

Spotlight

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∞Once and Future Mythologies∞

Popular culture, visionary novels, global political analyses, generalizing scientific reports and about technological impact upon economic prospects, religious and historical studies all point to competition between global ideologies which vie for predominance as a consensual mythology. This issue of Wordtrade.com's Spotlight is exhibiting a change in our editorial review focus. In previous issues we tend to focus on recent books that fit into recognizable seam pattern. In this issue, we are going to spread the net wider, presenting reviews of many books that in our humble opinion may contribute to the ascendancy of a new world mythology. In making such a claim we do not presume that American popular culture will set the terms for such a homogenous possibility. Rather, we expect that the terms of such a mythology, as well as the narrative actors and tellers will be multi-vocal involving a quilting together of a patchwork global culture that develops from fragmentation and incoherence toward community diversity and vibrant communication. Our world reviews will no longer be encased in documents, and political intrigues, but in a vibrant human conversation that turns towards a deeper appreciation of our mythical origins and our necessary mythical and religious aspirations.

So, what we wish to offer here are fragments that all may point to the themes that underpin this global migration and advance. [The Masks of God Tetralogy](#) by Joseph Campbell provides us with a now dated but still inspiring synthesis of the historical contours of a World mythology. [See for more Witzel \[The Origins of the World's Mythologies\]](#), relying on the conjectures of population distribution genetics geography and glottochronology, offers another way to understand the origins of mythology that may way color how we understand so of the other titles here under review. Anthropologist Sidky offers a spirited account and argumentative corrective to anthropological ideas about the interrelationship of religion based in practice of trance as a cultural universal embedded in human psychophysiology in [The Origins of Shamanism, Spirit Beliefs, and Religiosity: A Cognitive Anthropological Perspective](#).

Wrapping up our exploration is the recent essay, [The Scent of Time](#) by Byung-Chul Han on how we post-moderns might rediscover a contemplative dimension through what he calls, lingering. The faces of pilgrims circumambulating the Hindu and Buddhist sacred mountain, Navel of the Universe, Mt Kalash in the photography of Samuel Zuder. [Face to Faith | Mount Kailash | Tibet](#). ∞

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[Ursula K. Le Guin: The Hainish Novels and Stories by Ursula K. Le Guin, edited by Brian Attebery, two volumes boxed \[Library of America, 9781598535372\]](#)

Ursula Le Guin's visionary science fiction novels have often been provoking at some of the root issues that American historical culture still struggles with. An elegant, slightly misdirected ways, she deals with technological innovation, race and class struggle, competing visionary solutions to the problems and even sexism. In many ways writers such as Le Guin offer us a congenial way to enter the sum and substance of who we are as people and how do we fit into a cosmos among worlds. [See for more](#) ∞

[Heretics: The Wondrous and Dangerous Beginnings of Modern Philosophy by Steven Nadler and Ben Nadler \[Princeton University Press, 9780691168692\]](#)

If anything might entice you to explore the philosophical development of the 17th century, this book will do the job. People whose names might be only vaguely familiar, like Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Newton, and others, but about whose specific views we may not be quite clear, suddenly come alive. This graphically illustrated in color book tells the whys-and-hows of these philosophers' challenge to the accepted wisdom of their time. The story emphasizes how dangerous thinking beyond the norm, or 'outside-the-box' can be at times and places in our history.

In many ways Nadler and Nadler serve us an appetizer. By showing bits of argument, morsels of disagreement, and flasks of risk these thinkers dish up for themselves, we are drawn into the banquet of ideas by taking sides and refining our own tastes by arguing back. We react to the various basic ideas of these thinkers and find our own need to reason stimulated. This situation may plunge us down a slippery slope to land us in the philosophical soup. Suddenly we are sampling our own tastes about religion, government, spirituality, ethics, the nature of reality and other morsels we think to believe. Not a bad stew to taste – a porridge that invites and encourages questions and the deeper value of questioning itself. In the words of Socrates "An unexamined life is not worth living." If you like the idea of thinking for yourself let this book tickle you into doing it. It may even entice you to check out these philosophers' works themselves. ∞

[The Little French Bistro by Nina George, translated by Simon Pare \[Crown, 9780451495587\]](#)

I came away from reading this book with the taste of magical realism in my mouth. I don't know if it would fall into an academically decided category of this nature but it surely hints at it for me.

