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Volume 27, no. 1

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An introduction by the Editor

Violence. It seems that everywhere we turn we can't stop reading about violence, or witnessing its gratuitous display on our televisions, computer screens and mobile phones.

Oversaturation has the effect of rendering us blind at times. The more something confronts us, the more it either consumes us or becomes ambient; and ambience as a way of becoming just that: something that blends itself along the peripherals of our vision, inciting us to inaction and casual indifference. Violence in the media and media of violence have seemingly become as common place as bagels on Montreal breakfast tables, and re-runs of the Simpsons and Seinfeld.

I suppose one obvious intention of this publication is to jar us from this monotony, and call attention once against to violence; only, this time we approach it not as consumers or bystanders or witnesses, but as scholars.

That being said, violence, of course, comes in many forms and need not be of the physical or material variety. In this past year, North Americans have heard more than their fair share of violent speech; and speeches directed against both people and facts. Semioclasm, is suddenly ever-present, as is a war on meaning and scientific inquiry itself. Demonization of the "other" is rife, whether that other be Muslims, Hispanics, Syrian refugees or any variety of uncertain, undefined and largely unformed (but often alien) entity.

It seems that binaries are being put up and reinforced by powerful voices on the Right before the academy and more nuanced voices of moderation can tear them down. Manichaeism might have done out in thirteenth century South China, but its dichotomized cosmos has yet to elude us.

After a year like 2016, we as scholars certainly have our work cut out for us.

Rather than risk even the chance of becoming yet another voice decrying radical Islam or some other twenty-first century boogeyman, I'm pleased to announce that the bulk of this volume of work approaches the topic of violence in a more nuanced manner and from refreshingly different angles.

In volume one of our twenty-seventh edition of the JRC, we have selected the following three articles from our initial submissions list:

Once the Buddha was Aryan: Race Sciences and the Domestication of Buddhism in North America, by Ryan Anningson of Wilfred Laurier University, examines the ways in which early 20th century North American Buddhists employed the language of "race sciences" in order to present themselves as the heirs to a superior religious tradition. The paper traces elements of Asian agency at the end of the colonial era, connecting North American Buddhist historiography to the broader global network and movements of scientific racism.

The Trouble with Whorephobia: A Contemporary Re-evaluation of the Myth of Mary Magdalene with Reference to Marlene Dumas' Magdalena Series, by Rosanna McNamara of King's College London, revisits the Christian conceptualization of Mary Magdalene as the penitent whore who renounced her life of prostitution to embrace on of chastity and virtue. The paper re-thinks the role of Mary Magdalene as prostitute and deconstruct binaries of virgin/whore and other whorephobic attitudes within Western Christianity.

Privileging the Lens: Framing Islamic Violence and the Creation of Authoritative Discourses, by Jeremy Cohen of Concordia University, examines how colonialist photographic knowledge can produce particular forms of power. In particular, the paper discusses how photographic narratives surrounding images of "Muslim barbarism" and "helpless others" can blur and transform racial, ethnic and religious truths against specific others.

In addition to the above listed peer-reviewed articles, we have also included the following reviews of recent publications:

- *Veiled Figures: Women, Modernity, and the Spectres of Orientalism*, by Teresa Heffernan. Review by Georgia Carter.
- *Does God Make the Man? Media, Religion, and the Crisis of Masculinity*,

by Stewart M. Hoover and Curtis D. Coats. Review by Alexander Nachaj.

- *Mary Wept Over the Feet of Jesus: Prostitution and Religious Obedience in the Bible*, by Chester Brown. Review by Anthony Easton.
- *Canadian Women Shaping Diasporic Religious Identities,* edited by Becky R. Lee and Terry Tak-Ling Woo. Review by Purna Roy.
- *Mythologizing Jesus: From Jewish Teacher to Epic Hero*, by Denis R. MacDonald. Review by Joseph E. Brito.
- *Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces: Exhibiting Asian Religions in Museums*, edited by Bruce M. Sullivan. Review by Bui Dieu Linh Mai.

As parting words, I have the following lists of thanks and acknowledgements.

On behalf of the JRC, I would like to thank: Ethel Gamache, the Religion Librarian at Concordia University who ensures that copies of our journal are always welcome in our library; all our readers and editors; our peer-reviewers in the department who have consistently (and willing) lent their time to participate in our double-blind review procedure. The journal would not be what it is without you; and lastly, everyone else who expressed interest when it was needed, chipped in when asked, donated their time when it was not even asked, or who otherwise went out of their way to support and aid this publication and its staff over the course of another hectic year of publication.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support the JRC received this past year which has made our current publication possible: Concordia's Department of Religion for both helping fund this project, as well as the generous allocation of office space; the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL) Special Projects Committee for their ongoing financial support; and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) for their generous Special Project Funding allocation.

I would also like to personally thank and acknowledge two of our executive editors, Georgia Carter and Elyse MacLeod, who are both in the process of wrapping up their final term with the JRC. Your workaholic tenacity and zealous attention to detail have helped make this journal what it is - reviving it from an intermittent student-run project into a modern publication.

Finally, I would also like to extend my gratitude to our newcomers on the staff: Daniel Santiago Sáenz, Laurel Andrew, and Lindsey Jackson. I'm

looking forward to witnessing the coming years and the direction you will help steer this publication.

And, of course, let's not forget Joseph E. Brito, our ever diligent publication editor, who organized and assembled these pages you are about to dive into. For all our readers who privilege the paperback over the digital medium as much as I do, you know who to thank.

Alexander Nachaj
JRC Editor-in-Chief, December 2016.

“Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd.” — Bertrand Russell

The Trouble with Whorephobia

A contemporary re-evaluation of the myth of Mary Magdalene With special reference to Marlene Dumas' Magdalena series

Rosanna McNamara

> "*A theology that aims to be both critical and life-giving should not content itself with a state of affairs where religion serves to hinder rather than nourish the full humanity of all people*."[1]

Abstract

Since the Middle Ages, Western Christianity has conceived of Mary Magdalene as the penitent whore who renounced her life as a prostitute to become a chaste and virtuous follower of Christ. There is no mention of Mary Magdalene as prostitute in the four canonical gospels, and in 1969 the Roman Catholic Church firmly rejected the myth of the promiscuous Magdalene, something feminist writers, such as Susan Haskins, have supported. This essay seeks to rethink the Magdalene's role as a prostitute, instead perceiving it as a way to deconstruct the binary thinking of Western Christianity, which has historically reinforced dichotomies such as virgin/whore and established whorephobic attitudes within the church. By looking at visual representations of Mary Magdalene, specifically at the Magdalena paintings by Marlene Dumas, and employing Deleuze's concepts of becoming and repetition, the primary aim of this paper is to re-evaluate whorephobic views about the Magdalene myth and to propose ethico-theological frameworks that, through reconstructions of the myth, can support and protect sex workers by accounting for embodied multiplicity and the sexualised body within religion, aesthetics and beyond.

Keywords: whorephobia, Mary Magdalene, Deleuze, Irigaray, becoming, Marlene Dumas, Susan Haskins, sex work, ethics, aesthetics, visual art, Christianity.

In 1969 the Roman Catholic Church renounced Mary Magdalene's historical portrayal as prostitute. In praise of this decision, Susan Haskins has argued that society has everything to gain from "losing" the myth of the sexualised Magdalene.[2] However, this essay contends that the Magdalene's story needs to be reinstated and, more crucially, re-evaluated. As a prostitute, Mary Magdalene can critically deconstruct the moralistic

control over sexuality engrained in patriarchal systems (many of them philosophical and theological in character), which seek to maintain the repressive dichotomies of spirit/body and virgin/whore.[3] Wendy Steiner, in her analysis of Dumas' work in *The Trouble with Beauty*, states that interpreting the women in her work as prostitutes simplifies their "meaning and social standing," reducing all sex work to a low social status having little significance or value.[4] In contrast to Steiner's perceptions, this study attempts to radicalise understandings of sex work and the sexualised body in Dumas's work.

The analysis will employ Luce Irigaray's feminist critique of Nietzsche's phallocentric Apollonian/Dionysian dialectic, looking at how her adoption, and further critique of, Deluezian theory subverts binary thinking and stresses the importance of the body—including sexuality and sexual difference—within ontologies against the objectivist thinking of Western theology and philosophy.[5] Theories of being have historically been dictated by phallocentric Western philosophy, whereby its founding gesture, according to Irigaray, lies in Plato's metaphor of the cave: by liberating themselves from the dark shadows on the cave, representing the womb, the prisoners emerge into the light of Truth and Irigaray reads this as a metaphor for the renouncement of the maternal and the self-creation of the paternal law.[6] The reflected shadows on the wall of cave became the non-being of the feminine order, only able to serve as a mirror to the 'intelligible masculine soul.' In other words, man is created in the image of God who denies the need for anyone but himself to exist.[7] Irigaray applies this idea to the dichotomous relationship between Apollo and Dionysus in Nietzsche's writing. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche discusses how Socratic reason effectively killed the classical Greek tragedy by introducing the age of the theoretical man and what would lead to Platonic spirit/body dualism. As Eugen Fink states, "in Socrates… only the logical and rational side of the spirit was developed excessively."[8] This is primarily where Nietzsche's discussion of Apollo and Dionysus arose, using their opposing differences to critique the superficiality of Socratic rationality—the two gods, Apollo as the mind and Dionysus as the body, act as "metaphors for the opposite artistic drives," and it is the tension between these two forces that allows for the creation of Greek tragedies.[9] However, even though Nietzsche established a reading and writing of the body, Irigaray criticizes Nietzsche's discussion of Apollo and Dionysus for abandoning the economy of women: both their mothers are dead and Apollo's sister Artemis is annihilated.[10] Kelly Oliver observes that "Apollo's balance and

harmony against Dionysian chaos are bought at Artemis's expense [...] In the Apollonian economy all women are abandoned, denied [...] He denies the body altogether; and, by so doing, he denies the significance of his birth out of the laboring body of a woman."[11] Oliver furthermore states that, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's theory of the eternal return presents bodies only as masculine bodies, ones that "appropriate the power of their mothers, sisters, or lovers without acknowledging their debt. They invent ways to give birth to themselves"[12]

Gilles Deleuze, and then later Irigaray, adopted Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return as way of thinking about repetition, difference and becoming. But rather than thinking about it as Nietzsche's "eternal return of the same," Deleuze translated it as the "eternal return of difference." As Cliff Stagoll explains, "if the primacy of identity is what defines a world of re-presentation (presenting the same world once again), then becoming (by which Deleuze means 'becoming different') defines a world of presentation anew."[13] The return is a force of action and re-action, and Irigaray specifically focuses on women's appropriation and repetition of patriarchal language as a way to subvert its sameness and to present new ontologies of sexual difference. Becoming is the "continual production (or return) of difference immanent within the constitution of events," whether these are corporeal or otherwise; it serves as a counteragent to what Deleuze considered to be the "unjustifiable focus upon being and identity" within Western philosophy.[14] A subject, for Deleuze and Irigaray, is not conceived of as "a stable, rational individual," as it is through the lineage of Platonic philosophy, but rather a "constantly changing assemblage of forces" that does not tend towards a particular end-state or goal.[15] Ontology is not thought of as a hierarchical progression towards a transcendent, disembodied objectivity, but exists relationally and between subjects and objects in an eternal production of difference, rupturing the binary thinking of patriarchal theology and philosophy. Employing a Deleuzian philosophy to Dumas' work, and the topic of the Magdalene more generally, will allow for greater understandings of embodied sexuality beyond reductionist binaries such as self/other, spirit/body, and virgin/whore.

The first part of this essay will contextualise the Magdalene's historical representation as the erotic penitent from the early church up until the nineteenth century, exploring how tensions between sexuality and spirituality have affected her visual depictions, specifically referring to Lefébvre's *Mary Magdalene in the cave* (1876) which employed the figure

of the Magdalene as an "alibi for the female nude."[16] Secondly, particular works in Dumas' *Magdalena* series that reference art-historical precedents will be examined in conjunction with theories of parody and repetition. These works will be compared with artists, such as Vaginal Davis, Sarah Lucas, and Hannah Wilke, to explore how taking art beyond literal representation can critically deconstruct dominant ideologies of sexuality. The final part will examine curatorial aspects of Dumas' retrospective, concentrating on how the demarcation of "sexually explicit" images within the exhibition manifests a dichotomy of erotic/pornographic. Paintings such as *Fingers* (1999) and *Male Beauty* (2002) will be reread as Magdalenes to question how disrupting the original series of works radicalises art-historical representations, thus acting as a potential mechanism to distort whorephobic stereotypes of the sexualised subject.[17]

Firstly, it is important to recognise that, for a non-sex worker to be discussing these issues, the proposed arguments come from a place of privilege. The term "prostitute" will only be used in reference to a quotation or its historical usage as many people within the sex trade today do not identify with this word and/or find it oppressive.[18] Otherwise, the term "sex work," coined by Carol Leigh in 1978, will be used because of its inclusivity and gender neutrality.[19] Furthermore, the analysis specifically refers to US and European understandings and readings of sex work because, through the West's domination in imperialism and colonialism, a hegemonic discourse on the sex industry has been established which often enforces victimhood upon those in the industry. Put differently, organisations claiming to benefit sex workers can actually deny them agency by inflicting upon them a status of helplessness and vulnerability.[20] The "prostitute" has been constructed as a "marginalised social-sexual identity" in the West, and categorised in relation to the Victorian bourgeoisie ideals of women and sexuality, one of which is the virgin.[21] The demarcation of the prostitute's body as otherness within the identity (sameness)/otherness (difference) hierarchy, and the internal dichotomy of virgin/whore, continues to portray female sex workers as objects of patriarchal control and performing a deviant sexuality (e.g. non-reproductive, non-monogamous).[22]

The Church's decision to renounce Mary Magdalene's involvement in prostitution preserves the "radically dualistic concepts" of sexuality perpetuated since early Christianity and accentuated in the Victorian West.[23] Pope Gregory the Great's misconception of Mary as the unnamed sinner from the Bible in 591, as well as the conflation of at least five

different women into the figure of the Magdalene, created a symbol of the feminine erotic to juxtapose the sanctity of the Virgin Mary. Indeed, within the Litany of Saints, the Magdalene was portrayed as a spiritual virgin, a term that was used to honour those virtuous women who idolised and sought the coveted, but distinctly unattainable, purity of the Madonna.[24] Throughout the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, the symbolic image of the penitent Magdalene prevailed, and her identity as a "reformed prostitute" made aesthetic nudity permissible in the eyes of the church.[25] She became a theological symbol of penitence, emphasised by the contrast between her long hair as representative of female sexuality and her humble gaze directed upwards to God. These depictions became widespread after the Counter-Reformation in portrait paintings such as Titian's *Penitent Magdalene* (Fig. 1, 1565) and Caravaggio's *Magdalene in Ecstasy* (Fig. 2, 1606).[26] As Nancy Qualls-Corbett has claimed, the sexualised figure of the Magdalene paradoxically creates a link between spirit and body, however the divisional hierarchy is reinforced by the demonstration of penitence within these images, creating a stereotyped image of the chastely erotic female.[27] The nineteenth century revived the historical representation of Mary as virginal prostitute, pushing the boundaries of morality once the nude became "a distinct form of art," something John Ruskin outwardly abhorred as immoral, describing sexually charged paintings as "disgusting."[28] While Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy sought to establish a balance within the human condition between mind and body, Irigaray plausibly argues that his "one-ness" of being rejects the feminine as transcendent and creates an eternal return of the (male) same.[29] There needs to be fluctuations to rupture the binary structure in order to dislocate the dichotomies in which other subjectivities are excluded; it is an ethical mode of thinking that allows for otherness within the divine through establishing a language for women to "subvert the primacy of the (singular) male subject position."[30] Art is a medium with the possibility to interpenetrate the spirit and body by enabling a move away from the disembodied transcendent into a territory of immanent becoming that fluctuates between the dualisms established by patriarchal structures.[31] It is important to question moral attitudes towards sexuality, rather than perpetuate them as in Jules Joseph Lefebvre's painting of *Mary Magdalene in the Cave* (Fig. 3, 1876). The Magdalene is completely unclothed and lying within Christ's tomb, supposedly illustrating both the spirituality and physicality of the Magdalene's love for Jesus as a "beautiful example of womanhood."[32] However, her sexuality is confined within the boundaries of morality as the artist has concealed her genitalia behind a raised leg, in order to avoid an explicit reference to prostitution during such a time of

Victorian prudishness.[33] These moral attitudes that impose universalised laws on sexuality still prevail today, and, to disagree with Wendy Steiner, Marlene Dumas does little to radicalise arbitrary conventions of the female nude in her paintings *Venus* and *Manet's Queen*.[34]

The *Magdalenas* (1995) exhibited at Dumas' 2015 retrospective at the Tate Modern, titled *The Image as Burden*, were generated from an amalgamation of art-historical sources, present-day celebrities, and fashion models. The replication of art-historical iconography, whilst containing the potential to disrupt conventions, has become ideological in Dumas' work. Linda Hutcheon argues that parodies have the potential to disrupt patriarchal representations when used self-reflexively. In other words, parodies, as subversive forms of appropriation, can generate a "crisis in the entire notion of the subject"—Dumas' *Venus* (Fig. 4), however, merely copies the pose and attributes of Botticelli's original painting in a way that does not distort the historical Venus Pudica imagery.[35] The painting mirrors the "divine beauty" of the nude Venus, representative of the prelapsarian Eve, echoing the chastely erotic images of the Magdalene that were created to contrast with the unattainable purity of the Virgin.[36] Rather than accepting Wilde's statement that "all art is immoral," art's ethical obligation should be to question universalised morals and binary thinking in order to move beyond normalised representations of sexuality.[37] Ontological discourse needs to disrupt the subjective error of the Apollonian and Dionysian dialectic, which lead to a "refusal of the feminine order" and thus a refusal of sexual difference.[38] Instead, a Deleuzian mode of becoming would enable interpenetrational dialogues between binaries—such as virgin/whore—as something that is about fluid processes and transformations rather than a singularised and static identity.[39] Dumas' *Venus* simply identifies with its historical precedents and imitates its form without causing a significant rupture within the appropriated imagery to open up the Magdalene figure to trajectories of becoming other. She remains an ideal nude in the Romantic aesthetic male gaze.

