

**2019 ESITIS Conference Programme**

***THE HOPE AND DESPAIR  
OF RELIGIONS:***

**Exploring the Nexus of Theory and Praxis**

24-27 April, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina



**WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 2019**

LOCATION: Faculty of Islamic Studies, Ćemerlina 54, 71000 Sarajevo

13:00-15:00 **Registration**

15:00-15:30 **Opening session**

**Anne Hege Grung**, Associate professor in Interreligious Studies and Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo and president of ESITIS

**Zuhdija Hasanović**, Dean of the Faculty Islamic of Studies, University of Sarajevo

15:30-17:30 **Plenary Session I: Thinking Beyond Eurocentric and Traditional Paradigms of Religion**

In her talk "Understanding religion in modern Europe" Grace Davie examines the place of religion in modern Europe from two points of view. The first part outlines the factors that must be taken into account if we are to understand Europe from within. These include: cultural heritage, the historic churches, a shift from obligation to consumption, new arrivals, and secular reactions. The second part places Europe in a global context, recognizing that the relative secularity of Europe is an exceptional case in global terms. It asks not what Europe is but what it is **not**.

Grace Davie's contribution provides a background for paper proposals to this session. We would like to encourage speakers to contribute with themes beyond the mainstream of interreligious and intercultural academic work. These could include: postcolonial approaches to analyses of religion, education and society, in Europe or other continents; innovative studies on the self-understandings and functions of religions; overcoming the traditional understanding of religion in opposition to secularity; interreligious and dialogical approaches contributing to a comprehensive understanding of religions (focusing beyond Christianity to include other religions, like Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, or Alevism, and the dialogue between them) with both academic/disciplinary and lived religious references.

Chair: **Wolfram Weisse**, University of Hamburg

Keynote speaker:

**Grace Davie** is professor emeritus in the Sociology of Religion at the University of Exeter, UK. Her latest publications include *Religion in Britain: A Persistent Paradox* (Wiley-Blackwell 2015) and *Religion in Public Life: Levelling the Ground* (Theos 2017). In addition she was a co-ordinating lead author for the chapter on religion in *Rethinking Society for the 21st Century, Volume 3: Transformations in Values, Norms, Cultures* (CUP 2018), which is the report of the International Panel on Social Progress (see <https://www.ipsp.org/>).



Respondent: **Nicholas Adams**, Professor in Philosophical Theology, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham

17:30-18:00 Coffee break

18:00-19:30 **Round table: Interreligious Education for Peace**

In 2017, a unique joint master's study program began in Sarajevo, entitled Interreligious Studies and Peacebuilding, implemented by three theological faculties: the University of Sarajevo's Catholic Theological Faculty, the Faculty of Islamic Sciences, and the Orthodox Theological Faculty St. Basil of Ostrog (in Foča, as part of the University in East Sarajevo). This program seeks to provide a unique opportunity for a clear positioning of religions as sources and catalysts of peace, and for religious institutions to profile themselves as advocates of a more just and better society, which remains a key concern in this postwar, ethnically homogenized context. This roundtable will give a space to learn about the challenges and successes of this program and to compare notes with other, similar study programs in Europe.

Chair: **Julianne Funk**, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Athens

## Roundtable participants:



**Darko Đogo**, Assistant Professor, Department of Systematic Theology, St. Basil of Ostrog Orthodox Theological Faculty, University of East Sarajevo



**Emina Frljak**, MA student of Pedagogy and MA student of Interreligious Studies and Peacebuilding, University of Sarajevo



**Samedin Kadić**, Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo



**Pavle Mijović**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and vice Dean of Science, Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Sarajevo



**Srđan Vidačković**, MA student of Interreligious Studies and Peacebuilding, University of Sarajevo, and Project Officer, Catholic Relief Services

19:30

**Reception**

## THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2019

LOCATION: Catholic Theological Faculty, Josipa Štadlera 5, 71000 Sarajevo

9:00-10:30 **Plenary Session II: The Apocalyptic Dimension of Religious Traditions: Inclusive and Exclusive Visions**

The apocalyptic encompasses a broad range of beliefs, actions, and social processes centered on cultural disjunctures concerned with “the end of the world” and thereafter. ‘Apocalypse’ in its original usage signified a radical change in consciousness, a disclosure which potentially facilitates action to transform the self and social relations. Apocalyptic texts may connote a future cataclysmic reckoning for humanity, the collapse of civilization and perhaps even annihilation of all life. However, usually apocalyptic texts are not so much about the End, but about the Present Crisis. Religious imagination may provide hope and conviction that God is preparing for us a place with no tears, and no brokenness – or it may promise a final battle between the powers of good and evil. Yet, who are included and who are excluded in this vision of ultimate destiny remains an open question and there is little consensus regarding the nature and sequence of events that will occur prior to an apocalyptic unravelling of the present order of life. The panel will study contemporary apocalyptic discourses: is there hope for peace, is there hidden a way out of (mindless) violence? Can apocalypticism be tamed and pacified?

