

# Study of Religion as Analytical Discipline Workshop

## Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion

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Friday, November 20, 12:00-5:45 pm Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

“...in any given society, the social practices of reading and writing are systematically regulated. The social effects of this regulation are produced, therefore, by the concerted operation of social institutions, not only by acts of individual judgment.

Once this point has been given its due, it should be possible to shear away the philosophical problem of aesthetic value from the historical problem of canon-formation... The problem of canon-formation is one aspect of a much larger history of the ways in which societies have organized and regulated practices of reading and writing...”

John Guillory “Canon” in Lentricchia and McLaughlin, *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 239, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990 (1995).

In canon, the canon would limit me. We students are the laboratory of canon, the experimental space of working on, working out, and augmenting what it is. In metaphor canon is a limitless language I use, whose origins are my origins. To paraphrase Baruch Spinoza, nothing is canonical in an absolute sense apart from the mind. *A canon is an act of the mind. It is a metaphor.* The aporia, the opportunity, is the question of the relationship of the two metaphors of laboratory and canon; the relationship, further, of the two canons of laboratory and metaphor. Course, canon, introduction: In what sense am I bound? And to what?

Nancy Levene, “Courses and Canons in the Study of Religion (With Continual Reference to Jonathan Z. Smith),” *JAR*, 1001-02, December 2012. Emphasis ours.

In year five, SORAAAD will focus on the role of canon. Twenty-five years after Guillory, what does canon mean as a conceptual valence of research design? How is canon – its creation, imposition, and contestation – meaningful for those we study? We will look at the implied and overt canons we deploy in designing qualitative research, the canons deployed by the subjects of our research, and the politics of representation and classification. [Karen King](#), [Jennifer Knust](#), [Kecia Ali](#), [Terje Stordalen](#), Karen Fields, [Rudy Busto](#), [Laura Ammon](#), and [Doug Cowan](#) will speak. Topics will include canon and canon-making in the study of Early Christianity; Gender and Islam; Race; and Science Fiction.

Participants and panelists in this year’s workshop will explore questions crucial both to their areas of specialization and to religious studies as a discipline. How can we track the varied and dynamic ways that ‘canon’ morphs as an assertion of hegemony across space and time? How do we relate deep studies of relatively small populations to larger discourses without distorting particular expressions as definitively representative? Who gets to canonize? How do we track factional fixations within

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canon? To what end and with what pivots can we productively compare canons? How do we continue to integrate research that demonstrates how canonical concerns have warped our study of religions both in- and outside a “Western context,” e.g., by privileging some forms to the detriment of scholarly understandings of factionalisms, esotericisms, indigenous religions, fictional religions, and new religions? Beyond text and logocentrism, how can we talk about canons of emotion and art?

“Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion” will be of interest to scholars who already enact social science and critical humanities research methodologies; to those who want to develop techniques to denaturalize canon; and to anyone who wants to rethink how canons materialize, function, and are used to normalize specific power structures.

The SORAAAD workshop is sponsored by: the AAR’s Critical Theories and Discourses on Religion Group, the AAR’s Cultural History of the Study of Religion Group, the SBL’s Metacriticisms of Biblical Scholarship Group, and the SBL’s Redescribing Early Christianity Group

The SORAAAD workshop has been underwritten by the University of Regina Religious Studies Department, whom we thank for its ongoing support and the support of William Arnal, Head of Department.

SORAAAD's committee would like to thank Monique Moultrie and the Religious Studies Department at Georgia State University for supporting SORAAAD 2015.

SORAAAD’s committee would like to thank Matt Sheedy and *The Bulletin for the Study of Religion* blog for their ongoing support of the workshop.

**Registration.** Please send an email to [soraaad@gmail.com](mailto:soraaad@gmail.com). Place “registration” in the subject line, and include your name, indication of rank (independent scholar, graduate student, professor, etc.), and institution if applicable in the body of the email.

**Registration is free.**

**Registration Limit: 55**

**You might wish to review the [SORAAAD Workshop Ethos](#).**

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## SORAAAD is on Social Media

- @SORAAADWorkshop #SORAAAD2015
- <https://www.facebook.com/SORAAAD>
- [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu)

As some of the suggested readings are posted on Academia.edu by the authors, we encourage all participants, panelists, and those interested in the topic to use academia.edu and to list [Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline](#) as a research interest.