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise that the male gaze and binaries such as virgin/whore, self/other etc., are also racialised in the post-colonial West. During the nineteenth century, black South African women's bodies were exploited through their public displays around Europe; their sexuality was deemed primitive, and black prostitutes were classed as antithetical to European sexual norms.[40] Wendy Steiner is of the opinion that Dumas, as a white South African woman, is 'well placed' to discuss ideologies of black

female beauty.[41] However, Dumas fails to critique the hyper sexualised stereotype of black women in *Manet's Queen* (Fig. 5) by simply exchanging the white horizontal prostitute in the original painting with a vertical black woman. In his writing on Dumas' work, Richard Shiff contends that black and white, as colours, are interchangeable, and that the potential for connecting to fields of difference is made stronger through the rejection of immediately recognising these colours as signified signs, such as races.[42] Yet, it is not a simple case of un-thinking or erasing signs. Why? Because the cultural weighting behind these signs must be recognised if there is going to be any chance of an ethical model of difference. Similarly, with "losing" the myth of the Magdalene as a prostitute, it is not about losing or erasing the cultural meanings of signs, because social erasure is a form of violence, but instead refiguring and decolonising these signs and making space for those who have been silenced within oppressive systems.

Dumas' use of superficial inversions doesn't disrupt these gendered and racialised binaries because the work refers back to the dominant ideology by merely posing as its opposite. This flattening of political structures is also seen in the performance *VB53* (Fig. 6, 2004) by Vanessa Beecroft, whereby a homogenised group of Magdalene-esque women, all of a similar height and weight and sporting the long hair common to traditional depictions of the erotic penitent, stand naked on top of a mound of earth.[43] Although the performative element of the work means that femininity is experienced over a period of time, posing questions about gender as identity, the lack of diversity between the models does not allow for radical interpretations of the Magdalene's sexuality.[44] Vaginal Davis' restaging of Beecroft's work, *VD as VB - Erdgeist, Earth Spirit #27-29 10827* (Fig. 7, 2007), subverts the myth of the beautiful, objectified Magdalene through the use of parody. Davis not only participates in her own work, but allows anyone to take part; her models differ in age, race, appearance, and sexuality as a way to disrupt the normalised representations of conventional beauty found in Dumas and Beecroft's work.[45] Through critically distancing her performative content from that of Beecroft, Davis establishes a trans-contextualisation within the discourse of sexuality.[46] Instead of denying the multifaceted dimensions of cultural experience, and through presenting sexuality as multi-voiced, Davis, as a black, genderqueer artist, utilises difference as a departure for performative content in order to open "being onto becoming." By presenting *at least two* subjectivities, Davis' work creates potential trajectories of difference that break apart the "mirror of the same."[47]

Two of the works included in the *Magdalena* series that work more strongly in radicalising the portrayal of a Magdalene figure are *Newman's Zip* (Fig. 8) and *A Painting Needs A Wall To Object To* (Fig. 9). Here, as in Davis' performances, the figures present multiple registers of meaning rather than being representative of sexist art-historical precedents. In *Newman's Zip*, Dumas presents the Magdalene as a figuration of Barnett Newman's abstract zip paintings through paralleling the verticality of the forms with the Magdalene's long hair and elongated body. Even though Dumas is using motifs from traditional Magdalene iconography, here they behave as a retort against the formalism of Abstract Expressionism. Art-historical discourse on Abstract Expressionism often discusses how the movement was a homogenously male domain, one that portrayed masculinity as the "natural expression of maleness itself."[48] Jonathan D. Katz states that in order to exist and exert its power, masculinity cannot admit "to its construction in the social." In Abstract Expressionism, therefore, the social became nature, buttressing a discourse of "naturalised masculinity" whereby the entire movement became steeped in a "transcendent and naturalised authorial presence."[49] The movement was crucially significant to the post-Cold War national identity of the US, portraying the nation as masculine and aggressive in contrast to the weakened, effeminate Europe. Abstract Expressionist art did not represent figurative ideas but instead universalised subjectivity as its principal theme, conceptualising the human mind and experience as predominantly male in the process.[50] Determining what bodily experience is from a singularised perspective means that those who do not identity with this ideology must either conform or be rendered invisible.[51] This has been reflected through the phallogocentrism of Christianity, seen prominently in the Gospel of Thomas whereby Christ informs Peter that Mary Magdalene will enter Heaven when she makes herself male.[52] Totally abstracting Mary Magdalene would be to create an objective image of a symbolic ideal, whereas figurative presentations can disrupt the idealised image of the prostitute by contextualising it. Here Dumas is subverting the power relations between abstract and figurative art and deconstructing the spirit/body dichotomy. The figure, as the "frayed edge zip," refuses to submit to the borders imposed on her body by patriarchal power structures.[53] The Magdalene is no longer moving "within place as place," but deterritorialises the abstracted male subjectivity to open it up to the possibilities of otherness.[54] A myth's power resides in its malleability, as a creative outlet in order to explore human reality and experience, and it is critical that the Magdalene myth becomes a pliable narrative in order to deconstruct stereotypes of prostitution and the sexualised body.[55]

Sarah Lucas' *Self Portrait with Skull* (Fig. 10, 1997) also destabilises historicised representations of female sexuality through queering the image of the Magdalene. Lucas is sat on the floor, staring out at the viewer, with a skull placed between her feet. Historically, the skull has been used as an attribute of the penitent Magdalene. It symbolised her overcoming the carnal desires that lead to mortality, and became an object of spiritual contemplation about the dangers of sexuality. However, Lucas seems to pose a challenge to the demure nature of such an image through her almost daring gaze. Instead of merely confronting her own sexuality and mortality, she flips it back onto the viewer, situating the skull and her face on the same vertical plane of the image as a way to form a kinship between them. Lucas is becoming-skull whilst the skull is simultaneously becoming-Lucas. Lucas acts as both artist and model, collapsing the distance between subject and object and making the body a site of exchange that continually fluctuates between "self" and "other."[56] Her androgynous appearance—she is dressed in trainers, jeans and a heavy jacket—also disrupts the political power structure of the masculine/feminine binary so often reinforced within Magdalene imagery; Lucas is both the one who looks and the one who is looked at.[57]

A Painting Needs A Wall To Object To also disrupts the formalist reduction of art to the status of an autonomous object.[58] The figure stands with its front facing the wall, its head turned to look at the viewer as if to reject the flatness of the canvas; its dark body merges into the black surroundings, creating a depth that blurs the lines between subject and object and instead becomes a body amongst other bodies. The painting's ambiguity dislocates power relations between viewer and model because the subject has no conclusive identity—its race, gender, and sexuality refuse to become fixed, and instead they are constantly becoming something other. What could be interpreted as a seductive pose has become destabilised through a rejection of the pressure to literally represent an image of the erotic Magdalene, and the power relations between Dumas and the model are shifted because the figure has gained an agency that dislocates the gaze from its historicised position of control. The self-portrait works of Hannah Wilke also subvert the political power of the gaze through presenting a self-reclaimed narcissism in her nudity.[59] Wilke doesn't rely on the gaze for an impregnation of value and meaning, but instead presents herself as an embodied subject.[60] Like Dumas, she references the historical figure of Venus in her *Intra-Venus* series (Fig. 11, 1992-1993), but here the conventional beauty of the archetype is abjected through Wilke's presentation of her cancerous body. Although her body is in a state of decline, Wilke still makes it the focus of her work,

not only as a critique of the art-historical models of beauty, but perhaps of her own presentations of beauty in earlier works.[61] Critical self-parody underlines that beauty ideals are not somehow exclusive to the distant past of art history but can dwell within an artist's own body of work; Wilke's parodies of her own art conveys her subjecthood as a site of continuous becoming other. The controlled, contained nude of the classical Venus is transformed through the presentation of her decaying, naked body as a way to challenge the historic treatment of the nude as a distinct form from the vulgarity of nakedness.[62]

The distinction made between nude and naked in Western art history has established categories of socially acceptable and unacceptable modes of bodily presentation. The idealised nude was created as an object of elevated aesthetic contemplation for the male viewer, which sought to relieve reminders of imperfection, decay, and the female abject. As Jane M. Ussher notes, the female nude "most clearly transforms the base nature of woman's nakedness into 'art,' all abhorrent reminders of her fecund corporality removed." [63] The nude/naked dichotomy plays into the erotic/pornographic dialectic—a crucial aspect of whorephobic prejudice. Pornography continues to be discussed in moralistic rather than ethic terms with the industry continuously perceived as "all bad" and oppressive for women. Whilst not denying that there are severe issues with the sex industry, such as trafficking and pimping, universalising the sex industry presents those who participate in it, particularly those who are not white men, as immoral outsiders needing to be "saved."[64] Wendy Steiner describes pornography as a repellent extreme of beauty, stating that Dumas' artworks must be "saved" from pornographic readings because this renders the subject matter as "dead."[65] Jerold Levinson, echoing Steiner's views, also states that pornography cannot be considered as art because it cannot be appreciated for its own sake.[66] For him, erotic art has a capacity for disinterested contemplation, in contrast to the functionality of pornography, reinforcing the Kantian philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche that endorses art as being a form of transcendent, objective truth and knowledge, segregated from individuality and desire.[67] Unfortunately, rather than using the subject matter of Dumas' work to critique this dialectic, the retrospective reinforced the distinction by segregating so-called "explicit" artworks from other images of the naked *Magdalenas*. Maintaining these distinctions means that those who choose to participate in the sex industry remain ostracised from other parts of society, and the segregation and labelling of certain imagery within the exhibition poses as a microcosm for such social exclusion.

Freda Dröes has argued that within Dumas' *Magdalena* series there is a shifting of identity that disrupts the repetitive iconography of the Magdelene throughout the Western canon, and Dumas herself claims that her *Magdalena* series portrays a "bastard race" refusing to be fixed to any singular meaning.[68] However, these women are bastardised only as far as Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian dialectic bastardised the hierarchic rationalism of Socratic philosophy. Nietzsche's dialectic reduces any concept of otherness as a mirroring of the male same, and Dumas, by uncritically imitating patriarchal representations of the Magdalene from art history, genders the Magdalene as prostitute as exclusively female.[69] Melissa Gira Grant stresses the importance of reframing discussions of sex work to include the identities and experiences of men and gender non-conformists who are rendered invisible when sex workers are stereotyped as women.[70] As previously stated, the Magdalene myth needs to be re-evaluated as a malleable narrative that can be assimilated into a multiplicity of voices, and one way of disrupting the homogenous presentation of sexuality in Dumas' exhibition would be to reinterpret the segregated, "explicit" works as Magdalenes by displaying them amongst the series of *Magdalenas*. Reading a work like *Male Beauty* (Fig. 12, 2002) as a Magdalene figure distorts the historical representations of the female penitent by presenting her as a black man. This may sound somewhat hypocritical after being sceptical of Dumas' use of a black model in *Manet's Queen*, and it is not to say that *Male Beauty* is devoid of similar issues. However, rereading the homoerotic male figure as Mary Magdalene has the potential to disrupt not only normalised representations of sex workers as cis-gendered women, but also to deconstruct the power relations of the heterosexual male gaze that historically dominated representations of the Magdalene. The painting was inspired by homoerotic pornography and has been described as dehumanising in its exposure of the naked body, but universalising pornography as oppressive reduces the differing experiences of those in the industry as one of pure victimisation, ultimately silencing the multiplicity of voices in sex work.[71] Dumas' Magdalenes are uniformly contained in their verticality, their genitalia either blended into the surrounding flesh or, in the case of *Venus* and *Out of Eggs, Out of Business*, totally covered by their hair. In contrast, *Male Beauty* and *Fingers* (Fig. 13, 1999)—the latter also exhibited in the segregated room—prize open their bodies with their hands, openly exposing their genitalia, blurring the lines between subject and object. The horizontal pose of the figure in *Fingers* could potentially disrupt Dumas' use of verticality in the *Magdalena* series by challenging the claim that horizontality is a form of objectification. Steiner automatically considers a horizontal figure as passive and aligns it with prostitution,

without considering that the figures, such as *Fingers* as well as Manet's *Olympia*, could be actively sexual.[72] Through the curatorial organisation of the exhibition, Dumas' show implies that an active display of the genitals is differentiated from other forms of art, suggesting, as Jerold Levinson does, that images cannot be "both art and pornography."[73] Establishing a dualism whereby certain bodies convey inspiring, aesthetic nudity and others morally and artistically redundant nakedness, serves to maintain the spirit/body dichotomy that is perpetuated in Western theology and philosophy. Instead of being hierarchically situated above the body, the spirit should be considered as the "*other side* of the body" whereby both are simultaneously interconnected by a chiasm or an interval that opens up the possibilities of interchange and transformation.[74] Exhibiting both the brazenly naked figures and the chastely nude Venuses as *Magdalenas* would present sexuality as multi-voiced, rupturing the divide between spirit and body and portraying the sexualised, embodied subject as a site of continuous becoming.

In conclusion, this essay has illustrated that society has nothing to gain from losing the Magdalene myth, because, as a prostitute, she has the potential to radicalise the repressive dichotomies that seek to police bodies and sexuality. As Sandra Rushing aptly states, to discard the erotic Magdalene is to cast off the "visceral, grounded aspects of being in the body and in the soul."[75] Her penitence reflected a type of transition from carnal immorality to spiritual transcendence, and therefore the renunciation of her association with prostitution may sincerely diminish the space for sex workers and their experiences in the Western Church. However, it is crucial to underline that reinstating her historical characterisation is not good enough; the crucial part of her story lies in her rejection of sexual desire and the myth needs to be re-evaluated in a way that forms an ideology whereby the spirit and body are not diametrically opposed. This paper has argued that contemporary art is a medium that has the potential to disrupt normalised representations of the Magdalene, but that Marlene Dumas' retrospective at the Tate Modern falls short of challenging the conventional imagery portrayed through the Western art canon. Works like *Venus* and *Manet's Queen* do not parody their art-historical precedents in a way that critically distances them from idealised nudes like that of Lefébvre. Iconographic copies or inversions reiterate the dominant ideology by merely conforming to its "other;" works like *Newman's Zip* and *A Painting Needs A Wall To Object To* are stronger in parodying historical images of the Magdalene through the use of reappropriation and non-literal representation. These paintings disrupt patriarchal dualisms by blurring the line between subject

and object, presenting sexuality as multi-voiced. Artists like Vaginal Davis, Sarah Lucas, and Hannah Wilke, who participate in "the performative posing of the self," deconstruct the power relations between subject/artist and object/model by presenting themselves as both "self" and "other," adopting the gaze and projecting it back onto the viewer.[76] Although, this is not to say that self-portraiture is the only way to subvert patriarchal structures; curating Dumas' exhibition to integrate the more graphic works with the *Magdalenas* could potentially disrupt the moralised boundaries of erotic and pornographic imagery. Presenting Mary Magdalene as both demure and overtly sexual, as well as diverse in race and gender, conveys her subjecthood as multiple, opening up her myth to a trajectory of becoming that refuses to be assimilated into a singular, idealised meaning. It is not time to lose the myth of the Magdalene but to reclaim the importance of her life as a prostitute and to reappropriate patriarchal representations of her in order to rupture the binary thinking of Western theology and philosophy. Creating radical art is just one way this reclamation can manifest, and deconstructing phallocentric theology is another. Sex workers' voices need to be heard and listened to in order for the experiences and safety of those in the industry to be acknowledged, understood, and, more crucially, protected within those discourses that have historically silenced and erased them. Religion and sexuality should not be an either/or decision, and thinking about existence as unfolding through trajectories of becoming, fluctuating between self/other, male/female, spirit/body, has the potential to manifest important ethical discussions of sexuality and sex work within the church and beyond.

