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Fundamentalism and Gender

Scripture—Body—Community

EDITED BY
ULRIKE AUGA, CHRISTINA VON BRAUN,
CLAUDIA BRUNS, AND JANA HUSMANN

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Preface

This book is the result of a conference held in December 2010 at the Humboldt University in Berlin and dedicated to the theme "Fundamentalism and Gender: Scripture—Body—Community." Scholars from Germany, Israel, South Africa, and the United States presented their work on one of three different panels focused on the following topic clusters: (1) Literalism, Religion, and Science; (2) Nation, State, and Community; and (3) Body, Life, and Biopolitics. The interdisciplinary approaches taken to the subject included perspectives from cultural history and theory, religious studies, Christian theologies, Islamic studies, history, social sciences, anthropology, comparative literature, and women and gender studies. We are pleased that most of these contributions are available here in written form.

We give special thanks to all those who took part in the conference and contributed to a productive series of discussions. For financial support of this publication we would like to thank the PhD Research Training Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge," funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). Our special thanks also go to Leah Chizek for translation and editing assistance, and to Viola Beckmann and Julia Eckhoff for assistance with both editing and formatting.

The editors,
Berlin, September 2012

Fundamentalism and Gender—An Introduction[1]

Ulrike Auga, Christina von Braun,
Claudia Bruns, Jana Husmann

Why pursue the relationship between gender and fundamentalism? Initially, at least, this question might appear to be self-explanatory when one considers the ways such topics have been present in the Western media during recent years and their significance with respect to a number of geopolitical events. Springing most readily to mind, perhaps, are the populist associations between Islamism and the oppression of women. And yet issues pertaining to Christian fundamentalism—premarital abstinence, homophobia, and conservative family values—have become a source of increasing interest in the Western public sphere over the last few years as well. Parallel to this is a renewed sense of scholarly engagement with the interrelations between religion and secularism, a critical endeavor that is focused largely on examining the Western discourse about fundamentalism itself.[2] On a meta-level, this means questioning Western myths about the secular, which subsume it into a progressive teleology that imagines secularism as a force both separate from and ultimately prevailing over religion. According to these critiques, teleological narratives of this kind fail to recognize the extent to which religious heritage and concerns continue to exercise their influence on modern Western

1. Translated from German by Leah Chizek.
2. Asad et al., *Is Critique Secular?*

societies.[3] Not least the diverse manifestations of Christian fundamentalism underscore a return of the religious in secular Western contexts.

However, the notion that secularism represents a progressive form of overcoming religion has a particularly strong effect on Western discourses about Islamic fundamentalism. Critiques that examine the stereotypical conflation of fundamentalism with "Islam" unveil a host of neo-occidental stereotypes according to which the Muslim Other embodies religious backwardness, while the West is said to represent secular progress and emancipation (from religion). Such stereotypes go together with neo-racist processes of othering and new modes of occidental self-affirmation, as has been illustrated repeatedly.[4] Authors such as Judith Butler, Saba Mahmood, Jasbir Puar, and Joan Scott examine the ambivalent position assigned to Western feminism in this Islamophobic context, in which feminism and gay rights are instrumentalized by anti-Muslim discourse and thereby permitted to feed into polarizing notions of identity and geopolitical strife.[5] With an eye toward the contemporary wars waged in the name of liberating women, Linda M. Alcoff and John D. Caputo invoke Gayatri C. Spivak's famously pithy definition of colonial legitimation strategies as "[w]hite men saving brown women from brown men"[6] in order to underscore its ongoing pertinence in today's context, where such strategies are ideologically recoded under the sign of the (anti)religious.[7] These various examinations of Western discourse about fundamentalism—about its generalizing and legitimizing functions—on the one hand illustrate how Western feminism is assimilated into hegemonic structures of power; yet on the other, they also illustrate the critical and (self-)reflexive potential resid-

3. Butler, "Sensibility of Critique," 119–20; Mahmood, "Religious Reason," 71–72; Mahmood, "Secularism"; Taylor, "Redefinition of Secularism"; Taylor, *Secular Age*. On the secularization of religious thought, see Braun, *Schwindel*, 438. On the relation between religion and secularism, see also Butler et al., *Power of Religion*; Casanova, *Public Religions*; Casanova, "Secularization"; Warner et al., *Secularism*.

4. On the previous concept of occidentalism in the context of postcolonial theory, see Coronil, "Beyond Occidentalism." On the concept of critical occidentalism in relation to islamophobia and neo-racism, see Dietze, "Okzidentalismuskritik"; Dietze et al., *Okzidentalismus*.

5. Butler, "Sensibility of Critique," 126–34; Mahmood, "Religion"; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*; Scott, *Politics of the Veil*.

6. Spivak, "Subaltern," 296.

7. Alcoff and Caputo, "Introduction," 2.

ing in the feminist production of knowledge, which calls into question the tendency of such rhetoric to view (Western) feminism as a monolithic entity. In this context, the various feminist and (self-)critical interventions alluded to here do not make religious fundamentalism their object of analysis but instead criticize the problematic creation of stereotypes and legitimizing strategies used by Western discourse about fundamentalism. Yet, as Gabriele Dietze argues in this volume, the political and secular positions behind antifundamentalism can betray a fundamentalist character of their own. In a similar way, Alcoff and Caputo speak of "secular Fundamentalism" with regard to "ethnocentric nativism" and "anti-Muslim policies of exclusion."[8]

Of course, these various feminist interventions into polarized conceptions of "Islam" versus "the West" do not obviate the need to question the unjust structures that pervade religious fundamentalisms of every shade and reconsider the complex pictures of the enemy they construct and that cut across various geopolitical factions. Thus, in present-day conflicts between Islam and the Western world—whether the latter defines itself as Christian or secular—we find again a number of potent images at work that were already in use in anti-Semitism of the nineteenth century. Some of these images are directed against Moslems, whereas others have Muslim origins and are directed against Christians or the Western world in general; still others are directed against Jews and Israel, making use of images from the anti-Semitic journal *Der Stürmer* we thought we would never see again. All of these present conflicts have in common that they are highly emotional, replace reflection by polemics and, in doing so, they also make ample usage of gender categories.

