

Book Reviews

Religion in the 21st Century: Challenges and Transformations

LISBET CHRISTOFFERSEN, HANS RAUN IVERSEN, HANNE PETERSEN & MARGIT WARBURG, eds., 2010

Farnham, Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate

i–xiv + 234 pp., £55.00, US\$99.95 (hb)

ISBN 978–1–4094–0398–2

Religion in the 21st Century: Challenges and Transformations is one of the rich crop of books emanating from the University of Copenhagen Research Priority 2003–2007: “Religion in the 21st Century”. Whereas previous volumes in the planned series of 35 books provide “specialized studies on cross-disciplinary topics” (*Foreword*) concerning religion in Scandinavia, particularly Denmark, this eponymous volume, the twenty-fifth in the series thus far published (cf. www.ku.dk/satsning/religion), offers an overview of “some principal scenery” (*Foreword*). In this sense, it is primarily contextual and features among the 17 essayists a number of prominent scholars, such as David Martin, José Casanova, Grace Davie, Peter Beyer, *inter alia*, whose influential perspectives on the condition of religion in the modern world are likely to be familiar to readers of this journal.

That familiarity serves here as the apposite general framework within which to illuminate the particulars of the Danish religious experience. There is pastry and there is bacon; however, there are Danish pastries and there is Danish bacon. Hanne Petersen’s “Introduction” (2), which draws on Chakrabarty’s ‘provincialization’ thesis, conveys the book’s feeling for the distinctive flavours of the religio-political state of Denmark: “The state of Denmark may perhaps be said to have undergone a shift from a twentieth-century ‘autonomous’ nation state to a ‘province’ of the world. Part of this process of ‘provincializing’ earlier central players—such as states and regions, including not least Europe—may be that ‘Western secular modernity is challenged.’”

The key question regarding the Danish ‘case’ is the degree to which “the politics of Lutheran secularism”, as Anders Berg-Sørensen refers to it (Ch. 16), mutates modernity in a manner that mitigates its most intolerant anti-religious effects. Can the Danes—86% of the population belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church—show us how to live as, in Davie’s words (Ch. 4) “fully religious [and] fully modern”? Casanova (Ch. 1) reminds us that we were democratic before we were secular, a reiteration of the view that secular modern democracy is an outworking of the Judeo-Christian mythos (see de Gruchy). This may be the most important lesson of European history and

absolutely vital for debates on the future of “global denominationalism” (Casanova 29) into which turbulent waters a small peninsula with a few scattered islands where the Baltic and North Seas meet has been dramatically projected, like the rest of us, in recent years.

To understand ‘multiple modernities’, we need to grasp the salience for Nordic countries of this complex and contentious history. Beyer’s contribution underscores the affinity between liberal democratic culture and ‘anti-fundamentalist’ religion. He writes (48–9) of “liberal religious critiques” that “their political challenge becomes largely invisible if one reads ‘political challenge from religion’ as ‘the challenge to secularity by religion’. In that case, really only ‘fundamentalist’ challenges count.”

Scandinavia has figured long since as something of a quiet, temperate oasis of tolerant liberal civic culture, somehow blessed to be outside the recurring hot spots of ‘divided Christianity’ and relatively set aside somewhat, too, from the turpitude of global religio-political conflict (see Hanne and Juul). Until, that is, this sea of tranquillity was disturbed seismically by the ‘the Cartoon Crisis’ of 2006. ‘The Mohammed Crisis’, as this dramatic incursion of the riotous, terroristic, tribal ‘Other’ of late modern geo-religious politics into what Martin (Ch. 14) calls “the settled secularity of happy Denmark” ends, perhaps forever, the myth—the national anthem of the kingdom of Denmark, *Der er et Yndigt Land* (There is a Lovely Land)—of Scandinavian exceptionalism. Hans Raun Iversen (197) writes that “Danes are afraid of too much religion, especially as they perceive it among Muslims and New Religious Movements”. He quotes (197) a male carpenter who said: “I don’t think if anyone mocked our religion we would burn their flag and stuff like that. That’s way over the top, the idea, it’s too distant . . . !” Sadly, perhaps, ‘too much religion’ is the ‘big game in town’, for now.

Margit Warburg’s analysis of ‘the Danish Mohammad cartoon crisis’ (Ch. 17)—and with these unexpected juxtapositions, the phrase cannot shake off its Monty Pythonesque resonances—shows how the local and the global really have become interfused. There is no hiding place. Warburg writes (218) that a “consumers’ boycott of Danish dairy products was orchestrated in a number of countries, primarily in Saudi Arabia”. No doubt, somewhere in this deterritorialised global order of things, the markets in Danish pastries and bacon felt their share of gustatory religio-political disgust. This book gives ample reason to consider that any future discussion of the challenges and transformations of ‘confessional deterritorialization’ (Casanova 25) neglectful of perhaps ‘not-so-happy Denmark’ would be like staging Othello without the Moor. The Danish contemporary poet, Henrik Nordbrandt, in “Portrait of the Heroine Far Out at Sea”, in the collection *Offshore Wind* of 2001, sweeps us out of the fairy tale world of Hans Christen Andersen:

The summer is over.
It was like the other summers
As much as they were like each other
and were different . . .

WILLIAM KEENAN

School of Social Sciences, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

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Religion and the Public Order of the European Union

RONAN McCREA, 2010

Oxford: Oxford University Press

294 pp., £50.00 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-19-959535-8

This book is a timely addition to the well-respected series of Oxford Studies in European Law. Although it is aimed mainly at practitioners and scholars of law, it offers copious information and commentary that will be of value to social scientists and others with an interest in the ways in which the European Union (EU) frames and regulates religion. Giving priority to religion as a source of identities, it begins with a broad-brush investigation of the changing configuration of religion, politics, law, and education in EU member states. The author then considers how religion continues to inform law in the public order of the EU while taking account of doctrines such as pluralism, balance, and historical inheritance—without overlooking humanism and cultural influences on public morality. More technical discussions of religion's place in the fundamental rights obligations of the EU lead into a focus on the regulation of religion and on competing ideologies. Brief case studies of the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Britain helpfully illustrate the variety of ways in which the balance between religious and humanist influences is sought in countries with differing religious histories and composition. The concluding chapter argues that the EU is neither secular nor neutral towards all religions. Nevertheless, its emphasis on balance and pluralism might prove to be a “bulwark against any theocratic tendencies that may emerge in the future” (271).

JAMES A. BECKFORD

Department of Sociology (Emeritus), University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

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When Religion Meets New Media

HEIDI CAMPBELL, 2010

Abingdon & New York: Routledge

222 pp., £65.00, US\$120.00 (hb), £19.99, US\$35.95 (pb)

ISBN 978-0-415-34956-7 (hb), ISBN 978-0-415-34957-4 (pb)

Heidi Campbell's second monograph proposes an important new model of the relationship between religious communities and technology, specifically new

media. A fascinating array of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian case studies is used to demonstrate the complexity of the process through which religious communities evaluate, re-shape, and talk about the media they use. This timely and important work should set the agenda for the next generation of scholars in this field, drawing attention to the specific communities, processes, and contexts in which media use is shaped and situated.

The first two chapters survey the online activities of the religions by using two typologies. In Chapter One, Campbell proposes five religious perceptions of the Internet: as a spiritual network for religious activities, a worship space, a missionary tool, a way to maintain religious identity, and a functional technology. In Chapter Two, she uses a typology created by John P. Ferre to distinguish three further interpretations: as a conduit for communication, a mode of knowing with its own distinctive mindset, and a social institution constructed by users. The third option echoes ideas developed in two areas of sociological research—the social construction of technology (SCOT) and the social shaping of technology (SST). Campbell proposes her own variation, the ‘religious social shaping of technology’ (RSST), which highlights four themes: the history and traditions of the community, including attitudes to earlier media; contemporary beliefs and practices; negotiation of technology, including evaluation and re-design; and framing technology through communal discourse.

The next four chapters use case studies to explore these four stages. Chapter Three examines the role of tradition in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox communities, particularly the redesign of modern technology in line with Sabbath observance. Chapter Four addresses community values, with attention to the popular Egyptian preacher Amr Khaled, television channels operated by the Turkish Gülen movement, and advertising campaigns in Israel and Kuwait encouraging viewers to switch off technology and pray. Chapter Five examines the negotiation of technology, with case studies of online Christian missionaries, Ultra-Orthodox Internet filters, a Christian church in a virtual world, and Muslim prayer software, and emphasises the diversity of possible responses, including acceptance, rejection, and innovative redesign of technology and community structures.

Chapter Six uses Christian examples to explore religious discourse, introducing yet another typology. Discourses may be ‘prescriptive’, accepting the Internet as a neutral tool to fulfil a particular goal such as ‘e-vangelism’. ‘Officializing’ discourse offers qualified approval, seeking to preserve the community from perceived dangers; it can be found in many denominational reports. ‘Validating’ discourse builds new media into the identity of the community, for example, the central role of blogging in the Emerging Church.

These four stages are brought together in Campbell’s final two chapters. Chapter Seven returns to her research in Israel to examine the rise of the *kosher* cell phone, a range of handsets adapted to remove all features banned by ultra-Orthodox rabbis, and examines each of the four stages to construct a nuanced account of the development and impact of this new technology. Chapter Eight summarises the key insights offered by the RSST process and ends with a general survey of future directions in the study of religion and new media.

There are three major limitations to Campbell’s research, each derived from the focus of her case studies. Firstly, these studies are of great variety and interest, but are frequently based on conversations with a single source. Secondly, case studies

are drawn almost exclusively from groups which have strong hierarchies and boundaries and which are at considerable cultural distance from mainstream Western society. As Campbell acknowledges, it is much more difficult to trace the RSST process in mainline Christian denominations (160). Finally, the author's understanding of community emphasises shared traditions, structures, and leadership but does not include attention to the individual, lived level of religion (8), at which quite different negotiations of technology may be taking place in defiance of official commands. A more comprehensive understanding of the way in which religion shapes technology requires further study of all three issues.

Despite these reservations, Campbell's argument is a major theoretical contribution to this field, directing our attention to crucial, understudied aspects of the relationship between religious groups and new media. The book is an essential resource for students and scholars interested in contemporary religion.

TIM HUTCHINGS

Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, Durham, UK

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Science vs Religion: What Scientists Really Think

ELAINE HOWARD ECKLUND, 2010

Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press

155 pp. + 18 pp. (methodological appendices), £16.99, US\$27.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-19-539298-2

Elaine Ecklund is worried about the public antagonism between science and religion in the United States. On such issues as evolution, creationism, stem-cell research, and what constitutes appropriate public education, science and religion seem to be at loggerheads. On a deeper level, many scientists do not understand religion and many religious people do not understand science. In this book, Ecklund explains the former's views, finding that the situation is not hopeless. She sees ways for scientists, if they will, to communicate better with the American public—including the religious public. She thinks that they should do so.

Ecklund surveyed 2,200 randomly selected natural and social scientists from 21 US elite research universities. This is a large sample, given the total population of 5,740 scientists in such places. The response rate was also large for such studies: 74.8%. Ecklund augmented her survey by randomly selecting 501 respondents for follow-up interviews, of which she completed 275. She usefully includes both the survey instrument and her interview protocol in the appendices, plus a thorough description of her method. (Would that more authors did the same!) Her data is rich and most of the book is devoted to presenting what she found.