## We ask that everyone read:

Guillory, John, "Canon." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 233-49, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Levene, Nancy, "Courses and Canons in the Study of Religion (with Continual Reference to Jonathan Z. Smith)." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 998-1024, December 2012.

Smith, J.Z. "Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon." In *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, 36-52, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982

Robinson, Lillian, "Treason our Text: Feminist Challenges to Literary canon." In Adams & Searle, *Critical Theory Since 1965*, 572-82. Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990 (1986).

Stordalen, Terje. [Canon and Canonical Commentary: Comparative Perspectives on Canonical Ecologies](#). In T. Stordalen & S. Naguib (Eds.), *The Formative Past and the Formation of the Future: Collective Remembering and Identity Formation* (133-160). Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2015.

# Study of Religion as Analytical Discipline Workshop

## Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion

12:00 - Pre-Workshop Refreshments

12:20-12:30 **Introduction: SORAAAD Year Five**

[Ipsita Chatterjea](#), for the SORAAAD workshop committee.

### **Part One: Canon, Canonicity, and Comparison**

12:30-1:35 **Segment One: Canon: Anatomies and Materialities**

[Terje Stordalen](#), University of Oslo

**Deconstructing Canonical Anatomies**

[Jennifer Knust](#), Boston University

**There is No Bible/There is a Bible: Thinking about the Materiality of Text**

[Krista Dalton](#), Columbia University - Moderator

1:40-2:35 **Segment Two: There is No Author/There is Author-Function: Further Thoughts on Practices of Ascription and Canon Formation**

[Karen King](#), Harvard University

[William Arnal](#), University of Regina - Moderator

2:35-3:15 **Workshop Break** A light lunch will be provided.

### **Part Two: Shaking off Canonical Constraints**

3:15 -4:20 **Segment One: Canon, Collective Identities, Hegemony, and Social Regulation**

[Kecia Ali](#), Boston University

**Canon and Gender in the Study of the Muslim 'Tradition'**

[Karen Fields](#), Independent Scholar

**Race in America: An Elementary [or Elemental] Form of Religious Life**

[Ipsita Chatterjea](#) - Moderator

4:25-5:45 **Segment Two: Canon and/in Science Fiction**

[Rudy Busto](#), University of California, Santa Barbara

**The "Nine Billion Names of God" and Science Fiction's Disloyal Canons**

[Doug Cowan](#), Renison University College

**Lo(o)se Canons: Rethinking the Need for Canons at All**

[Laura Ammon](#), Appalachian State University - Respondent

[David Walker](#), University of California, Santa Barbara - Moderator

# Study of Religion as Analytical Discipline Workshop

## Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion

12:20-12:30

### Introduction

**“SORAAAD Year Five: Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion”**

[Ipsita Chatterjea](#), for the SORAAAD Workshop Committee

### Part One: Canon, Canonicity, and Comparison

How do we compensate for or contextualize privileging extant texts without distorting particular expressions as definitively representative? Who gets to canonize? How do we shake up our understandings of the complex time- and space-contingent structures that generate Canon?

### 12:30- 1:35 Segment One: Canon: Anatomies and Materialities

As we work across case studies in different traditions where canon is a key component, to what end, with what compromises, and with what pivots can we productively compare canons?

[Terje Stordalen](#), University of Oslo

[Jennifer Knust](#), Boston University

[Krista Dalton](#), Columbia University - Moderator

[Terje Stordalen](#), University of Oslo

### Deconstructing Canonical Anatomies <sup>1</sup>

Conventional exegetical and dogmatic approaches tend to imply first that the biblical canon is the same across all Christian congregations and secondly that this canon is one of a kind – basically incomparable to any other phenomenon. From a more general humanities perspective, however, it is evident that human societies crystallize rules, standards, and classics in all spheres of life. These often take on the status of socially canonical collections (such as bodies of habit, action, rules, artefacts, writings, etc.) that symbolize and promote the social doxa of a given group (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu, 1993). The spheres of education and academic scholarship in current society

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<sup>1</sup>The complete set of references, or “Further Readings” are in the first appendix at the end of the program.

