religion."

Relations among religion, secularism, science, and politics are also the focus of Banu Subramaniam's essay. She considers the way in which the idea of Hindu science is rewriting not just the Indian understanding of science but also the history of Hinduism. Subramaniam, along with Geeta Patel in the next section, raises important questions about the rise of a self-identified Hindu right in India and about how Hinduism is (re)constructed in relation to secular formations while secularism is reconstructed in relation to Hinduism. Subramaniam shows, for example, that the shift in governing party from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to the secular Congress Party has not necessarily produced substantive change on questions relevant to Hindu science. Both Subramaniam and Patel examine how particular kinds of power 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—or 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.

It is this intertwining of religion and secularism that is crucial for understanding what is possible in today's world. Religion is not a static undertaking in relation to which secularism moves forward through time any more than secularism is an unchanging, transhistorical, and universal proposition. Moreover, as these essays show, the political implications of taking up either religion or secularism vary greatly depending on the social context and the historical moment. If one hopes to promote a politics akin to that promised by secularism—a politics of freedom, equality, and

democracy, for example—one needs a much more careful analysis of the implications of secularism than those currently available. We thus turn to the implications of how secularism is lived, how it is literally embodied.

Secular Relations: Micronarratives How is the body implicated in secular formations? And what are the stakes of understanding the body as religious or secular? What does secularism "feel" like? The essays in this section take up and complicate these questions by revealing the complex layerings of bodies and subjectivities in time and space. It has become a truism after Foucault to assert connections between disciplinary time and the carceral system: the regimentation of military formations, the factory, and the school day helped to forge the modern subject not just in time but as fundamentally a subject of time. Time has a moral dimension. These novel, specifically modern disciplines of the body have served to connect the laboring body at once to new forms and practices of capital and to new forms and practices of religious life—and have done so in ways that naturalize all three: the disciplined body, the market as secular site of freedom, and religion as morality. Certainly, body regulation has been a crucial pivot in the religion-secular relation. The newly secularized state enforced specifically religious ideas about, for example, supposedly natural versus unnatural sexual acts and appetites precisely through enforcing body regulation. However, the secular 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 coimplicated religion and secularism described by Weber. Indeed, as Baird makes clear, one of the most striking transformations effected by the 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-secular divide they come to occupy.

There is thus no simple answer to the question of whether bodies are secular or religious. Nor can we assume that the alignment of the body with religion is necessarily conservative, while secular, supposedly universal bodies are somehow free and clear. The question of domination is not a matter of abstraction, but one of social relations in their historical context. In some contexts, the emancipation promised by secularized universalism has been deployed to counter relations of colonial domination. In other contexts, however, the enactment (or enforcement) of secular universal-

ism will carry forward a project of colonialism, even a missionary colonialism. We cannot take secularism and its promise of universal rights at its word any more than we can dismiss religion as always and everywhere the problem that needs solving. We must constantly ask not just which secularism and which religion, but also, what is their interaction? How secularism feels and/or how religion feels depends on where one is arrayed in relation to them.

Angela Zito offers a powerful historical analysis of the paradoxes produced by secularized universalism in its interrelation with religion. Zito's analysis of both Christian and secular opposition to foot binding explores the ways in which the progress narrative of secularization is literally embodied. She details how the nineteenth-century Christian missionary anti–foot binding campaign was based on an idea of the universal human body, one that is exemplary of and controlled by a divine nature. The subsequent, secularized campaign takes up this particular idea of the universally human through the discourse of biomedicine. Both these forms of universalism—the missionary and the biomedical—produced a discourse in which the particular practices of Chinese culture (or nature) could only be in violation of that which was truly, universally human.

Zito's analysis of Christian missionary concerns with the oppression of Chinese women connects to Fessenden's discussion of the way feminisms, both secular and Christian, may unintentionally extend Western domination. With both Zito and Fessenden, then, we come to see how universal equality produces the particular inequalities that grounded the project of imperialism—and haunt contemporary human rights discourse as well. Indeed, one of the major questions raised by the new studies of secularism and by the essays in this volume is whether it is possible to shift or interrupt the narrative in which modernity equates with secularized development toward universal (in)equality.