A 60-year-old woman on holiday with her husband despairs of her marriage and determines to commit suicide by jumping off a bridge in Paris.

She is rescued by a homeless man who she thinks is Death.

She steals a small painted tile from a nursing station and walks out unnoticed to find the locale of the scene

portrayed that includes a small boat with the name Mariann, her name but missing the 'e'.

She is told how to read the land and the sea by a young nun in a graveyard.

She is led to shelter by a cat.

I don't want to spoil the almost mythical rhythm of the story by describing how she comes to the term 'sea whisperer'. I will say the engaging descriptive nature of the writing draws the reader into the very personal reality of Marianne. This is a world we are familiar with, but with a different vibratory thread running through it. It is a wonder to share with her the journey from drowning in the tragic to living in the magic "at the end of the world." I want to read Nina George's previous books. ∞

[A Distant View of Everything: An Isabel Dalhousie Novel by Alexander McCall Smith \[Pantheon Books, 9780307908940\]](#)

Here is an opportunity to visit with the mind of a philosopher, a woman whose line of thought is intriguingly tangential. Besides a husband, children, and owning/editing The Review of Applied Ethics, Isabel Dalhousie 'gets involved' with helping the people she meets deal with their quandaries and crises. Most often not through any conscious desire on her part but because it is there to be done, and she is asked. She takes these requests seriously and sometimes ends up down the rabbit hole.

In this latest of the Dalhousie series, (the first one I have read though not the last to be sure) she is asked to investigate whether a dinner guest her friend has introduced to another guest as a potential mate is indeed a predator of wealthy women.

The plot, of course, thickens and twists but the pleasure is in sharing the way Isabel thinks about what is happening. She considers what she is doing and, invariably, other avenues seduce her mind into following, sometimes into the comic. This is a mystery novel of potential threat, not one where a convenient murder occurs to wrap the tale around, although it's not out of the question.

For something a little bit different the reader can easily develop a relationship with this quirkily objective central character that it could be fun to have as a friend. I, for one, will be getting a copy of the first in this series, The Sunday Philosophy Club. Who knows, I might even join. ∞

[At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Others by Sarah Bakewell \[Other Press, 9781590514887\] \[Paperback Edition\]](#)

When Philosophy meets up with the actualities of life that are happening on your doorstep, what happens? Bakewell takes existential philosophy out of the theoretical and abstract and breathes life into it with stories of the challenges, arguments, loves, and bitter fallings-out amid the world changing crises of the times that the most well-known expounders experienced. Heidegger, Sartre and

Beauvoir, Camus, Merleau-Ponty and others are fleshed out with the colors of the events that formed the stage they played their scenes on in Paris, Berlin, and wherever else they were driven at times to flee. The passionate questions they asked and the unsettling answers they variously found helped shape a generation of thought that sent echoes still vibrating now in the 21st century.

Not your grandfather's philosophy textbook but a book that offers fertile ground for understanding that ideas of life come from people who have done some living outside of the ivory towers their works may end up in. What answers would we find today for what it means to be free, is human nature variable or fixed, how does morality mesh with loyalty, what does it mean to live authentically? A few interesting questions for our own times, this is the way philosophy should be taught, in my humble opinion. Bakewell has given us an ideal primer. ∞

[La Parisienne in Cinema: Between Art and Life](#) by Felicity Chaplin [Manchester University Press, 9781526109538]

