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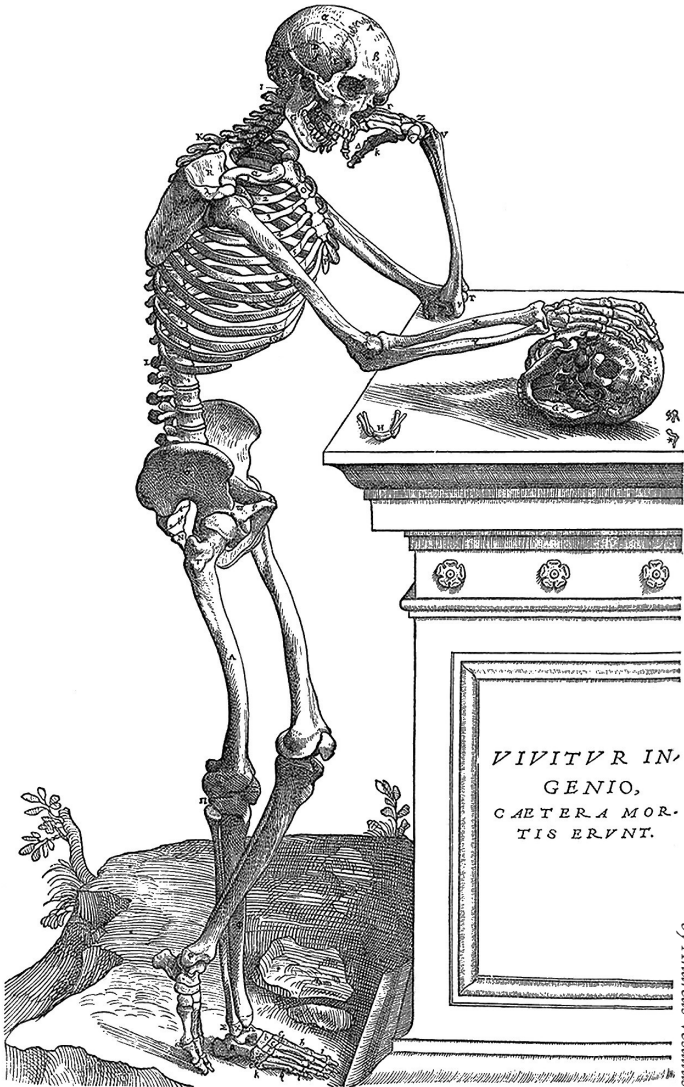
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The *Christ Child in Medieval Culture* remains an important, groundbreaking piece of scholarship. The contributors' significant survey of literature, liturgy, and art have opened up a discursive space for the study of childhood, children, and the Child Christ in the Medieval and Early Modern period. The book is highly relevant for those interested in the Middle Ages, the history of Christianity, as well as religion and the arts; and it can be an interesting point of departure for future studies on the construction of childhood in the West.

Daniel Sáenz  
Concordia University

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***Becoming Women:  
The Embodied Self in Image Culture***

Carla Rice. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.  
408 p. \$24.71 CND (Paperback).

*Becoming Women* is an ambitious body of research that aims to show how women create and embody their identity living within the imposed standards of a modern Western culture. Carla Rice spent a decade conducting interviews with a diverse group of Canadian women in order to understand how identity is formed. As Rice notes in her introduction, “By locating their stories in the social milieu, this book reframes, from a critical feminist perspective, how diverse women respond to a barrage of messages in their attempt to create an acceptable identity and affirm a self” (5). This book focuses on women growing up between the second and third wave of feminism, in a time when image culture was also growing rapidly.

Rice's book is organized in relation to different intersectional criteria. Each chapter is dedicated to exploring one issue of embodiment; including size, race, disability, puberty, and the modern beauty industry. Rice is a self-declared feminist with a lengthy career in academia focusing on women and gender studies. Her style is informal, and the book is easily readable for those unfamiliar with feminism or the other issues addressed in her



book. Concepts are clearly defined, allowing the reader to keep pace with the wealth of ideas and subjects discussed.

Overall, this work significantly demonstrates the autonomy and agency of women in creating their own embodiment in a society that pushes for a strict standard of how women should look and act. The suggestions made by Rice in the conclusion, such as making changes to our education system, as well as government programs and services, give hope, but remain elusive concepts without widespread knowledge and a push for change. Rice acknowledges the difficulty in shifting long-held views and ideologies embedded in the Canadian socio-cultural structure. The suggestions are straightforward, but the reality of implementing them shows the complicated and deep-rooted understanding of women's place in society.

