Introduction

Ends and Beginnings

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The fact that you are reading these lines indicates that (1) issue number 4 of *Advances in Research: Religion and Society* has been published; and that (2) the world did not end, as expected by some, in December 2012. The buzz surrounding the Mayan calendar seemed for us as editors to be an appropriate pretext to conjure a debate concerning the intersection of religion and environmental apocalypticism. The four contributions to this debate reflect, in a critical and engaged fashion, on such intersections and their mediatization. Anna Fedele takes the Mayan calendar controversy as a starting point to argue for a history of apocalyptic prophecies in Western New Age and spiritual movements, in which prophetic success or failure have not depended on empirical confirmations. Terry Leahy draws on his research in Newcastle, Australia, to explain that apocalypticism is not exclusive to religious movements, and in fact circulates in different scientific and political spheres. Stefan Skrimshire also pursues this argument, moving beyond the caricature-filled debates between so-called latter-day prophets who campaign on environmental issues and the political orientations of environmental skeptics, and using this approach to decouple apocalypticism and prophecy. Peter Rudiak-Gould, in turn, explores cataclysmic apocalypse narratives in the context of wider expectations of moral and political change, both within and beyond the religious discourse of sin and repentance. All contributions in this section portray logics and contexts of environmental apocalypticism in sketches that overlap but also exceed religious spheres.

The fact that the world did not end also allowed us to celebrate a special anniversary: the centenary of the publication (first edition in German in 1913) of Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, a collection of short essays concerning the psychoanalytical approach to incest, taboo, animism, magic, totemism, and mentality, and a cornerstone for the psychological study of religion that would develop in the subsequent decade. We decided to mark this event with a special edition of our "Around a Book" section, in which Roland Littlewood performs a double exercise of recalling the intellectual environment in which Freud wrote his four essays, and interrogating its legacy in the contemporary study of religion—one where broadly psychological approaches are gaining increasing intellectual purchase. In a lucky coincidence, Bruce Kapferer, the subject of this issue's Portrait, pioneered the intersection of psychoanalysis and anthropology.

With a similar longitudinal concern as Littlewood, the first contribution in the Articles section, authored by Rane Willerslev, makes a case for animism, otherwise frequently confined to the archives of armchair anthropology. Sonia Hazard also parallels Littlewood in her blending of themes from religion, anthropology, and other disciplines, but in her case the focus is on approaches to materiality rather than to the mind (even if debates over connections between mind

and materiality have also pervaded post-Enlightenment Western thought). Interestingly, her article also speaks to that of Willerslev in its invocation of phenomenological approaches that have succeeded in the study of materiality and animism. If for the latter the inspiration is Tim Ingold, for the former its Robert Desjarlais and David Morgan.

Other articles provide numerous interlocking themes and concerns relating to questions of secularism and modernity. While Steve Bruce elaborates on the question of secularism from an alternative angle to the mainstream configurations—reminding us of its history in the Anglo-phone world—Giumbelli explores one of secularism's consequences, the regulation of religious practices as seen from the South American context, and its moral, political, and ethical consequences. Anne-Sophie Lamine presents a complementary debate by invoking the problem of religious pluralism and its multiple (internal and external) configurations. Abby Day and Anna Strhan contribute with relevant debates in this context: respectively, problems of generation and belief, and the rethinking of Christianity from an urban perspective. Regarding this last point, Strhan invokes Steve Bruce's earlier theses on religion and secularization in the urban space to develop her argument on "Christianity and the city." She also connects with Lamine indicting the continuing relevance of Simmel to contemporary social thought. Most of these contributions refer, more or less explicitly, to Talal Asad's analysis on the formations of the secular. From this perspective, Bruce in particular engages in a lengthy dialogue with Asad's theses, arguing for alternative and pluralized understandings of such formations.

In many ways, Bruce Kapferer, the protagonist of this issue's portrait, conflates in his work several of the debates that emerge here. On the one hand, he has dealt with the political dimensions of religion through ritual and its potentialities. More than speculate over a theory of religion and ritual themselves, Kapferer is more interested in thinking about them as "generative events par excellence," as he mentions in his text. This approach, a mere example of the complexity and richness of Kapferer's contributions, speaks to the dynamics and event-based narratives involved in religious environmentalism, for instance, as well as the ideological speculations that emerge in debates on secularism and its ramifications, and the consequent narrative and political constructions that bind them. But his concern with "ritual time" also resonates with the kinds of (implicit or explicit) temporalizations involved in the study of animism, as described by Willerslev—if we are indeed willing to accept symmetry between the study and the experience of ritual behavior. Finally, Kapferer has also addressed the psychology of ritual in reference to Freud's theories, exposed in the "Around a Book" section of this issue.

The contributors to this section (Andrew Lattas, Rohan Bastin, Don Handelman) offer a composite analysis of Kapferer's influence in academia (or rather, the several academias, from Australia to the UK and now Norway), and his extraordinary contributions to the study of religion—in particular, the study of ritual, healing, cosmology, rationality, state mythologies, etc.—which, as we know, is not integral to his curriculum of research in both Africa and Asia.

During the production of this issue, our good friend and colleague Clara Mafra, who was part of the journal's editorial board, passed away. With her groundbreaking work on neo-Pentecostal movements, ritual speech, religious architecture, politics, and transnationalism, she was one of the main references in the contemporary anthropology of religion in Brazil, and was instrumental in promoting connections between Brazilian and European studies of religion in this journal, as well as many other places. We are deeply saddened by her early departure, and hope to pay her homage by allowing ourselves to be continuously inspired by her ideas and her friendship.