Chic, sophisticated, seductive, and enigmatic, the Parisienne possesses a *je ne sais quoi* which makes her difficult to define. Who or what is the Parisienne and how she is depicted in cinema is the subject of this new and exciting book. In the first book-length publication to explore la Parisienne in cinema, Chaplin expands on existing scholarship on the Parisienne type in fields such as art history, literature, and fashion history, and builds on scholarship on the films discussed to both enrich and offer new perspectives on these films. Accessible and wide-ranging, this interdisciplinary and lively work will be of immediate interest to students and researchers working in Film Studies and French Studies and the broader humanities as well as a general interest audience. It is also essential reading for cinephiles and Francophiles alike. [See for more](#) ∞

[Face to Faith | Mount Kailash | Tibet](#) photography by Samuel Zuder, graphic design by Peter Schmidt, Belliero & Zandée [Hatje Cantz, 9783775741507]

Breathtaking photographs from the hub of the world text in English and German

In 2012, Samuel Zuder (*1965) set out to one of the most fascinating places in the world. According to legend, the yogi Milarepa was the only one to have scaled it in the twelfth century, although thousands of pilgrims circumambulated it: Mount Kailash—also known as the “Jewel of Snow” due to its unusually symmetrical form—in the middle of the rocky desert of Tibet's Changthang plateau. Venerated by four religious orientations—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jaina, and Bön—the photographer harnessed the magnetism of this site, its promise of happiness and enlightenment, in his images. With his large-format, analogue camera, Zuder accompanied pilgrims over a period of several weeks on their approximately fifty-three-kilometer-long path around Mount Kailash—which they regard as the origin of the world—to capture its silent grandeur. [See for more.](#)

The Masks of God Tetralogy

The Masks of God: [Primitive Mythology](#) by Joseph Campbell [Penguin Books, 978-0140194432]

The author of such acclaimed books as [Hero with a Thousand Faces](#) [Third edition, New World Library, 9781577315933], and [Myths to Live By](#) [Penguin Books, 9780140194616], [The Flight of the Wild Gander](#) [New World Library, 9781577312109], and [The Mythic Image](#) [Fine Communications, 9781567311228]

discusses the primitive roots of mythology, examining them considering the most recent discoveries circa 1960 in archaeology, anthropology, culture studies, history and depth psychology. Dated in detail and hence, open to easy shots of irrelevance by specialists in their respective fields, still the overview and the good myths told are timeless and inspiring. A truly satisfying read.

The Masks of God: [Oriental Mythology](#) by Joseph Campbell [Penguin Books, 9780140194425]

An exploration of Eastern mythology as it developed into the distinctive religions of Egypt, India, China, and Japan. The volume synthesizes 19th and early 20th century theories eastern culture as it exhibits variants of the monomyth.

The Masks of God: [Occidental Mythology](#) by Joseph Campbell [Penguin Books, 9780140194418]

A systematic and fascinating comparison of the mythical themes that underlie the art, worship, and literature of the Western world to the through late antique culture. An attempt to recognize the mythical emergence inside and outside the orthodoxies.

The Masks of God: [Creative Mythology](#) by Joseph Campbell [Penguin Books, 978-0140194401]

Here Campbell proposes a modernist culmination to the whole inner story of contemporary culture since the Dark Ages, treating recent attempts to self-consciously inventing and renegotiating our own universal and particularistic, even personalist, mythology. Here Campbell shines forth with challenges to modernist assumptions that deserve close discussion. <>

The Cambridge History of Modernism by Vincent Sherry

[Cambridge University Press, 9781107034693] covers

mostly British and American trends in this epoch. Richly detailed essays draw a vivid picture of the existing contours of the writers, artists and thinkers that characterizes the *longue durée* of the Modernist sensibility. The volume is more descriptive than analytic, schematic than synthetic and does not touch upon the larger global reach of modernism still vibrant around the world today. [See for more](#) ∞

The Origins of the World's Mythologies by E.J. Michael

Witzel [Oxford University Press, 9780195367461]