Chair: **Anne Kull**, University of Tartu

Keynote speakers:

**Muhamed Jusić** is Media Advisor to the Reis ul Ulema of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has a degree in Islamic Theology from the Department of Apologetics of the Islamic University in Medina, Saudi Arabia. He has also worked as a columnist for the Islamic newsletter Preporod, and as a foreign affairs correspondent for the Sarajevo-based magazine Start. His articles have been published in Takvim and Novi muallim of the Islamic Community Riyasat, in Democracy and Security in Southeastern Europe of the Atlantic Initiative, as well as in well known regional magazines such as Dnevni Avaz, Oslobođenje (Sarajevo), Danas (Belgrade) and H-alter (Zagreb). Jusić is the author of numerous books, including Mecca and Medina and Islamic Movements. He is actively engaged in interfaith dialogue and peace-building projects in his local community and the region.



### *The Apocalyptic Dimension of Religion in Post-normal Times*

Long ago it was said that people will find in religion or holy texts - be it the Bible, Quran or another - what they want to find. The times that we live in define our understanding of faith and the real question is ‘to what extent is our world being shaped by religious beliefs or vice versa?’ In an attempt to describe the time we live in, Ziauddin Sardar talks about ‘post-normal times’. Sardar describes this present as ‘an in-between period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones have yet to be born, and very few things seem to make sense’. Muhamed Jusić will speak about a different apocalyptic dimension of religion taking in consideration the presumption that ‘many methods of futures and foresight seldom incorporate pluralism and diversity intrinsically in their frameworks, and few, if any, emphasize the dynamic and merging nature of future possibilities, or highlight the ignorance and uncertainties we constantly confront’. He will debate about the reasons why apocalyptic visions of the end of the world are becoming more attractive to people living in a complex, uncertain and post-factual world.

**Jakob Wirén** is a Reader of Systematic theology, specialized in interreligious relations with a focus on the dialogue with Islam and Judaism. Dr Wirén is the theological advisor to Church of Sweden’s archbishop, Antje Jackelén. In this capacity, he is involved in interfaith work both nationally and internationally. Dr Wirén is a member of a World Council of Churches committee for interfaith dialogue and he also serves as a board member of the international journal Dialog: A Journal of Theology. He has written several books and book chapters on the role of religion in society. His most recent book is Hope and Otherness: Christian Eschatology and Interreligious Hospitality (Brill 2018).



*Apocalyptic Hospitality: Comparative Insights Beyond Soteriology*

Apocalypticism and eschatology might seem far removed from the interreligious challenges of everyday life. But they are not only matters of future expectations. Our eschatological beliefs affect our lives and our ways of relating to the Other in the present, regardless of our particular worldview. This lecture explores the place and role of the religious Other in some contemporary Christian, Muslim, and Jewish eschatologies and compares different levels of inclusion and exclusion beyond the question of 'who will be saved'. It argues that it is time for eschatology to reconnect with its apocalyptic strands in order for Christian hope to be articulated, distinct, unfinished and respectful.

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 **Plenary Session III: How to Research Religious Traditions: Moving beyond a Bifurcated Field**

For scholars of religions and theologians, the boundaries of religious traditions tend to conveniently demarcate their field of research. However, who sets these boundaries and why? To what extent do these boundaries perpetuate divisions between people who tend to interact in daily life? What are the ways of researching religious traditions/ issues that do not contribute to entrenching religious divisions? Is such research possible only within the scope of social sciences or can it also be done in theological inquiry? In what way can an interdisciplinary turn be helpful? "Interdisciplinary" indicates not only that: 1. a theologian makes informed use of knowledge and methods from the realm of the social sciences (and vice versa), but also that 2. s/he is familiar with all religious traditions, whose adherents interact with the research subject, so that s/he is able to consider the widest scope of impact from these differently shaped traditions upon the phenomenon (i.e. difficult particularities are not overlooked for the sake of a plausible research result).

