Strauss is one excellent pathway into that conversation.

DOS: And finally: If you’re willing to speculate, what do you think Lévi-Strauss would have thought of the movie Avatar?

PFT: I haven’t seen the film but if his taste in music is anything to go by, I doubt he would have liked it.

References


Field Notes

News and Announcements in the Discipline

The *Bulletin* welcomes announcements, including call for papers, conference announcements, grant competitions, news items, and other informative updates on happenings in the discipline. Such announcements (like those below) will first appear on the *Bulletin’s* blog for timely distribution with occasional inclusion in issues of the *Bulletin*. There is no charge for announcements being included in Field Notes. Please email all announcements (of approximately five hundred words) to the editors. Our editorial staff will also be watching for interesting items to include in this section of the *Bulletin*.

Religion and the Media:

University of Sheffield Blog Announcement

The Centre for Freedom of the Media at the University of Sheffield has recently launched a new blog site on “Religion and the Media” ([http://religionmedia.wordpress.com/](http://religionmedia.wordpress.com/)), in part organized by James Crossley, professor of Bible, Culture and Politics, and Jackie Harrison, professor of Public Communication. As a collaborative project, the blog is being dedicated to updates, news, and analysis of a wide range of issues relating to religion and the media.

The Religious Studies Project: Podcasts and Resources on the Contemporary Social-Scientific Study of Religion

The Religious Studies Project, [http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/](http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/), in association with the British Association for the Study of Religions and with some support from the University of Edinburgh, was launched in January 2012. This is a website and podcasting project featuring weekly audio interviews (of around thirty minutes) with leading scholars drawn from religious studies and related fields. So far, these podcasts have featured James Cox, Armin Geertz, Carole Cusack, Donald Wiebe, and Graham Harvey, speaking on topical issues, novel approaches, and important scholars and methodologies of religious studies in the twenty-first century. Future interviews will include Grace Davie, Jay Demerath, Callum Brown, Linda Woodhead, and many more. In addition, the website also features weekly articles from postgraduate students and other scholars on the themes of the interview that week, in addition to other useful resources and articles relevant to teachers and students of religion in the modern world.

If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute please contact [editors@religiousstudiesproject.com](mailto:editors@religiousstudiesproject.com).
New Unit in the Society of Biblical Literature to Debut in Chicago

Metacriticism of Biblical Scholarship, a new unit in the Society of Biblical Literature, will debut at the 2012 annual meeting in Chicago. The unit critically evaluates suppositions in and underlying biblical scholarship, including how an explicitly non-religious approach differs from what is even now represented as historical-critical scholarship, especially when compared to other secular disciplines within the humanities (history, classical studies) and the social sciences (e.g., anthropology, sociology).

The idea for the new unit crystallized out of concerns for the pervasive theological orientation of many units in the Society of Biblical Literature. A meeting was held in New Orleans in 2009, which included Hector Avalos, Jim Linville, and Zeba Crook, who are part of the current steering committee. Other committee members are William Arnal, Randall Reed, and Rebecca Raphael. Hector Avalos of Iowa State University is the chair of the steering committee for this unit.

The unit made a formal proposal to the SBL in 2010 with the title of “Secular Biblical Criticism Consultation.” But it was not until this year that it was approved and given its current name.

The new unit will offer the following two sessions in Chicago:

Frauds, Pious Frauds and Biblical Origins
November 17, 9:00–11:30 a.m.
Room N129, McCormick Place

Presiding: Stephanie Louise Fisher, University of Nottingham
Jim Linville, University of Lethbridge, “The Royal Scam: Josiah, Joseph Smith and Believing one’s own Pious Fraud”
K. L. Noll, Brandon University, “A Portrait of the Deuteronomistic Historian at Work? How Theology Invents the History of the Bible”
Robert Price, Johnnie Coleman Theological Seminary, “Pious Fraud and Imposture in the New Testament”

Respondent: Diana Edelman, University of Sheffield

Histories of the Religion of Israel: Joint Session with Metacriticism of Biblical Scholarship, Ideological Criticism
November 18, 4:00–6:30 p.m.
Room S104a, McCormick Place

Presiding: Willi Braun, University of Alberta
K. L. Noll, Brandon University, “Inventing Yahwism: The History of Israelite Religions and the Religion of a Historical Israel”
T.L. Thompson, University of Copenhagen, “A Biblical Critique of Religion and the Figure of Yahweh in the Pentateuch”

Respondent: Mark Smith, New York University

For more information, please contact Hector Avalos (HectorAvalos@aol.com), chair of the Metacriticism and Biblical Scholarship Consultation.

SORAAAD 2012: The Analytical Handling of Norms and Values in the Study of Religion
Friday, November 16, 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Registration ($25) is for an hour long high tea service. Registration is limited and we are within sight of full capacity. (http://www.aarweb.org/meetings/annual_meeting/Current_Meeting/2012Workshops.pdf)

In our second SBL/AAR pre-conference workshop, the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline (SORAAAD) will take up how analysts of religious phenomenon observe the norms, values, and mores of the people they study and the politics of presenting such work; how we handle issues of rep-
representation and power claims, and how we remind ourselves of the importance and impacts of research ethics in our encounters with the subjects of our studies and in the training of researchers.

To enable a productive discussion centered on how these issues affect the design and implementation of our research, readings on each topic (and the workshop generally) will be the assumed point of reference for all discussions. The reading list for each section of the workshop will be staged off of the SORAAAD website (https://sites.google.com/site/religiondisciplineworkshop/discussion) and posted on September 1.

**Issue One: The Problem of “Genuine Religion” and Dominant Normative Claims**

*Speakers:* Sean McCloud (UNC-Charlotte); Katja Rakow (University of Heidelberg)

**Issue Two: Analytical Research in the Eye of a Normative Claims Storm**

*Speakers:* Randall Styers (UNC-Chapel Hill); Monica Miller (Lewis & Clark College)

**Afternoon High Tea**

Smoked salmon with cream cheese, cucumber with watercress and egg salad tea sandwiches accompanied by cookies, scones, whipped butter, assorted jams, and hot tea

**Issue Three: Human Rights and Researcher Responsibilities toward Threatened or Minority Populations**

*Speakers:* Robert Baum (University of Missouri, Columbia); Jorunn Buckley (Bowdoin College)

**Issue Four: Falsifiability, Method, Theory, and Norms**

*Speakers:* Ipsita Chatterjea (Vanderbilt University); K. Merinda Simmons (University of Alabama)

**Issue Five: A Research Ethics Policy in the Analytical Study of Religion**

*Speaker:* TBA

Business Meeting, Randy Reed, presiding

The workshop is co-sponsored by the SBL’s Ideological Criticisms of the Bible Group and the Bible and Cultural Studies Section and the AAR’s Critical Theories and Discourses on Religion Group, Cultural History of the Study of Religion Group, and the Sociology of Religion Group.