Gender Research and the Term Fundamentalism

Historically, at least, religious fundamentalism is not unilaterally associated with Islamism the way it often is today; rather, it has much more commonly been understood as a Western and Christian phenomenon: The term fundamentalism has its origins in the context of American fundamentalism, where it initially served as a means of positive self-description.[9] In the research on fundamentalism, the concept has

8. Ibid.

9. The term "fundamentalism" was coined in the 1920s by the Baptist pastor Curtis Lee Laws (1868–1946). The multivolume work *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to*

meanwhile been applied in a number of additional, largely monotheistic religious contexts, though it has also been used with reference to non-monotheistic religions such as Hinduism.[10] At the same time, the term fundamentalism has also been applied to secular phenomena.[11] This more expansive usage is not without controversy. Contentious, though, is the question as to whether—and if so, to what extent—the Protestant concept of fundamentalism should even be applied to other religions in the first place when it is historically associated with the specific criterion of (Protestant) literalism (i.e., a literal understanding of the Bible). There are, after all, alternative concepts available to describe the dogmatic, archconservative, and/or extremist tendencies of other religions—"Catholic integralism," for example, or the "extreme traditionalism" of ultra-Orthodox Judaism.[12] These objections notwithstanding, fundamentalism has since also become established as a transreligious concept, which is attested to by the diverse spectrum of applications it has received within the context of gender research.

Gender-theoretical studies focus on both specific cultural and religious dimensions, as well as on transreligious elements in their discus-

the Truth (1910–1915) represents the founding text of American Protestant fundamentalism. The first institutionalized forms of Protestant fundamentalism are linked to the founding of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919. On the history of Protestant fundamentalism in the United States see, e.g., Barr, *Fundamentalism*; Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*; DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*; Pieh, "Fight like David"; Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion*.

10. Numerous interdisciplinary anthologies and various interreligious reflections on fundamentalism testify to this. See, e.g., Bielefeld and Heitmeyer, *Politisierte Religion*; Brink and Mencher, *Mixed Blessings*; Caplan, *Fundamentalism*; Hawley, *Fundamentalism & Gender*; Jäggi and Krieger, *Fundamentalismus*; Kepel, *Revenge*; Kienzler, *Fundamentalismus*; Kindelberger, *Fundamentalismus*; Lehmann and Iqtidar, *Fundamentalism*; Marty and Appleby, *Glory*; Meyer, *Fundamentalismus*.

11. Thus, for example, Bamforth and Richards take into account the "historical originalism in American constitutional interpretation" in their definition of a "source-based fundamentalism" (Bamforth and Richards, *Patriarchal Religion*, 280). See also Crapanzano, *Serving*. Jäggi and Krieger discuss the term fundamentalisms with regard to Marxism and certain fractions of the Green Party in Germany. See Jäggi and Krieger, *Fundamentalismus*, 138–46. Prokop relates the term to right-wing policies. See Prokop, "Rechtsradikalismus." Albrecht links it to National Socialism. See Albert, *Religiöser Fundamentalismus*.

12. For a critical treatment on the use of the term fundamentalism in the Jewish context see, e.g., Harris, "Fundamentalism"; Wagner-Rau, "Suche," 20–21; on Catholicism, see Wagner-Rau, "Suche," 16–18; on Islam, see Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion*, 12–14.

sions of gender and fundamentalism. The Christian fundamentalism of the early twentieth century has thus been linked to a rearticulation of patriarchal structures. In particular are those sociological, ethnological, and historico-scientific perspectives that attribute the rise of Christian fundamentalism to the momentous changes brought about by Western modernity. These include the historical restructuring of gender relationships in the context of industrialization and urbanization, as well as the foundation of the first Western women's movement. In much the same token, historian Margaret Lamberts Bendroth has interpreted Protestant fundamentalism as a defensive reaction to the growing significance of women within evangelical organizations toward the end of the nineteenth century.[13] And in a similar vein, sociologist Martin Riesebrodt has described both Christian *and* Islamic fundamentalism as two versions of a "patriarchal protest movement" in reaction to modernity.[14] Various works of feminist theology shed additional light on the strategies of theological reasoning that has been deployed in support of fundamentalist-patriarchal structures.[15] The revival of Protestant fundamentalism since the 1970s has also been described on numerous occasions as a conservative "rollback" that goes hand in hand with sexism in its struggles against societal liberalization.[16] In the introduction to their anthology *Fundamentalism & Gender* (1994), John Stratton Hawley and Wayne Proudfoot conceptualize the meaning of gender in the context of fundamentalism as generally linked to a "conservative ideology of gender."[17] In contrast to more usual, one-sided theses positing oppression of "the woman" Judy Brink and Joan Mencher emphasize in their reader *Mixed Blessings: Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross Culturally* (1997) how women have been politically and socioeconomically integrated into different fundamentalist communities.[18] Ran-

13. Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*.

14. Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion*, 206. The term "patriarchal protest movement" (*patriarchalische Protestbewegung* in German) is also part of the book title to the German edition of Riesebrodt's *Pious Passion* and describes one of the book's main arguments. See Riesebrodt, *Fundamentalismus*.

15. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Searching*.