Geeta Patel takes up this challenge in her contribution to the volume. Writing with and against Foucault's conception of disciplinary time, she attends to those places where linearity "leaks," and the seams show the sometimes violent effort required to erase other ways of telling time and taking up the body. Patel importantly links transformations from one way of telling time to another—from traditional into modern, for example, or rural into financial—to colonial domination and the transformations of the nation-state. Further, she shows how these shifts in ways of telling time produce different, and gendered, forms of subjectivity.

Patel's essay deliberately shifts tenses, alternating between the vivid im-

mediacy of the present tense and a historical past. The power of Patel's argument lies in its demonstration of the ways in which Hindu nationalist temporality depends on both missionary (Christian) and postcolonial (Christian-secular) time. According to the secularization thesis, Hindu nationalism, by virtue of its religious foundation, must run counter to Western secularism. But Patel shows how Hindu nationalism works *with* the production of secularism, particularly secularism as financial time, and enforces certain relations in the form of gender to ensure that the connections between Hindu nationalism and secular capitalism work. Nationalism effectively connects Hinduism to secularism and displaces alternative understandings of what it might mean to be Hindu. Particular bodies, then, are here produced and regulated via this conjunction of different forms of temporality and different forms of secularism. And yet the transition from one "older" way of telling time to another more "modern" one is never as complete as is claimed; different temporalities remain as a kind of ghost effect. Time has become, in Patel's words, "spectral."

Molly McGarry takes up the question of spectrality through a different historical archive. Her essay on the intertwined histories of secularism, sexology, and Spiritualism in the United States suggests another way of relating to time and embodiment. The mid-nineteenth-century practice of Spiritualism allowed the dead to speak "to and through the living," breaking through the supposedly impervious line between past and present, this world and the next. Refusing to accept the past as irretrievably gone, Spiritualists instead sought to cultivate embodied connections to those now departed. The experience of being possessed by another person did not just offer a unique form of spiritual embodiment, McGarry argues; it also allowed many Spiritualists to inhabit—embody—sexuality and gender in transgressive ways.

McGarry goes on to contrast the trajectory of Spiritualist practice as it grounds alternative possibilities for being in time and in space with the sexological discourses that emerged in the late nineteenth century. With its developmental focus, sexology's conception of time was far less fluid than Spiritualism's; it also had a far more restricted, even fixed, sense of bodies and embodiment. However, even as she traces the emergence and dominance of sexological discourse, McGarry calls us to attend to the lingering remains of the religious in the secular conceptions and experiences of modern sexuality. This is more than an academic task. In sharp contrast to the "ghost[s] of dead religious beliefs" that Weber identifies as

the secularized "spirit of capitalism," the ghostly remainders discussed by McGarry conjure other ways of experiencing embodiment and relating to time.[37] In so doing, McGarry's ghosts may offer resources for reimagining the future in the present.

Public Alternatives This sort of embodied reimagining animates another major theme running through the essays: If we move away from the parameters set by the religion-secular binary, how might we live differently in social, as well as individual, bodies? Our contributors come down on various sides of this question. Our own hope is not to lay out a new line on how to conceive of contemporary possibilities, but rather through the very tensions and disagreements among these pieces to suggest the richness of contemporary possibility. As we move to pluralize secularism, our task is not simply to ask what other models of secularism are possible, but what models are *already* in place in different local and national configurations.

In his essay on religion and politics in the post-secular, Tyler Roberts considers possibilities for an American public life that is not dominated by either liberal secularism or religious morality. Roberts evaluates two postsecular modes of thought for their potential to facilitate public engagements across multiple differences: radical Christian orthodoxy and postmodern Jewish thought. Neither position is without its problems or dangers, but the crucial issue addressed in his essay is whether it is possible to be open to dominant as well as minority expressions of religion *without* falling into the problems of domination that make secularism and the idea of a secular public sphere so appealing. This remains an open question. We well imagine that some readers may be discomforted by Roberts's argument for "desanctifying" secularism and admitting openly religious perspectives into the public sphere. To us, the provocation of his essay derives in part from his willingness to play out an ethics of engagement across difference not only where such crossings feel comfortable, but even where they do not. In addition, his conception of a "secular diaspora" offers one means of responding to Levitt's desire to make room for different publicly recognizable secularisms.