Not surprisingly, Ecklund found major differences between elite scientists and the American public. For example, 34% of the scientists reported that they did not believe in God and another 30% said they did not know whether God existed

(and saw no way to find out). 2% and 4% of the American population hold such views, respectively. Although similar proportions of scientists and the public identify as Mainline Protestants (13–14%), only 2% of scientists are Evangelical Protestants, versus 28% of the general population. 9% of the scientists are Catholic, versus 27%. Jews, however, are over-represented: 16% versus 2% (although many Jewish scientists identify themselves as culturally, not religiously Jewish).

In all, 54% of the scientists, but only 16% of the general population, declare themselves non-religious. This is a big gap, but Ecklund draws an interesting conclusion from it. She notes that 46% of the scientists say that they *are* religious and she wonders therefore how science and religion can remain such public enemies in the popular mind. After all, nearly half of the practising scientists in her sample reconcile religion and science in their personal lives. Why can they not do so in the public sphere?

Ecklund proposes several answers. She notes that non-religious scientists do not understand religion very well. Too many think that all religious people are fundamentalists and treat religions as a matter of believing unbelievable things. Partly as a consequence, many religious scientists keep quiet about their faith. They closet their religiosity, treating it as a matter of personal, not public, concern. Ecklund understands this, but finds it regrettable, because it perpetuates the religion/science divide. Who else, she says, understands both sides well enough to develop a new way of bridging them?

Ecklund explores the various discourses about religion and science that appear in her interviews. For example, many scientists identified science with reason and religion with unreason; for them, universities and education should focus on critical thinking alone. (One wonders how they view the educational role of fine arts, athletics, and the humanities, none of which is a purely rational or critical enterprise.) They worried about religious litmus tests, such as the faith statements that various religious schools sometimes impose. However, they did not seem to worry that secular universities discriminate against religious faculty. God and the Quad should not intersect, in their view. Ecklund notes that even those interviewees most devoted to campus pluralism did not encourage public religious presentation—in part because they feared proselytising.

Other scientists saw a more positive role for a God/Quad relationship. Some thought it part of the universities' job to nurture students' growth, including spiritual growth. They supported the private expression of religion on campuses, without necessarily allowing it into university public life. Some thought religion is a legitimate object of study, although this often results in assigning such study to specific departments rather than exploring the relationship between religion and various scientific disciplines. Only about 10% of Ecklund's scientists thought that religions have something to say to science, beyond religions' historic concern with ethical decision-making. Even fewer have spent much time leading such conversations. Ecklund thinks this a shame, as it leaves the field open to those who would polarise science and religion as incompatible entities.

This is where Ecklund's book gets patchy. Although the scientists in her sample did not have much practice bridging the religion/science divide, other scholars do—and these scholars never appear in her work. Ian Barbour, Michael Heller, John Cobb, and others have developed some of the discourses for which

Ecklund yearns. While this book tells us what scientists do and do not think about religion, it does not tell us—or them—how to conceive of the relationship between science and religion more deeply. The book is very good, as far as it goes, but it needs to go a step farther, to accomplish Ecklund's aims.

JAMES V. SPICKARD

University of Redlands, Redlands, CA, USA

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Religion, Conflict and Military Intervention

ROSEMARY DURWARD & LEE MARSDEN, eds., 2009

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186 pp., £55.00, US\$99.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7546-7871-7

The proceedings of a Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, conference might be expected to be provocative to a pacifist reviewer, but this symposium is an excellent overview of an important subject area, delivered by specialist writers from diverse backgrounds.

The appropriateness of selective military intervention in the affairs of other nations, when expressed in liberal humanitarian terms, is an unchallenged axiom of the military establishment in the UK and US. This volume dares to explore the Christian justification or otherwise of such interventions and looks through Islamic eyes at the disastrous twenty-first century Western military adventures affecting Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The Islamic context is set by Kunal Mukherjee, who charts the rise of, and distinguishes between, an anti-intellectual and revolutionary Islamism and the philosophical purity doctrines of Neo-Fundamentalism. The various parties in post-Saddam Iraq are analysed by Rebecca Glazier, indicating the greater or lesser role played by different religious sensibilities in fuelling or easing violence. Similarly, in a remarkable survey of the social, political, and theological values of Pakistan's tribal areas, Shazadi Beg draws on her own interviews with key international players to argue for dialogue and Islamic re-education for vulnerable and illiterate young men who have been indoctrinated into *Wahhabi/Salafi* ideology. Underlying geo-political grievances would remain, but rather than producing terrorists by killing terrorists, investment in public education, skills training, and job creation would deprive terrorist organisations of new recruits.

The good versus evil paradigm, seen in *Salafism*, was also at the heart of the Bush presidency's foreign policy and remains part of the American psyche. Rosemary Durward provides a critique of this dualism in the light of Karl Barth's monist theology, especially his Doctrine of Reconciliation. Traditional Christian attitudes to war are summarised by Lee Marsden, covering the familiar ground of patristic pacifism and the development of Just War criteria, neither of which mattered much to the Christian Right during the Bush years. Their story, and especially the critical role played by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), is brilliantly set out by Sandy Mergenschroer-Livingston. Longstanding Southern US low self-esteem and an oppositional mindset were a seed bed for ethical dualism fuelled by distinctive eschatological preaching

and cynically tapped into by influential Republicans. This deliberate political infiltration and takeover of SBC, which had a long tradition of refusing to endorse any US military activity, was clinical and effective, giving a religious voice to the advance of US hegemony. Central to the language of that hegemonic progress is the concept of freedom, considered here by Nicholas Kerton-Johnson. Was the meaning of freedom the same for Lincoln as it was for Bush, who appropriated a cherished term for the promotion of global capitalism by force?

Similarly, was the meaning of Just War the same for Aquinas, in feudal society, as it is for contemporary theorists? That question is posed by Ivan Manokha, in an excellent Marxist analysis. The rise of capitalism was associated with an awareness of the rights of liberty and equality—although significantly not economic equality—of individuals. War between sovereign states could be justified by the essentially secular aim of restoring the diminished human rights of citizens of other states, a convenient pretext for colonial expansion. Post-Cold War, constant reinforcement of selective individual human rights and freedoms has provided the ‘moral leadership’ which, Gramsci argued, is required for hegemony, leading to a popular preparedness to tolerate the use of force, military humanitarianism, in order to bring such freedom to others in the form of neo-liberal capitalism. The editors ask ‘whose good is served?’ by military intervention; they neglect to answer, ‘BAE, Boeing, Halliburton...’.

The book ends with a call to go back to the beginning. Serena Sharma considers and rejects recent thinking on a third Just War strand, *jus post bellum*, to go with *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Not only do continuing Iraq and Afghan wars show that it is not clear when a *post bellum* phase begins, but the Iraq débâcle shows that *post bellum* issues need careful attention *ad bellum*. That, after all, is the pacifist case—that if one fully considered all the consequences in advance, there would be no *bellum*.

Among the contributors is a gender balance and there is good Christian and Islamic scholarship. Inevitably, there is duplication, repeated reference to Augustine or Grotius, or distinguishing between a greater, spiritual *jihad* and a lesser, militarily defensive *jihad*. Lack of reference to interfaith dialogue is a surprising omission.

The Sandhurst conference which gave rise to this set of essays was entitled “Engaging with Religion for Building Peace”. There can be no peace building without engagement with religion. This indexed symposium ‘aims to contribute to mutual understanding and respect’ and so to encourage constructive engagement. Largely, it succeeds; I commend it.

CLIVE BARRETT

Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford, UK

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Beyond the State in Rural Uganda

BEN JONES, 2008

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

224 pp., £70.00 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7496-3519

Ethnographies are much the best way to understand Pentecostalism, even when, as in the case of the exemplary work of Ben Jones, there are wider matters under scrutiny to do with the viability and veracity of the standard narrative of development, and with the central role of all the churches in the many areas of Uganda out of range of national and international agencies.

Uganda has been regarded as something of a developmental success story under President Museveni, but success is distinctly patchy outside certain favoured areas. The state is suspended in mid-air looking outward to international agencies and decentralisation has in practice meant that many local areas get on with their own organisation. At times not even taxes were collected. It is in this vacuum that the churches, above all the numerically dominant Anglican and Catholic churches, but increasingly—since the 1980s—the growing Pentecostal bodies, play a vital role as centres of political and legal organisation. Pentecostals now account for about one person in ten.

During the time of the Amin tyranny, only a few religious bodies were allowed to function and Pentecostals were persecuted. However, with the advent of a massively disruptive civil war, Pentecostals found an unexpected opportunity to evangelise in difficult conditions where people of all faiths were mixed together in camps. Many chose to associate with the fervent Pentecostal groups and this led in turn to the adoption of Pentecostal and charismatic styles by Anglicans and Catholics. All the religious groups focused on the theme of reconciliation and peace after the gross violence of the war. They sought respectability in a profound sense of the word and promoted courtesy. This is where burial societies played a major role alongside the churches and Pentecostals have been ready to take responsible roles in these societies, and indeed in most of the organisations of local communal life.

Pentecostals are both distinct from others in their community and yet integral to communal organisation. Their greater regulation of conduct was one way in which they differed, so that, for example, one of their number convicted of adultery had to submit to public humiliation. This meant that non-Pentecostals concluded that Pentecostals were serious about their faith and also reliable. In particular they abjure the consumption of alcohol—hitherto so central to local life—and the violence that goes with it. The Pentecostal churches offer a distinctive space within which women may negotiate improvements in domestic behaviour. They also insist on HIV tests before marriage and forbid alliances between those who are infected and those who are not. The young and better educated are particularly attracted to Pentecostalism and they embrace the chance it offers to escape customary obligations as a member of a new and vibrant fraternity.

Ben Jones underlines the way membership in such a distinctive group allows a new generation to break with the past even as it draws on models from the past, like the 'big man'. The role of the 'big man' remains important, because people are still afraid of the kind of violence that can emerge among young men once a fragile social order breaks down. Throughout his analysis Ben Jones writes of the crucial role of seniority, prosperity, and propriety in restoring relations after the brutalising effects of civil war. People say that 'rules matter more now' and Pentecostals provide signal examples of rule-governed lives. Like the courts they set up venues for courteous negotiation and spaces where careers in local politics can be launched and realised.

Ben Jones set his account of the interaction of churches, courts, and burial societies in the context of previous research, some of which acted largely as an extension of the development narrative. Indeed, his whole analysis involves a sensitive and carefully judged assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of previous work, including a neglect of the religious factor, and it constitutes a further advance towards a comparative account of Pentecostalism in Africa, region by region. On the one hand, he refers to James Ferguson's *The Anti-Politics Machine* of 1990 where development projects are seen as being more about extending the power of a weak bureaucracy and providing a-political cover for the interests of the political class than relieving the needs of the poor. On the other hand, he refers to Goran Hyden's *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania* of 1980 and to Hyden's notion of an 'uncaptured peasantry' where the supposed 'machine' is virtually absent and relations are apparently governed by an 'economy of affection'. Jones steers his way between a stark realism about development projects and a romantic idealisation of local relationships while making it clear that the growth of Pentecostalism belongs to an 'economy of affection' and occurs within the context of the effective withdrawal of the state even in a country like Uganda conventionally regarded as a success story of the triumph of a politics of development rather of rival ethnicities.