16. Ostendorf, "Conspiracy Nation," 163–65; Riesebrodt, "Protestantischer Fundamentalismus," 12–13.

17. Hawley and Proudfoot, "Introduction," 4.

18. Mencher, "Introduction." See also Riesebrodt, "Fundamentalismus, Säkularisierung," 83–86.

dall Balmer calls attention to the cultural-historical specificity behind the religious and social ideals of femininity informing fundamentalist constructions of gender.[19] And in her study of conservative evangelicals in the US, Dagmar Herzog demonstrates that religious conservatism does not invariably lead to the general suppression and silencing of sexuality; rather it succeeds in generating new discursive positions through its discussions of putatively right and wrong sexualities as the emergence of the evangelical "multimillion-dollar Christian sex industry" indicates.[20] With regard to conservative Catholicism and theories of New Natural Law, which serve to legitimize heteronormative constructions of gender and sexual politics, Bamforth and Richards thus see a form of fundamentalism constituted by "moral absolutes."[21]

These various examples show how questions concerning the social construction of gender and sexual politics have acquired substantial significance for research on fundamentalism in many different ways. In their various attempts to describe the exact nature of the relationship between basic religious tenets of faith, its holy writings and/or dogmas, and the establishment of sociocultural norms, such studies also arrive at different answers. For example, Hawley and Proudfoot juxtapose the literalist belief in biblical inerrancy with social themes of gender, reading them together through the lens of the abortion debate. In doing so, they establish a position that illustrates just how impossible it is to apply a *literal* reading of the Bible to this issue.[22] They ultimately reach the conclusion, "As American fundamentalism has prospered over the last two decades, its most powerful message has been one of social, not scriptural, inerrancy."[23] Rather differently, a substantial connection between gender and literalism can also be ascertained that clearly extends further than social constructions of gender. This, in any case, is one of the points driven home by Vincent Crapanzano, who describes Christian literalism as a modern "style . . . of interpretation"[24] that is coded as

19. Balmer, "American Fundamentalism."

20. Herzog, *Sex in Crisis*, blurb. The "Christian sex industry" includes in particular the wide field of Christian literature of advice on sexual behavior.

21. Bamforth and Richards, *Patriarchal Religion*, 279.

22. Hawley and Proudfoot, "Introduction," 3–4.

23. Ibid., 4.

24. Crapanzano, *Serving*, xvii.

masculine by its "pragmatic, tough minded realism."[25] By asking what role gendered forms of knowledge play in the fundamentalist context and what relationship they have to modernity and its social constructions of gender, Crapanzano's reflections on literalism as a "masculine" system of knowledge help to broaden the interpretive framework of gender-theoretical analysis.

Against this background, defined by the multifarious and mutual relationships between fundamentalism and gender, the conference "Fundamentalism and Gender: Scripture—Body—Community,"[26] on which this anthology is based on, raised a number of overarching questions: For what reasons are all (religious) fundamentalisms constituted to a substantial degree by (normalizing) definitions of sexuality, gender roles, and intergender relations? Why do sexual politics constitute a common denominator of religious fundamentalisms that otherwise radically differ? To what extent and why does the category gender play a role (or not) in definitions of fundamentalism? What understanding of religion, politics, society/community, and the individual subject are implied by different fundamentalisms and in critical discussions about them? In what way do gender and sexual politics play a role in secular criticisms of religious fundamentalism? And finally, how are forms of secular fundamentalism characterized by gender constructs and sexual politics?

As these questions show, one of the overarching research interests behind this anthology is in the analytical diversification of the term *fundamentalism* and its various intersections with the category gender. On the one hand, the focus is on the historical and current specificity of religious fundamentalisms within the three Religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). On the other hand, consideration is also given throughout to those Western secular means and methods of self-affirmation that are structured with recourse to discursive knowledge production about (religious) fundamentalism. Analytical perspectives that make use of the term fundamentalism with regard to secular phenomena are also included. Accordingly, consideration is given to what is or has been understood by fundamentalism in various disciplines and political or religious contexts.

25. Ibid., 24.

26. The conference was held in December 2010 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. For the conference website, see www2.hu-berlin.de/gkgeschlecht/fundamentalismus.

For the anthology, then, the diverse possibilities for applying the concept of fundamentalism and its various alternatives were purposefully left open. On the whole, however, this publication makes no claims to be complete or give equal weight to different forms of fundamentalism (religious and secular). If anything, an overview of the various contributions here suggests that they might better be understood as an invitation to sound out the limits and possibilities offered by the term fundamentalism and discuss related themes from the various perspectives afforded by religious and cultural studies and history, as well as by sociopolitical points of view.

In terms of content, a certain conceptual premise entailed here involves reflecting in more detail on the relationships between (religious) fundamentalism and modernity. To be sure, conflicts between religions have always existed—and especially between the three Religions of the Book. But paradoxically, these conflicts seem to have grown both in amplitude and forcefulness since large parts of the world have turned *away* from religion and toward a secular understanding of itself. Why is that? Why is religious fundamentalism on the rise in the so-called modern world? One of the answers is, of course, that fundamentalism appears where the fundaments themselves have given way; and it is true that the loss of religious fundaments can be felt as an abyss, which creates the need for a lot of new concrete and high walls intended to separate one's own group from all others. Against this background, many works have understandably sought to describe fundamentalism primarily as an antimodern phenomenon. Yet, an overarching conceptual focus for this book lies in critically questioning approaches that seek to define and understand (religious) fundamentalism as a *strict* form of antimodernism and in doing so imagine a realm of religious irrationality—approaches that are structured by simplified dichotomies between enlightenment versus religion, rationality versus irrationality, reason versus unreasonableness.[27] So even if religious fundamentalisms are frequently associated with conservatism and the rhetoric of antimodernism, they must also be understood at the same time—as will be

27. Instructive in this context is, e.g., the title of an anthology published by Thomas Meyer: *Fundamentalismus in der modernen Welt: Die Internationale der Unvernunft*. See also Hubbert, *Fundamentalismus*. In their strict antireligious attitude, the works of Richard Dawkins can also be problematized in this respect. See Dawkins, *God Delusion*. On Dawkins, see von Braun in this volume.