Endnotes

1. Damien Casey, *Flesh Made Word: Theology After Irigaray* (Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010), 191: http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/dacasey/buchblock.pdf
2. Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 400.
3. Platonic philosophy emphasised that the spirit is hierarchically situated above the body, aligning the spirit with transcendence and Truth and the body with immanence, matter and decay. Within this ideology women and the maternal were associated with the body and its unruly passions, which needed to be controlled by the rational, masculine mind. This dualism is reflected in the virgin/whore dichotomy; the former is aligned with asexuality which will lead to a higher state of being with God. The renouncement of the Magdalene as a prostitute reinforces the virgin/whore binary because it refuses any opportunity to be both, or indeed neither. In order to be "saved" and protected by God she must follow in the footsteps of the Virgin Mary who is perceived as the epitome of woman—obedient, chaste, and asexual. See: Alison Jasper, "Recollecting Religion in the Realm of the Body (or Body©)," in: Pamela Sue Anderson and Beverly Clack, eds., *Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Critical Readings*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 172; Katrina Forrester, "Blame it on the Management," review of *Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work,* by Melissa Gira Grant. *London Review of Books* 36 no.13, (2014): 24-26, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n13/katrina-forrester/blame-it-on-the-management; Melissa Gira Grant, *Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work*, (New York and London: Verso Books, 2014), 17.
4. Wendy Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty* (London: William Heinemann, 2001), 224.
5. Within phallocentrism, it is only the man's ontology that signifies meaning, hinging on the metaphor of the phallus as signifier. Man is the meaning of "I," as the thing which has a penis, whereby its opposite becomes "not-man" (read by Irigaray as "woman"), as something that does not have a penis. The other is constructed in a negative relation to this possession and thus no syntax and no space is available for the other to exist. The other must reflect the man, the phallus, in order to have an ontology, and this is why Irigaray talks about breaking apart the "mirror of the male-same" in order to account for sexual difference. Hilary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women*, (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006), 55.
6. Andrew Cutrofello, *Continental Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 334.
7. Ibid, 2005, 334.
8. Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, trans. Goetz Richter (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 21.
9. Ibid, 2003, 15.
10. Kelly Oliver, *Womanizing Nietzsche: Philosophy's Relation to the "Feminine"* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), accessed October 20, 2016, http://bit.ly/2eZvLJu, unpaginated. Also see Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).
11. Ibid, 2016, unpaginated.
12. Ibid, 2016, unpaginated.
13. Cliff Stagoll, "Becoming," in *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition,* ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 26; Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York and London: Continuum, 2006), 43.

Also see: Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell, eds., *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

14. Stagoll, 2010, 25-26.
15. Stagoll, 2010, 27.
16. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "Revisiting 'The Scarlet Lily': Mary Magdalene in Western Art and Culture," in *Secrets of Mary Magdalene: The Untold Story of History's Most Misunderstood Woman*, eds. Dan Burstein and Arne J. De Keijzer (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), 208; Forrester, "Blame it on the Management," unpaginated.
17. Whorephobia is defined in this essay as the discrimination against and violence towards sex workers, which extends to their forced victimization.
18. Gira Grant, 2014, 20.
19. Forrester, "Blame it on the Management," unpaginated.
20. Rosalee Sylvia Dorfman, "A Foucauldian Analysis of Power and Prostitution: Comparing Sex Tourism and Sex Work Migration," *Polis Journal* 5 (2011): 12, http://www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/students/student-journal/ug-summer-11/rosalee-dorfman.pdf.
21. Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 40.
22. Ibid, 1994, 41; Gira Grant, 2014, 15.
23. Marjorie M. Malvern, *Venus in Sackcloth: The Magdalen's Origins and Metamorphoses* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 170.
24. Nancy Calvert-Koyzis, "Ready to Sacrifice All: The Repentant Magdalene in the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe." In *Breaking Boundaries: Female Biblical Interpreters who Challenged the Status Quo,* eds. Nancy Calvert Koyzis and Heather Weir (New York and London: T & T Clark International, 2010), 194. Also see Helene E. Roberts, ed. *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, vol. I, (London: Routledge, 2013), 904; Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, op.cit, 201; Helene E. Roberts, op.cit, 901; Nancy Qualls-Corbett, *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine*, (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1988), 146.
25. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "Revisiting 'The Scarlet Lily,'" 207.
26. Jessica A. Boon, "A Full-Figured Paradox: Mary Magdalene as Prostitute, Apostle, Virgin, Ascetic, and Contemplative." In *Jusepe de Ribera's Mary Magdalene in a New Context,* vol. II, ed. Gabriele Finaldi (Dallas: Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist University, 2011).
27. Qualls-Corbett, 1988, 147.
28. Eric Jan Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 17; Kumiko Muka, *Hawthorne's Visual Artists and the Pursuit of a Transatlantic Aesthetics*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 187; George P. Landow, *Aesthetic and Critical Theory of John Ruskin*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 169.
29. Friedrich W. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings,* eds. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21; Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, 164; Stagoll, 2010, 26.
30. In this paper, "ethics" are separated from "morals," defined here as objective and universal, and refer to what Anna L. Peterson describes as "Feminist ethics" that "reject objectivist and universalist epistemology of traditional Western moral theory" by instead stressing the importance of relationships and context in order to "accommodate the particular needs and interests involved... in people's actual lives." Also see: Anna L Peterson, *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the*

World, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 139; Jean Marie Byrne, "Breath of Awakening: Nonduality, Breathing, and Sexual Difference" in *Breathing with Luce Irigaray,* eds. Lenart Skof and Emily A. Holmes (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 70.

31. Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation," *Angelaki*: *Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 6, no. 3, (2001): 129.
32. Buthaina I. Zanayed, "The Visual Representation of Mary Magdalene in Art: From Penitent Saint to Propagator of the Faith" (Master's thesis, The University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2009), 56.
33. Susan Haskins*, Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky, 1993), 399-400.
34. Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, 224.
35. The Venus Pudica, or the "modest Venus", traditionally covers her breasts with one hand and her *pudendum* with the other, a double gesture that both conceals and emphasises her nudity. Aligning the Magdalene with Venus portrays her as both carnal and divine; her nudity is thus permissible in the eyes of the church because the pudica gesture reinforces her penitence and renouncement of the flesh. See: Claudia Lazzaro, "The Visual Language of Gender in Sixteenth-Century Garden Sculpture," in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance,* eds. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 82; Rachel Geshwind, "The Printed Penitent: Magdalene Imagery and Prostitution Reform in Early Modern Italian Chapbooks and Broadsheets," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque,* eds. Michelle Erhardt; Amy Morris (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 120; Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 2-4.
36. Silvia Malaguzzi, *Botticelli. Ediz. Inglese*, (Florence: Giunti Editore, 2004), 72; Isabella Alston, *Botticelli*, (Charlotte: TAJ Books International LLC, 2014), 12-13.
37. Oscar Wilde, *Intentions*, 8th edition, (London: Methuen & Co, 1913), 169.
38. Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, 72; Tamsin E. Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 55.
39. Keith Robinson, "Towards a Political Ontology of the Fold: Deleuze, Heidegger, Whitehead and the 'Fourfold' Event," in *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader*, eds. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 199.
40. Dorfman, "A Foucauldian Analysis of Power and Prostitution," 7.
41. Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, 222.
42. Richard Shiff, "Less Dead," in *Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave,* ed. Cornelia H. Butler (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary art, 2008), 158 and 161.
43. Domenico Quaranta, Antonio Caronia, Janez Janša, *RE:akt! Reconstruction, Re-enactment, Re-reporting* (Brescia: Link Editions, 2014), 88.
44. Clare Johnson, *Femininity, Time and Feminist Art* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 53.
45. Quaranta, Caronia and Janša, *RE:akt! Reconstruction, Re-enactment, Re-reporting,* 80.
46. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 101.
47. Casey, *Flesh Made Word*, 183; Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, 72.
48. Francis Frascina, *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (London: Routledge, 2000), 350; Moira Roth and Jonathan D. Katz, *Difference/Indifference: Musings on Postmodernism, Marcel Duchamp and John Cage*, revised edition, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 60.
49. Roth and Katz, 2013, 60-61.
50. Michael Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 256-258.

51. Carolyn M. Tilghman, "The Flesh Made Word: Luce Irigaray's Rendering of the Sensible Transcendental," *Janus Head* 11, no.1, (2009), 42: http://www.janushead.org/11-1/tilghman.pdf; Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 2002), 45.
52. G. Thom. 114: "For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."
53. Marlene Dumas, Emma Bedford, eds., *Marlene Dumas: Intimate Relations* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2007), 82.
54. Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 35.
55. Benjamin Bennett, "Nietzsche's Idea of Myth: The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics," *Modern Language Association* 94, no. 3 (1979), 423.
56. Amelia Jones, "The 'Eternal Return': Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment," *Signs* 27, no.4, (2002), 965.
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58. Wendy Steiner, *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Free Press, 2001), XXII.
59. Jones, "The "Eternal Return"', 965; Claudia Mesch, *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1955*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014), 109.
60. Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 157.
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62. Gannit Ankori, "The Jewish Venus," in *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art,* eds. Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 250 and 258 n.33; John Berger, Chapter 3 of 'Ways of Seeing', 1972, in: Hilary Robinson, ed., *Feminism Art Theory: An Anthology 1968-2014*, second edition, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2015), 296: "A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude [...] In the average European oil painting of the nude the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man. Everything is addressed to him [...] [The nude] is made to appeal to *his* sexuality. It has nothing to do with her sexuality [...] Women are there to feed an appetite, not to have any of their own."
63. Helene E. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography,* 641; Griselda Pollock, "Nude Bodies: Displacing the boundaries between Art and Pornography," in *The Body*, eds. Sean Sweeney and Ian Hodder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101; Jane M. Ussher, *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 2.
64. Kath Albury, "Reading Porn Reparatively," *Sexualities* 12, no. 5 (2009): 647-648; Dorfman, "A Foucauldian Analysis of Power and Prostitution," 12.
65. Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, 218 and 225.
66. Jerrold Levinson, "Erotic Art and Pornographic Pictures," *Philosophy and Literature* 29, no. 1, (2005), 263.
67. Ibid, 239; Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, trans. and ed. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 184-185; Nietzsche,

The Birth of Tragedy, 29.

68. Freda Dröes, "Art at the Edge: The Painter Marlene Dumas," *Feminist Theology* 14, no. 3, (2006): 389-390.
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74. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 259 and 266; Shannon Winnubst, *Queering Freedom* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 94.
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Privileging the Lens

Framing Islamic Violence and the Creation of Authoritative Discourses

Jeremy Cohen

> "*The Arabs are one of the least developed cultures. They are typically nomads. Their culture is primitive...*"[1]

Abstract

Photography is the process of actively evaluating the world. Not only are photographs taken, witnessed and forgotten, they produce an affect that shapes the view of ourselves in relation to the other. This essay is about finding a theoretical framework to understand how particular forms of knowledge produce particular forms of power. The colonialist use of photography will serve as a foundation for two contemporary visual case studies. First, narratives that seek to highlight Muslim barbarism include domestic photojournalism in the wake of September 11th. Second, the dissemination to the West of the helpless other will come through an investigation of pictorial representation during the war in Kosovo. The photographic narratives produced can blur or transform racial, ethnic and religious truths and have the power to mobilize against the other while propagating normative discourses. In the midst of increased tension between the West and Middle East, these pictorial representations continue to produce knowledge about the Oriental other.

Keywords: Islam, violence, photography, news, colonialism

Photography is not simply seeing—it is actively evaluating the world. Photographs are not only taken, witnessed and forgotten, but shape the view of ourselves in relation to the *other*. What is retained by the witness is the photograph (de)contextualized by particular historical and cultural narratives. The historical and cultural narratives that inform our perceptions of the Middle East, for example, are made up of moments of war, suffering, savagery and romanticization that provide us with static and isolated visual truths. When we are told, "there are terrorists abroad," the

photograph provides visual evidence in the form of a massacre, a burnt-out building and human suffering. When we are told that the threat of Islamic violence is present in the West, the photograph shows us the Twin Towers falling, blood spilled on the floor of the Bataclan and what Susan Sontag calls "a narrowly selective transparency."[1] Most Westerners learn of national and international conflicts through pictorial representations in news media. The photographic narratives produced can blur or transform racial, ethnic and religious lines and have the power to mobilize against the racial *other* while propagating normative discourses. In the midst of increased tension between the West and the Middle East, these pictorial representations continue to produce knowledge about the Oriental *other.*

Methodology & Framework

Photography is not simply a window into the world or the process of empirical witnessing; it is a mode of knowledge production. From capture to dissemination, photographs have made Islam and the Arabic world appear as monolithic and comprehensible totalities. This essay is about finding a theoretical framework to understand how particular forms of knowledge produce particular forms of power. Focusing on the colonialist use of photography as the backdrop for two contemporary visual case studies, this essay will use critical historical analysis alongside contemporary visual and textual criticism. Notably, this paper will concentrate on: 1) narratives that seek to highlight Muslim *barbarism* including domestic photojournalism in the wake of September 11th; and 2), the dissemination to the West of the helpless *other* through an investigation of pictorial representation during the war in Kosovo. These two narratives both operate to produce forms of knowledge and degrade the *other* by propagating cultural-nationalistic myths through the dissemination of photographic evidence. This paper draws on Kendall Walton, who wrote that photographs are transparent in that "we see through them to the persons or objects that were in front of the camera at the moment of exposure."[2] Walton argues that all investigations in the representational arts should adopt the methodology of theory construction.

The Photographic Gaze

Susan Sontag's seminal work *On Photography* is a collection of essays that argues for the inherent power of the photographic gaze. Photography is neither a passive art nor static practice. It is imbued with changing cultural shifts and perceptions of photographer, photographed and viewer. To photograph, writes Sontag, "means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, feels like power."[3]

Photographs are epistemically turned into mental objects that codify truth and shape our perceptions of the world. Sontag's work will inform this paper by contextualizing the power of photography to both mobilize and reify. In the case study on domestic terrorism, for example, Sontag will show how events—when defined in a certain matter—mute the power of photographs taken abroad while strengthening those taken at home. Sontag argues that politics and photography are inseparable, the former using the latter as a means of producing knowledge and exerting power. This latter point will be made clear in the use of pictorial representations to support American hegemonic power.

Degradation Ceremonies

Harold Garfinkel published his essay, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies" in 1956. Degradation ceremonies are "any communicative work between persons, whereby the public identity of an actor is transformed into something looked on as lower in the local scheme of social types."[4] This communicative work is carried out by those already in positions of power and may pursue themes of moral indignation against the other.[5] The goal of degradation is to identify behaviors and identities of those who are to be degraded and reinforce dominant group solidarity against them.[6] The ultimate goal then is the "alteration of total identities."[7] Looking at the West as the dominant hegemonic power, degradation ceremonies are ones that lower the social and psychological status of non-Westerners or any perceived *other*. This essay argues that this degradation can be achieved through popular media consumption, primarily visual media.

Orientalism

Orientalism, or knowledge of the Orient, privileged the categorization and historicism of the Oriental *other* through study, judgment, discipline and governing.[8] It was argued that unlike the rational, virtuous and mature European, some in the Orient had never evolved beyond a primitive stage. The Oriental was, "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different."[9] Since those in the Orient could not govern themselves in rational ways, the moral authority fell to the West, a belief which crystallized as the "White Man's Burden."[10] The effect of colonization was twofold. First, colonization brought with it Western systems of organization that were imposed on the East. These systems were religious, militaristic, educational and judicial. Thus, at a systemic level, the colonizer was positioned above the colonized. Second, eager to demonstrate the moral work being accomplished, colonizing governments and Christian missionaries documented and shared visual

evidence with an eager public at home. This created an ideological hegemony that perpetuated the belief that the West had moral dominion over the non-Western world.[11] Oriental tropes produced particular kinds of knowledge about the *other*, creating a myth of the Orient that has held through to today.[12]

Western interests in the Middle East have a long history of occupation, documentation and representation. Pictorial representations of the Orient created dichotomies between the barbarism of the *other* and the moralism of the West. (Fig. 1) Rooted in moralism and biblical history, American interests in the Orient tended to be both spiritual and physical. The spiritual manifestation often played out on American soil. For example, the pilgrims traveled to the Americas with the purpose of building the New Jerusalem, while Mormon doctrine stated that Native Americans were in fact the lost tribes of Israel. This fascination with the Middle Eastern *other* only increased with the advent of tourism and missionary work in the 19th century.[13] Coupled with social Darwinism and the belief that, "the United States and Western Europe—controlled a descending array of underdeveloped, even 'primitive' *others*,"[14] the American moralist mission sought to Westernize the Middle East while simultaneously empowering the American project on the world stage.