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clearly take part in such movement (Guillory, 1993; Gorak, 1991; Davis & Zald, 2009). These canonical formations and the “social games” they regulate are eminently powerful devices, and so should be subject to critical study. It might be advantageous to start such study by identifying potential roles and agencies of human and non-human agents (Latour, 2005) in canons that took form under conditions more supportive of the formalization of canonical power. Therefore I propose to study scriptural canonical ecologies (Stordalen & Naguib, 2015; Stordalen, 2015) as a backdrop for understanding canonicity and canonizing processes in the contemporary world.

While primarily relating to critical theory, this endeavor must also consider earlier comparative studies of scriptural canons (among which the following were particularly important: Smith, 1978; Assmann & Assmann, 1987; Levering, 1989 and there especially Folkert, 1989 Henderson, 1991; Smith, 1993; Tworuschka, 2000). To anticipate, one outcome of such a study would be a renewed sensitivity for various forms and roles of canonical collections including the profiles of their particular media (Meyer, 2013; Stordalen, 2013); canonical commentaries (with their institutions and media); the canonical community; and the canonical commentators. These and other factors, united in a given canonical ecology and empowered by the iconicity of the canonical collection in question, sometimes work to fabricate a sense of unity, even where none seems to be present. They also serve to “naturalize” the politics preferred by the canonical curators, rendering their agency largely invisible.

## Suggested Readings

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*, Chapters 3, 4, and 5, 105–136. Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. “Introduction” In *What Is Scripture? A Comparative Approach*. 1–20, Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press. 1993.

Stordalen, Terje, & Naguib, Saphinaz-Amal, [Time, Media, Space: Perspectives on the Ecology of Collective Remembering](#). In T. Stordalen & S. Naguib (Eds.), *The Formative Past and the Formation of the Future: Collective Remembering and Identity Formation*, 17-37. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2015.

Stordalen, Terje. [Canon and Canonical Commentary: Comparative Perspectives on Canonical Ecologies](#). In T. Stordalen & S. Naguib (Eds.), *The Formative Past and the Formation of the Future: Collective Remembering and Identity Formation*, 133-160. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2015.

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**Jennifer Knust** Boston University

## There is No Bible/There is a Bible: Thinking about the Materiality of Text

Now in its 28th revised edition, the *Novum Testamentum Graece* attempts to reproduce the “initial text” of the New Testament as nearly as possible, given the limits of human knowledge and the tricks time plays on manuscripts, codices, and fragments of papyrus. Yet, as text critics are well aware, the restoration of the “initial text” (once called the “original text”) is an unreachable goal, a kind of fantasy of retrieval and fulfillment in which decay and distance are overcome by human ingenuity so that the truth of the text might be fully present once again. The materiality of text—or better, texts—pushes back against any wish that the Bible can be fixed, its content settled, and its meaning(s) clarified. Pulled into human history, the codex, the papyrus, and the manuscript are momentary projections of an ever-changing now, whether at the moment of production, deposit in a garbage heap or in a monastery library, transfer as a gift from one dignitary to another, theft or “discovery” by a farmer or a manuscript hunter, or photographed for digitization and re-circulation as an artifact of the “digital humanities.” The materiality of biblical texts fragments rather than fixes the dream of a transcendent canon, inviting further reflection on the entanglement of matter and text, text and matter, neither of which escape the materiality that transforms them and in which they are transformed.

## Suggested Readings

Brakke, David. “[Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity: Towards a New History of the New Testament Canon](#).” In *Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity* (ed. Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and David Brakke), 263-280. Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 11. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012.

Knust, Jennifer. “Miscellany Manuscripts and the Christian Canonical Imaginary.” In *Ritual Matters: The Materiality of Ancient Religions*, ed. Jennifer Knust and Claudia Moser. *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, [forthcoming].<sup>2</sup>

Latour, Bruno. “The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things.” In *Matter, Materiality, and Modern Culture*, ed. Paul Graves-Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). English translation of the French original by Lydia Davis (“La clef de Berlin et autres leçons d’un amateur de sciences,” *La Découverte* [1993], 25-46. [Original Version](#). Accessed July 19, 2015.

Schillingsberg, Peter. “[Text as Matter, Concept and Action](#).” *Studies in Bibliography* 44 (1991): 31-82. Accessed July 19, 2015.

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<sup>2</sup>The workshop will indicate when the book has been published.