underscored here—as a *result* of modernity and thus deeply imbricated with modern developments. Along these same lines, Gottfried Küenzlen speaks of fundamentalism as a form of "modern antimodernism."[28] That religious fundamentalisms are by no means categorically opposed to modernity, science, and new technologies is evident not least of all in their use of modern media, a fact that has been repeatedly highlighted.[29]

The interconnections between religious fundamentalism and modernity also become particularly apparent in the case of fundamentalist gender ideals: while the impression is often aroused in the context of (religious) fundamentalism that prevailing, normative notions of gender should be timeless constants independent of culture, the universal results of divine creation, they can—in contrast to such a-historical assumptions—only be understood in historical hindsight against the rise of modernity. For in the Western context, the cultural construction of a naturalized sexual dichotomy and the heteronormative nuclear family are the results of discursive processes engendered in bourgeois society—the outcome of a historical interplay between scholarly, cultural, and economic discourses and societal practices of modernity.[30]

By challenging both historical and ongoing relationships between science and religion, as well as between secular and religious thought, this anthology focuses on interdependent structures of modern religious and secular knowledge productions about gender and asks how this intrinsically intersects with other modern/secular categories of power and difference, most notably race and nation. The book therefore uses gender and religion as analytical and intersectional categories that embrace both sociopolitical and symbolic levels of analysis. It furthermore gives rise to an analysis of gender as a category of knowledge in context of both religious and secular knowledge production and their intersections. On the epistemic level, this implies asking to what extent modern religious and secular claims to objectivity not only diverge but also correlate.

In the next section, we would like to summarize the basic conceptual concerns behind the three thematic foci and chapter divisions in the present volume—"Literalism, Religion, and Science," "Nation,

28. Küenzlen, "Fundamentalismus," 53, 56.

29. Tibi, *Islamischer Fundamentalismus*; Marty and Appleby, *Glory*; Riesebrodt, "Protestantischer Fundamentalismus."

30. Frevert, *Mann und Weib*; Hausen, "Polarisierung."

State, and Community," and "Body, Life, and Biopolitics"—consolidating some of the points mentioned above. We shall then follow up by describing the individual contributions in more detail.

Literalism, Religion, and Science

Thematizing the connections between literalism, religion, and science is indebted, firstly, to the observation that religious literalism, meaning the belief in the literal truth of the holy scriptures, constitutes one of the usual definitional criteria for religious fundamentalism. Accordingly, from a gender-theoretical perspective the relationships between literalism and social constructions of gender are subject to negotiation. Previous research has thus devoted itself to breaking down and contextualizing literalist interpretations of individual passages from the Bible and the Koran through the varied lenses of theology, social politics, the history of religion, and cultural history.[31] This includes critical studies of fundamentalist positions on a variety of sociocultural norms, adjacent attempts to find an appropriate religious rationale for these positions, and the various discrepancies that can accompany literalist claims to truth (see Crapanzano in this volume).

Simultaneously, this focus on belief in the written word draws on analyses from both cultural and religious studies dedicated to understanding the ways gender is encoded in both the oral and written traditions of knowledge associated with the three Religions of the Book.[32] Beyond the religious context, however, literalism also poses questions about the extent to which religious and secular forms of loyalty to the written word and literal hermeneutics may even be compared. Making the analogy between science and religion, Erich Geldbach has described (Christian) literalism as a factual way of reading the Bible, a practice he associates with a so-called "theology of facts."[33] In contrast to this purely allegorical connection between science and religious literalism, Christina von Braun's article pursues a more concrete comparison of the religious and scientific-secular belief in the written word, which she

31. Balmer, "American Fundamentalism"; Balmer, *Kingdom*; Mernissi, *Veil*; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Searching*.

32. Ahmed, *Border Passage*; Braun and Mathes, *Verschleierte Wirklichkeit*.

33. Geldbach, *Fundamentalismus*, 45.

illuminates in more detail for a Western context in terms of its religious and cultural history.

Basically, the conflicting relationships between literalism, religion, and science imply a need to examine literalist claims to objectivity more closely and ask questions about the ambivalent relationship between (religious) literalism and (secular) science. While religious literalism is usually perceived as being separate from modern secular science, religion has still made a number of attempts to appropriate science for specific agendas, as the much discussed concept of Creationism continues to demonstrate. And while literalist recourse to holy scriptures is often depicted as both a salutary return to fundamentals and a turning away from modern societies perceived to be in crisis, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and modernity is on the whole far more ambivalent than this (see Riesebrodt in this volume).Examining literalist claims to objectivity also entails problematizing religious reasons and explanations of secular (scientific) configurations of knowledge. At issue is the need to clarify the cultural and temporal specificities that inform literalist knowledge production, as can be seen in the case of historical literalist attempts to justify modern anti-Semitic and racist knowledge bases (see Husmann in this volume).

A final topic relevant to the relationship between literalism, religion, and science consists in the ways scholarly work in religious studies access the holy scriptures. With this, the various lines of conflict between different hermeneutic traditions and textual understandings become the subject of negotiation, as Angelika Neuwirth demonstrates in her discussion of Western-European and Muslim Qur'ānic scholars.