DAVID MARTIN

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Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics

VICTOR ROUDOMETOF & VASILIOS N. MAKRIDES, eds., 2010

Farnham, Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate

258 pp., £55.00, US\$99.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7546-6696-7

The book under review consists, apart from the Introduction, of two parts, each comprising five chapters. The first part discusses Orthodoxy, Greek ethnicity, and politics (for example, church-state relations and the status of non-Orthodox minorities) at a general level. The second part consists of case studies (for example, the debate of the building of a mosque in Athens, the role of women in Orthodoxy) illustrating the issues sketched in the first part. All the chapters variously combine historical, sociological, and anthropological methods. Six out of the eleven authors are women.

Taking into account the prominent role of Greece in European Union politics, surprisingly little has been written about the Orthodox Church of Greece, which

was established in 1833, except about church-state relations. The significance of the Church for Greek ethnicity and culture has often been claimed, but seldom studied.

The present work revolves around social, demographic, cultural, and other transformations which have taken place in Greece during the last two decades. They raise questions such as: how have changes affected the interplay between the Greek Orthodox Church, state, and society? What strategies have the Church and society adopted to adapt in the situation? Or, as Prodromos Yannas put it (111), “how to live with, rather than suppress, difference?”.

Several chapters discuss two topical issues: the position of women (within Orthodoxy and Orthodox society) and Islam. While Western presuppositions about the thorny official position of Muslims in Greece seem to be validated, it is evident that those concerning the position of women should be reconsidered, due, for example, to the fact that some Greek Orthodox theologians have recently seriously supported the ordination of women.

The collection clearly shows that the global religious revival has affected Greece, too. One indicator of this is that the Church re-entered, in 2000, the public field by contesting (unsuccessfully) the government’s exclusion of religious affiliation from identity cards. (However, the ruling socialist party then lost the general elections in 2004.) It may be that, in the case of the identity card, the Church represented itself as anti-modernist, but by entering the scene it showed that it was, at least under the then archbishop Chrysostomos, willing to challenge secular transformation. As Victor Roudometof puts it, ‘anti-modernism’ is “a means to an end; it enables the church . . . to use the widespread localist feelings currently present throughout modern Greek society to reassert its public role . . . gain public support for its activities . . . and ultimately increase its visibility” (34). However, the disturbing consequence of such an adaptation to post-modern society is growing intolerance towards other religions, also known among religions other than Orthodoxy.

Does this mean that Orthodoxy would invigorate religious de-privatisation in Europe after Orthodox Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Romania joined the EU? The Greek case would suggest that Orthodoxy can at least challenge present secular understandings of religion in Western Europe. However, the authors of this book suggest that this cannot happen by a return to the past symphony of the Orthodox Church and the state. Rather, as Anastassios Anastassiadis shows, for example, the Church consists of various clerical and secular actors, who have various interests and aims, which all reshape the role of religion in twenty-first century Greece, the EU, and the world. Consider, for example, a group of monks (from a privately founded monastery), portrayed by Lina Molokotos-Liederman, who propagate Orthodoxy through rock music.

However, Orthodoxy, or religion in general for that matter, has also darker faces. As Vasilios Makrides’s chapter indicates, for example, after the collapse of socialism in 1989–1991, the Church of Greece (and, I would add, some other churches as well—Orthodox and others) has evidently been involved in different illegal and dubious enterprises, such as smuggling, money-laundering, embezzlement, and bribery, not to speak of pedophilia. Without Makrides intending it, his chapter also throws new light on the financial crisis that shattered Greece in early 2010: the Church and the state institutions have dealt with change in a similar manner.

As a whole, this work—leaving aside some issues which could have been included, such as the changing role of monasteries (outside Athos), pilgrimage or male religiosity—is a much needed contextualisation of some current issues in the Greek (and Orthodox) situation. It also effectively dismantles the customary non-Orthodox presupposition of a monolithic, backward-looking Orthodox Church. What is still lacking is a comprehensive history of Orthodoxy (not only of the Orthodox Church) and religion in general in Greece in the twentieth century so that the issues which are discussed in the present volume can be further contextualised.

TEUVO LAITILA

Orthodox Church History & Comparative Religion, Joensuu, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

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Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief

ROBERT A. SCOTT, 2010

Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press

235 pp., US\$24.95, £16.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-520-26275-1

The theme of this book would appear to have little relevance to our contemporary world, given the growth of bio-medical science during the last 200 years. Since the Second World War, welfare systems rapidly expanded in the West. However, during the last 30 years, the power and prestige of bio-medical science and medical professionals have been challenged by ‘insiders’ (for example, those involved in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health ‘problems’) as well as outsiders. This criticism has found common ground in pointing to the limitations of bio-medical knowledge concerning the relationship between mind and body and the role of a wide range of ‘alternative’ beliefs and practices.

Thus for Robert Scott, the fact that millions of people still go on pilgrimage to seek healing demonstrates not just the ways in which contemporary society is linked to the pre-modern world, e.g. medieval Europe, but also that non-medical beliefs cannot be dismissed as relics of a bygone ‘superstitious’ age. As he carefully points out, while change in the environment through going on pilgrimage “could plausibly explain why people might have gained relief from at least some of the conditions from which they were suffering . . . this is not the full story” (120). In both medieval Europe and contemporary times, psychological evidence suggests that “appealing to the saints could result in genuine relief of symptoms of bodily illness” (ibid).

The author is well placed to advance this thesis. He has acquired a considerable knowledge of medieval European society, particularly through his work on both cathedral building and the Black Death, and has written collaboratively on the sociology of contemporary health and illness. His inter-disciplinary expertise has been honed by his role as deputy director of the Stanford Center for Advanced Study on the Behavioral Sciences and periods of study in other centres of learning, where he encountered historians of both medieval and

modern Europe (for example, Ruth Harris, whose impressive study of Lourdes explores the complex relationship of mind and body in 'the secular age').

The book is organised in two parts. The first considers the ways in which Christian pilgrims have sought miraculous healing through the intercession of the saints in both the 'Middle Ages' and more recent times. The author begins by describing life during the 'Middle Ages' and then considers both the relationship between people, saints, and god and how people assert their own agency in the realm of miracle and saints. Scott notes the ways in which people bicker and bargain with saints—a process of 'sacred commerce' which has been noted elsewhere, but still needs further exploration (see Eade and Sallnow 25). The next two chapters in this first part deal with apparitions, drawing heavily on nineteenth- and twentieth-century cults, and pilgrimage to saints' shrines across both medieval and modern periods.

The second part brings the reader to the heart of the matter: how people over the centuries understand and cope with disease. Scott draws on recent research on health and illness to explore the role of stress in illness through an examination of 'social, situational and psychological factors' across the centuries. Suffering can be alleviated by trust in the treatments individuals receive and in those administering them. However, pilgrimage can also contribute; in the final chapter, Scott brings the various strands of his argument together through a powerful analysis of framing, confessing, self-efficacy, and healing. The book concludes with a coda where the author considers such issues as the ways in which saints heal, the frequency of miraculous healing, the relationship between mind and body, and the veneration of saints on the internet.

In sum, this is a fine example of inter-disciplinary scholarship. It is written clearly and the overall argument is supported by a wide range of historical evidence. Specialists in particular disciplines may dislike the broad-brush approach adopted by the author, but this would be to miss the point. He shows the continued relevance of pilgrimage in a modern secular (post-secular?) world. Hopefully, others will take up the crucial issues of life and death raised in this book and apply them to other religious beliefs and practices concerning health and illness around the world.

JOHN EADE

Southlands College, Roehampton University, London, UK

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REFERENCE

Eade, John, and Michael J. Sallnow, eds. *Contesting the Sacred*. London: Routledge, 1991.

A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism

MATTHEW T. LEE & MARGARET M. POLOMA, 2009

Lewiston, NY & Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press

vi + 175 pp., US\$99.95, £64.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7734-3902-3

Periodically, there have been endeavours to investigate the common terrain inhabited by theology and sociology and there have even been suggestions that they may be fused to mutual advantage. In recent years, the venture appears to have quickened its pace. Depending on one's point of view, the enterprise might be interpreted as either holding great potential or as being a rather reckless assignment: an opportunity to navigate uncharted waters or as futile an experiment as exploring the commonalities between anthropology and quantum physics. *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism* by Matthew Lee and Margaret Poloma at least marks an earnest attempt to break ground for both disciplines through a well-crafted, albeit rather brief volume. It carries many of the previous enlightening insights of Poloma's in particular; she represents the relatively rare breed of an Episcopalian charismatic who is also renowned for her significant sociological contribution to the field of Pentecostalism. In recent years, she has turned at least some of her attention to the often bewildering nature of the ecstatic Pentecostal phenomenon, including that evident in the ill-fated Toronto Blessing. Therefore, the volume marks something of a continuation by examining the subjective experience of the Holy Spirit that is so central to Pentecostalism in the context of Christian mission and service and the impact of social and psychological factors.

A Sociological Study of the Great Commission in Pentecostalism is essentially derived from surveys integral to the Godly Love Project founded at the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, initiated in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2001. While there is not the scope to comment on the rationale and perhaps wisdom of the project, this volume amounts to the second major publication emerging from it and it follows the earlier and generally positively appraised *Blood and Fire* of 2008. The latter resulted from a four-year ethnographic survey and from interviews conducted with members of a congregation willing to forge a major evangelising departure for the Pentecostal movement. *A Sociological Study of the Great Commission in Pentecostalism* raises some of the same complex theoretical and methodological issues addressed in the earlier work. Nonetheless, its central concern is to engage with the relationship between divine power (or 'Godly Love') and the Christian believer, as manifest in unswerving altruism in mission and social service.

'Godly Love' is here understood to be the interaction between the divine and human. In short, for Lee and Poloma, it constitutes the outcome of encountering the experience of a benevolent God and subsequently "being motivated by this dynamic to engage in selfless service to others". This seems to be the essence of "The Great Commandment in Pentecostalism" and the authors examine—as their core aim—the motivation of those taking up this mantle. One immediate observation is that 'The Great Commandment' is a primary directive in *all* Christian traditions. Thus, the volume is limited to the discussion of such encounters within Pentecostalism. This narrow focus appears to be partly led by the methodology relating to the interview sample at the heart of the volume, that is, the channels which are already open to the researchers and an almost ready-made quota (plus an element of 'snow-balling') of interviewees.

An academic enquiry into 'Godly Love' essentially means excavating the social science of 'altruism' and going beyond evolutionary naturalism, social psychology, and other secular approaches; it is here that theological

frameworks are deemed to be the missing ingredient. This may all seem rather arduous, but to their credit the authors skilfully fashion a justification. In doing so, and in fusing the sociological and theological, Lee and Poloma jettison the sociological orthodoxy of ‘methodological agnosticism’—largely associated with Peter Berger—in favour of ‘methodological theism’ that essentially allows for dialogue between both disciplines. Much of what follows involves trawling through the mass of existing psychological theory, including naturalistic and Jungian as well as sociological perspectives, and social network and rational choice theories. Some are discarded, while others are merged, thus forging a complex model of altruism as expressed in ‘Godly Love’. The authors then proceed to define love in this context by using Sorokin’s five dimensions of love, while acknowledging that no definition can ultimately be essentialised or stripped of its variation-producing cultural contexts.