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1:40-2:35

## Segment Two: “There is No Author/There is Author-Function: Further Thoughts on Practices of Ascription and Canon Formation”

[Karen King](#), Harvard University

[William Arnal](#), University of Regina - Moderator

Michel Foucault begins his groundbreaking essay *What is an Author?* with the question “What does it matter who is speaking?” While those who proclaim the death of the author and the ascension of the text may not care, it is hard to imagine that most historians of the New Testament and early Christianity would show the same indifference. In this field, identifying the “real author” is generally considered crucial both to reconstructing the historical context in which early Christian literature was written and to interpreting the meaning of the text correctly. The authority of the New Testament canon is also traditionally tied to the claim of apostolic authorship (or direct lineage to an apostle). Rather than attempt (again) to identify “the real authors” of these writings, we will begin by noting that people in the ancient Mediterranean conceptualized writing and authorship differently from moderns, as is easily seen by examining their very different material technologies, writing and reading practices, and social organization. In the workshop, we will address (at least) four questions about Christians’ practices: What were the characteristics attached to attribution? How was attribution deployed, in what contexts, by whom, and to what ends? And what material-economic-social conditions or contexts enabled and constrained those deployments? How does this shift from asking “Who is the real author?” to “What is an author?” illuminate the rhetorical role of attribution in early Christian polemics and canon formation?

### Suggested readings

Brakke, David. “[Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity: Towards a New History of the New Testament Canon](#).” in *Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity* (ed. Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and David Brakke), 263-280. Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 11. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012.

Foucault, Michel. “What is an Author?” in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984, 101-120.

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King, Karen L. “Ancient Author-Function in *The Apocryphon of John* and *The Apocalypse of John*” (The article will be provided to those registered.)

N.B. Translations and original primary sources for use in this segment will be provided.

## Workshop Break 2:35-3:15

Lunch will be provided

Sponsored by the University of Regina Religious Studies Department

### Part Two: Shaking off Canonical Constraints

How has canon constrained our units of observation for research on religion? Can we use work in fields that have to contend with canon as a problematic or warping frame to shake ourselves loose of canonical presumptions? How do we do that at the level of designing, coding, reading, or notation?

3:15 -4:20

#### Segment One:

#### Canon, Collective Identities, Hegemony, and Social Regulation

Who are you calling “fringe,” “heterodox,” “apostate” or “primitive”? How is canon created? What functions as canon? How does any thing become “Canon” or canon? How has canon malformed our research design for indigenous religions, new religions, esotericism, secularism, and the paranormal in relation to “religion.” What of our understandings of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity? Or, what has been useful in restructuring work where this has been a problem?

[Kecia Ali](#), Boston University

Karen Fields, Independent Scholar

[Ipsita Chatterjea](#) - Moderator

# Study of Religion as Analytical Discipline Workshop

[Kecia Ali](#), Boston University

## Canon and Gender in the Study of the Muslim 'Tradition'

Two trends, somewhat at odds, characterize scholarship over the last decade. On the one hand, there has been a flourishing of works under the rubric of Muslim women's studies or Islamic gender studies. Dozens of significant articles and books have appeared on women's Qur'an interpretation; Muslim feminism; gender and Islamic law; and "Muslima" theology. Women engage with canonical Muslim sources and, implicitly or explicitly, discuss the parameters of that canon: Scripture only? Interpretive works? If so, which ones? Recently, there have also been secondary studies that analyze Muslim women's scholarly output—including its emergent canon and classics. On the other hand, numerous (male) scholars continue to publish on the Muslim tradition—classical and contemporary—without taking this work into account. My objective here is not complaint but query: what structures of authority and what ideas about canon—in academia, among Muslims, and within Islamic Studies—make this possible? How do notions of canonicity intersect with, trouble, and reshape scholarly fields? What productive and disruptive effects can a focus on canon bring to the study of Islam, gender, and women?

### Suggested Readings

Ahmed, Sara. "[Making Feminist Points](http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/)," <http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/> Accessed July 19, 2015.

Ali, Kecia. "[Men, Men, Everywhere](http://feminismandreligion.com/2013/11/26/men-men-everywhere-by-kecia-ali/)" <http://feminismandreligion.com/2013/11/26/men-men-everywhere-by-kecia-ali/> A fuller exploration can be found in "The Omnipresent Male Scholar." *Critical Muslim* 8, (September 2013): 61-73. Accessed July 19, 2015.