Chair: **Stanisław Grodź**, Anthropos Institute, German

Keynote speakers:

**Marloes Janson** is Reader in West African Anthropology and Associated Director of Research (Humanities and Languages) at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She researches the intersection of anthropology and religion. West Africa (the Gambia, Senegal and Nigeria) is her ethnographic area of specialization. She conducted ethnographic research in the Gambia on various research projects relating to popular culture, oral history, Islamic reform, gender and youth since 1996. Since 2010 she has focused her scholarly interest on Lagos, Nigeria, exploring the emergence of Chrislam, a religious movement that fuses Christian and Muslim beliefs and practices. Her research interests are reflected in her teaching. She had been a researcher at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin. Then, joined SOAS in 2012. Her previous monograph, *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia* (Cambridge UP for the IAI, 2014) was awarded the RAI Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology. She has just completed a monograph on religious plurality in Lagos, Nigeria.



*Towards a Framework for the Study of Multi-Religious Settings: The Case of Chrislam in Nigeria*

Christian-Muslim relations in Africa (and beyond) are still largely approached in terms of either religious conflict or what scholars attempting to advance ecumenical ideas have called 'interfaith dialogue'. These two approaches suffer from the same limitation: they take religious boundaries for granted. In an effort to open up the binary logic of an exclusive 'either/or' that permeates the study of religion and replace it by an inclusive 'both/and' paradigm (Lambek 2008), this paper presents an ethnographic case study of Chrislam: a series of religious movements that originated in south-western Nigeria in the 1970s, which mix Christian and Muslim beliefs and practices. The core questions leading my paper are: how to conceptualize processes of religious mixing without falling into the pitfall of assuming an essentialised purity, as is the case with much work on 'syncretism'? Which alternative concepts are available to examine the dynamics of multi-religious fields? What difference does it make to take multiplicity as the default? By reflecting on the conceptual and methodological implications of a focus on religious plurality, this paper aims to propose a new framework for the study of multi-religious settings.

**Kajsa Ahlstrand** is Professor of World Christianity and Interreligious Studies at Uppsala University since 2006. Her research focuses on religion and modernity. She has researched Hindu-Christian and Buddhist-Christian relations and the softening processes in Christianity. Her published works include: "Religionsteologi och frälsning", in B. Fagerli et al. (eds), *Dialogteologi på norsk*, Asker, 2016, pp. 247-259; "The Crisis of Authority: From Holy Obedience to Bold Moral Imagination in European Christianity", *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 30 (2010) 49-57; "Strategies for Christians Under Threat", in Karen L. Bloomquist (ed.), *Identity, Survival, Witness: Reconfiguring Theological Agendas*, Geneva, 2008, pp 103-108; and "Boundaries of religious identity: Baptised Buddhists in Enköping", in J. D'Arcy May (ed.), *Converging Ways?: Conversion and Belonging in Buddhism and Christianity*, Sankt Ottilien, 2007.



### *A Plea for Good Theology in Religious Studies*

The boundaries between Theology and Religious Studies can be hard or porous depending on how the terms are interpreted. In my presentation I will give reasons for why porous boundaries are preferable, why it is important for religious studies to recognise good theology, and why theology needs religious studies. I will also show how good theological arguments are fashioned, and why it is imperative for scholars of religion to be aware of the rules which theological reasoning follow. My point of departure will be ecumenical Christian theological reasoning, but the need to be able to distinguish between good and bad theology is necessary in all rich religious traditions.

12:30-14:00 Lunch

### **14:00-16:00 Papers Session I**

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30 **Welcome from Darko Tomašević**, Dean of the Catholic Theological Faculty

### **16:30-18:00 Plenary Session IV: Religious Leadership: Prophets and Protectors?**

Religious leadership is crucial to understanding religious dimension of both peace and conflict periods. Yet the shifting and contested character of religious leaders may lie in their protective role, of caring for 'tradition', on the one hand, while simultaneously holding prophetic authority, envisioning the way into the future. During social conflict, times of increasing ethno-religious nationalism and hostile discourses of identity politics, religious leadership may be squeezed between different needs and expectations. Meticulous reflection on these aspects may produce very acute dilemmas. Can their shifting roles in dynamic contexts be analysed and critiqued? The panel poses the question: "To what extent do religious leaders have/use their moral authority to contribute to conflict resolution, to counteract despair and to promote hope?"