The sample frame based upon 110 interviews is sound enough, suitably represented by geographical region, denomination, and other variables, but no ‘exemplars’ other than those in the Pentecostal fold. Nonetheless, there are some striking findings, including the high percentage of interviewees of relatively high social class background as measured by professional, educational qualifications and income. There are evidently not many of the ‘The wretched of the earth’—the poor, marginalised, and dispossessed that constituted the ranks of the early Pentecostals. Either this is indicative of the social mobility of Pentecostals over generations, resulting from frugal Protestant lifestyles or suggesting that the prosperity gospel really does work. I was also struck by the conservative political leanings of the majority of the interviewees and was left contemplating quite how this could be reconciled with the social activist dimension of altruism.

In many respects, it’s quite hard to know what to make of this volume and the project from which it is derived. In that sense it is something of a novelty. Certainly, there remains the question as to whether the model developed by Lee and Poloma works beyond their findings as outlined in the book. Nevertheless, it does open up a challenge for future research. This is the main value of the volume, as it suggests that any attempt to explore the mutual ground of sociology and theology will not necessarily end in a relativistic *cul-de-sac*. It answers a number of worthwhile questions and, importantly, raises some more that any synthesis of sociology and theology can continue to engage with. In doing so, the authors break some academic taboos and probably the taboos of a fair number of Pentecostals as well.

STEPHEN J. HUNT

Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

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REFERENCE

Poloma, Margaret M. *Blood and Fire: Godly Love in a Pentecostal Emerging Church*. New York: New York UP, 2008.

A Sociology of Religious Emotion

OLE RIIS & LINDA WOODHEAD, 2010

Oxford: Oxford University Press

270 pp., £30.00 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-19-956760-7

For quite some time, emotions have remained conceptually cloistered in the inner recesses of the individual and the primary domain of psychology. Sociologists such as Arlie Hochschild, Tom Scheff, and Randall Collins shifted the position of emotions from 'within' to 'between' individuals and their social worlds, thereby making emotions a legitimate subject for sociological examination. This is not to say that earlier sociological accounts completely overlooked emotions. But emotions appear, similar to bodies and embodiment, as an "absent presence" (Shilling) in the discipline.

While emotions might be topical in sociology, sociologists of religion have, for a variety of reasons, been slower in their emotional uptake. Clearly, some of the classic theorists in the field recognized the centrality of emotions in religious life. But contemporary sociology of religion favours the cleaner lines of doctrine, belief, and other 'rational' dimensions of religion over the 'messy' world of emotions. *A Sociology of Religious Emotion* by Ole Riis and Linda Woodhead aims to correct this disregard, to re-claim and re-theorise emotions in religious life.

Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, the first part of the book provides a helpful overview of the social scientific study of emotions and religious emotions in particular. The authors also develop their definition of religious emotions. Religious emotions do not include any distinctive sets of emotional experiences, such as awe, wonder or rapture. Rather, religious emotions arise "... in the context of religious regimes" (93). Such regimes orient emotional life around an "alternate ordering"—the way emotional life 'should be'—and defining what can be felt and when. Going farther, religious emotions have three distinct characteristics according to the authors: emotional ordering, emotional transcendence-transition, and inspiration-orientation. All of their explication and terminological fine-tuning is quite helpful in navigating this tricky territory, even if it does not lead to a precise definition.

In the rest of the text, the authors develop their analytic framework for the study of religious emotions. In an effort to avoid all types of reductionism, they present a tripartite and dialectical framework in which emotions arise in the interactions between self, symbols, and community. Terminology, such as 'consecration', 'insignation', 'externalisation', and so forth, captures the dynamic processes that flow between these elements and establish a particular emotional dialectic. This dialectic can be balanced or imbalanced, resulting in either a certain emotional cohesion or the potential for various forms of emotional conflict. These fairly abstract models are complemented by a smattering of empirical examples throughout the text, with a sustained application in the final chapter.

This is a very welcome and timely text. Riis and Woodhead provide a theoretical model and vocabulary for an under-theorised area in the discipline. Their analytic frameworks and terminology act as 'sensitising concepts'—telling the reader more where to look rather than how to move their theory to explicit

methods. This may frustrate some, but will be welcome by others. My main criticism is the density and style which make the text, at times, hard to wade through. New terminology is often circular and tough to follow and often seems like a transformation of fairly clear concepts (e.g. emotional labour and emotional work) into less clear concepts (e.g. emotional regimes and emotional programmes). Most unfortunate is how such a lively, compelling, and emotional topic becomes weighed down by emotionless, academic prose. That said, it will be a good start for graduate students and scholars interested in stepping into the wild world of religious emotions.

MATTHEW IMMERGUT

Purchase College, State University of New York (SUNY), New York, USA

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Spirituality and Social Work

BETH R. CRISP, 2010

Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate

169 pp., £50.00

ISBN 978-0-7546-7734-5

Spirituality and Social Work by Beth R. Crisp aims to show that spirituality is and should be an important resource for social work. Today, however, spirituality is not often understood as such. This is because social work has struggled to free itself from its historical roots in religious institutions and define its foundations, aims, and methods in secular terms. This is done to the extent, as the book recounts, that some of today's agents within social work, who are officially and formally connected to a religious institution, prefer to downplay this connection and present themselves in purely secular terms. However, the author emphasises that, if spirituality is understood in a de-mystified way and stripped of religious language, it can become a valuable part of how social workers relate to the lives of service users in more holistic terms.

The book is more like a textbook that explores the potentialities of spirituality within social work than a critical examination of the theme. As such, the text is readable and probably very useful for its intended audience, especially as its examples are drawn from research done in many fields connected to spirituality, particularly in the Western world. One point of criticism that one might mention is that intersectional issues (such as gender and ethnicity) are not very much focused upon.

However, precisely because it is a textbook, *Spirituality and Social Work* provides the scholar of religion with an interesting and relatively well documented case of how spirituality is understood today in some contexts outside religion. The book first presents a short discussion on how spirituality should be understood as 'lived experience' and how it both relates and does not relate to religion. An important point, which is repeated many times, is that spirituality is not restricted to religion. The chapters then describe different stages in a person's life-span (from childhood to advanced age) and critical stages in life (such as suffering and death as well as the problems of belonging and exclusion) when spiritual issues often surface. The proposed understanding

of spirituality is extremely broad and inclusive, even vague. It is based on the assumption that 'everyone is spiritual' and that this 'intrinsic spirituality' has its place potentially in every situation in life. The concept of spirituality is not very strictly defined, which is understandable, since it is extremely hard to do that, as scholars of religion well know. Instead, spirituality is likened to meaning, identity, connectedness, transformation, and transcendence (as many similar books and articles do which address the issue of spirituality, for instance, in health care). None of these attributes, aspects or instances of spirituality (except for transcendence, perhaps) is restricted to special religious institutions or uses. This kind of fluid spirituality that happens both within and without religions could, perhaps, be called general or generalised spirituality.

Discourses where this type of general(ised) spirituality is related but not equated to religions, as well as to the secular society, take place and the particular ways in which these relations are constructed are revealing with regard to some of the understandings of religion today. From the case of *Spirituality and Social Work* we can learn, for instance, the following: firstly, some social institutions, like social work, that have their roots in religions go through interesting processes and struggles with regard to this historical bind. Urge and interest to separate from religious roots may have implied, within the self-understanding of the social institution in question, that religion has been represented in quite critical and even negative terms. Secondly, the word 'spirituality' is used as one means of doing the boundary-work with regard to religion today. Whereas institutional and normative religion may be seen in critical terms, spirituality is often used to mean and represent all that is good (non-normative and agent-supporting), both within religions and in the broader field of social life. Thirdly, interestingly, a challenge that social institutions, such as social work and psychotherapy (perhaps also health care and education), face and pose themselves in this field of demarcations is how to distinguish what is assumed as 'authentic spirituality' from 'repressive religion'.

Spirituality and Social Work gives an illuminative picture, in the present post-secular situation, of how the borderlines between religion and the secular are fracturing. Thus, besides being valuable reading for students of social work, the book provides the scholar of religion with a good case on the active and creative use of religion in the public sector in contemporary society.

TERHI UTRIAINEN

Study of Religions, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

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Spiritual Identities: Literature and the Post-Secular Imagination

JO CARRUTHERS & ANDREW TATE, eds., 2010

Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang

236 pp., £34.00

ISBN 978-3-03911-925-7

In a world which is weary of religion, literature offers a voice, often uttered tentatively and without conclusion, which murmurs that the ancient pursuit of

spirituality and the sacred remains persistently with us, awaiting new definition even while resistant to the theological definitions and religious authorities of the past. The essays in this collection celebrate that voice and mark, in one sense, a return to older ways in the study of literature and religion, more prevalent 20 or 30 years ago than today. Like all such returns, this has both its strengths and its weaknesses. One strength is the welcome return of close readings of literary texts and a commitment to literature which is not, as so often, befogged before it begins by theory or doubtful philosophy. The corresponding weakness is a tendency to indulge in mere descriptions of poems or plot rehearsals of novels, blurring the sense of what precisely is being argued. In other words, there is a lack of theoretical (or perhaps theological) reflection *after* the process of close literary attention has been completed.

It is becoming commonplace now to speak of our 'post-secular' age. After the 'death of God' and the claims of postmodernity, religion has not gone away, although this need not imply one of the varieties of rejection of the postmodern, as in the claims of George Steiner and others and as referred to by Gavin D'Costa in his Preface. The Introduction to this book begins with a consideration of the 'return' of the religious in contemporary literary studies and the first essay by Sara Maitland, who is both a novelist and a theologian, traces this return in a fascinating history of the individual from pre- to post-Enlightenment thinking. The next four essays deal with five women writers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some well known and some obscure. This immediately raises the question of the preponderance of women authors in the collection and how the issue of gender relates to the primary concern of the book. More particularly, it remains somewhat unclear why these particular authors from an earlier age have been chosen to "suggest the various possibilities for rethinking writing from our contemporary, post-secular situation" (5). True, they are all deeply religious in their concerns in one way or another, but they are by no means unique in that. What they might suggest, from positions of extreme religious commitment to those of complex divergence from the tradition in Emily Brontë and George Eliot, is the continuance of the religious in literature in ages and situations of faith and doubt. But it is not the studies of the major and more familiar writings that are most fascinating. Rather those of the lesser known and forgotten figures—the working-class hymn-writer Susanna Harrison, the redoubtable Anna Barbauld, and the 'poetess' Felicia Hemans—give clues to the fate of religion in a changing society unobscured by the genius of the authors. Emma Mason's essay "Sensibility into Sense: Barbauld, Hemans and Religious Commitment" is one of the most interesting and original in the book, drawing on a distinction from literature—in Jane Austen's familiar sisters—to explore the complexities of religion in the age of Romanticism.

