



Institut für Christliche Philosophie

Gastvortrag

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(Iowa)

## **Why Must the King Have Two Bodies? An Exercise in Social Ontology**

**Mi., 29. 6. 2016, 18.00 Uhr s.t., Seminarraum VI (Karl-Rahner-Platz 3)**

A long-standing debate within social theory concerns whether social facts and entities can be reductively accounted for by thinking of them as being comprised of just individual persons and their thoughts and actions. I shall begin by arguing that whether, e.g. social institutions can be reductively analyzed or not is “up to us” (the relevant social group), at least to the very considerable extent to which such institutions are intentional artifacts instituted by means of performative acts. I shall argue, further, that a great many societies have, in fact, conceived of their communities and institutions in irreducible, holistic terms. But what kind of ontological sense can be made of this? Does it require positing “group minds,” or a World Historic Spirit, or mysterious top-down forces of some kind? Or can a more sensible, down-to-earth, ontology do the job? I want to sort through what some of the (rationally defensible) options might be. Finally, I will examine how such plausible holistic ontologies might provide a conceptual framework in terms of which a defensible hermeneutical method can be constructed for interpreting some of the more puzzling and refractory theoretical commitments of such holistic societies – commitments rather typically couched in what we would identify as religious or theological language. What emerges is a principle of charitable interpretation.



**Evan Fales** has been deeply rooted at the University of Iowa, where he has taught for over forty years. During that time, he has been primarily engaged in thinking about metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of the social sciences, and philosophy of religion. His books include *Causation and Universals* (Routledge 1990) and *Divine Intervention: Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles* (Routledge 2009). His more recent work has included a strong interest in the theory of interpretation of sacred texts and in what light can be shed by theoretical work in the social sciences, especially anthropology.

**Alle Interessentinnen und Interessenten sind herzlich eingeladen!**