Alongside her suggestions for improving embodied experiences of women in Canadian society, Rice mentions the Dove "Real Beauty" campaign. Rice worked as an advisor for the campaign with the goal of providing a body-positive, critical feminist perspective (278). Though the campaign aims to enhance women's confidence, Rice notes that, "there are real problems with the 'real beauty' images. First, as other feminist critics have noted, the campaign sends contradictory messages, promoting self-acceptance while encouraging women's consumption in order to feel good about themselves" (280). Following her time on the campaign, Rice states, "They also taught me how consumer capitalism exploits people's vulnerabilities and adopts hypocritical messages in order to make money... I learned how capitalism could not solve the problem of beauty for women" (281).

This experience led Rice to declare that changes to body image and acceptance must come from women within society, and from structural changes in areas outside of the media. In making such a suggestion, following real experience in a large for-profit corporation, Rice shows the difference between her respondents who live an embodied experience and actively work for body-positivity, and corporations that seek to make profit off of these women. Her experience opens a dialogue for what role media and corporations should be allowed to play in the struggle towards equality and positive embodied experiences for women. Between her suggestions for educational and government reform, and her critical awareness of the dangers of media, Rice highlights the complexity and difficulty faced by feminists seeking change.

The body of research for this book was completed between 1997 and 2007, a time when LGBTQ rights were coming to the forefront of public awareness and political action. The exclusion of non-heterosexual women and trans women is a serious oversight in an otherwise thorough work. Future research in the area of intersectional feminism and embodiment in image culture should include the experiences of women born with male or intersex organs. The inclusion of trans women would have helped to develop a greater public understanding of the difficulties that transgender and transsexual women (like women of color or women with disabilities) face in creating an embodied identity. Rice only briefly mentions trans women throughout the book, and they are given no more than a passing glance each time. Their experiences could easily have been included in Chapter 6, “A Body That Looks, and Feels, Like a Woman,” where the question of what counts as female could be discussed with a deeper analysis of the human physical body.

Any work on intersectional feminism should aim to look at all of the varying ways that differing identities come together in creating self, which should include not only disability, size, and race; but women born with differing genitalia, physical bodies, and sexual orientations. As Rice herself states, “The ‘embodied self’... recognizes the inseparability of physicality from psyche- how selves are expressed/materialized through bodies and how meanings given to bodies inevitably shape selves” (17). This acknowledgement of the human body and mind interaction should have brought about the question of how sexed bodies become gendered, and how women born with different physical sex characteristics struggle to become considered authentic women in a society that imposes strict definitions of who is considered truly female. The same question arises for non-heterosexual women who struggle to embody a “self” amidst an image culture that imposes heterosexual ideals. How do women with varying sexual orientations create embodied experiences in this culture? How do trans and intersex women embody their identity in a culture operating with a strict gender binary and gender roles?

Aside from these important oversights, *Becoming Women* succeeds in furthering the discourse for women of color, plus-size women, and disabled women. Rice gives a first-person voice to varying groups of women that have been, and continue to be, oppressed or ignored by popular media. Her background research alongside quotes and narratives of these women

show the reader a story different from the dominant narrative: one that places women of color and disabled women as victims or lacking agency. Rice makes clear her focus on “hearing the voices of those missing from the story of North American feminism” (5). How these women responded shows throughout her research that women do, in fact, navigate norms and expectations, conforming and fighting against societal messages. Indeed, women are receptive to a myriad of messages and expectations from media and society, yet women actively engage with these expectations to find their place and create an identity.

Ashely Crouch  
Concordia University

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***Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages***

Edited by P. H. Cullum & Katherine J. Lewis. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 2013. 224 p. \$133.78 CND (Hardcover).

*Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages* is a collection of eleven previously unpublished essays which seeks to systematically explore the devotional lives of medieval men from a decidedly gendered perspective. Noting that medievalists and scholars of religion have enjoyed a wealth of recent research focusing on femininity and female mysticism and piety, which has in turn helped to uncover the religious lives of medieval women, there has been a comparative lack of studies that examine male devotion outside of its patriarchal or canonical forms. While these forms have generally represented the dominant forces of masculinity, by no means were they the only expressions of manhood to which religious men, from both the clergy and laity, could find meaning.

Thematically, many of the essays in this collection deal either directly or indirectly with the debates leading up to, and the repercussions following, the clerical reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These reforms, which at their heart sought to bring about a greater distinction between lay and clerical masculinities and piety and resulted in enforced clerical