The second half of the book, as might be expected of a conference volume, has a somewhat miscellaneous feel to it, leaving the overall impression to be very much constructed by the reader, for the Introduction is little more than a mere description of the ubiquitous presence of religion in literature. One of the most interesting pieces is Andy Mousley's "Spiritual Humanisms", with its exploration of Walter Benjamin and Julia Kristeva and its concern to establish the nature of theology—weak or strong—in not only a post-secular but also a post-theological age. How is the religious to be articulated *beyond* the realms

of the literary imagination? The lead given by Mousley might have been interestingly followed in the subsequent papers on individual authors from Orhan Pamuk, Douglas Coupland, Salman Rushdie, Octavia Butler, David Grossman, Susan Howatch, and Sara Maitland, not least because their status as writers varies enormously (like that of the writers drawn from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

In other words, this fascinating collection does pose important questions that are left too implicit, reminding us that the study of literature and religion (or theology) demands a rigorous theoretical and even philosophical basis that is not quite pursued here. It was once wisely said at a conference on religion and literature in the early 1980s that all such meetings should have a serious philosopher present. The essays here so promisingly opened by Maitland suggest many avenues of thought left unexplored on the question of 'spiritual identity', which a second volume might begin to unravel in the service of this interdisciplinary field. One can but hope that the editors might consider this for another conference and book.

DAVID JASPER

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK & Renmin University of China, Beijing, China

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The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film

JOHN LYDEN, ed., 2009

Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge

503 pp., £125.00, US\$200.00 (hb), £24.99, US\$50.00 (pb)

ISBN 978-0-415-44853-6, ISBN 978-0-415-60187-0 (pb)

Patience is everything in a 25-chapter, 503-page edited volume that aims to cover the full range of perspectives on a field that as yet has no bounds—patience for the writers, who want to submit in time to meet the 2:15 show time of *Inception*; patience for the editor, who pores over each submission looking for the interpretive spark that induced him to invite this writer in the first place; and patience for the eager reader, who peruses the book seeking entertainment, enlightenment, and a teaching text. I am happy to report that I was often entertained and enlightened. Although I plan to keep *Theology and Film* by Christopher Deacy and Gaye Ortiz at my side as I prepare lectures, I will definitely recommend John Lyden's labour of love and leadership, *Religion and Film*, to my students and colleagues.

Before I heap praise on some of the salient chapters, though, I must chide a few contributors for an unnecessarily apologetic tone—as though somewhere in the scholarly world, some academic might not consider 'religion and film' an area worth a scholar's time. Do not fear the disciplinary (or even the interdisciplinary) police, however! Even apart from the intellectual freedom that the field offers, where else can you revere film critics such as André Bazin, Jonathan Rosenbaum, and Nick Davis in the same breath? What other field of study requires you to watch dozens of movies every month; explore history, literature, astronomy,

design, and physics just to warm up to write movie reviews; and immerse yourself in non-Western, non-Christian stories even as you prepare a critique or praise the systems of art, faith, and politics, in which you personally reside?

What other field (other than film itself or art history) entices you to take a second or third look at a screen image to examine ways the body and the face are represented, then be led to study the paintings or icons that may have inspired that image? Diane Apostolos-Cappadona's thorough analysis of three modes of visual analogy stimulated me to re-think the connections between the icon and 'reality' and the differing ways a pared-down image (Bresson's *Pickpocket*) and a sensuous one (Tarkovsky's *Mirror* and the Dardenne brothers' *The Silence of Lorna*) might send a viewer tumbling towards a deeper grasp of meaning, just as the folding sidewalks of Paris in *Inception* visually duplicate some paintings by Vermeer.

By the way, to readers who assume that a Jansenist transcendental aesthetic governed all of Bresson's work, as several writers in this volume suggest, let me recommend *Au hasard, Balthazar* (1966), *Mouchette* (1967), and *L'Argent* (1983), full of images, sounds, and (almost) smells as palpable as Rossellini's in his war trilogy of 1945–47. You can hear the snap of clothespins and the crunch of hazelnuts in the Tolstoy-inspired, Dostoevsky-inflected tale of greed and redemption in *L'Argent*; feel the bruise of stones hurled at the soiled and doomed child-woman *Mouchette*; and walk with the donkey *Balthazar* along his long and sacrificial pilgrimage, so palpable are the images of rocks, mud, and rain that Bresson invokes.

The single most informative chapters might be those by Melanie Wright on Judaism and Amir Hussain on Islam, with their unpacking of media misrepresentations and religious bodies' misuses of the popular medium. Wright also presents a nuanced analysis of films that "treat Judaism in fresh, surprising ways" (103). She supports her arguments by referring to specific incidents in the films she refers to—for instance, Amos Gitai's *Kadosh* and Giddi Dar's *Guests*. Hussain, too, emphasises misrepresentations, guessing (correctly, I believe) that "negative portrayals of American Muslims on television must have some correlation with the ways in which actual American Muslims are perceived by those in the United States" (134). He notes Islam's great cultural and religious diversity and suggests films about Muslims made by Muslims.

Other pleasures await the patient reader. I thank Francisca Cho for a helpful filmography as well as an enlightened discussion of Buddhist semiotics. Terry Lindvall presents a lively discussion of silent cinema and religion informed by one of the top scholars in early cinema, Tom Gunning. Peter Malone provides a snapshot of the productive work of SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication that operates in more than 140 countries. A whole world of new movie-watching awaits us, aided by SIGNIS's participation in international film festivals. (I did wish for a list of non-Western movies from recent years that Malone might particularly applaud.) Gaye Williams Ortiz moves clearly through the world of feminist film and scholarship and stumps for fuller understandings of the ways the movie industry constructs gender and suppresses the voices of the marginalized.

Christopher Deacy, yet again defying critics who find theological approaches to cinema limiting, proves its continued contemporary resonance. He passionately

defends a cinema informed by Bonhoeffer's (humanistic as well as Christian) plea for persons to identify with the suffering of all human beings. Redemption as a marker of that compassion (*hesed*—long-suffering love; *agape*—unconditional love) continually catches Deacy's imagination, as it does mine—not the cheap sentimentality of the Hollywood product (I cite *Saving Private Ryan* and *Shawshank Redemption*), but rather the hard-won insights and redemption of flawed human beings such as Theo Faron (*Children of Men*, 2006), Malik El-Djebino (*A Prophet*, 2009), Benjamin Esposito (*The Secret in Their Eyes* (2009), and Christine (*Lourdes*, 2009).

A collection of essays always takes chances. On the whole, Lyden has done well with his charge. For future revised editions, though, let me urge that he and his contributors engage the actual film texts themselves—the visual and sonic evidence that leads them to the conclusions they have drawn. Plot summary is not enough. In what specific ways does a movie's language (its arsenal of light and darkness; distance; shot duration and depth of field; colour; camera movements; pace; and narrative structure, etc.) determine—or at least suggest—its interpretation(s)? Roy Anker presents a splendid group of artistically sophisticated films that I want to see again, the more reason to spend some time with their particularly filmic qualities.

The volume includes several other compelling essays that hint at the writers' fuller contributions to religion and film. Robert Johnston compellingly argues the central place that theology occupies in cinema; his chapter serves as a microcosm of current approaches within the field. Robert Jewett and John Lawrence's analysis unpacks a topic simplistically marketed by Hollywood: the (great American) hero as a model to be imitated—a 'religious' identity that, when examined closely, valorises individual violence and implicitly or explicitly promotes American imperialism. I offer only one change to their otherwise helpful discussion of hero movies: with only one exception, *Sudden Impact*, Clint Eastwood's 30 directed films (particular his movies since 1992) tell the stories of men, women, and children marginalised by a rapacious dominant culture: women, non-whites, immigrants, and the poor. His personal films are a critique of individual violence and war.

Another Eastwood correction: in Jolyon Mitchell's otherwise provocative and useful chapter on "Ethics", *Flags of Our Fathers* concentrates not on the soldiers' duty, but on the government's fraudulent appropriation of their suffering. (Again, I note that the film narrates stories of young men and women displaced and disregarded by the powerful.) I would have liked a longer chapter on ethics, coming from such an experienced analyst as Mitchell and attending to a critical topic common to worldwide cinema. I also want to hear more about non-WASP, non-Western, non-male movies and movie-makers as well as from filmmakers and movie critics who hail from humanistic or non-religious traditions, but might have illuminating insights on the issues in religion and film that so engage us. I await a second edition of *Religion and Film*.

SARA ANSON VAUX

Department of Religious Studies & Office of Fellowships, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA

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REFERENCE

Deacy, Christopher, and Gaye Ortiz. *Theology and Film: Challenging the Sacred/Secular Divide*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008.

Interpreting the Qur'an: A Guide for the Uninitiated

CLINTON BENNETT, 2010

London & New York: Continuum

157 pp., £65.00, US\$130.00 (hb), £14.99, US\$24.95 (pb)

ISBN 978-0-8264-9943-1 (hb), ISBN 978-0-8264-9944-8 (pb)

It is significant that this important new volume is dedicated to Professor David Kerr (1945–2008), former Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Birmingham. The author, an ordained Baptist minister, began his study of Islam, the Qur'an, and Arabic under David Kerr and, like his mentor, developed a respectful yet scholarly approach to Islam, Muslims, and inter-faith dialogue. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the author stating that the aim of his book is to “elucidate, de-perplex and illuminate, but also to help strangers to the Book, the uninitiated, to begin to develop an appreciation for, even a love of, the Qur'an” (ix). Biographically, he writes, it represents the work of “a non-Muslim scholar of Islam who has wrestled with the Qur'an for almost 30 years” (7).

After a lengthy introduction in which background and method are outlined and explained (including the use of the internet and Wikipedia), the book presents four chapters in which the author paraphrases various *surahs* of the Qur'an associated with the successive historical phases of the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Muslim community: “The Prophet's Call”, “The Qur'an on God, Humanity & Itself”, “The Community Takes Shape”, and “The Community Consolidates”. These four chapters seek to place the content of the Qur'an into historical context. In terms of presentation, this is both a strength and a weakness: a strength in that it gives the reader a strong historical sense of the life of the Prophet and the early Muslim community; a weakness in that the rapid succession of facts and detail—coupled with frequent references to, and comparisons between, Qur'anic passages—risk overloading the reader. It is a pity, too, that there is only passing reference to the oral and aural experience of the Qur'an within Muslim life and spirituality.

The final chapter, “Conclusion: the Qur'an in Muslim Life and Practice with Final Thoughts”—is a noble attempt to pick up some of the more contentious issues (for the non-Muslim), such as gender, the Qur'anic view that the Bible was corrupted, and the relationship between science and the Qur'an. As in other parts of the book, the author adopts a conciliatory tone so that readers can steer clear of both simplistic reactions and stereotypes: that the Qur'an is all about punishment and wrath, for instance (27).

Although this text is written for the non-Muslim ‘uninitiated’, the author's background and approach mean that it is aimed principally at the Christian/Christianised reader for whom it will have much interest. In stating that he is convinced that “my God and Allah are identical” leading him to use “the Arabic

Allah and the English God interchangeably, sometimes in the same sentence" (13), the author makes his own stance clear from the outset. Throughout his journey through the Qur'an, he is subsequently not shy of finding parallels with biblical literature and imagery. Thus, for example, he draws a comparison between The Transfiguration of Jesus and Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascent (63) and between the 'Incarnation' of Jesus and the revelation of the Book (134). Undoubtedly, this will be discomfiting for some readers—Muslims and Christians alike—as will the author's tendency to lapse into Christian thought forms, for example, when he refers to 'sinners' or the 'formation' of Muslim children, for example.

