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Religion, Ideology & Violence

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For more information:
Journal of Religion and Culture
Department of Religions and Cultures (FA-101)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve O.,
Montreal, Quebec
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“Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd.” — Bertrand Russell

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structure did not work in the same way as other parables. Peter Cresswell argues for an early Matthew in his editing and translating of *The Book of the Nazarene*, folding in discussions of historical prostitution that seem to line up with his understanding of the text. It is a nice piece of historical detective work. Indeed, Brown reads widely, but without the rigour of an academic.

All caveats aside, serious artistic and personal engagement with scripture seems rare these days. I am reminded of the Anglo-American comic artist Basil Wolverton, who found a particularly apocalyptic Jesus in the late 1960s, after almost half a century of drawing pop grotesques. Wolverton was a bad exegete, but a brilliant artist—like Brown.

Brown's brilliance shines through in the paranoid, bodily closeness of David in his bedchamber, and the three pages of Ruth getting her courage up to ask to glean—and even how he draws a ladder in the story of Rahab. Wolverton's biblical work was for a magazine called *Plain Truth*, and worked as a tract. I wonder, considering the social and political nature of Brown's work, if it might have been better in the ephemeral middle ground between tract and comic.

Anthony Easton

Veiled Figures: Women, Modernity, and the Spectres of Orientalism. Teresa Heffernan. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016. 240 pages. \$55.00 CDN (Paperback).

Teresa Heffernan is a Professor of English at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In her most recent work published by the University of Toronto Press, *Veiled Figures: Women, Modernity, and the Spectres of Orientalism* (2016), Heffernan traces the history of Western perceptions and understandings of the veil in Islam. Indeed, by exploring how the clash of “Eastern” and “Western” civilizations is perpetuated by the rhetoric of “veiling” and “unveiling” women, Heffernan argues that women's bodies have been unjustly used to exacerbate the divide between religion and rationality, and Islamism and global “secularism” in the contemporary period. In particular, she looks to the legacy of Orientalism, and how it has come to inform the ways in which perceptions of Muslim women and the veil have been constructed in Western, secular societies. Heffernan seeks to demonstrate the ways in which Orientalist perceptions of the veil have foundationally contributed to its contentiousness in today's society—

in particular, in the secular West. Looking, naturally, to Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) for support of her claim, Heffernan describes the ways in which the Occident (West) produced—and continues to produce—an imagined Orient (East) as its inverse. Applying this to perceptions of the veil, specifically, Heffernan clearly demonstrates how, as an obvious and visible marker of Muslim identity, the veil is frequently perceived as the embodiment of the “backward” and “superstitious” East, in contrast to the “rational” and “secular” West.

Heffernan clearly builds her argument by charting the development of the divide between East and West via three significant historical moments. In *Chapter One—Islam, the Enlightenment, and the Veil*, Heffernan explores the first of these, being the development of Western secularism as it began in the eighteenth century. With the rise of Western modernity, Heffernan pinpoints the emergence of the veiled woman as a contentious figure in the Western imagination, and thus the moment after which the veil becomes one of the most powerful symbols of Islam's “irrationality.” In *Chapter Two—The Great Whore of Babylon: Cosmopolitanism and Racialized Nationalism*, Heffernan begins her discussion of the second key historical shift that constitutes her argument's lineage: that of the racialization of nations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this chapter, Heffernan examines the surge of Orientalist travel literature about the Ottoman Empire that occurs during this period, and argues that the tendency for such literature to portray Ottoman populations as degenerate is underpinned by simultaneously occurring Western concerns regarding class transgressions and mixing races. *Chapter 3—Two Western Women Venture East: Lady Annie Brassey and Anna Bowman Dodd* further develops this second shift, as it examines two travel narratives with a view to wider developments of Western imperialism and racialized nationalism during this period.

The last historical shift which Heffernan examines is explored in her final chapters entitled *The Great War and Its Aftermath* and *The Burqa and the Bikini*, which explore the rise of global capitalism and Islamism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Chapter Four examines the “unveiling” of women in the context of the rise of Turkish nationalism following World War I, as the veil becomes central to conversations regarding conflicting understandings of “private” and “public” spaces. Furthermore, in Chapter Five, Heffernan again examines how the veiled (and unveiled) woman is mobilized to create and fortify divisions between the East and West in the twenty-first century. Heffernan's use of historical events to forge the backbone for her argument

presents a solid and clear path for readers to follow, while also allowing for Heffernan to substantiate her arguments from multiple angles within various contexts. While Heffernan's agenda is immediately made clear, she makes certain to appeal to the reader by speaking to the difficulty more or less intrinsic to discussions regarding the veil. Indeed, what makes these discussions especially difficult to navigate, according to Heffernan, is that as soon as the veil is perceived as pitted against unveiling, there is a refusal to acknowledge the presence of an alternative modernity in Islam. By this, Heffernan means that with the rise in Orientalist scholarship in the eighteenth century—scholarship that marks the formal inception of these Western perceptions of veiling—it has since been a conceptual struggle to argue for an understanding of the veil (and Islam in general) that diverts from this clear-cut bifurcation. Certainly, Heffernan stands firmly against this unfortunate trend in understandings of veiled Muslim women, arguing that understandings of veiling have always involved interpretation, and therefore are open to multiple and dynamic readings that can never be complete. Indeed, the veil is often perceived in the Western imagination as a fixed symbol with an unchanging set of meanings. However, such approaches to the veil are not only erroneous and problematic, but extremely limiting.

Though Heffernan's thorough and thoughtful examination of perceptions of the veiled woman may, at the outset, leave the reader feeling frustrated and cynical, this is not Heffernan's ultimate intent. Indeed, the book's final ring is that of surprising optimism—the aspect which most lends itself to establishing this work as unique to contemporary discussions of the veil. Heffernan argues that the very divisions between East and West which she examines—divisions in which the veiled and unveiled woman are oft placed at the centre—paradoxically create the possibility for the very women under scrutiny to engage with one another to resist and break down these divisions. While a more fully bodied explication of this aspect of Heffernan's argument would not have gone amiss, its presence remains poignant, and makes *Veiled Figures* an important read for those who seek examinations of the veil's role in the contemporary context that present a hopeful alternative to the common narrative.

Georgia Carter
Concordia University