‘FEARFUL SYMMETRIES’
Religion, Co-existence and the Secular

Strawberry Hill, Twickenham/UK
Wednesday 8th -Sunday 12th July 2009

A joint colloquium:

St Mary’s University College, Strawberry Hill
Heythrop College, University of London
COV&R UK
2009

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In the contemporary ‘return of religion’, not least in the wake of anxieties around Islamist terrorism, the UK government has highlighted the importance of fostering religious cohesion and integration. These issues are especially acute in Britain: the bombers who attacked London in July 2005 were ‘home-grown’, reinforcing nervous perceptions of ‘Londonistan’, and of a multicultural experiment that, for many people, has failed. Enormous public debate has been generated, as society confronts the limits of its own tolerance, and as attitudes towards religious diversity harden.

A COV&R Colloquium held in London would address issues of religion and identity, using René Girard’s mimetic theory. It is envisaged that we will draw on the resources of two university colleges: Heythrop College (University of London), and St. Mary’s University College, Strawberry Hill.

Heythrop College is the specialist college of Theology and Philosophy at the University of London. It has twice welcomed René Girard for smaller conferences, in 2004 and 2005 - on the latter occasion he was presented with an honorary doctorate. Its resources include a Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue: http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/ccid/. Heythrop’s commitment in this area is reflected in its research, and in undergraduate and postgraduate provision of programmes, as well as grassroots dialogue work in Southall, West London.

Like Heythrop, St Mary’s is a university college within the Catholic tradition. Its historic setting - Strawberry Hill house, set in 35 acres beside the River Thames - will provide an excellent and idyllic venue for this Colloquium. A close cooperation between Heythrop and the Faculty of Theology, Religious Studies and History at St Mary’s is envisaged, specifically with the Holy Land Research Project and the Centre for Religion and History.

For further information about the colleges: www.heythrop.ac.uk and www.smuc.ac.uk

A CALL FOR PAPERS will be issued later in the summer. For further information about COV&R 2009, please contact:

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