Nation, State, and Community

Most obviously, the concerns comprising the focus on "Nation, State, and Community" result from nationally specific versions of different religious fundamentalisms. For example, the peculiarities of fundamentalist religious movements in the US, Iran, and Israel have all been examined in terms of the local (socio)political developments in these countries during the 1970s and 80s.[34] Likewise, the gender-political as-

34. Marty and Appleby, *Glory*; Much and Pfeifer, *Bruderzwist*; Kepel, *Revenge*; Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion*. For further historical and national contexts see, e.g., Gaier, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*; Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming*; Rausch, *Zionism*; Schied,

pects of fundamentalism have been linked to these individual national contexts.[35] At the same time, however, we find transnational commonalities between different fundamentalisms, for example their manifestation as "patriarchal protest movements," as already mentioned above.[36]

All in all, the creation of fundamentalist movements poses essential questions about the cultural and political processes behind religious community-building. At issue is the extent to which gender plays a role in this context, on a symbolic as well as a social level. Contrary to the static and ideal notions advanced by fundamentalist communities, it therefore seems necessary to highlight the historical evolution and elasticity that ultimately inform religious constructions of community and their various depictions of gender. Micha Brumlik's article on the historical development of the matrilineal principle in Judaism offers an illustrative example of this fundamentally fluid character and the historico-cultural contextuality of religious community-building.

Yet another cluster of themes connected to questions concerning fundamentalism, nation, and community deals with issues of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and/or racism, as well as religious anti-Judaism and anti-Islamism within religious fundamentalisms. Here, the interrelationship between religious and secular constructions of community comes to the fore, which in turn also necessitates considering the gendered dynamics behind such group formations. In addition to this, the nexus between nationalism and racism also touches on the matter of secular fundamentalisms. This includes those approaches that regard nationalism itself *as* fundamentalism.[37] In this context, for example, even National Socialism has been described as a form of "[r]eligious fundamentalism" on account of its various sacral elements.[38] In order to

Nationalismus. On the relationship between nationalism and fundamentalism, see also Lintl, *Fundamentalism*; Marx, "Fundamentalismus"; Mehmet, *Fundamentalismus*; Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism*.

35. In this regard, many scholars point to the connections between Protestant fundamentalism and the American New Right movement in reaction to gender-political liberalizations. See Herzog, *Sex in Crisis*; Ostendorf, "Conspiracy Nation"; Riesebrodt, "Protestantischer Fundamentalismus." On the differences between evangelical and militant right-wing fundamentalist groups like "Christian Identity," see Zickmund, "Verschwörungstheorien."

36. Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion*.

37. Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus*; idem, *Moderner Fundamentalismus*.

38. Albert, *Religiöser Fundamentalismus*.

break down the connections between nationalism, racism, and secular fundamentalism, Claudia Bruns' article examines the Christian-Jewish dialogue during the Weimar Republic era and looks at the underlying correlations between national/nationalist, rascist, and religious constructions of community.

Lastly, questions about nationalism and racism also become relevant to critical reflections on Western discourse about fundamentalism and are examined through the theoretical framework of a Critical Occidentalism (*Kritischer Okzidentalismus*).[39] Here, the Western modes of self-affirmation and homogeneous images of community generated through secular forms of knowledge about religious Islamic fundamentalism are themselves subject to scrutiny. Considered through the lens of theories of racism this leads to a number of questions: To what extent are new manifestations of "neo-racism"[40] relevant in this context? How are the categories of culture and religion bound in newly essentializing ways? And lastly, in what ways are traditional Western self-understandings of "race" and "ethnos" projected onto religion? Examining occidentalist notions of community and related sexual-political discourses in the contemporary German context, Gabriele Dietze offers fresh insights into the extent to which occidentalist antifundamentalism can itself be analyzed as a form of (political) fundamentalism. Belonging to this same cluster of themes are analyses that focus on the imagination of communities and regulatory state practices brought about by Western political discourses of a "war on terror." Through recourse to the idea of homonationalism, Jasbir Puar has investigated the sexual-political dimensions of this political discourse in two respects: on the one hand, with a view to the political absorption of queer politics in the context of American nationalism, and on the other with a view to sexualized stereotypes of the fundamentalist Other.[41] Puar's article here pursues the idea of homonationalism and instrumentalizations of sexual-political discourses with reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

39. Dietze, "Critical Whiteness Theory"; Dietze et al., *Okzidentalismus*.

40. Balibar, "Neo-Racism."

41. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

Body, Life, and Biopolitics

In the context of fundamentalism, the thematic focus on "Body, Life, and Biopolitics" encompasses a broad field of questions related to social practices normalizing the individual body, the ways the collective bodies of the self and other are imagined, and the various biopolitical regulations centering on both the body and the concept of life.

Belonging to this particular constellation of themes is a classic field of feminist intervention, namely the struggle with culturally-sanctioned powers of control over the (female) body. Accordingly, connected to this are the study of religious-fundamentalist strategies for legitimizing gender hierarchies and the critical illumination of cultural bans and precepts regulating life conduct. This also leads to questions concerning the discrepancies evident between religious imperatives and culturally passed-down practices of hierarchization (see Hassim in this volume). Additional questions concern lastly the various discrepancies between (female) religious figures, metaphors, symbols, and social constructions of gender, questions that were given early emphasis within the field of religious studies.[42]

A closer examination of the category of the body furthermore ensues against the background of numerous gender-theoretical works that attempt to sound out the relationship between the individual and the collective body in more detail: this includes research in the fields of cultural studies, religious studies, and history, all of which investigate the metaphorical and allegorical gendering of collective bodies[43] and/or analyze how the body is imagined in sexualized, racist, and anti-Semitic discourse.[44] An additional point of theoretical approach to the body lies in the ways Queer Theory and related methodologies critically reflect the cultural production of bodily norms that characterize the heterosexual matrix.[45]

42. See, e.g., the classic reader by Bynum et al., *Gender and Religion*; Bynum, "Introduction."

43. Lanwerd, "Religion"; Wenk, *Versteinerte Weiblichkeit*.

44. Braun, "Feind"; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*; Mosse, *Image of Man*. For its part, the "white body as feminist fetish" has also been subject to critical reflections on race. See Lorey, "Körper."