Chairs: **Yaser Ellethy**, VU Amsterdam

Keynote speakers:

**Halima Krausen** was born in Aachen, Germany, where she was raised by a Catholic-Protestant family but became Muslim in her early teens. After leading the German-speaking Muslim community at a mosque in Hamburg for 20 years, she is now an academic co-worker at the Academy of World Religions at Hamburg University. Studying with visiting Muslim scholars and learning Arabic, Krausen has travelled extensively in the Muslim world. In 1985, Krausen became a founding member of the Inter-Religious Dialogue Center at the Department of Theology at Hamburg University. In 1993, she helped found the Initiative for Islamic Studies and became head of the German speaking community. In 1992, Krausen completed her studies in Islamic Law and Theology, Islamic Studies, Christian Theology and Comparative Religion. Krausen was also involved with the team that created German translations of the Qur'an with commentary. She also conducted a partial translation of the Hadith. She has contributed to several books on interfaith studies and written a number of articles on various Islamic and inter-religious subjects. She teaches regularly in London and across Europe and is particularly interested in inter-faith dialogue. She joined a circle that involved Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim experts who were interested in taking dialogue past the intellectual and applying it to culture.



**Ivo Marković**, Bosnian Franciscan, was born in 1950 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He studied theology in Sarajevo and in Zagreb, Croatia. Since that time, he has taught pastoral (practical) theology in Sarajevo. During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, he assisted in orienting the activities of the peace movements. After the war, at the beginning of 1996, he took immediate action to reduce hostilities and encourage reconciliation and return. One of the most beautiful projects is the inter-religious choir Pontanima, with representatives from all national and religious communities in Sarajevo, singing together a symphony of the Abrahamic religions. Ivo regularly writes theological texts and newspaper commentaries related to topics like the situation of women in the Church, God's image in religious people in Bosnia, a new identity for priests, nation and religion, churches with regard to war, a culture of reconciliation, ecumenism and dialogue, and the treatment of war trauma through faith and art.



### *Religions between Prophetic Mission and Political Misuse in Wartime and Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*

The three main ethnicities in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) came to exist out of traditional religions and ethnic identity is mostly comprised of religious identity. Since the religions in the Balkans have recently been dominated by nationalistic politicians, it is very opportune to misuse religion in mobilizing for war and political manipulations. Religious institutions coordinate their activity more with national politicians than from the starting points of their own revelation and tradition. Therefore, non-nationalistic parties and politicians distance themselves from both religions and nationalistic parties, seeing them as a negative for society.

However, religions cannot be reduced to their supra-structures, which tend to be alienated from the lived religious experience of their congregations. First, strong movements exist within these religions - orders, theologians, individual devotees and intellectuals, communities with intensive faith, etc. – returning to their traditional origins. While they wield prophetic power for social change, they are often in conflict with or alienated from politicians and their religious supra-structures. Second, complete traditional religious life is experienced in local communities (e.g. parishes) and family life. Here one finds intense faith influencing entire relationship systems and producing important manifestations of faith such as a sense of meaning, a system and socialization of values, and moral stability. Both of these areas of traditional religions carry power for social change, available through the youth, women, educators, etc. As such, freeing religions from the nationalistic political embrace and enable these manifestations of faith are urgent tasks in the Balkans.

18:00-18:30 Coffee Break

18:30-19:30 **ESITIS General Assembly**



## FRIDAY, 26 APRIL 2019

LOCATION: Catholic Theological Faculty, Josipa Štadlera 5, 71000 Sarajevo

### 9:00-10:30 **Plenary Session V: Gender, Religion, and Violence. Seeking Transformative Practices**

The bodies of women have become weapons of war, both as victims of sexual violence and 'mothers of war heroes'. Widows of war have become the most vulnerable segment of population in conflict-ridden societies. Oppressive views and practices of religious traditions regarding women have played a key role in the ways in which gender relations are organised in wars and post-war contexts. 'War time' often reveals what goes unseen during 'peace time'. Patriarchal societies and religious institutions have practiced systemic structural violence against women for centuries. This session will explore how religious traditions have been part of these oppressive social practices and, at the same time, engaged in transformative and liberative gender practices.