Like Roberts, Kathleen Sands seeks an engaged but nondominant public role for religious expression; her particular example is religious feminism. Alongside Najmabadi, Sands criticizes the assumption that feminism, even contemporary U.S. feminism, can be conflated with a secular

stance. However, she questions not just the removal of religion from the public sphere, as does Roberts, but also the uniqueness of the privileges that apply to religion in the U.S. public sphere in the first place, privileges that religious feminists often call on to lend them moral authority in public debate. Sands argues that by questioning the privileges of religion in public as well as the exclusions of religion from public debate, those feminists who speak in religious terms might be more effective in their public actions. The new form of secularity Sands calls for would deprivilege religion not to banish it from public view, but to open up a wider democratic space for moral and political perspectives—"religious, nonreligious, and antireligious" too.

To take this argument further, Ranu Samantrai considers how public discourse about secularism might need to change to address the issues of postcolonial and patriarchal domination vis-à-vis British secularism. Her project has gained urgency in light of the polarizing public debates taking place in Britain in the wake of the London subway bombings of 7 July 2005. This debate largely replays the rhetorical positionings that followed on the 1989 fatwa against Salman Rushdie. In a careful examination of responses to the fatwa, Samantrai reveals the poverty of British secular and communal religious discourses, both of which, she argues, remain trapped in colonial thinking. For an alternative approach to "a pluralism that does not encounter difference as an obstacle," Samantrai turns to groups like Women against Fundamentalism and Southall Black Sisters, who have provided 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 with only bad choices. The presumption that secular discourse is supposed to liberate women may only reinforce both colonial domination and secular patriarchy, while the opposition to these secular dominations may only be a minority discourse that is itself simultaneously patriarchal and trapped in colonial thinking. 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 resist *and* extend sexism—is precisely what makes the woman question, as well as the secular question, so complicated. In the end Samantrai makes "an argument for secular Britain," but if we hope to promote this option without also promoting sexism and colonial thinking, we cannot do so by holding onto the traditional narrative about what constitutes this secularism.

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OPEN ENDINGS: IN HOPE?

The familiar story of secularism remains hard to relinquish in part because it appears to be a defense against the dominations ascribed to religion. Secularism is rarely subjected to critique in the academy or 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 either (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 but it limits our imagination of secularism to only one narrative.

We raise the question of multiple secularisms in order to open spaces for other possible narratives. We need not imagine the secular within the parameters of the secularization narrative any more than we must imagine religion through its dictates. 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 easily; Patel stresses the painful affect engendered by new ways of telling time and history. Yet as she and others 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 essays: abjection (Najmabadi); terror (Subramaniam); surprise (Roberts); solace (McGarry). For his part, Baird's analysis of the "subjectivizing" of scientific theory and "objectivizing" of religious feeling offers a cautionary tale about public sentiments in an age of mediatized "truthiness." Nonetheless, this retelling of time and history is also bound up with alternative pos-

sibilities for values, as McGarry's essay, with its interest in the haunting power of the residual, underscores. The millennial time that conflates the Christian with the secular with the global marks progress because of a conflation between time and value(s). These values prominently include what Raymond Williams has called "structures of feeling" and what we will here dub "modernity's affect" so as to mark something of value's place, time, and feeling.[38]

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—and other kinds of social feelings—might be produced during a time of "terror." Might hope, too, be one of modernity's affects?[39] Hope in the sense in which we mean it here requires breaking faith with secularization's progress narrative, which assumes that change is unidirectional and always for the better, and instead actively working toward alternative possibilities. 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.[40] Ultimately, our purpose in criticizing the traditional secularization thesis and exploring alternatives is not to get the kinks out of secularism so as to secure its final triumph over religion, nor is it to debunk secularism so as to leave religion as the only possibility. Rather, we want to have our secular cake and eat it too. This openness to both secular and religious discourses is also openness to a field of possibility—to a different future.