45. Butler, "Bodies." On the scientific history behind bipolar body images, see Laqueur, *Making Sex*.

Against this backdrop, the most diverse inroads appear for further possible research on fundamentalism. This means asking, among other questions, what religious, secular, and organic metaphors of the body are invoked by fundamentalist constructs of the self and the other, as well as what interrelations play a role between the individual body, the collective body, and the (holy) body of text. By examining the normative processes that serve to engender, (de)sexualize, and heteronormalize the body, questions arise over religious-fundamentalist efforts to justify a normative model of the (two) sexes, together with attendant symbolic and sociopolitical functions. Applying the methods of "queering" in this context, Lisa Isherwood examines theological-patriarchal and fundamentalist Christian approaches to interpreting the bodies of the sexually marginalized as well as the symbolic body of the earth itself and contemplates both the underlying and alternative conceptions of "life."

An additional thematic constellation centers on the relationship between fundamentalism, the concept of life, and biopolitical strategies of regulation, which includes questions about the appropriate use of new technologies. At stake are fundamental questions about the way religions distinguish between lives that can be lived, are worth preserving, and are capable of procreation. Where the question is a matter of defining life, religious-fundamentalist positions are mostly perceived as "anti-emancipatory" ones that adopt contrarian attitudes toward the technological advances offered by science; this figures into debates over cloning, stem cell research, artificial insemination, and abortion, but also into more secular controversies over issues like kinship, (gay) marriage, and adoption rights. Frequently, too, (religious) conflicts over the status and definition of life remain ethical rather than becoming biopolitical in nature. In contrast to this, however, one can also consider exactly the opposite scenario—in other words, the extent to which religious fundamentalisms indeed regulate the sexual politics of gender and the body. This requires close examination of fundamentalist influences on scientific theory and practice of the sort undertaken by Carmel Shalev in her study of ultra-Orthodox interpretations of Jewish *halakah* and their implications for the practice of reproductive medicine in Israel.

On another level, the concept of human life can also assist with the project of theorizing the relationship between theological-fundamentalist regulations on human life on the one hand, and resistive subject

formations on the other. Thus, in her proposal of a "critical bio-theology," Ulrike Auga negotiates various political and philosophical concepts of power, knowledge, and agency in order to conceptualize the religious sphere itself as a possible site of resistance—one that is equally capable of permitting new, temporary, and performative concepts of life.

If the individual contributions to this volume have already been touched upon in part above, we would now like to introduce them as such by summarizing their basic arguments.

Article Overview

Section 1: Literalism, Religion, and Science

Christina von Braun opens the first section with her article "Religion and Science—An Opposition?" Here, von Braun reveals a number of structural similarities pertinent to all forms of fundamentalism—be they of religious or secular origin. She puts special emphasis on one characteristic in particular: the manner in which the written word, especially the sacred texts, are confounded with historical truth and reality. This "literalism"—the act of taking the printed word for reliable truth—has already been pointed to by other scholars. Christina von Braun additionally demonstrates that this phenomenon is closely related to specific historical changes prompted by the alphabets—the writing system that became the basis for all three "Religions of the Book." And yet the Enlightenment also proclaimed a deep belief in the written word—a factor to reflect upon when we think of modern fundamentalism.

By contrast, *Martin Riesebrodt* focuses on the concept of fundamentalism solely in the context of religion. Taking his departure point from its historical status as a Protestant phenomenon, Riesebrodt theorizes the extent to which fundamentalism can apply to a diverse spectrum of religious groups and cultural contexts. Gender and fundamentalism are understood as complementary categories of social and historical analysis. His article underscores the structural similarity between different fundamentalisms, which then becomes visible through processes of centralization and the patriarchal regulation of gender relations and sexual moralities. At the same time, Riesebrodt also pleads for a differentiated view that considers the diversity of cultural gender-regimes and critically assesses ideal-typical characterizations against concrete manifestations of fundamentalism.

Vincent Crapanzano brings an ethnological perspective to his study of various strains of Protestant fundamentalism in the United States. His article "Jesus Enters the Battle of the Sexes" takes a critical look at contemporary forms of biblical counseling, evangelical self-help literature (best-selling books of advice on marital relations and sexual behavior), and the practice of sanctification. Crapanzano stresses the significance accorded to Jesus as a mediating figure in fundamentalist gender relations and problematizes the inherent hierarchization and mechanization of sexual relationships. At the same time, his analysis takes into account literalism's underlying modes of interpretation and spells out the discrepancies that arise between the interpretive claims of literalism and fundamentalist paraphrasings of Holy Scripture.

Jana Husmann also focuses on forms of Protestant fundamentalism but examines it in the historical context of Germany during the 1930s. She analyzes the various interrelationships between fundamentalism, literalism, and anti-Semitism, which are then exemplified by the German *Bibelbund* (Bible Confederation). Beginning with the contemporary conflicts centered on the Old Testament's status as Christianity's Jewish legacy, Husmann discusses how the Bibelbund positioned itself toward National-Socialist racial ideology. In doing so she inquires into the ways religion is racialized while secular categories are sacralized, processes that become potently effective in the context of religious anti-Semitism. This is accompanied by reflections on the intersections of religion, race, nation, and gender, which pertain to concrete forms of literalist knowledge production on the one hand and affect both literalism as a system of knowledge and its ambivalent relationship to science on the other.

Starting with the observation that "the West" and "Islam" are often presented as two distinct monolithic blocks, both in the Western public sphere and in the scholarly field of Qur'ānic studies, *Angelika Neuwirth* investigates the conflicts and hermeneutical barriers that persist between Western European and Muslim Qur'ānic scholars. Throughout, she thematizes the present-day conflicts that give rise to different scriptural understandings of the Qur'ān and its genesis: these include juxtaposing notions of a transcendent *ur-schrift* or protoscript on the one hand, and those conceiving of the Qur'ān as a failed "imitation of the Bible" on the other. Neuwirth reveals the historical development of such antagonisms. Unlike narrower, Eurocentric interpretations, she makes a case for reintegrating the Qur'ān and Early Islam into the epoch of Late Antiquity,

thereby stressing the common theological and cultural history of the three monotheistic religions and their "scriptural communities."