Chairs: **Jude Lal Fernando**, Trinity College Dublin, and **Jagbir Jhutti-Johal**, University of Birmingham

Keynote speakers:

**Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović**, PhD, is an associate professor of political sciences at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Eastern Sarajevo. She has published more than seventy scientific papers and analysis focusing on gender, activism, representation and the position of women in the media, the process of reconciliation through the gender dimension, the place and role of religion in the public sphere. She published the books *The Women's Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Articulation of a Contraculture*, and *Women and Reconciliation Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenging Gender Roles, (Re) established Narratives and Performative Acts, with a Discussion of Religion*, and participated in several studies related to women's activism and networking, the position of the LGBTQ population, the process of building reconciliation and trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For many years she has worked with civil society organizations and has written columns for web portals. She is a member of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Political Science Committee at the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



#### *Women and Reconciliation Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a Discussion of Religion*

During the conflict of the 1990s, including the postwar period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women have often been placed in the position of victim within the patriarchal social structures and strengthened by religious discourses. However, women have also succeeded in stepping out from that position, using different toolkits mostly within civil society activism. In some cases their activism is motivated by faith and women tend to be more affirmative regarding the role of different actors, including religious ones. Some nuances will be described based on research about reconciliation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina using Galtung's notion of positive peace.

**Lieve Troch** was trained in theology, religious studies and criminology at the University of Leuven, Belgium, and the University of Tilburg, in the Netherlands. She taught for more than 25 years as a senior assistant professor in Theology, Ethics and Culture in Nijmegen's Radboud University, the Netherlands, and as a full professor of Feminist Studies in Religion and Theology at the Ecumenical Institute of the Methodist University in São Paulo, Brazil (UMESP). She held a Procter Fellowship at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, USA, associated with Harvard Divinity School and researched feminist black theology, hermeneutics and ethics for transformation. She has been a visiting professor in several countries of Latin America and Asia and worked with interreligious grassroots movements for change and transformation in conflict areas in the Global South. Her main research interests are related to the oppressive and liberative transformative factors of religion and theology in situations where the interconnection between race, class, gender and religion is experienced as the cause and solution for conflicts.



10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-13:00 **Papers Session II**

13:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-18:00 **Optional city tours**

### 1. Exploring Sarajevo's Vraca Memorial Park and the Old Jewish Cemetery

Guide: **Dr. Nicolas Moll**, historian and a trainer in the fields of intercultural cooperation, dealing with the past and civil society development

Guided memory walk through two emblematic sites of the history of Sarajevo, situated on one of the hills along the town, and which are both linked to different historical periods of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the Ottoman times, the Austrian-Hungarian period, the Second World War, the socialist Yugoslavia, the 1992-1995-siege, and post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants will go by taxi to the locations in/around Grbavica.

### 2. Sarajevo city center inter-religious walk

Guide: **Amra Pandžo**, local faith-based peacebuilder

The mystery of Sarajevo, the city between East and West, can be visible through various sacred spaces lying close to each other. Their energy is almost overlapping. If you visit Careva Mosque, built in 1462, you can sense an oriental silence surrounding ancient Muslim graves. If you walk only five meters further, you will see Saint Anthony's Franciscan Monastery where you can light a candle for good luck, like many Sarajevo residents. The first decades of Christianity left behind the beautiful Old Orthodox Church a few meters from Sarajevo's oldest synagogue, which was built when the Ottoman Empire welcomed Sephardic Jews expelled during the Spanish Inquisition.

18:00-18:30 Coffee break

18:30-20:00 **Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology Journal Panel: Special issue on Robert Schreiter**

Robert Schreiter has been an influential voice in intercultural theology and interreligious studies for decades, with a teaching and research career that has spanned continents. His sizable and important contribution to these fields of study is indisputable, particularly as a pioneer in developing the notion of local theology. For this reason the ESITIS journal, ISIT, recently published a double issue in his honour. In this panel, two influential thinkers will offer their thoughts and insights on Schreiter's (continuing) influence, and to make their own contributions to the challenges and problems to which Schreiter has so ably called our attention.

Chair: **Henry Jansen**, Independent scholar and ESITIS Treasurer

Panel participants:



**Robert Schreiter**, C.P.P.S., is the Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago



**Leo Lefebure**, Matteo Ricci, S.J., Professor of Theology, Georgetown University and faculty fellow at the Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs



**Norbert Hintersteiner**, professor of Theology and director of the Institute for Missiology and the Study of Theologies Beyond Europe, University of Münster

**SATURDAY, 27 APRIL 2019**

LOCATION: Catholic Theological Faculty, Josipa Štadlera 5, 71000 Sarajevo

9:00-10:30 **Plenary Session VI: Embodied Narratives of Hope and Resilience**

Flipping the coin from the theoretical framework in Plenary Session V, in Session VI we have the opportunity of hearing first-hand, practical experiences from the field of collectively experienced trauma. The aim of this session is to exemplify the healing potential of narratives, i.e., how life stories may offer insights and possibilities for treating individuals and communities that have been victims of extreme violence. As such, we place the emphasis on the “hope” of religions within different conflict and post-war contexts, where peacebuilding actors, including those from a faith-base, contribute to reconcile previously warring communities, achieve greater social cohesion, help people recover from traumatic experiences, foster post-traumatic growth and build resilience.