NOTES

1. Jakobsen and Pellegrini, "World Secularisms at the Millennium."

2. See the views advanced by the conservative pundit Andrew Sullivan, whose essay "This *Is* a Religious War," published less than a month after 9/11, asserted that Christian values provide what is best and most tolerant in secular civilization. For a representative view from the secular left, see Slavoj Žižek's *New York Times* editorial, in which he argues for the European heritage of "atheism" as the only bulwark that will protect both Europeans and Muslims. Žižek, "Defenders of the Faith," *New York Times*, 12 March 2006. Despite their apparently opposed political affiliations, both Sullivan and Žižek still agree in their depiction of religious "fundamentalism" in general, and of radical Islam in particular, as regressive, oppressive, and ultimately dangerous. Sullivan and Žižek thus imply what many Christian conservatives are willing to say in the open. The most (in)famous such avowal probably came from the evangelist Franklin

Graham (the son of and successor to Billy Graham) at the dedication of a chapel in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, in October 2001. His comments were ultimately broadcast by NBC Nightly News, on 16 November 2001. According to the transcript, Graham said: "We're not attacking Islam but Islam has attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God. He's not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It's a different God, and I believe it [Islam] is a very evil and wicked religion. I don't believe this is a wonderful, peaceful religion. When you read the Koran and you read the verses from the Koran, it instructs the killing of the infidel, of those that are non-Muslim." In a follow-up statement to the *Charlotte Observer*, Graham cited the relief efforts for impoverished Muslims made by his charitable organization, Samaritan's Purse, but also said that he "had expressed concerns about 'the teachings of Islam regarding the treatment of women and the killing of non-Muslims, or 'infidels.'" Qtd. in Gustav Niebuhr, "A Nation Challenged: The Evangelist, Muslim Group Seeks to Meet Billy Graham's Son," *New York Times*, 20 November 2001.

3. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, esp. chap. 4.

4. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*; and *Discipline and Punish*.

5. We here focus on a narrative about secularism and the market because it is the discourse of the market as a universal, secular site—a site that is supposedly not only free of religion but also free of values (beyond the production of economic value)—that undergirds contemporary notions of "the world" and "globalization." Benedict Anderson ties a crucial element of the secularization narrative—the privatization of religion—not just to capitalism but also to the development of modern nationalism. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. For a critique of Anderson's view of privatization, see Derek R. Peterson and Darren R. Walhof, introduction to *The Invention of Religion*, ed. Peterson and Walhof, 1–16. Peterson and Walhof argue that religious reforms of varying sorts, rather than privatization alone, have been the building blocks in different contexts for a variety of nationalisms. We extend this argument by considering the ways in which formations of secularism in relation to religious reforms have contributed to different versions of nationalism.

6. Doubts about the validity of the secularization thesis have now been raised in a wide range of fields and for some time. The field of such criticism was probably inaugurated by David Martin's jeremiad against the sociological validity of the concept of secularization, arguing that it simply reflected the desire for secularization of those who promoted "counter-religious ideologies." Martin, *The Religious and the Secular*, 16. Martin has been working on the secularization thesis consistently since that time, most recently publishing *On Secularization*. Some of the other recently influential

texts to raise these questions were José Casanova's comparative historical sociology, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, and the political theorist William E. Connolly's *Why I Am Not a Secularist*. For a sense of the ongoing debates in this field, see Talal Asad's critique of Casanova in *Formations of the Secular*, and Casanova's response in "Secularization Revisited."

7. Recent works on the question of secularism, in addition to those already cited, include Dussel, "World Religions"; and Needham and Sunder Rajan, *Crisis of Secularism in India*. On the difficulties of addressing the complexities of both posing the critique of secularism and of working through its implications even in a field like anthropology where the critique is relatively well developed, see Saba Mahmood's preface to *Politics of Piety*, ix–xii.

8. Achin Vanaik summarizes this narrative as follows: "Historically, secularization (and the ideology of secularism which intertwines with this process) emerges in Europe in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the rise of the Enlightenment and partial de-Christianization. The general understanding of the issue of secularization has ever since been marked by this historical background, with different people assigning different weights to how capitalist modernization, Enlightenment values of humanism, rationalism and materialism, and Christianity relate to the nature and potential of secularization even today." Vanaik, *Furies of Indian Communalism*, 105. As Vanaik notes, there is disagreement about the relative importance of various contributing factors to the process of secularization, and there is also disagreement about the crucial time period. Martin Marty and Owen Chadwick locate the crucial time period as that of the nineteenth century. See Marty, *Modern Schism*; and Chadwick, *Secularization of the European Mind*. Chadwick, for example, chooses to focus on the last four decades of the nineteenth century in Europe because this period is "an age admitted by every historical observer to be central to any consideration of [secularization]. And these forty years have the first merit, that during them the word *secularization* came to mean what we now mean when we use it. If we know what we mean when we use it" (18). But he begins his narrative with the religious toleration produced by the Reformation.