Barlas, Asma. "[Still Quarrelling over the Qur'an: Five Theses on Interpretation and Authority](http://asmabarlas.com/PAPERS/ISIM_Authority_07.pdf)," [http://asmabarlas.com/PAPERS/ISIM\\_Authority\\_07.pdf](http://asmabarlas.com/PAPERS/ISIM_Authority_07.pdf) Accessed July 19, 2015.

Hidayatullah, Aysha. "Feminist Interpretation of the Qur'an in a Comparative Feminist Setting," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 30:2, (Fall 2014): 115-129. Accessed July 19, 2015.

# Study of Religion as Analytical Discipline Workshop

**Karen Fields**

## **Race in America: An Elementary [or Elemental] Form of Religious Life**

When we Americans claim that ours is a secular society, we have in mind our right to differ according to the faiths we adhere to and enact. We conceive of those faiths as private matters subject to individual inclination and personal choice. Our Bill of Rights prohibits the making of any law respecting an establishment of religion, but the canonical shield and buckler it provides can avail nothing against religious forms that are not (and cannot be) matters of personal inclination. They permeate life in America, and in that regard are analogous to the totemic cults that were Emile Durkheim's focus in *Elementary Forms*. There, the Australians no more choose their clan or their kinship with an animal (for instance, a kangaroo) than they chose their human kin.

Nowadays, Americans often say that the phenomena we call *race* in everyday parlance is not biologically given but is “*merely* socially constructed.” Whether expressed or implied, that qualifier spotlights the howling inadequacies of a formula that invokes construction, a process, without troubling either to describe the mechanisms and moving parts of that construction or to identify the raw material used in it. Moreover, it offers no clues about where to look for “social construction,” or how to recognize it when one is looking at it *in situ*, except by invoking physical appearance. But that move explodes the not-biology part of the “social construction” formula, and it promptly opens a back door for return to race as a biological fact. Durkheim's account of Australia's totemic clans whose social constructedness is easy to see, and hard to doubt, enables us to keep that door closed.

Meanwhile, he opens another, to a thought-experiment that makes rigorous use of the plainly not-biological constructs that are the totemic clans of Durkheim's *Forms*. I propose to draw on the seen but seldom noticed ethnographic strangeness of American society in order to exhibit the continual enactment of rites that, through ritual procedures, symbolically impose race not only on people, but also on places and things.

### **Suggested Reading**

Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, “A Tour of Racecraft” in *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*, 25-74. New York: Verso 2014.

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## Segment Two: Canon and/in Science Fiction

What is Canon for those we study and what are the terms of Canonization and how are understandings of Canon wielded? What functions as canon for those we study, how do we track this and talk about it? On message boards, moderators admonish posters not to argue with each other on the basis of "Head Canon" and then ban them from discussion when they will not stop. How have people analyzed events where fights over priorities in variously asserted common canon play out? How do we chart the evidence of self-identification of elements within a canon, discern the rules of deployment and note the emergence of conflicting canons? How do we analyze these phenomena where notions of canon are very much in play, sites of extended, personal heated arguments and other forms of enactment?

[Rudy Busto](#), University of California, Santa Barbara

[Doug Cowan](#), Renison University College

[Laura Ammon](#), Appalachian State University - Respondent

[David Walker](#), University of California, Santa Barbara - Moderator

[Rudy Busto](#), University of California, Santa Barbara

### The "Nine Billion Names of God" and Science Fiction's Disloyal Canons

How can the issues of canonicity in Science Fiction (SF) illuminate the how and why of textual boundaries and the policing of ideas in the study of religion? SF explodes the question through its rude staging of disloyalties to the canons of religious traditions one and all. For example, Arthur C. Clarke's canonical Golden Age story, "The Nine Billion Names of God" (1953), forces scholars of religion to accept the proposition that millions of people believe that God has 9,000,000,000 names because Clarke fictionalized a Tibetan text that said so. Presumably most of Clarke's readers did not fact check. On the further assumption that we cannot really know how many names God uses, what does it mean that Clarke's fictionalized "theology" lives on in the minds of SF readers for over 70 years? What further disloyalties to religion and theology does SF gleefully stage in its capacious archive? How might the issue of canonicity within SF criticism and its ongoing debates over genre definition catalyze and provoke new thinking in how scholars of religion view text and scripture?