Chair: **Lidia Rodriguez Fernandez**, Deusto University

Keynote speakers:

**Srdan Sremac** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Religion and Theology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a co-director of the Amsterdam Center for the Study of Lived Religion at the same university. He is also the co-founder of the Centre for the Study of Religion, Politics and Society in Novi Sad, Serbia. Srdan is widely published with 17 (co-) authored or edited books and over 50 journal articles and book chapters. He is also the managing editor of *Palgrave Studies in Lived Religion and Societal Challenges* (Palgrave Macmillan). His interdisciplinary research interests include lived religion, narrative psychology of religion, biographical-reconstructive research, religion and sexuality, war-related trauma, addiction and spirituality, lived religion of marginalized groups, material non-western culture/religion, and post-conflict reconciliation studies.

*Hope, Trauma and the Real: A Lived Religion Perspective*

Triggered and supported by my research on the role of narrative-biographical reconstruction among trauma survivors (e.g. substance dependence, sex-trafficking, war-related sexual violence) this paper will explore the notion of hope in the empirical study of lived religion and its healing testimonial potential. Lived religious world-making informs post-traumatic coping mechanisms and significantly contributes to the re-envisioning of traumatic experience and lived religious realm. The paper focuses specifically of the role of testimony in reconstructing a viable narrative of the self, accounting for trauma, hope and the Real (le réel) and embedding in different social, cultural, and spiritual contexts.

**Zilka Spahić Šiljak** holds a PhD in gender studies and her work addresses cutting edge issues involving human rights, politics, religion, education and peace-building, with more than fifteen years of experience in academic teaching and work in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. She teaches Cultural Studies at the University of Zenica and at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Sarajevo. Zilka is also a research associate at Stanford University. Her book publications include: *Bosnian Labyrinth: Culture, Gender and Leadership* (2019); *Living Values: Global Ethos in Local Context of BiH* (2018); *Shining Humanity – Life Stories of Women Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2014); *Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities. Post-Socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (2012); *Women Religion and Politics* (2010); *Women, Believers and Citizens* (2009). She also runs the Transcultural Psychosocial Educational Foundation in Sarajevo, which also includes projects on trauma, memory and healing.

*Salvation through Narration and Interpretation: Building Resilience after Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The paper contributes to the broader discussion on gender, feminism, peacebuilding and religion and the role of personal narratives and interpretations of religious texts and traditions in maintaining hope and building resilience after terrible war crimes women in Bosnia and Herzegovina survived from 1992-1995. When war happens and when women survive inconceivably terrible crimes they become imprisoned by pain, fear and shame. One of the ways to help them in healing and transforming their traumas was to create ‘safe spaces,’ listen to their stories and provide comfort with religious interpretations for those who were seeking refuge in faith. The humane theology was not

planned or prepared, but an ad hoc enterprise to answer an unbearable amount of suffering and pain. It turned out that many women found salvation in repetitive narrations and interpretations, as it was a way for them to cope with trauma and keep hope alive.

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:00 **Closing Panel**

Chair: **Anne Hege Grung**, University of Oslo

Speakers:



**Paul Hedges**, Associate Professor in Interreligious Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU, Singapore



**Marianne Moyaert**, Professor in Comparative Theology and Hermeneutics of Interreligious Dialogue, VU University of Amsterdam



**Oddbjørn Birger Leirvik**, Professor in Interreligious Studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo

**Optional visit to the Serbian Orthodox Holy Saturday Easter service** (service starts at 17:00. Please meet at 16:30 in front of the Catholic Cathedral on Ferhadija ulica, the main pedestrian street)

**SUNDAY, 28 APRIL 2019**

### **Optional excursion to Mostar**

We will travel 2.5 hours by train to Mostar and back. The day will include guided tours at Blagaj Tekija, the Franciscan monastery, and the Partisan Memorial Cemetery. Free time will be given to explore the old town with its famous bridge. Mostar is located in Herzegovina, the southwestern part of the country, and has a Mediterranean climate, so be prepared for warm, sunny weather.





**Guest wifi**

Password for 24 April, Islamic Faculty: S@rajevo  
25-27 April, Catholic Faculty: STADLER1890