Paperback

This remarkable book is the most ambitious work on mythology since that of the renowned Mircea Eliade, who all but single-handedly invented the modern study of myth and religion. Focusing on the oldest available texts, buttressed by data from archeology, comparative linguistics and human population genetics, Michael Witzel reconstructs a single original African source for our collective myths, dating back some 100,000 years. Identifying features shared by this "Out of Africa" mythology and its northern Eurasian offshoots, Witzel suggests that these common myths--recounted by the communities of the "African Eve"--are the earliest evidence of ancient spirituality. Moreover, these common features, Witzel shows, survive today in all major religions. Witzel's book is an intellectual hand grenade that will doubtless generate considerable excitement--and consternation--in the scholarly community. Indeed, everyone interested in mythology will want to grapple with Witzel's extraordinary hypothesis about the spirituality of our common ancestors, and to understand what it tells us about our modern cultures and the way they are linked at the deepest level. [See for more](#) ∞

In fact, it is this volume, as well as the universalist synthesis created by Joseph Campbell in the 1960s in the 4 volume *Masks of God*, that inspires the eclectic collection reviews in this issue of Spotlight. <>

La Parisienne in Cinema: Between Art and Life by Felicity Chaplin [Manchester University Press, 9781526109538]

Excerpt: The term *la Parisienne* denotes far more than simply a female inhabitant of Paris. She is a figure of French modernity, and this can be taken in two senses, the technical/industrial and the cultural. The technical or industrial sense refers to the modernization of Paris and its transformation into the capital of the modern world. This process included the reconstruction of Paris by Baron Haussmann and the widening of the boulevards, the extensive use of iron and glass in the construction of the arcades, the expansion of the railway system, the revolution in printing technology, the rise of the department store, the new system of capitalism and consumer culture, and increased leisure activity amongst the city's inhabitants. In the days before Haussmann, 'it was impossible to stroll about everywhere in the city. Before Haussmann, wide pavements were rare; the narrow ones afforded little protection from vehicles. *Flânerie* could hardly have assumed the importance it did without the arcades'. Anne

Friedberg traces the appearance of the *flâneuse* to the emerging consumer culture and development of department stores in late nineteenth-century Paris which afforded women a legitimate reason to occupy public space: 'The female *flâneur*, the *flâneuse*, was not possible until she was free to roam the city on her own. And this was equated with the privilege of shopping on her own'. With the boulevards and arcades, as well as the construction of extensive parks and gardens, women could for the first time be seen in public, on display, without being considered *filles publiques* or prostitutes.

Fashion, too, dictated the redesigning of Paris: in *The Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin writes that 'the widening of the streets, it was said, was necessitated by the crinoline'. This remark indicates a close relationship between the creation of the boulevards and fashionable women in their abundant crinoline dresses, parading down the wide streets of Paris, participating in the spectacle of modern life. This was the era when women began to stroll publicly in the city streets, their emergence facilitated by the arcades and department stores which legitimated their temporary leave of the interior or private sphere and their entry into the public sphere as consumers. The expansion of the railway network, from a few disparate strands totaling 1,931 km in 1850 to an intricate network of 17,400 km in 1870, opened Parisian industry and commerce to interregional and international competition. David Harvey sums up the effect of this expansion in the following way: 'it was not only goods that moved. Tourists flooded in from all over the world, shoppers poured in from the suburbs, and the Parisian labor market spread its tentacles into ever remoter regions to satisfy burgeoning demand for labor power'. The ease with which provincials and foreigners could now travel to Paris was also formative for *la Parisienne* who, according to Georges Montorgueil, '*est de partout, mais ... ne devient qu'à Paris la Parisienne*' (is from everywhere but ... only becomes the *Parisienne* in Paris).

A further important development in the creation of the *Parisienne* type was the revolution in printing technology in the nineteenth century. This resulted in both a dramatic decrease in the production cost of print media and the considerable increase in the availability of visual material, which in turn saw not only the proliferation of illustrated journals, particularly fashion journals, but their dissemination across a wider readership, including both the working and lower-middle classes. For the first time, women across a much broader social spectrum were exposed to a single homogenizing image of the fashionable woman. Iskin writes that women could 'acquire a certain amount of information on how to look like a chic *Parisienne* by reading fashion magazines, illustrated journals and ordering from department store catalogues'.