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## Suggested Readings

Arthur C. Clarke, "[The Nine Billion Names of God](http://download.org/Etext/nine_billion_names_of_god.html)" [http://download.org/Etext/nine\\_billion\\_names\\_of\\_god.html](http://download.org/Etext/nine_billion_names_of_god.html) Accessed July 19, 2015.

Darko Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition" <http://www.strangehorizons.com/2014/20141124/1suvin-a.shtml> with additional notes, reproduced from *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1979. Posted November 14, 2014. Accessed July 19, 2015.

[Doug Cowan](#), Renison University College

## Lo(o)se Canons: Rethinking the Need for Canons at All

To what purpose do we continue to entertain the analytic concept of “canon”? Certainly, in many religious traditions the notion of a canon, and often particularized interpretations of that canon, is part of the bounding structure of the tradition itself. But how does this help us understand such “unnatural narratives” as science fiction and fantasy? Or, does the very notion itself hinder us? My purpose is not to solve the hoary question of “canon,” but to raise questions that complicate its analytic utility. What happens, for example, when a beloved literary text is translated to cinema, and for millions of people the film version becomes, as it were, the “authorized version”? Put differently, what happens when people don’t read *The Hobbit* (because they’ve seen the films) or *The Game of Thrones* (because they’ve seen the television series)? What happens when the film version completely reverses central aspects of the literary text – as in the 1953 version of *The War of the Worlds*? Or, finally, what happens when an interpretive tradition emerges that is at considerable and consistent odds with the film text itself – as in the penchant to read *The Day the Earth Stood Still* as a Christian allegory?

## Suggested Readings

Cowan, Douglas E. “Seeing the Saviour in the Stars: Religion, Conformity, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.” *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009).

Cowan, Douglas E. “Intellects Vast and Cool and Unsympathetic: The War of the Worlds and the Transcendence of Modernity.” In *Sacred Space: The Quest for*

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*Transcendence in Science Fiction Film and Television*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010.

[Laura Ammon](#), Appalachian State University.

## **Respondent**

In bringing these conversations together into a larger discussion of the role of canon in the study of religions and subfields we may find an opportunity to broaden and deepen the field of religious studies. For example, one line of inquiry has to do with the various, and sometimes nefarious, purposes of creating a canon or agreeing to recognize one set of materials as more or less authoritative than others. Doug raises different perspectives on these thorny challenges through his questions about which rendition of a text is more or less 'true' than others. Another question is what does thinking about the strictures of canon bring to the conversation of how religious studies scholars theorize their data. Rudy turns the reflection from the field of science fiction studies back on the field of religious studies and illuminates how one kind of theoretical thinking might transform another. Underlying these questions is the task of thinking about what kinds of possibilities are included and excluded because of accessibility to materials or ideological commitments within bodies whose task it is (or who give themselves the task) to recognize, assess, provide suggested lists, and attempt to enforce adherence to a canon. Our challenge this afternoon will be to discuss these (and other) possibilities for canon and community formation. The goal will not necessarily be hard and binding conclusions; rather our task is to seek out new ways of thinking, to explore new theories and possibilities, to boldly go where no scholar has gone before.

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2011 - The Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline

2012 - [The Analytical Handling of Norms and Values in the Study of Religion.](#)

2013 - [Methodologies and the Analytical Study of Religion](#)

2014 - [Comparison and the Analytical Study of Religion.](#)

2015 - [Canon and the Analytical Study of Religion](#)

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Founding Co-Chair of the SORAAAD Steering Committee

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## Appendix I :

*The complete references for Terje Stordalen's talk, that are also his further readings.*

Assmann, A., & Assmann, J. (Eds.). *Kanon und Zensur: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* (Vol. Vol. 2). München: Wilhelm Fink, 1987.

Bourdieu, P. . *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991

Bourdieu, P. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993.

Davis, G. F., & Zald, M. N. Sociological Classics and the Canon in the Study of Organizations. In P. Adler (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociology and Organization Studies: Classical Foundations*, 635-646, 2009.

Folkert, K. W. The 'Canons' of 'Scripture'. In M. Levering (Ed.), *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, 69-79. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989.

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