Photography and American Colonialist History

The Protestant Mission

Photographs played a key role in categorizing and presenting the *other* to Western audiences. Field cameras by the age of the Protestant mission in the late 1800s were as ubiquitous as the Bible.[15] Cameras served as a discursive means of expressing core Christian values with the aim of shaping the cultural and human landscape abroad and at home. In other words, photography became the tool for evangelicals to affirm the right nature of Christianity and their understanding of the uncivilized *other*. By 1900 more than 9,000 Protestant missionaries were out in the field and the camera became a ubiquitous tool of catalogue, visual display and Christian representation of self and *other*.[16] Visual culture defined American Christianity and its relationship to the rest of the world in ways that print media could not achieve.[17] This was accomplished through visual evidence of Christian schools, hospitals and other benevolent functions. By the late 19th century, photographic evidence of missionary benevolence and stereotypical Islamic culture could be found displayed in churches, missionary tracts, and hung up inside the homes of American elites. Missionaries and governments alike were eager to display to those back

home the effect of their donations and tax monies; photography provided the means to do so.

American Moral Hegemony

As America began to eye global expansion, Spanish intervention in Cuba offered enticing incentives for America to conquer new territories. A rhetoric of humanitarianism, aided by pictorial representation, was used by many Christian groups to justify war on Spain in Cuba; the same rhetoric which later justified the conquest of the Philippines.[18] Pictorial representations of Cubans and their Spanish aggressors were central in pushing America towards moral intervention. Historian Andrew Preston writes that, "Christian America had a responsibility to God to make the world a better place,"[19] and drawings in newspapers became the catalyst that allowed for this responsibility to play out. Drawings of American women being molested by Spaniards, or of starving Cuban children, engaged an American population that saw benevolence and protection of its own as a moral duty. The majority of Americans believed that "America had a duty to uplift the human race, and God had chosen the Philippines as its first test."[20] Max Quanchi writes that images in this period "constituted self-generating ethos reinforcement that served constantly to promote the central ideas and concerns of the age."[21] Drawings, like photography, became a moralistic endeavor that was used to awaken Christian consciousness.[22]

Photography as Mediation

As the medium became more accessible, photography—unlike print journalism or painting— became the primary, epistemic interlocutor of Truth. Through the mode of capture and the science of emulsion, photography was perceived as a cure and solution to the weaknesses and corruptions of earlier technologies of representation.[23] Into the middle of the twentieth century, it became clear that photography held the power to shape the American collective sense of self and purpose. Both official narratives and the power of photojournalism shaped the public's response to international American interventions. The Korean War and the Vietnam War were opportunities for photojournalism to cement itself as the authoritative medium through which American perceptions could be filtered. Susan Sontag notes that, "without a politics, photographs of the slaughter-bench of history will most likely be experienced as, simple, unreal or as a demoralizing emotional blow."[24] Photographs shocked to the point of mobilization during the Vietnam War, where they sparked outrage, or dulled the senses to a state of apathy in Korea, where the war and photographs were sold as a "just struggle" against communism.[25]

Viewing as an active process during these conflicts was aided by cultural precepts, government propaganda and politics. In viewing a photograph of the *other*, "we become aware that it is not simply a captured view of the *other*, but rather a dynamic site at which many gazes or viewpoints intersect."[26]

Case Studies

September 11th - Clash of Civilizations

As photographs of mission fields or drawings of Spanish aggression helped mobilize Americans into moral action, so too did visual media after the terrorist attacks on New York City on September 11th, 2001. Visual mass media following the attacks became a primary site for the production of knowledge.[27] As Riopelle notes, "knowledge production itself has become a commodity that constructs reality, influences values and judgments, and extends to far-reaching spheres of life."[28] In the months following the 9/11 attacks, jarring images of *ground zero*, American heroism and the preparations for war dominated the news cycles. Liam Kennedy notes that the recurring visual motifs in many such photographs include "workers—firefighters, police officers, welders and others—depicted as heroic figures, set against a shattered urban landscape of melted metal and cascades of rubble."[29] One example taken by Thomas Monaster in the days following the attack shows a bloodied, soot covered firefighter being helped to this feet.[30] These heroic motifs were amplified as the so-called "War on Terror" began. Photographs in the news media drew on a black-and-white, Manichaean lexicon of good vs. evil and us vs. them. The black-and-white division of absolutes inevitably played itself out in pictorial representations as photography allowed for a bifurcation of the complexity of the issues, presented instead as neat binaries of heroes and villains.

Photographs taken after the September 11th event in New York City quickly became part of the media-consumption machine that fed 24-hour news networks and newspaper coverage. This included a constant cycle of images of the planes hitting the twin towers, plumes of smoke and emergency response teams covered in dust and soot. These images were soon appropriated into touring exhibits, including *September 11th: Images from Ground Zero* in 2002, meant to shape and maintain the public memory of the attacks.[31] Liam Kennedy notes that, similar to the "campaign of truth" of the Cold War era—which also saw the creation of touring propagandist photographic exhibits—this touring exhibit was meant to build particular cultural currency.[32] The propagandist influencing of the "hearts and minds" of the world against communism became once

again important after September 11th, 2001, albeit with a new target in mind. Newsweek published several inflammatory headlines following September 11th, including, "Why They Hate Us: The Roots of Islamic Rage And What We Can Do About It" on September 28th, 2001.[33] The cover featured a younger, presumably Muslim, child holding an automatic rifle in his hand. Touring productions, alongside news publications and broadcasts, became the unequivocal vehicle to remind Americans and the world of the devastation inflicted by the Muslim *other*.[34] Griffin's meta-analysis of pictorial representations following September 11th showed "approximately two-thirds of the 894 pictures published in *Newsweek* from the 24 September 2001 issue through the 28 January 2002 issue fall into just four general categories of content."[35] The largest of this category showed the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and its aftermath, followed by militaristic propaganda.

Ideological hegemonies

While officials were quick to distance the September 11th attacks from Islam and Muslim-Americans, the ensuing "War on Terror" and government-fed religious rhetoric led to an increase in hate crimes in North America. American Justice Department statistics show that following September 11th, 2001, hate crimes against Muslim Americans and visible minorities who appeared Muslim spiked. From less than 100 reported hate crimes in 2000, the numbers grew to 500 in 2001.[36] While the number of hate crimes plateaued after 2002, the numbers have never returned to pre-2001 levels: "In the first six years after 9/11, the Department investigated more than 800 incidents involving violence, threats, vandalism, and arson against persons perceived to be Muslim or Sikh, or of Arab, Middle Eastern, or South Asian origin."[37] Harold Garfinkel wrote that, "Moral indignation serves to effect the ritual destruction of the person denounced. Unlike shame, which does not bind persons together, moral indignation may reinforce group solidarity."[38] In other words, pictorial representation worked as a mediator and knowledge producer between the participants in the *clash of civilizations* to enforce American nativism at the expense of the perceived *other*. Talal Asad writes that "the authoritative status of representations and discourses is dependent on the appropriate production of other representations and discourses; the two are intrinsically and not just temporally connected."[39] When the wars are over, the photojournalists move on; but the constructed epistemological *reality* of American heroism and Muslim barbarism remains in the collective unconscious.

Kosovo, American Intervention & Positive Imagery

Contemporary photography of conflict zones serves several purposes. Importantly, the images broadcast in newspapers, magazine, traveling exhibits and 24-hour news cycles acts as "stand ins for complex narratives."[40] The image of irrational violence is easily swallowed and, as Sontag notes, then quickly absorbed into the viewer's understanding of how the world operates and judged.[41] Images of the Middle East in American post September 11th discourse can be divided into the categories of American exceptionalism and Muslim barbarism.[42] Each category reinforces the *other* so that Muslim barbarism calls for American hegemonic imperialism, which then reinforces the distinctions between both worlds. Michael Griffin notes that analyses of photo coverage during American interventions in the Middle East conformed to narratives of a powerful American military industrial complex and compassionate humanitarianism. Griffin notes that, "this discourse suggests an American myth of providential supremacy."[43] More than technological supremacy, images of military humanitarianism were juxtaposed with others depicting brutality inflicted by Arabs on other Arabs. Images that highlighted American humanitarianism were also more likely to be published by Western media, especially in times of political turmoil, such as during the Vietnam War and the "War on Terror."[44]

Orientalist imagery often idealized life in the Middle East with "common" depictions of its opium-induced tranquility along with brutality and savagery that justified intervention, governance and moral assistance. Yet unlike pictorial depictions following September 11th, the first Gulf war in the early 1990s and NATO bombings in Kosovo in the late 1990s highlighted the radical sameness of Americans and the *other*. Heteronormative photographs of the Muslim *other* flattened differences in an attempt to propel the American moral project abroad. The *Time* magazine cover from April 12th, 1999, features a woman with white skin and a young child with the title "Are Ground Troops The Answer?" This cover is a strong example of a flattening effect.[45] Wendy Kozol writes that, "This manipulation of racial categories in the American media, in turn, supported the U.S. government's militaristic foreign policies designed to aggressively maintain economic and political global dominance."[46] In Kozol's analysis of news coverage during the Kosovo conflict, in which Serbian and Yugoslavian military and government forces attempted to cleanse Albanian Muslims, she noted several recurring themes. Her analysis showed that pictorial representations reframed the ethnic identities of the Albanian Muslims into easily digestible figures for those in the West, which was effective because those depicted looked like any other European or Westerner.

In the April 12th *Time* magazine cover we see a mother and child running in a line of refugees. This image presents an aesthetically white, thus safe, Muslim *other.* It likewise plays on the cultural myth of the male necessity to protect the subaltern. Wendy Kozol argues that:

> The photograph thus narrows the perspective on war to a racialized gender ideal of maternal suffering familiar to U.S. audiences. The headline on *Time's* April 12th cover, 'Are Ground Troops the Answer?' assumes that the question is how, not whether, to rescue this 'white' woman, the nursing baby, and, by extension, the other innocent victims of this war.[47]

Women and children, as in the *Time* image described above, have often been used to achieve hegemonic goals, even under the guise of humanitarianism. It is a reaffirmation of the colonialist project in that it propels the myth that *others* are unfit to govern themselves and are in need of Western intervention.

In Ron Haviv's iconic photograph from the Kosovo war we see a man kneeling on the ground with a gun near his head, his expression one of terror.[48] In this image Christian soldiers are degrading the Muslim man, and, as noted by Martin Lukk, so are the witnesses.[49] The witnesses in this situation are both the photographer and the viewer. In this image captured of a man, presumably before his death, we see what it means to put "oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, feels like power."[50] The photographer Ron Haviv was hardly a passive witness, as he had asked the soldiers to pose while he shot the scene.

Quoting Lukk:

> As someone being denounced, the man held up his hands, terrified. Haviv was not a passive bystander; he was a participant. He was a witness to this degradation ceremony, and he sought out his role. Haviv is admittedly powerless but is more powerful than the man whose photograph he is taking. The man imagined that if he were able to pose for Haviv, his life might be saved. Haviv, in the man's imagination, offers him life.[51]

As will be discussed in the final analysis, this image calls to mind a web of relations for the viewer that further participates in the degradation ceremony and reaffirms our role in his degradation. Photojournalism during the Kosovo war aimed to transform the *other* into a digestible and relatable whole. Yet instead of reaffirming our humanity, these images reinforced cultural distinctions, participating in a degradation ceremony by lowering the autonomous identity of the *other*.[52] The line of refugees, the kneeling man, the bombed-out ruins of former cities moved Americans to action by paradoxically flattening difference and presenting the *other* as wholly different from Western way of life, religion, and sense of security.

Final Analysis

Roland Barthes in his work *Camera Lucida* writes that the photograph can become "subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is *pensive,* when it thinks."[53] Art historian David Morgan argues that images and icons inevitably bring the viewer into what he calls a *web of relations*.[54] These webs are the images, preconceived beliefs and cultural artifacts that inform the way we view, and in turn construct what is being viewed. What is retained by the viewer is the photograph (de)contextualized by dominant historical and cultural narratives. Though privileged as empirical evidence, the photographic image is an empty vessel ready to receive meaning imposed by the photographer and viewer. As Asad writes, responding to a perceived a priori status of symbols, "it was not the mind that moved spontaneously to truth, but power that created the conditions for experiencing that truth."[55] Birgit Meyer points out that what is in play in photography is "the capacity of a picture to invoke for its beholders a sense of likeness to what it represents."[56] Photography is a medium that "renders present a mental image or figure in the imagination."[57] Images participate in but also become reflections of cultural myths; they participate in the meaning-making project and political landscape which has and continues to other those photographed. Art production, the degraded other with a gun pointed to his head, gun-wielding children and cultural markers such as the hijab, reinforce the dichotomy of us vs. them, West vs. East. Such images, represented as authentic reality, can both prompt moral action or desensitize the viewer to the point of apathy. In either case, the result has been a continuation of the colonialist mission and the disempowerment of Muslim communities at home and abroad.

The narrative of Muslim barbarism has a lineage extending to the first Muslim conquests. In modernity, a barrage of visual media have propelled that narrative, which continues in a new guise to police boundaries between

other and us, or what Jacques Ranciere calls a "partition of the sensible."[58] This policing of boundaries goes beyond television and newspaper coverage into the cultural fabric of the West. After September 11th, news media were filled with images of the atrocities committed by the regime of Saddam Hussein as well as the Taliban. Yet these images were often re-contextualized, with the goal of convincing Americans that intervention was in everyone's best interest. Such images, including those appearing on the covers of the tremendously influential news magazines *Newsweek* and *Time*, pushed the narrative that the Middle East is comprised of a monolithic whole that 'hates us.'

Images disseminated to the public after September 11th manufactured tension between American Muslims, based on narratives of trauma constructed around the September 11th attacks. Following the attacks, news organizations frequently used images to represent "geopolitical arenas and societies that could be categorized in politics or the media as anti-US or anti- Western."[59] These images reaffirmed Oriental stereotypes, degrading the status of Muslim Americans and Muslims abroad. Images reflect and reinforce cultural differences used by the powerful, to "facilitate and sustain the spread of a particular ideology, a potent strategy is the construction of myths about 'the other'—understood in a narrower sense as those who are perceived to be outside the normalized social cosmos"[60] It was not that the news media published images; it was the way in which they went about it. Photographs often utilized the gendered predispositions of Americans towards women and children, as seen on *Newsweek* covers. As a publication focusing on photojournalism, *Newsweek* was in a position of power as a producer of knowledge, given the predisposition of presenting visual representations as epistemological Truth. Images were put into relation with the world in the same way that pictorial representations did during colonialist missions. Visual media stoked Western fears of the *other* while producing a moral effect that sought dominance over those who were perceived to not be able to govern themselves.

Photographs position the viewer within a mode of power which, properly defined, can degrade what/who has been captured. As with the war in Kosovo:

> The world watched war crime after war crime through the news media. The world played the role of witness. Not just Haviv [the photographer], but the world, became a sustaining component of the system that enabled

> ethnic cleansing. War criminals played the role of the denouncer. Victims were the denounced. The world was the witness.[61]

Photojournalism in Kosovo constructed a narrative that was very different from what would be sold to the public after September 11th. Yet both examples have a lineage of problematic representation. Photography need not show only barbarism and blood to degrade a population, religion or culture. Instead it can play on gendered cultural myths and present the *other* as an actor in a scenario representing a simulacrum of Western ideals. In either case, it is a dominant and hegemonic power imposing itself on a perceived lower *other.*

Conclusion

The discourse on Islamic violence does not exist in a vacuum, nor does it exist solely due to the rise of Salafist Islam or Western interventions in the Middle East. Narratives are often informed by visual depictions authorized by image producers and viewers. With regards to the legacy of visual representations on today's political landscape, Cameron Riopelle writes:

> Contemporary globalized capitalist ideology carries the imprint of historical trajectories foregrounded by discourses of modernity, European civilization, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, simultaneously underwritten by latent social realities of slavery and colonialism.[62]

Visual images were essential in cultivating and maintaining Europe's Orientalist vision of the Middle East, and this function is now richly fulfilled by photographs and other in contemporary visual media. News media are disseminators of "authentic" visual representations and can produce new forms of knowledge, degrade the *other* and reify dominant cultural myths.

This paper has argued for the power of images to move people at conscious and unconscious levels. Images of war and brutality, as well as images of cultural differentiation, are sensational forms which produce particular effects in the viewer. Photographs are more than empty vessels; rather, like other media, they "shape the figuration of the images they convey and address beholders in a specific manner that triggers collective responses and tunes perception and sensation."[63] In other words, photographs have the power to change the way we view ourselves in relation to the *other*. In this way the viewer becomes a participant in the violence. Images move

from the photographer to the individual viewer, who then projects what was seen back into the collective through concepts and representations, beginning the cycle again. Orientalism is still with us, even if, instead of presenting painted images of opium dens in Morocco as evidence of the supposed fatalism of Islam, we now juxtapose photographs of heroic soldiers with irrational violence. Visual culture continues to serve ideologies of hegemony.