9. Expounded quintessentially in the American context by Durkheimian social theorists like 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 [Clifford] 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 in the sense 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. As Bellah says to open an essay entitled "Meaning and Modernization," "Modernization, whatever else it involves, is always a moral and religious problem." Bellah, *Beyond Belief*, 21, 24, 64.

10. These elements are drawn from several variations of the classic secularization thesis. See Bellah, *Beyond Belief*; Wilson, *Religion in a Secular Society*; Wallis and Bruce, "Secularization"; and Vanaik, *Furies of Indian Communalism*, chap. 3. Our interest in laying out these elements is not to dispute their sociological validity; we leave those debates to those who are trained in history and/or sociology. Rather, we are concerned with the narrative and, particularly, moral power produced by bringing these many different elements together.

11. For an in-depth study of how the concept of time can be used to define social relations hierarchically, see Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

12. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 101.

13. As Casanova points out, American sociologists have tended to reduce the concept of secularization to a set of indicators—"church attendance, belief in God, frequency of prayer, and so on"—that can be either proven or disproved. This approach is both a reduction in the meaning of *secularization* and also fails to account for the effects of secularism as a discourse, including its material effects (on, e.g., social organization and state legitimation) that have nothing to do with these indicators. José Casanova, "A Reply to Talal Asad," in Scott and Hirschkind, *Powers of the Secular Modern*, 15.

14. For a good explanation of the idea of discourse as both material and linguistic, see Davidow "Acting Otherwise."

15. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 13.

16. Ibid., 183.

17. Over the past decade there has been a range of critiques of the category of religion and of the comparative method of the study of religion, from Russell McCutcheon and Tomoko Masuzawa's critiques of the field of study as it has historically developed

to David Chidester's exploration of the consequences of comparative religions in the history of colonial southern Africa and Richard King's study of the relation between postcolonial theory and comparative religions through a genealogy of "the mystical" in India. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion*; Masuzawa, *Invention of World Religions*; Chidester, *Savage Systems*; King, *Orientalism and Religion.*

18. Chidester, *Savage Systems.*

19. Habermas, *Inclusion of the Other*, chap. 1, section 8.

20. Altizer, *Radical Theology*.

21. For an extensive analysis of the effects of shifts in global capitalism in the 1970s, see Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*.

22. For an example of this complacency, see the conclusion of Bryan R. Wilson's reply to debate over the secularization thesis in *Religion and Modernization*, published in 1992: "When, outside the confines of the relatively small circles of those who have involved themselves with it, one raises this subject with historians, sociologists, economists, or psychologists, one sees how readily those engaged with other aspects of the social system and its culture take secularization for granted. . . . Not infrequently they express some amusement that religion should be given the serious attention which I and others in the sociology of religion devote to it. Of course, these various and numerous social scientists could be overlooking a social force of paramount importance in the operation of those facets of the social system in which they are expert, but I doubt it." Wilson, "Reflections on a Many Sided Controversy," 210.

23. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World.*

24. The *New York Times* columnist David Brooks reported in March 2006 that a growing number of Americans held the "belief that while most of the world is chugging toward a globally integrated future, the Arab world remains caught in its own medieval whirlpool of horror. The Arab countries cannot become quickly democratic; their people aren't ready for pluralistic modernity; they just have to be walled off so they don't hurt us again." David Brooks, "It's Not Isolationism, but It's Not Attractive," *New York Times*, 5 March 2006. What is striking about this particular description is that the use of the term *medieval* allows for the invocation of most of the elements of the secularization narrative—democracy, pluralism, modernity—without ever having to mention either religion or secularism, and yet the association of Arab with Islam with radical violence is also completely clear as the last sentence shows.

25. Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* is another recent consideration of how the traditional division between a religious right and a secular left might be reconfigured.

26. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 256. For an extended case study of this phenomenon in Egypt, see especially chap. 7.

27. Foucault, "Ethic of Care."

28. The genealogical method most frequently associated with Foucault was brought to the fore in the study of religion by Talal Asad's *Genealogies of Religion*. Asad's book presents a wide-ranging intervention in the study of religion, one with particular ramifications for the secularization narrative (a question that he pursues in more depth in the follow-up volume *Formations of the Secular*). In his chapter entitled "Pain and Truth in Medieval Ritual," for example, Asad argues that the steps forward in rationalization represented by new medieval legal proceedings, steps that have been traditionally understood as part of the long movement toward modern rationality, were constituted by changes in understandings of religious truth. This argument opens the door to the possibility that changes in modern rationalization were similarly constituted in and through religion.

29. The move toward pluralizing world religions provides an instructive parallel. Tomoko Masuzawa argues in *Invention of World Religions* that the emergence of the category of "world religions" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is at one level a move toward equality and pluralism. The phrasing *world religions*, appears to put various religions on an equal plane; they are all equal instances of a similar phenomenon. But, as Masuzawa shows in great historical detail, the effect of the discourse of world religions is once again to reinforce the difference between the West and the rest: "Despite [the] incessant circumlocutions and the fine nuancing of the various classificatory systems [that make up the study of world religions], there seems to be some underlying logic silently at work in all variation, and the intent of differentiation probably has not changed appreciably. At its simplest and most transparent, this logic implies that the great civilizations of the past and present divide into two: venerable East on the one hand and progressive West on the other. They both have been called 'historical,' but implicitly in different senses. In a word, the East preserves history, the West creates history" (4). Given Masuzawa's analysis of world religions, we cannot simply complete our project of critique by moving from the singular *secularism* to the multiple *world secularisms*. If Protestantism is ultimately not just the model of religion but also the crucial historical backdrop to secularism, then the move to world secularisms may, like that to world religions, simply reinforce the idea that while there may be many secularisms, only one is truly reasonable, truly universal. The rest may be venerable, but they also pale by comparison.

30. Our approach in *Secularisms* is that giving up the idea of a singular, universal narrative for secularism constitutes a necessary first step to understanding the multiplicity

of secularisms. We thereby hope to contribute to the project of creating the conditions of possibility for alternative types of comparative or multiple histories. As Partha Chatterjee says with reference to the idea of approaching the history of India as a history of multiplicity: "But we do not as yet have the wherewithal to write these other histories. Until such time that we accept that it is the singularity of the idea of a national history of India which divides Indians from one another, we will not create the conditions for writing these alternative histories." Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*, 115.

31. Najmabadi, "Teaching and Research."

32. 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 Smith, *Millennial Dreams*; and Gibson-Graham, *End of Capitalism*.

33. 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, Asad's *Genealogies of Religion* was itself a multiple study exploring, as the subtitle states, "discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam."

34. See the preface to the English edition of Mernissi, *Veil and the Male Elite*, vi–ix.

35. The major conflict that preoccupies the public imagination of the United States, a conflict posed as that of Western secularism against politicized Islam, seems so irresolvable in part because of how that opposition is framed: supposedly universal secular sites for openly working out disagreement "versus" politics driven by dogmatic religion. Western proponents of freedom and democracy, central secular concepts, can neither understand how any rational person could reject the moral value of these terms, nor can they see their own advocacy as an extension of Western domination. Such proponents either fall back on the most simplistic of explanations—"terrorists hate freedom"—or they develop more sophisticated narratives about the regressive power of religion in the face of modernity. Acknowledging that Western democracy is intertwined with Christianity, for example, would shift the terms of this debate. We could then see how the attempt to resolve conflict by bringing everyone within the framework of secular reason can seem to those who are not Christian like an imposition of particular, rather than universal, values.

36. For more on the question of secularism in relation to conflict and violence, see Jakobsen, "Is Secularism Less Violent than Religion?"

37. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 181–82.

38. For "structures of feeling," see Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 128–35, esp. 132.

39. For two recent feminist and queer engagements with the politics and aesthetics of hope, see Dolan, *Utopia in Performance*; and Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*.

40. James, *A Pluralistic Universe*.