Section 2: Nation, State, and Community

Section 2, "Nation, State, and Community," opens with *Micha Brumlik's* article "Belonging to Halakhic Judaism: On the Sense of Matrilineal Descent." Concentrating on how, when, and why the matrilineal principle of Jewish descent developed as it did, Brumlik traces the historical lines and breaks in the development of Jewish identity formation and in the historically variable criteria that define Judaism and being Jewish following the First Temple's destruction in 587 BCE. With recourse to biblical and Talmudic sources, Brumlik discusses the "ethnogenesis"—the relationship between Jewish religion and ethnicity—and demonstrates why this should be understood as the result of both exile and anti-Semitism. The implementation of the matrilineal principle during the rabbinic era can be understood as an effect of internal political strife during the period of Early Judaism. Brumlik's commentary on the complex historical processes of Jewish belonging thus point to the paradox constituted by matrilineal geneaology and legal restrictions on women, a paradox that becomes operative through a series of historical episodes.

Claudia Bruns considers the extent to which racist elements in the Christian-Jewish dialogue at the start of the twentieth century can be read as a sign of fundamentalist tendencies and asks how tightly the connections between fundamentalism, racism, and gender can be ascertained here. On the basis of a Christian-Jewish dispute between Hans Blüher and Hans-Joachim Schoeps, published in 1933 under the title "Streit um Israel," the author drives home just how deeply the categories of race, gender, and national identity penetrated religious discourse at the end of the Weimar Republic and contributed to its fundamentalization. In addition to this, the close imbrication of religious and racial discourses in the present day is also revealed, laying bare how the German nation is created and conceived anew as an ethno-racial unity primarily through a strategic focus on religious differences.

In her article on "Antifundamentalism as Fundamentalism," *Gabriele Dietze* directs her attention to forms of secular political fundamentalism, exemplified on the one hand, she says, by the anticommunism of the McCarthy era in the United States during the 1950s and on the

other by contemporary anti-Islamic discourse in Germany. Dietze's basic thesis is that antifundamentalist political agitation—whether against Maoism and/or communism as a kind of secular fundamentalism, or Islamist fundamentalism and "Islam as culture"—exhibits characteristic features of fundamentalism in its own right. In the process, Dietze underscores the relevance of sexual politics to antifundamentalist discourse and shows how German anti-Islam discourse makes connections between gender constructs, neo-racism, and occidentalist visions of nation and community.

Jasbir Puar devotes her attention to forms of homonationalism and the so-called "pinkwashing" she claims are practiced by the state of Israel. Her concern is to work out the complex imbrication of sexual politics, specifically with regard to gay and lesbian rights, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Taking up the example of the "Brand Israel" campaign, Puar pursues the thesis that Israeli self-images of "gay-friendliness" become politically intrumentalized: according to this, dualistic constructs are used to stage Israel as gay-friendly, progressive, and Westernized while making Islamic nations appear backward, repressive, and homophobic—images that correspond to stereotypes about Islamist fundamentalists. The title of her article, "Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking About the Sexual Politics of Israel," furthermore alludes to the debates that preceded the conference and were spurred largely by Puar's original lecture title—"Beware Israeli Pinkwashing"—as well as another article she wrote for *The Guardian* on "Israel's gay propaganda war," which appeared in July of 2010. This was the context in which Puar was compelled to contend with accusations of anti-Semitism. Contrary to her depiction of events, however, it was not the organizers of the conference who accused Puar of anti-Semitism but some of the doctoral students from the PhD Research Training Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge," among whom these claims were also quite controversial. The purportedly anti-Semitic elements of Puar's critical view of Israel were also claimed by certain activist groups in Berlin and were discussed critically in some sectors of the Berlin public sphere. The conference organizers' attempt to communicate the ensuing controversy to Puar prior to the conference left her understandably confused due to the short notice she received and the unclear formulation of the complaint. Responding to the accusations of anti-Semitism, Puar argues in her article for a distinction between criticisms of Israeli state practice

and anti-Semitism as a form of racism directed against Jewish people. While the organizing committee had already rejected the accusations of anti-Semitism against Puar prior to the actual conference, her critique of Israel nonetheless remained contentious. In an interview, for example, Christina von Braun positioned herself against Puar's argument in the *Guardian* article. Puar interpreted this interview as well as the additional events leading up to the conference as the dynamic between "Citation and Censorship." Her theses that the Israeli state practices "pinkwashing" as well as the initial discussions about it consequently led to controversies at the conference. These debates implied mainly two problematic aspects of handling the subject: Firstly, and generally, they revealed the difficulty of discussing the Middle East conflict in a German context without resorting to polemics; and secondly, the conference discussions disclosed the limitation of those identity politics that confine questions of power and hegemony solely to (post-)coloniality and leave little or no space for more nuanced political views of the Middle East conflict, nor for an analytical differentiation of "whiteness" and "white hegemony" that would include critical reflections on anti-Semitism. More complex attempts to consider and differentiate between historical and contemporary power relations, different experiences of violence, and intermediate positions within the framework of (identity) politics remain challenging, to be sure—especially, though not exclusively, in discussions about the conflict in the Middle East.