Endnotes

1. Ayn Rand (1974).
2. Susan Sontag, *On photography*, (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 4.
3. Scott Walden, "Photography and Knowledge," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no.1 (2012): 365.
4. Sontag, *On Photography*, 2.
5. Harold Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," *American Journal of Sociology* 61, no. (1956): 421.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid, 420.
9. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 42.
10. Ibid, 41.
11. See Said's analysis of Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden"; in *Orientalism* 45, 224, and 226-229.
12. These pictorial representations were numerous. They included postcards, letters, lithographs, stretched canvas, etc. They tended to display either the *Arab* in his natural environment, or the Westernization being accomplished by missionaries (e.g. hospitals, schools, photographs of people wearing western clothing).
13. Cameron Riopelle and Parthiban Muniandy, "Drones, maps and crescents: CBS News' visual construction of the Middle East" *Media, War & Conflict* 6, no. 2 (2013): 157.
14. Douglas Little, *Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. 2008), 10.
15. Ibid.
16. Kathryn T. Long, "Cameras 'never Lie': The Role of Photography in Telling the Story of American Evangelical Missions," *Church History* 72, no. 4 (2003): 825.
17. Ibid, 834.
18. Ibid, 823.
19. Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, (New York/Toronto: Alfred A. Knoff, 2012), 210.
20. Ibid, 208.
21. Ibid, 231.
22. Max Quanchi, "Visual Histories and Photographic Evidence," *The Journal of Pacific History* 41, no. 2 (2006): 171.
23. Sontag, *On Photography,* 49.

24. Christopher Pinney, "The Prosthetic Eye: Photography as Cure and Poison," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14 (2008): 34.
25. Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.
26. Ibid.
27. Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes: The Example of National Geographic," *Visual Anthropology Review*, 7 (1991): 187.
28. Riopelle and Muniandy, "Drones, maps and crescents," 158.
29. Ibid.
30. Liam Kennedy, "Seeing and Believing: On Photography and the War on Terror," *Journal of Public Culture* 24, no. 2 (2012): 319.
31. Firefighter covered with ash after World Trade Center collapsed in terrorist attack. http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/firefighter-covered-with-ash-after-world-trade-center-news-photo/97269953#firefighter-covered-with-ash-after-world-trade-center-collapsed-in-picture-id97269953
32. Commissioned by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, this 27-photograph exhibit traveled to 135 cities in 64 countries in 2002. The photographs were taken by Joel Meyerowitz. See also Kennedy, "Seeing and Believing," 315.
33. Kennedy, "Seeing and Believing," 316.
34. Cover of *Newsweek*, September 28th, 2001. http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/2012/09/newsweek-muslim-rage-redux-135752
35. Kennedy, "Seeing and Believing," 318.
36. Michael Griffin, "Picturing America's 'War on Terrorism' in Afghanistan and Iraq." In *Photographic motifs as news frames Journalism 5* (2004): 391.
37. Eric Holder and Thomas E. Perez, *Confronting Discrimination in the Post-9/11 Era: Challenges and Opportunities Ten Years Later. A Report on the Civil Rights Division's Post-9/11 Civil Rights Summit Hosted by George Washington University Law School, October 19, 2011*, (Report produced by the Department of Justice, United States of America April 2012), 4.
38. Ibid, 8.
39. Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," 421.
40. 39 Talal Asad, "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1993), 31.
41. Griffin, "Picturing America's 'War on Terrorism,'" 383.
42. Sontag, *On Photopgraphy*, 9.
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44. Griffin, "Picturing America's 'War on Terrorism,'" 383.
45. Ibid, 395.
46. A Serbian Muslim Women walks in a line of refugees. Title of issue begging the question. http://content.time.com/time/covers/asia/0,16641,19990412,00.html
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48. Ibid.
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50. Martin Lukk and Keith Doubt, "Bearing Witness and the Limits of War Photojournalism: Ron Haviv in Bijeljina," *Human Rights Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2015): 632.
51. Sontag, *On Photography*, 2.
52. Lukk and Doubt, "Bearing Witness," 633.
53. Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," 423.
54. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 38.
55. David Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, (London/New York: Routledge, 2010), 57.
56. Asad, "The Construction of Religion," 35.
57. Brigit Meyer, *Sensational Movies: Video, Vision, and Christianity in Ghana*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 94.
58. Ibid, 107.
59. Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics,* edited and translated by Gabriel Rockhill, (London/New Delhi/New York/Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 36.
60. Ibid, 155.
61. Ibid, 154.
62. Lukk and Doubt, "Bearing Witness," 634.
63. Riopelle and Muniandy, "Drones, maps and crescents," 154.
64. Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 18.

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Once the Buddha was an Aryan

Race Sciences and the Domestication of Buddhism in North America

Ryan Anningson

Abstract

This study examines the ways in which Buddhists in North America in the early twentieth century utilized the language of race sciences in order to present themselves as carriers of a superior religious tradition. This tradition was presented as spiritually and racially superior, and therefore overturned colonial narratives of Asian Buddhist inferiority. By studying interactions of Buddhists and race sciences, we are able to nuance the historiography of Buddhism in North America, connecting it to broader global networks, as well as display instances of Asian agency in the development of Buddhist Modernism. Furthermore, the place of race sciences in American society in the early twentieth century, and connections between Buddhism and scientific racism problematizes reified terms like "modern" and "science." What was once considered the most cutting-edge scientific development of the age, utilized by early Buddhist in North America, is now considered socially repugnant.

Keywords: History, Buddhism in North America, Buddhism and Science.

According to British Member of Parliament Philip Snowden in a 1926 article published in *The Young East,*[1] "The most formidable problem before the world today, and especially for the Western nations, is the awakening of the 'subject' races." [2] Race science is a broad term that encompasses a number of scientific theories from the early twentieth century that equated racial characteristics to biology and therefore justified certain perceptions of human evolution, intelligence, phrenology, and even eugenics. In the early twentieth century, then, many within the scientific community believed that evolutionary biology could explain the development of human races.[3] These scientists separated human populations by phenotype, a category which was then combined with other scientific categories of the time to explain racial differences and social-

evolutionary trajectories.[4] This erroneous positing of social characteristics and development from the predetermined science of race was considered the most progressive science of the day. While this twentieth century pseudo-science must be differentiated from the science of the twenty-first century, it will be important to note that in both contexts the term "science" is reified to the point where it becomes equivalent to truth. This means that in the early twentieth century scientific racism was considered by many to be scientific truth—just like biology or physics today. The rush to reify science as essentialized truth helps to explain why the United States underwent its own "eugenics craze" during the Progressive Era, reaching its zenith in 1927 when states began legislating eugenic sterilization laws for "unfit" citizens.[5]

What difference would it make to the study of Buddhism in North America if Buddhists actively participated in a racist past? In this paper I will argue that Buddhists utilized racial science—then considered the most modern scientific thinking of the day—in order to reimagine a past which placed them at the pinnacle of racial evolutionary development. The utilization of scientific racism influenced the process of Buddhist modernization and domestication in the United States, and this history provides new insight into Asian agency in the spread of Buddhism globally. Buddhist writers in the early twentieth century were able to use preexisting discussions of Buddhism and science, combined with the new race sciences, not only to argue for the superiority of their religion, but also their own racial superiority during a time of colonial incursion in Asia and accusations of Buddhist corruption in North America. While we now recognize race science as fictitious, these theories nevertheless allowed Buddhists to invert accusations of Asian racial and religious inferiority by claiming that science proved Asian Buddhist superiority. Presentations of Buddhist superiority in North America helped to lay the foundations for Buddhism's place in the North American religious marketplace, as presentations of Buddhism's religious superiority, connections to science, and non-dogmatic rationalism helped to create the Zen Boom of the 1950s and 1960s. This paper is not a discussion of whether Buddhists were "racist" in any sense, but instead describes the way in which Buddhists deployed race sciences in order to reverse common narratives of Asian racial inferiority and Buddhist corruption. Although from the standpoint of 2016 much of the language of scientific racism is understood to be socially abhorrent, the fact that scientific racism and eugenics were considered to be advanced scientific thinking complicates terms like "modern" and "science"—especially in light of popular comparisons between Buddhism and science.

Race Sciences in America

Eugenics became in vogue with North American intellectuals in the early twentieth century. Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, is often credited with the creation of eugenics, or, as he phrases it, "a brief word to express the science of improving stock."[6] Broadly speaking, the eugenics movement represented the pinnacle of cutting edge science and a progressive solution to societal ills through the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.[7] Theories of racial evolution were thought to explain the development of humanity from pre-history to the current day. In other words, it was widely accepted that evolution through natural selection described the process whereby humanity could progress and develop better characteristics by eradicating individual traits deemed negative for society.

Eugenics was not merely an intellectual abstraction, but influenced social policy and the state. Perhaps the starkest example of this comes from the 1927 Supreme Court case, Buck v. Bell (274 U.S. 200). Carrie Buck was a poor girl from Virginia when she became pregnant at age sixteen.[8] As Virginia, in 1924, had enacted a eugenic sterilization law based on the theory that social defects like criminality and poverty were passed down genetically, Buck's poverty was presented as evidence that she was a "moral degenerate." Her child was also deemed "below average" in infancy.[9] These charges led to her undergoing forced sterilization at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. The case made it all the way to the United States Supreme Court, with former president, Chief Justice, and active member of the national eugenics movement William Howard Taft presiding. The court found that Buck should be sterilized. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was asked to write the majority opinion, a brief which his colleagues on the court called "brutal."[10] In this now infamous brief, Holmes wrote that Buck should be sterilized, "for the protection of the state," before ending with the social lament that, "three generations of imbeciles are enough." Major US newspapers lauded the decision, and over the next ten years more than a dozen states added eugenic sterilization laws.

Scientific racism also influenced American international policy. President Calvin Coolidge signed the Immigration Act of 1924—which encompassed the National Origins Act and Asian Exclusion Act—with the express purpose of preserving "the ideal of American homogeneity."[11] The Immigration Act included a quota system for certain areas, such as Latin America, while completely banning East Asians. The Act encountered very little opposition in Congress, and garnered strong public support from the

scientific community and even the American Federation of Labor. Madison Grant, a eugenicist and author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, strongly favoured the legislation as a way of upholding American superiority.[12] The quotas imposed by the Immigration Act effectively cut Asian immigration until they were repealed in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

Theories of racial development were used to justify global colonial endeavours, as "benevolent" races attempted to assist those stalled along the singular evolutionary track. American military expansion into economically poorer nations was in part justified by the race science ideals of Social Darwinism and Anglo-Saxon superiority. However, American Imperialism differed from British Colonialism, as the United States very rarely occupied nations in the systematic fashion of the British in India, for instance. In 1823 the Monroe Doctrine was signed, declaring that the United States alone could influence the countries of Latin America. Following the Spanish-American War (1898), the United States embarked on a period of "benevolent imperialism," during which time the Philippines, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and Cuba all came under American power.[13]

Race sciences and eugenics greatly influenced popular culture, especially in the 1920s. Lothrop Stoddard was a Harvard-trained historian, political writer, and eugenicist. He wrote *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* in 1920, which enjoyed great popularity and was referenced in *The Great Gatsby*.[14] Stoddard wrote that the hereditary superiority of the white race was being threatened by the increasing number of births and immigration from the "colored" races, whom he often called the "hordes."[15] Industrialists were revered members of society in the 1920s. In the spring of 1920, Henry Ford's personal newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, published a series of articles chronicling the perceived conspiracies of the world Jewish population.[16] The articles were compiled to create *The International Jew: The World's Problem*, a four-volume series. Popular culture both creates and reflects national social consciousness, and race sciences were ubiquitous amongst American intellectuals.

The natural sciences were not the only academic branches concerned with the development of racial characteristics; anthropology was also used to "prove" scientific theories of racial evolution. According to Brian Siegel, nineteenth century anthropologists "all but invented the idea of 'race'… [as] most of our current racial folklore derives from the 'scientific racism' and armchair evolutionism of the nineteenth century anthropologists."[17] Siegel argues that anthropologists studied human cultures and their findings

were then merged with race sciences in order to explain the current state of various world cultures biologically. In other words, cultural variation became biological predisposition, even to the point of considering some races as different species.[18] I do not argue that anthropology as an academic discipline is somehow "to blame" for the scientific racism of the early twentieth century, merely to show that the intellectual tenor of America at the time was predisposed to views of racial evolution and social Darwinism.

Scientific racism represented the cutting edge of scientific knowledge and a social truism, with scientific discovery reinforcing what was then considered to be common sense. Americans believed that eugenic sterilization and selective breeding could rid society of social ills like poverty and "feeble-mindedness." Race science theories became so ingrained in American society that they became fodder for the writings of popular culture and were even used to justify American imperial expansion. The science of the day was thus self-reinforcing: anthropology proved what science said about racial development, while race sciences helped to explain the cultural differences anthropologists encountered, either in the field or from armchairs. Scientific racism was so ubiquitous in early twentieth century America that it influenced the beliefs of religious practitioners.

Metaphysical Buddhism

In the early twentieth century, many American intellectuals believed Buddhism was the religion most compatible with modern science. One century later, connections between Buddhism and science are so commonplace within American culture that the statement basically functions as a general truism. However, even "science" is a construct, changing in various times and locales. Paul Carus and Helena Blavatsky both claimed to be developing "religions of science" whose doctrines would fully align with the discoveries of modern science.

The doctrines of the Theosophical Society influenced the development of Buddhism in North America. Madame Blavatsky claims to have studied the ancient *Book of Dzyan*, written in the secret language of Senzar, when writing *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888.[19] Blavatsky argues that the earth has gone through seven ages, and that humanity originally had seven root races, which then developed seven sub-races. Atlanteans were the fourth root race in human development. They inhabited the mythical island of Atlantis, and produced an advanced civilization with the use of electricity and airplanes. However, this age was marked by materialism, and therefore

the final sub-race of Atlanteans was subsumed into the fifth root race, the Aryans. The Aryans destroyed the Atlanteans who remained as they had become, "yellow and red, brown and black," due to their inferiority and sin.[20] It was in this violent melee that some of these inferior Atlanteans were able to escape to the lands of Africa and Asia. In Blavatsky's version of history, "the last survivors of the fair child of the White Island perished ages before. Their elect had taken shelter on the sacred Island, while some of the accursed races, separating from the main stock, now lived in the jungles and underground, when the golden yellow race became in its turn 'black with sin.'"[21] In the early twentieth century the Theosophical Society presented its doctrines as modern science, a designation which found immense popularity around the turn of the century.[22]

During this time philologists and race scientists sought to prove that the historical Buddha was Aryan.[23] Sanskrit is a part of the Indo-European language family, as is Greek, Latin, German, French, and English. These theories of language groups were combined with racial groups to demonstrate that the Buddha was racially an Aryan.[24] The historical Buddha was now racially and linguistically connected to Europeans.[25] One Philologist, Adolphe Pictet (1799-1875), attempted to publicize connections of Indo-European heritage, "to revive Indo-European memories in a Christian Europe that is in search of an even brighter future."[26] The Buddha, portrayed as racially Aryan, was therefore connected to a greater European past, and Buddhism was a religion of science developed for an Aryan future.

In the early twentieth century, Buddhism was a religion of science, and North American Buddhists were eager for a religion which agreed with modern scientific thinking. *The Golden Lotus* was a popular Buddhist magazine from 1944-1967; it was published in America and portrayed itself as a magazine for seekers, sympathizers, and others coming to Buddhism for perhaps the first time.[27] *The Golden Lotus* describes the upward evolutionary trajectory of the Aryan race in world history, including the Buddha, in a series of articles called "The Race."[28] This series of articles ran from 1944-1946, during the final years of World War II, when many were still ignorant (willfully or not) to the horrors wrought by eugenics in Nazi Germany. In "The Story of the Buddha's Dharma," the author describes the need for the "Āryan Root Race" to establish their religious inheritance to Buddhism, and regain control from those who would otherwise corrupt it.[29] In a side-panel on the following page, the editors quote Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden,"—"take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed/Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your

captives' need"—before a separate article explaining how the low karmic state of the Asian population may justify colonial endeavours in order to reinvigorate the Buddhist heartland.[30] It is clear that Buddhists in America utilized the language of race sciences in order to imagine themselves within an historical Buddhist pedigree, and in many ways place themselves at the centre of that tradition.