This revolution in printing technology took place contemporaneously with the rise of haute couture and the development of the department stores and *prêt-à-porter* clothing. In 1872 there were 684 couturiers in Paris compared to only 158 in 1850; by 1895 the number had increased to 1,636. Tamar Garb writes that the 'department stores and shopping arcades proffered an unprecedented array of goods aimed at seducing women

and creating in them the desire to consume luxury goods indispensable to their identity as women'.

Brian Nelson argues that shopping facilitated a woman's entry into and occupation of the public sphere. This reflected a more general tendency in Paris of the nineteenth century, resulting in increased visibility and mobility in the modern city: 'The newly revitalized city gave rise to a new culture. Life became more public'. According to Nancy Rose Marshall, it was in 'the new urban spaces in which the concept of the Parisienne was formed'.

In a cultural sense, la Parisienne is a figure of French modernity in that she was a feature of the visual arts, literature, physiognomies and popular culture of nineteenth-century France. She appears in the novels of Balzac, Flaubert and Zola; in the short stories of Maupassant; in Henry Becque's 1885 play *La Parisienne*; and in the poems of Baudelaire. She was also the subject of many studies and physiologies, including Taxile Delord's *Physiologie de la Parisienne* (1841), Théodore de Banville's *Les Parisiennes de Paris* (1866), Arsène Houssaye's *Les Parisiennes* (1869), Georges Montorgueil's *La Parisienne* (1897), and Louis Octave Uzanne's *Parisiennes de ce temps en leurs divers milieux, états et conditions* (1910), an expanded edition of the original 1894 version, which appeared in an English-language edition entitled *The Modern Parisienne* (1912). There have also been numerous paintings, lithographs, etchings and pastels of Parisiennes: Tissot, Morisot, Stevens, Renoir, Helleu, Cassatt and Toulouse-Lautrec, among others, all sought to capture the type in their work. Visual artists, too, explicitly titled their studies la Parisienne or included the descriptor Parisienne' in the title. According to Marie Simon, the proliferation of paintings featuring la Parisienne demonstrates 'the individual being replaced by the abstract. Artists no longer painted a woman but a human type, a quality'.

The attempt to capture the Parisienne type visually continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in photography. Three photographic monographs took the type as their primary subject matter: André Maurois's *Femmes de Paris* (1954), featuring photographs by Nico Jesse; *Parisiennes: A Celebration of French Women* (2007), a collection of photographs of Parisian women taken by celebrated as well as anonymous photographers; and Baudouin's *75 Parisiennes* (2013), which puts into play various pre-existing themes or motifs, revealing the vitality and currency of the Parisienne type. Baudouin draws on an already existing iconography of la Parisienne in composing his photographs, focusing on the repetition of familiar motifs such as the Eiffel Tower, the little black dress, the feather boa, the chevelure, the fashion journal and the cat. The iconography of la Parisienne that Baudouin draws on is largely informed by nineteenth-century visual and literary representations of the type. Baudouin also provides each sitter's profession and Metro station, which serves to indicate the meta-sociological aspect of the Parisienne type, a type not restricted by economics, class, nationality, ethnicity or status, but rather transcending these limits.

While there is significant scholarship on la Parisienne in the fields of art history, fashion theory and culture and cultural histories of Paris, there is little written on the