However, despite this, this is a generous and genuine book which strives to establish a form within which real and respectful Christian-Muslim dialogue can take place. Therefore, this is a welcome book which demonstrates that non-Muslims, in exploring the Qur'an, can find a middle ground between anti-Muslim polemic and Muslim absolutism. If it has its defects and limits, it is for others to take up the cause, but (it is to be hoped) in the same spirit of generosity and search for meaning as demonstrated by this author.

BILL GENT

REsource, the journal of the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) & Warwick Religion and Education Research Unit (WRERU), University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

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An Amish Paradox: Diversity and Change in the World's Largest Amish Community

CHARLES E. HURST & DAVID L. McCONNELL, 2010

Young Center Books in Anabaptist & Pietist Studies

Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press

356 pp., US\$60.00 (hb), US\$30.00 (pb)

ISBN 978-0-8018-9398-8 (hb), ISBN 978-0-8018-9399-5 (pb)

A number of excellent books have been written about the Amish in recent years and *An Amish Paradox* joins the ranks of the best of them. Sociologist Charles Hurst and Anthropologist David McConnell not only bring an interdisciplinary expertise to their study, but also an intimate knowledge of the Amish in Ohio's Holmes County Settlement area, as well as a sense of adventure, as they lead their readers on a journey through various domains of Amish life. Their presentation is knowledgeable, measured, and thoughtful and their clear and straightforward style of writing takes one through many facets of Amish life in Ohio at a horse and buggy pace—fast enough to cover the territory and maintain one's interest, but slowly enough to point out the changing scenery en route and to really give one a sense of the complex nuances that make up everyday Amish life.

As a 'Plain' people, the Amish are often described as leading a simple life, but in reality, Amish life is far from simple. Hurst and McConnell use a variety of sources and methods to gain an understanding of this complexity and the intricacies that continuously evolve, as new mainstream technological changes

in the English world that surrounds and intersects with each Amish community lead to a new round of decision-making among the Amish themselves. Over a period of seven years, between 2001 and 2008, the authors interviewed close to 200 respondents, both Amish and English, from each of the four major Amish affiliations: the least accessible, ultra-conservative Swartzentruber groups; the moderately conservative Andy Weaver churches; the more centrist Old Order affiliations; and the most accommodating and technologically progressive, yet morally conservative New Order. Information was also gleaned from surveys sent to Amish church members as well as individuals who had left Amish life. Further, the authors visited schools and businesses, attended church services, and pored over a range of documents, including Amish newsletters, textbooks, and storybooks used by Amish teachers, and Ohio Amish Directories that provide information on family membership, occupation, and geographical location. Each source opens a slightly different window into Amish life in Holmes County and the end result is a rich tapestry of awareness.

For the scholar, the authors embed the roots of their descriptions within sociological theory, but because Hurst and McConnell write with an enviable ease and clarity, the dialogue is openly accessible to everyone. Differing viewpoints are constantly presented throughout the pages of this book, as the authors present the many sides to decisions that have to be made with respect to family life, education, occupational changes, and health-care choices. Each new idea and aspect of modernity that encroaches on Amish experiences lead to new negotiations and walking a tightrope of 'changing with the times', while remaining separate and true to the belief in what it means to be Amish. How do parents increase the likelihood that their children will want to be baptised Amish when they become adults? Are the chances of success improved, if they enforce firm limits and clamp down on unwanted behaviour that might run the risk of causing rebellion in their teenagers or should they let their youth 'get it out of their system', believing that having real choices will make adults more likely to choose to follow the rules of the church? Are Amish families a model of stability or does the patriarchal Amish family lead to domestic violence and the status of women as second-class citizens? This book makes it abundantly clear that no one size fits all. The issues that the Amish face, as they grapple with interpreting new challenges that arise from increased contact with the outside world are complex and, although there are distinguishing commonalities in the ways in which Amish communities adjust, the variety of adjustments that occur reigns supreme. While everyone may be transformed to some extent by external forces, not everyone will be transformed in the same way. At the core of this book is the goal of working out how and why the process of change unfolds both similarly and differently for families, church districts, and affiliations.

Therefore, this is not a book for those who want easy answers and expect stereotypes of the Amish. It is a wonderful book for those who seek to understand the paradoxes of Amish life in the twenty-first century.

ELIZABETH C. COOKSEY

Department of Sociology and Center for Human Resource Research, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA

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The Nuwaubian Nation: Black Spirituality and State Control

SUSAN PALMER, 2010

Farnham, Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate

177 pp., £50.00, US\$99.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7546-6255-6

The Nuwaubian Nation is an ethnography of a Black Nationalist communal movement in the United States that has focused on coming to an 'overstanding' of African-American identity. Founded by Dwight York in 1967 as Ansaar Pure Sufi, the group has at various times called itself the Nubian Islamic Hebrew Mission, the Ansaaru Allah Community, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation. York, known at different times as Imam Issa ('Imam Jesus'), Yanuun (an extraterrestrial from the planet Rizq), Raboni, Maku, and Chief Black Eagle, has led his followers through a series of interpretations of the 'true' meaning of Blackness.

Palmer locates the socio-cultural roots of York's group in the 'Black cultic milieu', on the basis of which she describes the group's belief system as Gnostic in its search for hidden truth and York as a trickster or sacred clown who tries to bring enlightenment through his outrageous and changing theological ideas. Throughout the changes, York has remained a Black separatist who insists that Whites are evil beings without souls. In *The Paleman*, he reverses the White *antebellum* version of the myth of Ham and argues that Whites are the accursed descendents of Ham whose skin turned White from leprosy. Another myth situates Blacks as a race of aliens whose green skin turned brown when they came into contact with the Earth's atmosphere.

In 1993, the group moved from Brooklyn to rural Georgia, where they built Tama Re, which Palmer describes as part utopian community and part Egyptian theme park. The move to Tama Re marked the beginning of a period of escalating conflict with ex-members (including York's son) and with local and Federal authorities, which eventuated in the arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of York on child molestation and racketeering charges and in the destruction of Tama Re. The second half of the book is devoted to recounting the story of the conflict and the trial, which Palmer compares to the fate that has befallen other millenarian communities, especially African-American groups.

While it is obvious that Palmer is sceptical about the legitimacy of governmental actions against York, she goes out of her way to be evenhanded in her account. She interviews both spokesmen for the group and opponents, giving readers confidence that we are not being sold a 'party line'.

Palmer deserves a great deal of credit for even trying to write this book. Her access to vital information was limited in many ways. As a White researcher of a Black nationalist group, her ability as a participant observer to 'blend into the woodwork' was severely limited and she was not able to spend an extended period of time with the Nuwaubians. She was not able to interview York, nor did she have access to sealed trial records. Given the obstacles she faced, Palmer has achieved much. Despite the increase in scholarly attention paid to new religious movements in recent years, there is still a shortage of short, readable ethnographies. This is a well-written book that (assuming it is issued in paperback at a more reasonable price) could be profitably used

in classes in new religious movements to provide a springboard for discussions of charisma, leadership, the anti-cult movement, and other issues.

On the other hand, while Palmer does a good job of telling the Nuwaubian story, she sometimes fails to take full theoretical advantage of her data. Although she refers briefly to Weber's concept of charisma, for example, she does not seize the opportunity to use the example of Dwight York to enter into a full-scale analysis of the nature of charisma. Likewise, while she describes the escalating conflict between the Nuwaubians and outsiders in terms of 'deviance amplification', she uses her data to illustrate the theory rather than to build upon it.

This book would have benefited from a good proofreader, as spelling errors and stylistic inconsistencies sometimes distract the reader. However, despite these shortcomings, *The Nuwaubian Nation* is an important contribution to the ethnographic literature on new religious movements.

ARTHUR L. GREIL

Alfred University, Alfred, NY, USA

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Theater in a Crowded Fire: Ritual and Spirituality at Burning Man

LEE GILMORE, 2010

Berkeley: University of California Press

237 pp + DVD, US\$60.00, £41.95 (hb), US\$24.95, £16.95 (pb)

ISBN 978-0-520-25315-5 (hb), ISBN 978-0-520-26088-7 (pb)

The Burning Man festival is an event that I have attended in 2006 and 2010, and there is no way one could convey what it is and does—its very multi-facetedness, for many, its "profusion of artistic and creative expression is the heart and soul of the event" (68), which defies that possibility, and yet, Lee Gilmore's *Theater in a Crowded Fire* virtually manages to accomplish the impossible. Not only is she able to convey the controversial, ambiguous, paradoxical, and marginal festival as a "theater for spirituality, self-expression, communal bonding, and cultural transformation" (165), but she also solidly grounds her observations and analyses in careful methodology, drawing on Claude Lévi-Strauss, Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner, Hakim Bey, Michel Foucault, Mircea Eliade, and Catherine Bell (among others) to elucidate the tensions between mimesis, ritual authenticity, and make-believe as well as the conceptual vagueness between theatre and worship. Further, she discusses frankly the routinisation that has been inevitable as the festival has persisted and expanded since its more humble, spontaneous, immediate, and anonymous origins on San Francisco's Baker Beach.

Reminiscent to me of India as a direct experience, Burning Man—both the polysemous effigy Man and the festival as a whole—"cannot be accurately considered 'purely' one thing or another" (82). The recurring perspective that Gilmore employs is the van Gennep-Turner understanding of pilgrimage in such stages as separation, liminality, and aggregation (what 'Burners' refer to as 'decompression') in a paradoxical recreation of traditional and recognizable

civic/urban infrastructure: "Burning Man provides a theater by which to apperceive the extent to which all cultures are constructs" (125).

There is no question concerning the bacchanalian and hedonistic excesses of Black Rock City, a temporary autonomous zone constructed for a week on the semi-toxic alkaline clay-sands of the hostile and otherwise inhospitable Nevadan *playa*, where not even insects live, but this event also becomes an occasion, at least for many Burners, for introspection and transformation. It is the latter as spiritual and ritual activity on which Gilmore concentrates. In short, as she allows, "Burning Man is an interactive stage on which to perform, interrogate, and negotiate the meanings of religion, spirituality, ritual, identity, and culture, alongside a multitude of concurrent themes and possibilities" (11). For those Burners who affirmed to Gilmore that the festival was in some way spiritual (46%), this was chiefly seen as constituting an apprehension of connection to others or to community. Some saw it more in terms of self-expression, self-discovery or self-renewal. Roughly one-fifth of her respondents, however, denied that Burning Man was either religious or spiritual, although many of these did allow that "the event could ultimately be whatever participants wanted it to be" (60). Also, 39% recognized the ritualistic aspects of the event, although it is important to note that the ritual of this occasion is divorced from theology. Indeed, as Gilmore finds, "The interpretive openness evidenced in participants' widespread rejection of religion as a meaning-making frame—and in turn the collective dismissal of any pretense of orthodoxy in defining the event itself—is a central and critical aspect of this festival" (62). While borrowing just about any available religious and cultural register—ranging from Vodou, Shinto, and Mayan to Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, and even Christian, the appropriated elements and symbols are often parodied, satirised, transgressed, and reversed.