Buddhist doctrines could even be used to explain the development of human history, especially when merged with scientific racism. Although collective karma is not a traditional Buddhist concept, in "The Story of the Buddha's Dharma," the author argues that karma creates the racial characteristics of various social groups, thus making culture biologically determined.[31] According to this line of thinking, when Buddhism spread from Aryan India to the "uncivilized land" of Tibet, Buddhism naturally developed "uncivilized qualities" and a number of "clinging, parasitic superstitions" such as devotional practices.[32] Articles within *The Golden Lotus* clearly draw connections between the unfolding of karmic proclivities, racial designations and colonialism—connections which maintain that other nations may be helped by a benevolent and karmically superior nation. This web of explanation further displays the connections between Buddhism and modern science, and elucidates the purported corruption of Buddhism over previous millennia.

The real question, then, was: how could a superior religion of science have developed in a "backwards nation" 2,500 years before the present day? Race sciences explained how a once-great religion, started by an Aryan social reformer—the Buddha—could become the corrupted superstition of the "Lamaists" and the Japanese.[33] Max Müller once asked:

> Is it not high time that the millions who live in Japan and profess a faith in Buddha should be told that this doctrine of Amitābha is *a secondary form of Buddhism, a corruption of the pure doctrine of the Royal Prince*, and that if they really mean to be Buddhists, they should return to the words of Buddha, as they are preserved to us in the older Sūtras? But these older Sūtras are evidently far less considered in Japan than the *degraded and degrading tracts*, the *silly and mischievous stories of Amitābha* and his paradise of which, I feel convinced, Buddha himself never knew even the names.[34]

Race sciences thus provided an explanation for what scholars viewed as the corruption of Buddhism in light of the racial genius of the Buddha himself. The Buddha preached a superior religion, which was meant for superior people. However, this "Āryan Path" was corrupted by the inferior peoples of Asia following his death.[35] The original Buddhism was a scientific philosophy, developed by and for Aryans, while all other corruptions were placed there through later Asian accretions. Therefore, the Aryan Buddhists discovering the religion anew were its rightful claimants. Buddhists in the United States were reclaiming their racial, linguistic, and spiritual heritage, and wresting it away from those who had previously degenerated this Aryan religion.

Race Sciences and Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia

A history of white racism would not be terribly new as an academic study, but what if Buddhists of Asian ancestries were similarly engaging debates in Buddhism and race sciences? Anagārika Dharmapāla (b. Don David Hewavitharane) first rose to prominence with the Theosophical Society in Sri Lanka. He aided Col. Henry Steele Olcott and Madame Blavatsky on their trips throughout Sri Lanka, although he later split from the group over issues of universal religion and the Theosophical presentation of what Dharmapāla considered a poor version of Buddhism.[36] Richard Jaffe has also described connections between Japan and Southeast Asia in the early twentieth century, which shows currents of influence as well as a pan-Asian desire to connect to original Buddhism.[37] Race sciences in the United States would therefore come to influence Buddhism broadly, as cross-cultural flows impacted Buddhism in Asia as well as Buddhists coming to America.

Dharmapāla used the language of race sciences to argue that Buddhism itself was proof of Asian superiority. He claims that the people of the West are not racially superior at all, and that Asians who are descended from the Buddha are the true Aryans.[38] Dharmapāla countered the attacks of Christians in Sri Lanka on racial grounds; as he states, "we condemn Christianity as a system utterly unsuited to the gentle spirit of the Aryan race."[39] The influence of colonialism helps explain why Dharmapāla would focus on race science, as he was able to utilize the most cutting-edge science of the day in order to turn arguments around and claim Asian-Aryan superiority over those who only "call themselves Aryan."[40]

Aryan superiority was further justified through anti-Semitism. As Dharmapāla writes, "the two Semitic religions [Christianity and Islam]…

are responsible for the retardation of progress of the larger Humanity of Asia… all that was beautiful in aesthetic architecture, built by the devotees of Aryan spirituality, went down with a crash, under the sledgehammer of attack of Semitic monotheism."[41] He thus maintains that the nations of the West were prone to war and barbarism because they were mired in the depths of Semitic superstition.[42] Race sciences allowed Buddhists to claim their own superiority over the West, as the very foundation of European culture was "received… from the Asiatic Jews."[43]

Aryan superiority was also used as a merit-based designator. In other words, one could become Aryan through behaviour, thus connecting a pan-Asian Buddhism against the Semitic creeds of "the West." The Buddha uses the term *Āryan* throughout the canon to mean "noble," as in the story of the fisherman, Ariya, where the Buddha tells him that a noble person would not gain employment as a fisherman because they hurt living beings.[44] According to Dharmapāla, "with the introduction of Buddhism… Japan became Aryanized."[45] This merit-based designation makes all Buddhists into Aryans if they behave according to the noble example of the Buddha, although Dharmapāla continued to suggest that Sri Lankans were racially superior also. In other words, the entire Buddhist world was superior to the West, with Sri Lankan Aryans doubly superior, both spiritually and racially. If one group, Buddhists, were all of Aryan stock, then this would suggest that all others were barbarians (*mleccha*).

Although the language of racism carries a tenor of violence, race science obscures this tone behind a guise of knowledge specialization. The early twentieth century was a period of great violence, as the World Wars or the experiences of colonization demonstrate. The vocabulary of scientific racism necessarily creates a hierarchical system of violence whereby one group of people is denigrated at the expense of others. This denigration is justified through pre-determined biology, thus entrenching the tenor of violence within a science of dehumanization. A science which creates a hierarchy of humanity based on biological predisposition is inherently dehumanizing and thus connected to violence, especially during a period of World War and the utilization of race sciences in Nazi Germany.[46] Following the end of the colonial era in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), the island nation bore great periods of intense violence often revolving around conflicts between a perceived superior in-group against an inferior out-group, which in many ways mirrors the language of scientific racism purported in the early twentieth century.

Japanese Buddhists also utilized the language of racial science to assert their own superiority and counter both internal and external critiques. During the Meiji Era Japanese government officials persecuted Buddhism by claiming that it was a foreign religion of superstition with a parasitic monastic class[47]—which leading scholars of the day such as Max Müller agreed upon. Similarly, academics and Buddhists in the United States claimed that Japanese Buddhism represented the religion's most degraded form, while the American government was perceived as insulting the nation of Japan with stilted trade agreements. Japanese Buddhists believed their religion and their homeland were being publicly disparaged. Japanese Buddhists were therefore defensive of their own status, while simultaneously attempting to spread their religious tradition to North America.

Japanese Buddhists around the early twentieth century attempted to invert discussions of Japanese Buddhist degeneration and corruption through an emic reevaluation of Buddhist historical development. Critics argued that Japanese Buddhism was a corruption of the teachings of original Buddhism, in part due to temporal distance from the founder as well as persistent historical accretions added to the religion. However, according to the Tendai doctrine of *goji* (five periods), the Buddha taught the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* first following his enlightenment, but his audience could not understand due to their low capabilities. The Buddha then taught the doctrines of Theravāda Buddhism as expedient means, before moving on to the deeper teachings of the Mahāyāna, with the pinnacle teaching of Buddhism as the *Lotus Sūtra*. This, again, explains how Buddhism could have come from a superior being, then degraded, and finally ended as a superior religion again, as the Japanese Buddhists argued that their specific forms of Buddhism represented the pinnacle of Buddhist teachings. The past was reimagined in order to position the Japanese as superior against others.

Japanese Buddhists and the Theosophical Society were mutually influencing each other in the early twentieth century. D. T. Suzuki's wife, Beatrice Lane, was a Theosophist, and the pair started a new lodge of the Theosophical Society in Kyoto on 8 May 1924 (White Lotus Day).[48] Articles titled "Buddhism and Theosophy" and "The Over-Soul" ran in Japanese Buddhist magazines throughout the early twentieth century. Japanese Buddhists in the United States also discussed the affinities between the doctrines of Theosophy and Eastern Buddhism.[49]

Japanese Buddhism and the Japanese nation became entwined with the Buddhism of Southeast Asia and India in the early twentieth century. Japanese Buddhists were in close contact with Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia through travel and correspondence.[50] Japanese Buddhists in the early twentieth century often went on long pilgrimage trips to the sites of "original Buddhism" in India, and some Japanese monks underwent Theravāda ordination in Sri Lanka. Dharmapāla also visited Japan, and his writings appear in both *The Young East* and the *Eastern Buddhist*, two influential Japanese Buddhist magazines. There were direct networks of influence and engagement between the United States (or at least a perceived "West"), Metaphysical Buddhists, South Asian Buddhists, and Japanese Buddhists.[51]

Japanese writers used *Nihonjinron*—the belief in a defined core characteristic of Japaneseness as a racial designator— to justify colonial expansion throughout Asia. *Nihonjinron* was especially promoted following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), in which the smaller nation of Japan defeated more powerful Russia during the Meiji Era and in the years preceding World War II. According to Kwoyen Ōtani in *The Eastern Buddhist*, the Japanese Yamato race naturally "enjoy[s] peace, no warlike demonstrations take place, the virtuous are respected, the benevolent are honoured, and the rules of propriety are observed."[52] D. T. Suzuki and others claimed that every Japanese is imbued with a "Samurai spirit" of selflessness, respect, and honour, which included Har Dayal's assessment that, "the Japanese are *great* in every sense of that word—great because of their patriotism, their love of progress, their earnestness, their energy, their tradition of art, and their deep religious view of life."[53] *Nihonjinron* included an imagined past, such as the article "A Representative Woman of Japan," by Hanso Tarao, which describes how each Yamato woman holds a "samurai spirit bequeathed to her both by her parents and husband."[54] Japanese Buddhists were arguing for their own racial superiority, thus inverting scientific arguments.

Japanese Buddhists also utilized the language of race sciences in order to prove their racial and spiritual superiority. Taken together, the arguments of the five periods and *Nihonjinron* suggest that the Japanese are superior, both racially and spiritually. On a global scale, Japanese Buddhist writers essentialized the East as "spiritual" versus the "materialist" West. This argument was meant to counter American material prosperity by suggesting that they were lacking in spirituality, a quality which the Japanese had in abundance. In "Monochromism Versus Polychromism," J. Takakusu argues that biological race designators determine the preferred colour palette of individuals, and it is this colour palette which influences race-based

religious preferences.[55] As Aryans are monochromatic, they are more predisposed to monotheistic and dualistic thinking, which makes them prone to violence.[56] This point may be seen as countering the superiority of the Buddha himself, but given the nationalistic fervour of *Nihonjinron* at the time, Japanese writers may have been very willing to 'kill the Buddha' on the path to proving Yamato superiority. The Yamato Race is inherently spiritual, representing the pinnacle of the pinnacle of religious thought, and racially superior through the characteristics of *Nihonjinron*.

As a superior nation the Japanese were now in a position to help the other nations of Asia, who had fallen behind due to their inferior racial and spiritual capabilities. Although Suzuki sometimes referred to China and India as antecedents of Japanese Buddhism, other authors argued that the Chinese racial temperament meant "the people of [China] have no religion," but "with proper guidance…they will embrace true religion."[57] Korea (Chōsen) had similarly fallen behind, as Japanese writers claimed Korean Buddhism was in a state of disrepair with lazy monks gambling and fornicating. Japan gained control over most of the Korean Peninsula in 1910 and placed all Korean Buddhist temples under the auspices of Japanese Zen officials. Racialized nationalistic language continued over the next decades until the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. Japan's colonial expansion was, in some ways, an attempt to revive the "pure Aryan form of Buddhism from the Japanese storehouse."[58]

In the early twentieth century Japanese Buddhists were pressured internally, from their own government officials, and externally, from the critiques of missionaries, academics, and other Buddhists. In response, they utilized the language of race sciences to prove that Japanese Buddhism was not an inferior and degenerated form of religion but actually the pinnacle of human thought and religious development, and that the Yamato Race was racially superior through their inherent Samurai spirit. Race sciences meant that the Japanese were not a backwards nation of idol worship, but rather a superior nation bringing the true Dharma to both Asia and eventually North America. The rhetoric of race sciences, and subsequent reimagining of history, eventually contributed to Japanese colonial endeavours and the violence of World War II.[59]

Conclusion

One question which seems to beg asking becomes, were Buddhists in the early twentieth century racists? The best answer to this question seems to be one of 'noble silence.' I do not think Buddhists in the early twentieth

century were either racist or not-racist, nor does it really matter. In fact, my argument here is that going beyond the designation of "racist" allows for a more fruitful and nuanced discussion about global Buddhism in the early twentieth century. The more fruitful question then becomes, for what ends did Buddhists use the language of race sciences in the early twentieth century?

Buddhists and scholars alike were imagining an original Buddhism that coincided with then-current notions of racial and spiritual development. Scientific racism was used to explain how such a superior religion of science could begin in India nearly 2,500 years ago, as the Buddha was a racially superior Aryan. This scientific description allowed Buddhists to reimagine history in order to connect themselves to the historical founder as well as argue for their own racial and spiritual superiority.

A study of Buddhism and race sciences in the early twentieth century complicates historical narratives surrounding the domestication of Buddhism in America and how Buddhists were able to "cross boundaries and make homes" in the United States.[60] As opposed to earlier literature on the introduction of Buddhism to North America, the Buddhist use of race sciences shows that they were not passive, simply changing to better fit North American standards as a form of "Protestant Buddhism." Instead, Buddhists were utilizing what was thought to be the most advanced science of the day in order to assert their own superiority over the colonial powers of the world. Previous scholarship on the domestication of Buddhism in North America generally argues that Buddhism was already viewed as a religion of science by scholars, something which many seekers in the United States desired. Buddhists were able to use this connection of science and Buddhism to promote their religion in the United States. Rather than a banal "Buddhism and science," this study shows that Buddhism was connected to a racialized theory of science which was rooted in colonial themes and concrete power formations. They utilized what was considered the most cutting-edge science of the day, race science, in order to modernize and argue for their own superiority.

By focusing on race sciences and the development of Buddhism in North America as a case study, scholars are actually provided with a powerful example of Asian agency. Buddhist groups like the Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist Churches of America adapted themselves to Christian forms of worship in order to better fit North American standards, which is a traditional example of domestication. However, Michihiro Ama has shown that some

of the changes taking place in Shin temples were simultaneously happening in Japan, suggesting that these Churches were also Japan-izing.[61] Race sciences also show that Japanese Buddhists were arguing for their own superiority against the nations of the West. Taken together, the movement of Buddhism is no longer a unidirectional spread with American influence changing Buddhism, but a complex back-and-forth whereby the Japanese are adapting themselves as an expedient means before providing the United States with the pinnacle of world religious thought. Asian Buddhists were not forced to change by the power of others, but believed they were adapting their superior religion to be brought to the spiritually and racially inferior United States.

This study complicates commonly held notions of what is meant by the terms "science" and "modern" in the study of Buddhism in North America. Phrases like Buddhism and Science and Buddhist Modernism have become commonplace. It would be easy to simply contrast historical pseudo-science with current scientific truths. Many post-colonial movements ask us to reexamine the unquestioned scientific truths of today, and attempt to show that our ideas of science and modern are also constructed within colonial frameworks. Some of the scientific truths of today will likely be looked upon with a similar disbelief one hundred years in the future. References to Buddhist Modernism and Buddhism and Science are generally made in a cerebral sense, with "modernism" and "science" broadly referring to Westernization. However, my research shows a much more complex relationship between Buddhism and North America, as well as science and modernity. This study shows that Buddhists were able to claim a spot within the North American religious landscape by engaging with what was considered the most modern scientific thinking at the time, and then using this position as a religion of science in order to assert their own superiority as a religious alternative to Christianity, all of which was taking place within post-colonial frameworks and the specter of two World Wars. Buddhism and science and modernity therefore do not represent simple processes of Westernization, but a complex back and forth of power dynamics and the utilization of racialized science in order to promote Buddhism as a superior religious alternative. Terms like "science" and "modern" which are often referenced haphazardly in the singular become reified without critique and reevaluation. This historical study does not separate the pseudo-science of the past from the true science of today, but displays the need to question scientific truths at all times.

Although studies regarding the history of race and race sciences may be rather uncomfortable, by going beyond stark designators such as "racist," we can see further into the nuances of the development of Buddhism through these complicated issues. David L. McMahan uses the post-colonial theory of multiple modernities to show that the developments of Buddhist Modernism created a new alternative modernity which eschews typical versions of classical development tied to industrialization and materialism.[62] This study shows the development of a new "Buddhist modernity" within an era of globalization, colonialism, and race science. The various actors in this study utilized Buddhist doctrines in new ways in order to display their religious and racial superiority against more powerful figures. Although abhorrent to many today, race science contributed to Buddhist domestication in North America and spread globally, and also created a counter-argument to claims of Asian racial inferiority and Buddhist religious corruption. The outcomes of the racialized language of superiority contributed to the violence of colonialism and World War II, but was also a factor in laying foundations for what would become Buddhist Modernism globally, and Buddhism in North America locally. Buddhists actively engaged the language of race sciences in order to construct modernist Buddhist histories which placed their specific form of Buddhism at the centre of a racially and spiritually superior religion; these constructed histories deserve further study and would be an excellent contribution to the historiography of Buddhism in North America. Furthermore, by positing Buddhism as a superior religious alternative created by, and for, racially superior beings, Buddhist writers laid the foundations for the popularity of Buddhism in the 1950s and 1960s in North America, while simultaneously reversing colonial narratives of Asian and Buddhist inferiority. By ignoring our initial reaction for cries of "racism," scholars can complicate the history of Buddhism in America and show the active agency of Asian Buddhists in the development of Buddhist Modernism.