Section 3: Body, Life, and Biopolitics

The third section, "Body, Life, and Biopolitics," begins with *Lisa Isherwood's* article "Queer Theologies and Sacred Bodies." Isherwood looks at bodies that resist patriarchal and fundamentalist Christian theologizing. She gives an outline of fundamentalist monotheistic eschatology and its absurd endeavor to "strip the planet of all its resources"—intended to clear space for the messiah's act of total re-creation—and also considers the ways these ideas have influenced both policy making and various processes of "othering." Isherwood draws on Marcella Althaus-Reid's notion of the Bi/Christ, as well as on the ways transpeople—transgendered individuals, transsexuals, and transvestites—challenge the reigning gender orthodoxy. She proposes a eucharistic love that has no investment in the heteronormative "ar-

rangement" of body parts. Rendering what could be termed a "queer cosmology," Isherwood traces the shift in metaphors of the earth as a body or organism in order to reread the creation narrative through a decolonizing lens—one that leads away from an all-powerful father who instantaneously "zaps" out the world and toward a subtler, more enticing ethic of "chaos seeking enfleshment" characterized by emanations, *energeia*, and *dynamis*—in other words, the buried treasures of a post-Augustinian Christian tradition. Isherwood thus aims to send a shock wave through fundamentalist, dualist theologies, shattering their manifold alliances with neoliberalism.

Carmel Shalev brings together great expertise in medical, cultural, political, and religious scholarship in her complex study in order to discuss the fundamentalist, patriarchal, and ultra-Orthodox views informing various halakhic concepts of fertilization and reproduction. Israel, of course, is the example of choice where progressive policies toward reproduction and liberal application of new biomedical technologies are concerned. Shalev traces the correlations between medical progress and a national sense of mission by examining religious responses to and reconceptualizations of "health," "healing," and the biblical command to "be fruitful and multiply." She focuses on the biblical prohibition against "wasting seed," arguing that this obsession with sperm results in a preference for medical technologies that are ultimately more intrusive and more drastically violate women's bodies. Shalev demonstrates several cases in which restrictions enforced by halakhic kinship laws interfere with contemporary law and policy making and dictate how concrete clinical practice affects ultra-Orthodox couples—namely by engendering a form of "postmodern" fundamentalism that instrumentalizes women's bodies.

Shafinaaz Hassim skillfully reframes the traditional but objectifying saying that "women are diamonds," referring to her study *Daughters are Diamonds: When Honour Precludes Reflexivity* (2007). Setting her findings against the background of "honor killings" in Pakistan, Hassim draws on case studies featuring biographical narratives from six women in Johannesburg's Indian Muslim community. She focuses on the correlations between patriarchal structures, "honor," "shame," and "self-reflexivity." Throughout her exploration of these themes, a drastic imbalance becomes apparent in attempts to reconcile rereadings of religious texts (rereadings that understand the Qur'ān as "egalitarian" and "antipatriarchal") with juridical forms of reorganization on the one hand, and with

the deeply inscribed social customs in countries with ties to Islamic faith and culture on the other. Hassim maps out the "loss of reflexivity" in honor- and shame-based social constructs by addressing their reliance on "terror," "stigma," and the "internalization of values." The biographical data she presents forms a continuum revealing both pressure to conform as well as more liberating experiences of self-realization—in any case, each of these women's lives are predominantly determined by a tight, visceral, and efficacious network of social control.

Ulrike Auga addresses the "troubled relationship" that queer, leftist, feminist, and other critical theories have with "religious" and theological discourses, which they deem conservative and restrictive. Combining religiopolitical theory and political theology, Auga aims to undermine the artificial dichotomy between the "secular" and "religious," which has only served to aggravate reinvigorated strains of fundamentalism worldwide. She demonstrates how the secular—no less than the religious—must be understood as a construct and category of knowledge that pits the "rational, scientific, enlightened, non-believing" against the "oppressive," "terrorist," and "obsolete" elements that are said to characterize (religious) faith. Auga looks at theoretical contributions by Spivak, Mbembe, and Puar, as well as their various reappropriations of fractured and marginalized bodies, the bodily language of suicide, and acts of self-destruction versus the (creation of a) Western Foucauldian subject. At the same time, however, she claims that the various theorists she discusses themselves fail to escape the visible configurations of agency and subject formation offered by Western discourse and unfortunately refuse to sufficiently attend to the religious aspects of their argument. Auga's project, a critical biotheology engaged in a critique of power and epistemic violence on the level of human life itself, also seeks to opens spaces for subject formation and agency, particularly within the religious sphere. Together with Saba Mahmood, Auga opts for new forms of life, unusual temporal alliances, and nonunivocal contextual performances—an array of future-oriented projects dedicated to human flourishing.

Conclusion of Conference Discussions

Looking back on the conference "Fundamentalism and Gender: Scripture—Body—Community," it can be concluded that the various contributions and the ensuing discussions about them resulted in a

number of complex insights into the relationships between gender and fundamentalism as well as the interconnections between religious and secular traditions of thought, and encouraged critical reflections on the very concept of fundamentalism. Moreover, the broadening of the latter term to include secular fundamentalisms underscores how a strict dichotomy between religion and secularism falls short when thematizing the phenomenon. At the same time, the conference discussions also betrayed some potentially problematic issues, which could be seen partly in the attempts to extend the concept of fundamentalism beyond a religious framework: in any case, the claims that fundamentalism potentially loses much of its analytical function when applied to secular forms of knowledge will surely remain a controversial point for future discussions.

The impulse behind the conference—to reflect on the ways gender and fundamentalism mutually constitute and reinforce one other—was productively examined and discussed with an eye to the complex connections that ensue between religion, gender, sexuality, nation(alism), anti-Semitism, and racism. The most controversial discussions—those dealing with the Middle East conflict—also revealed the need within gender research to more strongly consider the various theoretical connections between postcolonialism, anti-Semitism research, Queer Theory, and Queer Politics in order to work against the possible pitfalls of one-sided intersectional research and simplistically political polarizations. In this regard, the conference not only delivered numerous insights into the relationship between gender and fundamentalism but also stimulated the kind of critical and controversial impulses necessary to further the ongoing development of gender-theoretical theories of intersectionality and interdependencies.

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