Among many of the 'citizens' of Black Rock City, the self-descriptive trope is described as 'spiritual but not religious'. This expression has come to be increasingly used in the wider society—usually in the context of rejecting more traditional institutionalised religion and finding the sacred in the experiential, reflexive, and heterodox. Burning Man in itself is not a religious event, but it at least facilitates religious events—besides much, much more. Gilmore's aim in this book is "to demonstrate that Burning Man not only is a space in which to ritualize alternative and individualized constructions of spirituality but also [to call] into question both academic and popular assumptions about what constitutes religion, ritual, and spirituality in the first place" (14). Black Rock City becomes a stage for individuals and groups to explore spirituality, pilgrimage, transformation, authenticity, otherness, liminality, and *communitas* (16). In her penultimate chapter, Gilmore examines the role of the media and their labels for Burning Man as 'technopagan', 'neotribal' or 'modern primitive'.

The creation of Black Rock City within a desolate and hostile desert emerges as an ephemeral week-long utopia that affirms itself against what Burners tend to call the 'default world' of the ordinary, institutionalisation, over-organisation (regulated), commodification, doctrine, hierarchical authority, inauthenticity, and programmed conformity—where communal psycho-spiritual release becomes less and less likely. While the term 'technopagan' is, according to Gilmore, a label created by the media, the understanding of paganism in a generic rather than sectarian sense comes perhaps closest to summing up

Burning Man's quasi-spirituality. The core of contemporary paganism includes a growing focus on the plight of planet Earth in the face of industrial pollution and global warming. Bron Taylor refers to this focal point as 'dark green religion' (DGR), which is uncomfortable with, if not opposed to, theism—whether monotheism, bitheism or polytheism. There are many names for this pragmatic, geo-centred focus, ranging from DGR, nature religion, and holism to organic paganism. For instance, the British Foundation for Holistic Spirituality argues, in its promotion of the label for the 2011 Census, that the word 'holistic' is "shorthand for an approach that is open-hearted, open-minded and respecting the essence of all spiritual traditions" (www.whyholistic.org). When this understanding is examined alongside Burning Man's 'Ten Principles' of radical inclusion, gifting, decommodification, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, 'leave no trace', participation, and immediacy (38) or its chief values—responsibility, autonomy, and freedom (43), there is conformity with holistic paganism, regardless of what it is called.

Gilmore states that "Burning Man takes its place in a lineage stretching back at least as far as the European medieval pilgrimage and carnival traditions" (25) and refers to this *genre* as "rituals of reversal" (69). She correctly understands that the carnivalesque is "a kind of temporary autonomous zone fully removed [for the Burners] from the taint of the ordinary, commodified, and regulated" (81). A Burning Man 'preacher', Reverend Billy, is cited as saying in an address to a crowd that "New Orleans . . . is our sister city, what teaches us to be Burners more than Mardi Gras?" (163)—this 'time out of time' celebration is key to both the carnival and the duration of Black Rock City. Among the 'Ten Principles' of the Burning Man gathering, it is the ecological mandate of leaving no trace that conveys both the notion of environmental responsibility and the ephemeral, virtually fictive reality of the Black Rock community and the temporary autonomous moment of carnival. Both have an affinity with the *epagomenal/nemotemi* days of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Zoroastrian, and Mesoamerican calendrical reckonings: days considered outside the regular solar calendar—at least the original ideal solar calendar of 360 days. When Burning Man concludes, not even a matchstick is left behind, and the Nevadan terrain once again reappears *as if* the event had never occurred. It becomes truly a phenomenon that is as 'make-believe' and 'made-up' as the Mardi Gras or even, following the US Supreme Court's Citizens United political decision, 'corporate personhood': fantasy fictions that nevertheless have real consequences.

The consequence for Burning Man, besides participants having a good time, is ultimately the nameless spirituality that has ancient roots in celebration and catharsis, but also forward-thinking concerns with contemporary and future planetary issues. Gilmore cites my own understanding of this relevant primordial apprehension, a generic, non-sectarian pagan sentiment, as "the root of religion" (142). Nevertheless, as she makes clear, Burners are less interested in, if not opposed to, any kind of label. If Burning Man is 'pagan', it is so basically only through the imposition of the designation by outside observers. It comprises the emerging spiritual nexus of ideas and practices conveyed by the likes of Genevieve Vaughan's 'gift economy' (www.gift-economy.com) and Taylor's 'dark green religion'. Although the Burning

Man ethos is contagious, it is also a part of an already expanding shift of religio-spiritual outlook and practice in our 'default world'.

While reading through Gilmore's study of a most complex and diversified event is certainly more palatable than enduring the seven-day grime and grit of Nevada's Black Rock Desert, it is also an enlightening and fascinating insight into a generative phenomenon of our times—one that is no less fully exemplary of, let alone possible because of, American material prosperity and yet it is also the ongoing search for meaning, value, and expression for a country and world at a crossroads to the possibility of a sane future. Perhaps noteworthy in this respect is the better social model that nearly a quarter of Gilmore's respondents witnessed as a renewed hope for humanity (110). The book includes a 30-minute DVD that re-presents its thousand-word description and analysis of the 'hyper-festival's interpretive plasticity', which takes place in the desert surrounded by nothing so that it becomes, according to founder Larry Harvey, 'the sole evidence of its own existence'. Burning Man is not a New Religious Movement or an attempt to start a new religion. It is a spiritual quest which borrows symbols from many different traditions and says *something* about religion. According to Gilmore, BM opens all categories and makes one think about them and wonder how mutable these categories actually are. This Herculean yet digestible undertaking represented by both book and DVD is to be strongly recommended.

MICHAEL YORK

Study of Religions Department, Bath Spa University (Emeritus), Bath, UK

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REFERENCE

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The Sixth Sense Reader

DAVID HOWES, ed., 2009

Oxford & New York: Berg

375 pp., £65.00, US\$119.95 (hb), £24.99, US\$44.95 (pb)

ISBN 978-1-84788-262-2 (hb), ISBN 978-1-84788-261-5 (pb)

The sixth sense—what is it and are our senses restricted to only six? These questions form the basis of an edited collection of papers by David Howes on the hitherto academically unmentionable area of psychic phenomena. He suggests that the sixth sense should be declared a 'floating signifier', able to receive any meaning at all. Not content with the prevailing psychological and neuro-biological theories of perception, which largely ignore important cultural and historical aspects, a sensorium continuum is proposed, with neuro-biology on one end, culture on the opposite end, and psychology and phenomenology falling between these two extremes. Howes points out that in order to know what the sixth sense entails in any of its contemporary manifestations, its cultural

roots and context of expression need to be investigated. Therefore, a combined anthropological–historical approach is taken in this *Reader*. Featuring the work of early writers, such as Louise Vinge and Mircea Eliade, both of whom have made contributions to the history and/or anthropology of the senses, as well as contemporary scholars, including the controversial Rupert Sheldrake, a diverse selection of papers on the theme is offered.

David Howes’s 52-page “Introduction: The Revolving Sensorium” rigorously explores the sensory experience, questioning, probing, and pushing through the various arguments that divide mind and body, emphasising the necessity for an academic approach that abjures reductionism, to give a more holistic picture of what the sixth sense might entail. As we discover, categorising the senses into a mere five and designating all that falls outside those five as the sixth sense is restrictive and seriously limits our thinking on the matter.

Just as animals have more acute senses than humans in some areas (smell, for example), so, too, members of other cultures often employ all the senses to a more heightened degree than people do in the West. The high importance placed on technological advancement in the West has led to a predominantly visual and auditory sensory emphasis, to the neglect of other senses. The Ongee, for example, who pay much attention to olfactory and other sensory phenomena that are useful to their way of life, can “gauge the depth of the sea with their oars”; “skin knowledge” enables the Cashinahua to find their way through the jungle to locate prey. If we were more conscious of the history of the senses in the West, writes Howes, we would not be so dismissive of the importance of all the senses. The historical approach, added to cultural information, enables more understanding of the changing contexts of perception and the cultural construction of perception.

The 17 chapters of the book are organised in four sections. Part I includes various ‘bearings’ on the sixth sense, from the physiological to the mystical, and include the sense of direction (which some of us seriously lack), a ‘wind sense’, the tactile sensation of the breath in the nostrils, of pre-sentiments experienced by the Bushmen, and of synaesthetic perception where one may ‘see’ sounds and ‘hear’ colours.

Part II is historical. Louise Vinge articulates how Western tradition has arrived at the arguable reduction of the senses to five; Jessica Riskin delves into eighteenth-century mesmerism, Leigh Eric Schmidt looks at Swedenborg’s celestial sensorium, and Pamela Thurschwell contributes on British experiments in intimacy, intriguingly entitled “The Erotics of Telepathy”. Intuition and reason, along with medical clairvoyance, are dealt with in Ruth Barcan’s chapter and the last essay in this section covers after-life and spirit photography and how the sixth sense has been portrayed in late twentieth-century films.

The authors in Part III push beyond the conventional psychologistic understanding of perception to offer alternatives with regard to “Uncanny Sensations”: the sense of ‘being stared at’ (Rupert Sheldrake) and tactility and distraction (Michael Taussig). It is Part IV that offers cross-cultural ethnographic case studies, such as peyote and the mystic vision among the Huichol, Malay trance and altered states, symbols and acculturation, miraculous experience among the Samburu, and a concluding chapter on global shamanism and Zulu Dreamscapes, with Mircea Eliade, Barbara Myerhoff, Carol Laderman, Bilinda

Straight, and David Chidester giving strong and credible analyses on some fascinating data.

The three-page appendix, entitled, "ABCDERIUM of Extra/Sensory Powers", suggests a thought-provoking, impressively large list of items that might well be included under the rubric 'sixth sense', a list that the editor invites readers to further expand interactively on-line, via an existing web site. The current list includes items that might not readily come to mind when contemplating the sixth sense, such as mimetic faculty, plant psi, temperature, humour, whiskers, and wind, along with the more familiar extra/sensory powers such as anomalous cognition, clauraudience, premonition, and so on. This short appendix provides much food for thought.

The Sixth Sense Reader is a daring collection of pertinent papers, presenting in both its selection of authors, writing styles, and topics widely diverse approaches. While admitting that a convergence of neuro-science and anthropology is still a long way off, the *Reader* is a necessary primer for an academic audience to start contemplating the possibility of that meeting of minds. Westerners now have technical terms, such as 'precognition' for premonitions, 'psychokinesis' for levitation, and 'remote-viewing' for clairvoyance. Perhaps, in the end, the difference comes down to a matter of terminology.

This is a very useful text for any course that is willing to take a serious look at the subject matter: anthropology of the mind and body, anthropology of religion/spirituality, cultural comparisons of belief, studies in religion, shamanism, and the history of ideas would all benefit from a close look at this publication. Hopefully, it will be a launching pad for further forays into the controversial debates between science and spirituality. It achieves what it sets out to do, offer an historical and anthropological vista of the sixth sense. Howes's collection demonstrates that this fascinating area of study will no doubt find a niche of its own within several disciplines. When more scientists enter the domain of the senses, what was once thought of as a subject fit only for parlour games or the very eccentric should explode into a full-scale debate, contributing to theories of the mind and the enormous possibilities of percipience that are inherent in the human being.