Endnotes

1. A Japanese Buddhist magazine in publication from 1925-1944.
2. Philip Snowden, "East and West: The World's Greatest Problem," *Young East* 1, No. 10 (March 1926): 313.
3. "Race" itself was a recently constructed categorization.
4. John Lie, *Modern Peoplehood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1.
5. Paul Lombardo, "Three generations, no imbeciles: New light on Buck V. Bell," *New York University Law Review* (1985): 31; 45.
6. Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, (London:

Macmillan, 1883), 17.

7. Paul Lombardo, ed. *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 1.
8. Paul A. Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles*: *Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck v. Bell*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), x.
9. Lombardo, 2008, x.
10. Ibid, xii.
11. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)," United States Department of State Office of the Historian, retrieved 21 August 2016.
12. *The Passing of the Great Race* was very popular in the 1920s, and Madison Grant took part in public debates with Franz Boas and other intellectuals of the time. Grant was the Chairman of the New York Zoological Society.
13. Meg Wesling, *Empire's Proxy: American Literature and U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 9.
14. In chapter One of *The Great Gatsby*, Tom Buchanan says he is reading *The Rise of the Colored Empires* by "Goddard." Tom claims, "well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."
15. Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*, (New York: Scribner & Sons, 1922), 8.
16. A. James Rudin, "The Dark Legacy of Henry Ford's anti-Semitism (Commentary)," *The Washington Post*, 10 October, 2014, Religion News Service, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/the-dark-legacy-of-henry-fords-anti-semitism-commentary/2014/10/10/c95b7df2-509d-11e4-877c-335b53ffe736_story.html
17. Brian Siegel, "Anthropology and the Science of 'Race,'" *Anthropology Publications*, paper 6, (1996); 4.
18. Siegel, 6.This debate was sometimes called the "monogensis" versus "polygenesis" debate. The question focused on whether humans shared biological ancestors, thus being of one biological origin, or developed independently from each other, thus caucasians were of a completely different origin than Africans.
19. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy, vol. I, Cosmogenesis*, (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, Ltd., 1888), viii.
20. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy, vol. II, Anthropogenesis*, (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, Ltd., 1888), 11.
21. Blavatsky, *Anthropogenesis*, 319.
22. Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 332-333.
23. *āryan* is a Sanskrit term for "noble" or "superior." Ancient peoples of northern India often used the term to refer to themselves. *Āryan*, in the Sanskrit, is often contrasted with *mleccha*, meaning "barbarian." See Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 7.
24. Ibid, 7.
25. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 151.
26. Maurice Olender and Arthur Goldhammer, tr., *The Languages of Paradise: Aryans and Semites, A Match Made in Heaven*, (New York: Other Press, 2002), 95.

27. *The Golden Lotus* oscillates between Buddhism and Metaphysical Religion in the United States, including the Theosophical Society, New Thought, and others. The editor of the magazine was Robert Stuart Clifton, a Theosophist who became a Jōdo Shinshū priest, and finally a Theravāda monk.
28. "The Mystery of Being," *The Golden Lotus* 1, No. 1 (January 1944): 2.
29. "The Story of the Buddha's Dharma," *The Golden Lotus* 1, No. 3 (March 1944): 17. "Āryan Root Race" is used throughout *The Golden Lotus*, such as the "Glossary" section of *The Golden Lotus* 1, No. 1.
30. Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands," quoted in *The Golden Lotus* 1, No. 10 (October 1944): 79.
31. "The Story of the Buddha's Dharma," 17.
32. Ibid.
33. M.L. Gordon, "Shall we Welcome Buddhist Missionaries to America?" *The Open Court* Vol. XIV (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, May 1900), in *Contacts and Exchanges in Print Culture: Encountering Buddhism in U.S. Periodicals, 1844-1903*, ed. Thomas Tweed, vol. 1 of Buddhism in the United States, 1840-1925, (London: Ganesha Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 302.
34. Friedrich Max Müller, *On Sanskrit Texts Discovered in Japan*, (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1880), 22.
35. "The Enlightened One," *The Golden Lotus* 1, No. 4 (April 1944): 29. The various authors of *The Golden Lotus* often refer to the Dharma as the "Āryan Path" (diacritics in original)
36. Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steele Olcott*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 167.
37. Richard Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, No. 1 (Winter 2004): 65.
38. Anagārika Dharmapāla, "An Appeal to Japanese Buddhists," *The Young East* 3, No. 6 (Nov. 1927): 195.
39. Anagārika Dharmapāla, "Message of the Buddha," in *Return to Righteousness: A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of Anagarika Dharmapala*, ed. Ananda Guruge (Ceylon: Government Press, 1965), 442.
40. Dharmapāla (1927), 195.
41. Dharmapāla, ed. Guruge, 456-7.
42. Dharmapāla (1927), 192-3.
43. Dharmapāla, ed. Guruge, 155.
44. Lopez, 82. His name is Ariya, which means noble, but this does not match his profession as a fisherman because hurting living beings for work is an ignoble profession.
45. Dharmapāla (1927), 192.
46. Adolf Hitler expressly used some Theosophical tracts in his racial theories. Lopez, 75.
47. James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5.
48. Shin'ichi Yoshinaga, "Three Boys on a Great Vehicle: 'Mahāyāna Buddhism' and a Trans-National Network," in *A Buddhist Crossroads: Pioneer Western Buddhists and Asian Networks, 1860-1960*, ed. Brian Bocking, Phibul Choompolpaisal, Laurence Cox, and Alicia Turner, (London: Routledge, 2015), 59.
49. Sokei-an, "Concerning Soul," *Cat's Yawn* 1, No. 4 (October 1940): 13.
50. Jaffe, 67.
51. I say "perceived 'West,'" because Japanese Buddhist writings in this time period essentialized the entire "West" as basically constituting the United States. This is the inverse of most Orientalism literature, which shows the essentialization of the East

as an imagined monolithic entity. Japanese Buddhists in the early 20th century were also creating a singular West. To quote Edward Said, the Japanese were also splitting the world into "two unequal halves, Orient and Occident" where "detailed logic [is] governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections." Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage, 1979).

52. Kwoyen Ōtani, "The First Step Towards the Realization of World-Peace," *The Eastern Buddhist* 1, No. 4 (November-December 1921): 257.
53. Har Dayal, "The Mission of the Japanese Buddhists," *Young East* 3, No. 1 (June 1927): 11.
54. Hanso Tarao, "A Representative Woman of Japan," *Young East* 4, No. 2 (July 1928): 55.
55. J. Takakusu, "Monochromism Versus Polychromism," *Young East* 3, No. 6 (November 1927): 183.
56. Takakusu, 185.
57. Mock Joya, "Religious Features of Manchuokuo," *Young East* 4, No. 11 (July-September 1934): 44-45.
58. Dharmapāla (1927), 192.
59. There are a number of scholars who have previously written on the place of Buddhism in Japan during the lead-up to World War Two, most famously Brian Victoria. He argues Buddhists were active in the rise of nationalist fervour and participants in the "Japanese War Machine." Victoria's claims that Buddhism engaged a concerted effort to propagate war through "religious-inspired fanaticism" seems to me rather drastic. The claims made in Victoria's studies may initially seem totally outlandish, such as accusing Japanese Buddhists of anti-Semitism, but he is correct in his assertion that these ideas are present in primary sources during the early twentieth century. Victoria fails to take into account the theoretical frameworks of post-colonialism and multiple modernities when pointing out what was an undeniable nationalistic tone in Japanese Buddhist writings. By focusing on ideas contained within these primary sources we can obtain a more nuanced picture of the historical situation and the network of interactions between Japanese Buddhists, the government, Buddhists and non-Buddhists in the United States, and others. For instance, Victoria draws great attention to the anti-Semitic language of Yasutani Haku'un and others; however, if we consider this problem through the lens of race sciences, we can see the ways in which race sciences played a great cultural role in North America, Europe, Japan, and the rest of Asia.
60. Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 74.
61. Michihiro Ama, *Immigrants to the Pure Land: The Modernization, Acculturation, and Globalization of Shin Buddhism, 1898-1941,* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 5.
62. David L. McMahan, "Buddhism and Multiple Modernities," in *Buddhism Beyond Borders: New Perspectives on Buddhism in the United States*, ed. Scott A. Mitchell and Natalie E.F. Quli, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 181-182.

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Étienne Camille Charbonneau, *Héritage religieux*, 2013, Photolithography, 13”x10.”

Étienne Camille Charbonneau is a multidisciplinary artist who delves into religious matter by dedicating his creation to the documentation and interpretation of the consequences and traumas caused by a childhood spent confined in religious beliefs. Being born in a mormon family, the Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-Day Saints is the main organization from which most of his inspiration comes from. He is currently finishing his bachelor’s degree in fine arts at Concordia University in the Painting and Drawing program while also studying religion, sexuality, and art history in multiple other classes.

Étienne Camille Charbonneau, *Stigmates*, 2014, digital prints, 18”x18” (diptych).

Book Reviews

Mary Wept Over the Feet of Jesus: Prostitution and Religious Obedience in the Bible. Chester Brown. Montréal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2016. 270 pages. $24.95 CDN (Hardcover).

Chester Brown wrote one of the best studies of Louis Riel, more than 10 years ago: it was a work that took religion seriously. His only major work after this, *Paying for It,* is a polemic in favour of legalizing sex work, and a personal memoir of his experiences with sex work.

His new book, an eccentric adaptation of scriptures about prostitution in the Bible, extends the religious seriousness of his Riel work, but also provides an argument about both his politics (Brown has run several times for the Libertarian Party of Canada) and his personal life. To put it crudely, Brown's central post-Riel project has been to justify his taste for sex work, and this volume—though less explicit than *Paying for It*—continues to pursue that goal.

There have been recent efforts to complicate how sex in the Bible can be seen as transactional (see especially Ipsen's *Sex Working the Bible*, but also Reid, Hollywood, and recent scholars of medieval prostitution). However, Brown's work functions more as literary criticism, or confession, than theological exegesis. Even more so, it is a polemical essay in exegetical drag.

Brown's work could be considered in this new radical sexual exegesis if his theological practice was less maladroit. Brown's explicit framing provides a formal structure for biblical texts, which are ambivalent at best. Each page has four panels, with the exception of pages that introduce characters or stories. The exception to this is the story of Job near the end of the book. There is little excess decoration; the work told in simple line drawing.

These framings tell the story through simple vignettes (Cain and Abel, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba from Jewish Scripture; and Mary, the Mother of God, Mary of Bethany, the Parable of the Talents, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the Christian scripture, with an afterward telling the story of Job). Some of the vignettes are very much about sex work, some are thought to be about sex work by certain scholars, while some seem not to be about sex work except in the mind of Brown.

Brown conflates the orthodox and heterodox. He makes the same common mistake as many amateur theologians in assuming Christ is a figure recognizable to progressive, contemporary Westerners; and in blaming Paul for sex negativity while ignoring some of the gospel's prohibitions against divorce, or Christ's words against the Syro-Phoenician woman. For example, he seems to include the Cain and Abel story in order to talk about Yoram Hazony's *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture,* which posits that God wishes to seek challenge rather than obedience. But Hazony's Philosophy is largely derided by more conventional theologians and religious historians.

Brown leans on Hazony because he is useful. This is an ongoing pattern, leaning heavily on the liberal John Dominic Crossan, and not mentioning any of the 19th century German scholars that allowed Crossan to do the work that Brown pillages.

The cherry-picking of scandal and blasphemy here has a strange rhetorical power. It makes an argument about inclusion—and the problems of gender—that more nuanced forms might lack. The most effective blasphemy, he argues, is the possibility of Mary, the mother of God, being a prostitute because of her age and her financial station. He justifies this by quoting Jane Schaberg's haunting work, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*. Schaberg argues that Mary was raped, and Christ as child of rape explains some of the taboos around his birth. There is a violation in how Brown uses the work of Schaberg, dismissing careful scholarship, without careful argument, in favour of a position that matches his polemic taste. One of the marks of some libertarian criticism in favour of sex work is the underplaying of rape. The misuse of Schaberg is the most obvious, but it is a continued pattern of Brown.

In his discussion of Bathsheba, he does not mention the culture of women as war trophies. In the story of Ruth, it becomes more of a metaphor for the positive power of entrepreneurship. In arguing in favour of sex work, the recognition that the sexual ethics of the Bible are often confusing and have to be read within the tradition of both ancient times and current usage is occasionally absent.

This does not mean that there are arguments not worth making. Making Rahab the saviour of the Israelites, even though she was a foreigner and a sex worker, is a story not told often enough. Brown's work on her manages to be tender, sensitive and inclusive. Even some of his leaning on other sources and other histories provides a useful corrective. The Parable of the

Talents 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
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Does God Make the Man? Media, Religion, and the Crisis of Masculinity. Stewart M. Hoover and Curtis D. Coats. New York and London: New York University Press, 2015. x + 223 pages. $27.00 USD (Paperback).

Does God Make the Man? Media, Religion and the Crisis of Masculinity is part of an ongoing series of scholarly work referred to the by the authors as inquiring "into meaning making among audience members" (vii) within the contemporary United States. Where prior studies have examined specific demographics (women, the elderly, etc.) or units (families, individuals, etc.), our authors are seeking to address a number of perceived gaps. The first, is the examination of men as men and how a man's gender affects their experiences of meaning-making in the media; and second, that the academy (which in this case, one would suspect is specifically media studies) has traditionally had a "blind spot" for religion and undervalued its potential worth as an area of inquiry (viii). Therefore, this study seeks to answer how man's religion affects not only his self-understanding as a male, but also to what extent it affects his engagement with the media in his society as a whole.

Relying on a large pool of interviews conducted in the years prior to this publication, Hoover and Coats ground their observations in first hand data. Importantly, they are clear to state that this study focuses on a particular demographic of religious men (white, Christian but mostly Protestant, nominally heterosexual). The study is therefore not intended to speak for all religious men in the United States.

The book is divided into three main chapters, along with introductory and concluding sections. In the first chapter, "The New Christian Patriarchs", we witness two predominant viewpoints extricated from the interviews. The first is the perceived loss of male authority in both the public or domestic sphere. Growing gender equality and changing societal norms have given the appearance that men are no longer in authority (though appearances are often just that – appearances). The second is the apparent lack of a "masculine" character in contemporary religious institutions.

The question is then raised, that if the sources of their faith are not also the sources for their masculine identity, then from where do they derive it? The prevailing attitude appears to be that masculinity is somehow inherent in a man's body; that there is something essentialist about manhood—although it is in danger of being overpowered. We of course know that masculinity "does not operate in a vacuum" (40), but through the negotiation of culture,

society, other genders, and so forth. However, to the media-consuming men in this study, they see their manhood as made up of basic elements such as provision, protection and purpose. While some of these elements would seem to come from their faith and scriptures, we soon discover that there is a stronger tendency to identify with them through other media.

The second chapter, "The Media that Matter", places more stress on the ambiguity of male identities and the complex, and often contradictory, ways gender is negotiated through society—particularly in the sources where these men find their role models. Interestingly, rather than dive into Biblical literature for model masculine behaviour, these men prominently find imitation worthy behaviour in secular media. Though the media is stereotypically perceived to be anti-Christian, or to solely posit values at odds with Christian society, the Christian men interviewed consume secular media as much as their secular male counterparts. In these media, these men find and create role models from which to emulate their behaviour very much the same as the rest of society—but not wholesale. Therefore, rather than create their identities in opposition to secular media, we can see traces of a careful selection process.

In the third chapter, "Elemental Masculinity, the Domestic Ideal, and Everyday Life" we see how these elemental qualities are understood and acted out—with a notable emphasis on the domestic sphere. This chapter also follows up on some intriguing questions about the relationship of these elements to secular media. For instance, what is it about largely fictional characters, such as William Wallace—or even Mel Gibson, the actor who plays him—that captivate Christian men so much? It would appear that through these avowedly secular figures, Christian men identify with the traits they feel they share with these characters: married, heterosexual, a sense of justice, strength of character, and so forth.

Ultimately, it seems that Christian men view the same programs that secular men view, but engage with them in different ways. Thus, through the media, religious men participate in the broader culture, engaging with its values and negotiating their own identities in the process. While these men's Christian background and faith do contribute to their alleged self-understanding as men with regards to values, one cannot help but notice the similarities between their perceived ideals of Christian masculinity and the characters from secular media who embody them. The answer to the question phrased in the title of this monograph "Does God make the man" is "not quite."

Overall, though this work does succeed in the continued problematization of the apparently "traditionalist" notion that religious identities can provide an element of stability to masculine identities, it does fall short in a few select areas. Firstly, one has to wonder whether there is much left to question about the so-called "crisis of masculinity". Over the past fifteen years, numerous scholarly studies have already problematized the notion that masculinity undergoes select periods of crisis. Second, one cannot help but notice many parallels here with the observations found in James Gilbert's 2005 monograph *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (which happens to be absent from this monograph's bibliography). Though Gilbert's monograph focuses on a different period in American history and with a broader area of study (and not just television media), Hoover and Coat's remark that "there was a 'crisis' of the domestic sphere" (186) and the perceived loss of power in different domains of society ring equally similar to themes pulled from Gilbert's study.

This criticism, however, is not meant to detract the reader from the overall worth of this monograph. Hoover and Coats succeeded in delivering a meticulous and thoughtful study with careful attention to detail, even if this monograph is not necessarily ground-breaking. Perhaps a wider chronological reach of study or a broader comparative approach among different masculine identities would be well-suited as a future undertaking in men, media and the construction of their masculinities.

Alexander Nachaj
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Canadian Women Shaping Diasporic Religious Identities. Edited by Becky R. Lee and Terry Tak-ling Woo. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016. v+pages. 371. $36.00 CDN (Paperback).

This interdisciplinary collection of essays examines the intersectionality of religion, gender and transnationalism by focusing on the ways in which women of diasporic communities in Canada shape, formulate and (re) claim distinct cultural and religious identities. The significance of this study becomes apparent if we take into consideration the socio-cultural context of multiculturalism in Canada, where, with the passing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in July 1988, "government officials expected religious groups to define their own identities, especially when it came to

the incorporation of temples or societies that could receive non-taxable status" (273), thereby promoting individualism and gender equity for all citizens. One gets the impression that the editors carefully chose religious traditions which are inherently patriarchal; where women had to challenge and subvert gender norms to create their own niche as ritual specialists.

The different pieces succeed in the difficult task of capturing the complex mosaic of women's religiosity, demonstrating that "the religiosities of the women represented serve as locations for both the assertion of self-identity in diaspora and resistance to institutions old and new within and without their faith traditions" (x). Here "religiosity" is defined according to cultural anthropologist Mayfair Yung's definition of the term, as "the religious feeling or experience of individual believers" (x), thus emphasizing the lived experiences of the female practitioners of cultural and religious traditions at a collective and individual level.

The book is divided into three sections: 1) religious communities of European origin, 2) new religions that developed in the nineteenth century, and 3) new immigrant populations that arrived after World War II. The first section consists of four articles studying the ethno-religious communities of European descent that settled in Newfoundland and Toronto. The first two articles of this section focus on "embodied religious practice," with Marion Bowman investigating Irish Catholic women from Newfoundland and their devotional practices to St. Gerard Majella, approaching it from the perspective of vernacular religious theory. Bonnie Morgan additionally highlights the voices of Anglican women working as midwives, exploring the "extent to which religious rituals of childbirth were informed by class and gender" (36). In the third article of the segment, Becky Lee uses feminist scholarship to examine three Roman Catholic feminist movements. By situating them in their respective social, historical and religious contexts, Lee pays special attention to gender roles and norms as set down by the Roman Catholic Church and the Victorian culture of English speaking Canada. The last essay of the section focuses on North American Judaism, with Aviva Goldberg using the ethno-hermeneutical approach of participant observation. She examines non-denominational feminist Jewish worship groups where Orthodox Jewish women assume leadership roles in ritual performances, despite continued opposition from the patriarchs of the traditional community.

The second section—on "new religions" in Canada—consists of three articles, all of which centre on identity and self-representation among

marginalized communities. Katherine Power's article looks at Mormon women, and examines how they construct their own religious identities by categorizing themselves "as 'belonging to' and/or 'separate from' specific religious groups" (xv) in rural Southern Alberta. Gillian McCann examines the Toronto Theosophical Society from a historical standpoint, investigating the reasons behind the appeal of Theosophy in the minds of Canadian women. Lynn Echevarria closes the section with her study on the Baha'i faith. Using a symbolic interactionist sociological perspective, she examines women's understandings of the Baha'i teachings and subsequent "expressions of their religiosity, individually and collectively" (255).

Focusing on recent immigrant communities having that have strong ancestral ties to South Asia in their recent memory, it is the third and final section of the book that emerges as the most significant to diasporic studies. Both Anne Pearson and Preeti Nayak highlight the voices of first and second generation Hindu women as ritual leaders in Southwestern Ontario's Hindu communities. Pearson and Nayak demonstrate the emergence of a trend they term "individualized Hinduism," due to the observation that "most of the younger women interviewed felt at ease either rejecting certain practices or transforming their usual meanings to suit their views" (270). In other words, these women were observed to be constantly negotiating between the desire to assimilate and integrate into mainstream Canadian culture, and the desire to retaining their own traditional values. In the second article of the section, Nanette Spina illustrates how women's ritual authority and their collective style of worship "have offered a revised definition in worship patterns from traditional priest-mediated ritual performance to a communal style of ritual participation" (xvii). She contextualizes her study by examining the Adhi Parasakthi temple society, situated in the Tamil religious tradition of Toronto.

This collection uses Paul Bramadat's concept of "diaspora" as an inclusive term encompassing "all communities of people who harbour deep emotional ties to some other place" (x). This usage acts as an important reminder that all Christians of European descent, even if they have been residing in Canada for generations, belong to migrant communities—communities that are actively striving to keep the memories of their own cultural traditions alive as they themselves deal with issues of displacement (forced or unforced). Unfortunately, this anthology falls short in developing theoretical implications for migrant/diasporic studies. Instead, it makes great contributions to existing scholarship on gender studies and rituals of religion by examining diasporic communities.

The strongest features of this anthology are its immense diversity and its impressive coverage of Canada's lesser-known religious traditions. A major achievement of this book is that it brings the topic of religion to the forefront of diaspora studies by using a range of theoretical approaches, opening the gateway to potential new areas of research in this field. Another striking point is the reflective comments made by informants while sharing their personal narratives, which makes the study rich in ethnographic data and an interesting read for academics and non-academics alike. It is worthwhile to mention the exhaustive bibliography included at the end of the text on women and religion in North America, which demonstrates a clear aim to promote further research in this field. However, it was disappointing to see that Islam as a religious tradition did not find a place in this collection, specifically when a section was dedicated to South Asian Religions [in Southwest Ontario]. For someone interested in a systematic analysis of the role of religion in forming diasporic social organization and identities in South Asian migrant communities, one could only wish that more attention could be given to that particular section instead of limiting it to only two articles. Nonetheless, the work as a whole is highly recommended not only as a classroom text, but for anyone interested in gender and ritual studies in a diasporic setting against the backdrop of Canadian multiculturalism.

Purna Roy
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Mythologizing Jesus: From Jewish Teacher to Epic Hero.

Dennis R. MacDonald. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. 178 pages. $36.00 USD (Hardback).

Mythologizing Jesus, by Dennis R. MacDonald, is a brief introduction to Greco-Roman influences on the canonical Gospels, attempting to demonstrate the literary similarities between Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey with the Gospels of Mark and Luke. In doing so, MacDonald casts light onto the literary background in which the mentioned gospels emerged, as well as the literary techniques employed at the time. Using Mimesis Criticism as his sole methodology, MacDonald elaborates on twenty-four cases in which the Gospels of Mark and Luke imitated the Homeric tales. The purpose goes beyond the scope of underlining the literary motifs borrowed from Greco-Roman literature, attempting instead

to situate the literary world that influenced the composition of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. He therefore focuses exclusively on these two gospels and contrasts their narratives to Homeric tales in order to demonstrate the literary allusions and inherited interpretative nuances that would have been apparent to the immediate audience.

MacDonald argues that modern readers frequently miss allusions to Greek poetry or literature because the names of biblical characters are often transliterated as opposed to translated (139). In doing so, literary references and allusions are not only obscured, but their interpretative possibilities also become limited to the reader's imagination as opposed to the literary context from where they emerged. To correct these missed references, McDonald applies the six rules of Mimesis Criticism presented at the beginning of his work; 1) Accessibility, suggesting that a given author had access to an earlier alleged model, 2) Analogy, which seeks to uncover the possibilities of other authors imitating the same alleged model, 3) Density, stating that the more parallels one can find between two texts the more likely it is that they used a given text as a literary backbone; 4) Order, examining the order of sequence between the two texts; 5) Distinctiveness, underlining the dissimilar literary traits that also come to connect the two texts; and 6) Interpretability, arguing that "ancient authors emulated their antecedents to rival them" (6). Following this he proposes a seventh criteria which argues that up until the 11th century, readers were aware of the similarities between the New Testament and "their putative classical Greek models," claiming that they have thus influenced the "original composition of the Gospels" (6). Following his introduction and methodological exposition, he proceeds to uncover in great detail twenty-four Homeric narrative models that the Gospels imitated.

The diction and tone is simple and easy to read, and avoids details that can derail his argumentative agenda. He refers to other academic sources throughout his book, but in general his footnotes serve as references to primary literature as opposed to developing side arguments, contrasting points of view, or referring to other academic suggestions. His literary examples and comparisons are constantly rendered in English, and seldom does he include the Greek text. Moreover, he often refers to either Christian apologists or Church Fathers so as to demonstrate that the reception of the Gospel of Mark or Luke in the following centuries at times contrasted these episodes with Greco-Roman literature.

McDonald's argumentation is driven by assumption of literary competition,

suggesting that the Gospels of Mark and Luke had to "create a rival to Greek and Roman superheroes" (10). He therefore argues that the authors of the Gospel of Mark and Luke enhanced their narratives in order to "compel readers to life-changing decisions to follow Jesus" (10). In doing so, McDonald suggests that the Gospel narratives and Greek mythology served the same purpose and function. Furthermore, by contrasting the literary parallel he confines the interpretative possibility to a comparative approach. The author also assumes a unidirectional and exclusive Greco-Roman influence as well as the overarching conventions of the ideal audience. While MacDonald's strength relies on Greco-Roman literature and genre, his observations could have accounted for the possibilities that other sources outside of the Greco-Roman influence could have influenced the compositions of the canonical gospels, including apocryphal narratives, Syrian or Egyptian myths, as well as Roman myths and deities.

The reader should also be aware that several assumptions are made in the introduction, which comes to influence how the rest of the work advances —such as "the seven authentic letters of Paul of Tarsus" as well as "a lost Gospel, often called Q, or sometimes the Logoi of Jesus" (2). Although there is an academic consensus regarding the two mentioned points, they should be underlined as theories rather than stated as a fact. He also concludes that "the Markan Evangelist…created most of his characters and episodes without the help of antecedent traditions or sources; instead, he imitated the Homeric epics," and that "Luke rightly read Mark as a historical fiction and expanded its imitations to include even more Homeric episodes" (2). Although there is little evidence based on papyri to support the argument, one cannot commit to absolutism on the base of "lack of evidence," let alone assume that Luke perceived the Gospel of Mark as a fictional work. It is also important to note that what MacDonald refers to as the *Lost Gospel* is his reconstruction of the sayings of Jesus that he has labeled Q+, and is different from what is traditionally understood as Q (for more on this, see *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias' Exposition of Logia about the Lord*, 2012).

In conclusion, this book presents MacDonald's overall work over the past decades regarding Greek influences in the narratives of Jesus as found in the canonical Gospels, as well as the socio-cultural and literary context in which these stories emerged. Although the Status Questionis regarding the composition of the canonical Gospels is overly simplified, it presents a detailed literary comparison of particular Markan and Lukan episodes of the life of Jesus with Homeric episodes. For those interested in Mimesis as an

analytical tool, this book explores the depth and richness of its methodological claims and applicability. It therefore serves well as an introductory work to the topic of Mimesis and its traces in the canonical Gospels.

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Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces: Exhibiting Asian Religions in Museums. Edited by Bruce M. Sullivan. London/ New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 256 pages. $34.55 USD (Paperback).

In the past two decades, scholars such as Gregory Schopen, Ronald Grimes, Richard H. Davis, Crispin Paine, John E. Cort, and Carol Duncan have published influential studies on material cultures in general, and religious objects and images in particular. *Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces*, edited by Bruce M. Sullivan, makes a valuable contribution to an important dimension of this field: the exhibiting and viewing of Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh religious objects in secular spaces of museums. The volume brings together art historians and religious studies scholars with expertise in Asian arts and religions to explore the following questions: How do we understand, describe, and exhibit religious objects in museums? Should we still see them as sacred objects or simply as objects of art? What are "sacred objects" after all? And do they represent cultural heritage, and to what extent? This highly readable ethnographically and historically well-informed and well-written volume will be of interest to researchers and museum curators who seek to understand religious material culture, museum studies, and Asian religious studies.

This book consists of eleven chapters divided into three sections on the challenges and experiences of displaying Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh religious objects in museums. Richard H. Davis opens the discussion by arguing that "objects have life stories, just as humans do" and thus, "biographies highlight the ways that identities can be reframed in different settings and renegotiated in encounters with different audiences" (11). When examining a religious object one often tries to understand what kind of object it is, which deity it represents, from what school or mythology it comes, or in what period

it was made, but often the life story of the object is forgotten. Thus Davis emphasises this way of interpreting objects through tracing their life stories.

The life story of the Hindu deity, Kali, is the focus of the second chapter by Deepak Sarma, who shows how the Kali image was marketed and commercialized in the historical context of colonialism and globalization. Bruce M. Sullivan follows with an analysis of the practice of yoga in museums for commercial purposes as another way of marketing, which encourages the reader to think of the role and definition of museums in a new light: museums are no longer the historical houses of "treasures" from the far away past. Cultural heritage can be seen through Anne Murphy's study of "Sikh Museuming", in which she describes how Sikh communities have represented their identity and history through the collections of religious and historical objects, such as weapons and relics. In addition, Denise Patry Leidy examines the history of Buddhism in the West, and explains how early sacred objects found their way into the museums' acquisition. This gives a necessary background for the reader to learn about how, when, and why Asian religions were presented in museums in Europe and North America.

The volume ends with a well-crafted contribution authored by Michael Willis, who discusses the role and function of exhibitions of religious art with a somewhat paradoxical and challenging claim that "The museum is certainly a place where certain kinds of memories are celebrated and fabricated, but in the final analysis the museum is really a place of amnesia" (145). What he means by "amnesia" here is the growing distance between the viewers and the objects, or younger curators of objects who have struggled to re-establish the links between records and objects that were the proprietary knowledge of their predecessors. Willis leaves the readers thinking about this ongoing struggle of museums to keep memories from and connections to the past. However, "amnesia" happens as soon as objects are removed from their context of religious backgrounds to the new environments of the secular museum. They are deconsecrated and we, as outsiders, cannot re-consecrate an object to make it sacred as it was in its original context. What is interesting is that, as suggested by Davis, identities can be reframed with different audiences. We see the example, as discussed by Bruce M. Sullivan, that some yoga practitioners in the Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C. explained that they "regarded their practice as 're-consecrating the icons'" (47). This shows the complexity in defining what is sacred when one experiences and interacts with an object differently from another in the secular space.

When discussing the exhibition of five world religions, Janet Baker suggests that the designers of such an exhibition should be well familiar with each of the five religious traditions to be able to represent them equally well (132), yet she focuses almost exclusively on Buddhism. Moreover, the entire book has more to say about Buddhist objects and Buddhism than other traditions. This gives a sense that the book itself represents a way of marketing religion to societies that hold Buddhism in high regard. A nice addition would have been to elaborate more on Hinduism and Sikhism, as well as on the collection and exhibition of religious art of the "Indianized" states of Southeast Asia such as Funan, Champa, Java and Cambodia. One example of such an exhibition was the "Lost Kingdoms, Hindu-Buddhist Sculptures of Early Southeast Asia" that took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2014. In addition, through the representation of Asian religious objects, Asian religions were portrayed in this volume as a collection of certain historical moments from the past; missing from all those exhibitions and discussions were the images of contemporary practices in Asia. Images or videos showing how people practiced their religions in recent times would very likely help the visitors to understand a certain religion better from its past to its present.

In sum, this volume covers a wide range of topics to which the contributors bring a great deal of knowledge, expertise, and hands-on experience. On one hand, it discusses the preservation of artefacts and the museum establishment, how deity images were marketed and commercialized in the historical context of colonialism and globalization, how icons were re-consecrated through the practice of yoga in a museum, and how to exhibit five world religions together. On the other hand, it shows the enormous effort curators put into an exhibition to display the religious objects in a systematic and theoretical way, and also to attract enough visitors to museums to keep them financially viable. There is no definite answer to the questions raised in the introduction regarding objects in museums as being categorized as "sacred" and "secular". However, the book provides a valuable window into current scholarly discussions on understanding religious objects, while evoking thoughts on the role of curators and museums in modernity.

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