LYNNE HUME

Department of Studies in Religion, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

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Ayahuasca, Ritual and Religion in Brazil

BEATRIZ CAIUBY LABATE & EDWARD MACRAE, eds., 2010

London: Equinox

xvi + 236 pp., £16.99 (pb)

ISBN 978-1-84553-679-4

The 'Ayahuasca religions' of Brazil are unusual in that they are centred around a psychoactive substance rather than a theology or an ethnic group. The substance in question is an Amazonian vine, *Banisteriopsiscaapi*, which is boiled up with the leaves of another plant, *Psychotriavidis*, to produce the Ayahuasca

'brew' (as the authors in this volume all call it). Originally used by local Amerindian shamans, it is known under different names: Ayahuasca in Quechua or *cha, oasca, uasca, yaha, vegetal*, etc. Of probably pre-Columbian use, it has now been incorporated and formalised through three broad religious currents which variously combine local shamanic knowledge with popular Catholicism and Afro-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda, but also to varying extent with Kardecism (nineteenth-century French spiritism which places emphasis on human and spiritual evolution couched in 'scientific' idioms of electro-magnetism), Rosicrucianism, and other esoteric European philosophies, with elements of counter-cultural ecology and indeed oriental mysticism. Members and supporters now include anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and pharmacologists and the three currents have spread from their western Brazilian origin to urban centres like Rio and also abroad to Europe and the United States.

The groups include (a) Santo Daime, founded in the 1920s by a black rubber tapper who had moved from Bahia to Amazonia during the rubber boom, where he was initiated by an Amerindian shaman. Like the other founders, he was the son of slaves. (b) Barquinha ('Little Boat'), started by an Afro-Brazilian sailor who left the Santo Daime group in the 1940s and incorporated aspects of Umbanda, such as spirit possession. (c) The UDV or Uniao de Vegetal ('Union of the Plant'), which emerged in the 1960s, introduced by another migrant rubber tapper and spread to south-eastern Brazil aided by a more 'rationalist' emphasis. All three traditions, despite elisions and schisms, affirm that they are consistent with Roman Catholicism, the prayers and symbols of which they use.

The Ayahuasca brew was prohibited in the 1980s under government medical advice, but was legalised later for religious use (except, initially, for the mentally ill, pregnant women, and children). It contains the alkaloids harmine, harmaline, and dimethyltryptamine, which produce an hallucinogenic effect. One group, which split off from Santo Daime, also uses cannabis, but the three churches are not in the business of experimental drug use. For all of them, the ritual consumption of Ayahuasca, although central, plays a relatively small part in the development of religious doctrine and experience—it signals a significant disjuncture with mundane experience. Barquinha ceremonies include the same kind of spirit possession and dancing that other Afro-Brazilian religions practise, whilst UDV adepts sit more soberly at a table in their church uniforms (all groups have a uniform with insignia; for Barquinha, this is based on a sailor's uniform), sipping the brew and answering doctrinal questions to recorded music—in some ways, all quietly reminiscent of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Theocratic School.

The Brazilian authors of these re-published papers, translated from the Portuguese, all point to the incredible syncretic quality of Brazilian spiritualists, particularly in the way the Ayahuasca religions have moved from a lower-class religiosity of the black poor and the *caboclo* (Amerindian or mixed-race Amerindian) to a more middle-class and professional congregation, which now incorporates commercial jingles, notions of astral planes and reincarnation, and even anthropological theory. Fusing links with ecological movements, some groups still employ herbal plant remedies and conduct 'shamanic' healing sessions for physical and spiritual problems, amidst their masses for the dead, baptisms, confessions, penitence, exorcisms, and celebrations of leaders' anniversaries. Malevolent spirits are translated into redeemed, more evolved

spirits. The 'brew', ritually prepared, is not sold and can only be received from the hands of the leaders, its quantities often miniscule and barely psychoactive. Ayahuasca serves as a Maussian 'total social fact', linking the local religious practice with the aesthetic, the political, and the economic everyday, as its own vegetal body becomes transformed into the corporeal and thence the spiritual body, to enable the celebrants to transcend their own psychical bodies and reconnect with others and with God.

A fascinating book, well translated, although the references of English and French sources remain in Portuguese. The editors query whether Ayahuasca should properly be referred to as a 'sacrament' and note that they have not included any contributions about its more urban or overseas constituency, although there is a (rather inconclusive) chapter on the use of Ayahuasca in treating drug dependency, both in the clinic and in the church.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

Department of Anthropology and Department of Mental Health Sciences, University College London, London, UK

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The Devil's Children—From Spirit Possession to Witchcraft: New Allegations that Affect Children

JEAN LA FONTAINE, ed., 2009

Farnham, Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate

xi + 204 pp., £55.00, US\$99.95 (hb)

ISBN 978-0-7546-6733-9

This book is a dynamic and well-chosen collection of chapters that address the theme of witchcraft accusations, mostly those that affect children, in Africa, Asia, the UK, and elsewhere. The urgent relevance of this volume is confirmed by a recent Unicef report on the rise in the number of children—particularly street and disabled children—subjected to violence, neglect, and abandonment due to religious beliefs that they are possessed or practising witchcraft (see http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_children-accused-of-witchcraft-in-Africa.pdf). The book follows in the wake of some very alarming cases of abuse relating to beliefs in child possession by evil spirits or the devil in the UK, some of the most well known being that of Victoria Climbié and that of Child B, both of whom were exposed to highly painful and, in Climbié's case, fatal, forms of deliverance. The strength and originality of *The Devil's Children* lie not just in providing a multi-vocal exploration of the contexts and causes of such phenomena, and a useful roadmap for clinicians, social workers, and other experts that may be called upon to deal with such cases, but also in calling for a more careful, anthropologically sensitive discernment of information.

The book is a result of two seminars organised in 2005 and 2006 by Inform, an institute which has been in existence since 1988, based at the London School of Economics, whose aim is to provide bias-free and updated information on faith movements, minority religions, and other spiritual communities. As Eileen Barker states in the Introduction, Inform draws significantly on the

methodology of the social sciences in its collection and assessment of information. While the social sciences “have no expertise, technologies or skills that allow them to judge theological or ethical claims” (3), as she says, the pragmatic and agnostic nature of its methods allows in this case for importantly diverse voices to contribute to an understanding of a field of beliefs where “suspicion, fear, ignorance and misinformation are rife” (4). The contributors to *The Devil’s Children* reflect this commitment to perspective difference within a common frame of methodological atheism—they are anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, and consultants, members of religious and esoteric traditions, psychiatrists, and a Detective Inspector. The result is a credible, if eclectic, journey through the myriad aspects (some personal to the authors) of what is certainly a complex and often misapprehended topic.

Why are children accused of practising witchcraft or being possessed? And why is this becoming more prevalent? This book suggests that answers can be sought at different levels of interpretation. One of them is religious tradition or cosmology. Some religious traditions hold that children are innately more vulnerable than adults to evil spirits such as *jinn*, for example among Bangladeshi immigrants, as Simon Dein points out. Eleanor Stobart explains that among the 38 cases of abuse she studied in the UK, most of whom were of African origin, certain differences—disabilities, illnesses, sleepwalking—are likely to be seen by family members as indications of witchcraft or possession. Barker also distinguishes between forms of possession that are culturally valued and sought-after and those that are undesirable, where a variety of sicknesses, such as AIDS or cancer, are thought to betray the presence of evil spirits in the body. The possession-related cases of child abuse in the UK seem to belong to the latter category. However, the evidence points to a more complicated story. Jean La Fontaine refers to the case of Child B, an eight-year Angolan girl who was the victim of starvation, beatings, cuts, and other forms of torture, allegedly, so that the devil responsible for her witchcraft would vacate her body. It is unlikely, she argues, that an explanation can be found in the idea that migrants from other countries bring their traditional beliefs, “because traditional African beliefs in witchcraft did not usually associate children with the practice of witchcraft” (118). As she says, “beliefs are activated within the context of human lives” (125) and this means having to look at a number of other factors at stake, not excluding the pressures of immigration. Both La Fontaine and Filip de Boeck highlight the role of Euro-American-derived Christianity, especially Pentecostalism, in the propagation of witchcraft and exorcism beliefs. De Boeck thinks that churches are both part of the problem and the local solution, as they are the principal sanctioned points of diagnosis and treatment. He paints a bleak picture of Kinshasa’s streets, where some 20–50,000 children have been relegated, abandoned by their families. Understanding this massive displacement requires understanding new forms of social and spiritual insecurity, he argues, in which new family and economic configurations—as well as concepts of childhood—are implied. The notion that there is a tight relationship between the labelling of the child as a witch and kin exclusion or redefinition is coherent with Stobart’s report of her findings in the UK: while the perpetrators are usually the carers, they tend not to be the biological parents.

The churches' responsibility and powers of intervention in the UK are examined by Robert Pull and David Pearson, who hold that the church can play a vital role in safe-guarding children from harm, especially if each develops formal child protection policies in collaboration with local authorities. Pearson reports the effectiveness of the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Services (CCPAS) model and Pull, a former Detective Inspector, reports on Safe2Worship, an organisation he founded that assists emerging black majority Christian churches. For both authors, it is critical that churches are transparent, open, and most of all clear on the definitions and types of child abuse. But, as Amanda van Twist rightly argues, each movement, church or belief system sets the boundaries of what is safe and appropriate for them in different places (24). She draws attention to the fact that language and classification cross over constantly—what is magic, witchcraft, a gift or a burden is not homogenous even among members of the same society or grouping. Transgressions are often highly idiosyncratic, making generalisations difficult. Roland Littlewood raises this question in another way, namely in the context of patient–doctor. For Littlewood, psychiatrists and other experts must remember that culturally specific patterns, such as witchcraft and possession, may be adaptive, not pathological, and that this is generally ascertainable according to local cultural parameters. Distinguishing symptoms from strategies becomes imperative and for this, the expert must remain sensitive to cultural issues. Sherrill Mulhern, too, reminds us of the relative nature of possession and psychiatric categorisations.

Van Twist claims that *Inform* is “well equipped to deal with some of these blurred boundaries”, because its “comparative and contextualising approach allows us to make connections and unearth trends” (25). Amma Abame–Agvei's proposal that social workers should be familiar with the theological framework of the families in question is consistent with *Inform*'s philosophy. But unique is that she stresses the necessity of a self-reflexive dimension to this social work: “an understanding of one's own motives, irrational fears, obsessions, and so on” (176)—self-knowledge. Malcolm Gold's, Christina Harrington's, and Mercy Magbagbeola's chapters all aim to introduce to this volume this crucial reflexivity, albeit from the point of view of the practitioner. Their chapters thus also function as both myth-dispellers and key points of insight.

Gold's observations on the centrality of individual charisma and biography in demon deliverance ministries stem from his long-term involvement with one such ministry in England. Harrington's evocative description of ‘drawing down the Goddess’ as a Wicca practitioner (107) goes some way in opening up an understanding of more Western forms of possession. Magbagbeola's account of her experiences as a prophetess of the Holy Spirit suggests, among other things, that healing from witchcraft need not imply trauma or violence. Finally, in her chapter on the prevalence of misconception and prejudice in relation to voodoo practices, Bettina Schmidt pushes home what is, in the end, one of the book's main ideological statements: that the availability of accurate information is directly correlated with all forms of tolerance and tolerant behavior.

DIANA ESPIRITO SANTO

Instituto de Ciencias Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

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