La Chevelure (Her Hair) by Charles Baudelaire

Ô toison, moutonnant jusque sur l'encolure!
Ô boucles! Ô parfum chargé de nonchaloir!
Extase! Pour peupler ce soir l'alcôve obscure
Des souvenirs dormant dans cette chevelure,
Je la veux agiter dans l'air comme un mouchoir!
La langoureuse Asie et la brûlante Afrique,
Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt,
Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique!
Comme d'autres esprits voguent sur la musique,
Le mien, ô mon amour! nage sur ton parfum.
J'irai là-bas où l'arbre et l'homme, pleins de sève,
Se pâment longuement sous l'ardeur des climats;
Fortes tresses, soyez la houle qui m'enlève!
Tu contiens, mer d'ébène, un éblouissant rêve
De voiles, de rameurs, de flammes et de mâts:
Un port retentissant où mon âme peut boire
À grands flots le parfum, le son et la couleur
Où les vaisseaux, glissant dans l'or et dans la moire
Ouvrent leurs vastes bras pour embrasser la gloire
D'un ciel pur où frémit l'éternelle chaleur.
Je plongerai ma tête amoureuse d'ivresse
Dans ce noir océan où l'autre est enfermé;
Et mon esprit subtil que le roulis caresse
Saura vous retrouver, ô féconde paresse,
Infinis bercements du loisir embaumé!
Cheveux bleus, pavillon de ténèbres tendues
Vous me rendez l'azur du ciel immense et rond;
Sur les bords duvetés de vos mèches tordues
Je m'enivre ardemment des senteurs confondues
De l'huile de coco, du musc et du goudron.
Longtemps! toujours! ma main dans ta crinière
lourde
Sèmera le rubis, la perle et le saphir,
Afin qu'à mon désir tu ne sois jamais sourde!
N'es-tu pas l'oasis où je rêve, et la gourde
Où je hume à longs traits le vin du souvenir?

Of Her Hair

O fleece, billowing on her neck! O ecstasy!
O curls, O perfume rich with nonchalance, O rare!
Tonight, to fill the alcove's warm obscurity,
To make that hair evoke each dormant memory,
I long to wave it like a kerchief in the air.

Africa smoldering and Asia languorous,
A whole far distant world, absent and almost spent,
Dwells in your forest depths, mystic and odorous!
As others lose themselves in the harmonious,
So, love, my heart floats lost upon your haunting scent.

I shall go where both man and tree, albeit strong,
Swoon deep beneath the rays of sunlight's blazing
fires.

Thick tresses, be the waves to bear my dreams along!
Ebony sea, your dazzling dream contains a throng
Of sails, of wafts, of oarsmen, and of masts like spires.

A noisy harbor where my thirsty soul may drain
Hues, sounds and fragrances, in draughts heavy and
sweet,
Where vessels gliding down a moiré-and-gold sea
lane

Open their vast arms wide to clutch at the domain
Of a pure sky ashimmer with eternal beat.

Deep shall I plunge my head, avid of drunkenness,
In this black sea wherein the other sea lies captured,
And my soul buoyant at its undulant caress
Shall find you once again, O fruitful idleness,
O long lullings of ease, soft, honeyed and enraptured.

O blue-black hair, pennon with sheen and shadow
fraught,
You give me back the vast blue skies of dawn and
dusk,

As on the downy edges of your tresses, caught
In your soft curls, I grow drunken and hot, distraught
By mingled scents of cocoanut and tar and musk.

Sapphires, rubies, pearls — my hand shall never tire
Of strewing these through your thick mane — how
lavishly! —

Lest Life should ever turn you deaf to my desire!
You are the last oasis where I dream, afire,
The gourd whence deep I quaff the wine of memory.

— Translated by Jacques LeClercq

(re)appearance and function of the type in cinema. In part, this is because her presence in cinema is not always immediately discernible and frequently forms or creates a subtext to the films. The goal of this book is to outline a 'cycle' of Parisienne films; however, this cycle, like the type itself, is never complete and is always in the process of evolving, due both to the plasticity of the type and to the myriad possible ways of representing her. The films under consideration are limited to narrative feature films, which is not to deny the presence of the Parisienne type in short films, documentary or experimental films.

An iconographical approach

Erwin Panofsky's theory of iconography was first developed in relation to Renaissance art and later applied to cinema. His theory of the iconographical type was developed in relation to silent cinema, and later applied to sound cinema by Stanley Cavell and Jean-Loup Bourget. *La Parisienne* constitutes what Panofsky calls a 'type' because it possesses both a fixed and fluid iconography, the fixed aspects being those necessary for any preliminary identification of the type, the fluid referring to the variations the type undergoes during its development. In his essay 'Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures', Panofsky argues that in early silent cinema we find the introduction of 'a fixed iconography which from the outset informed the spectator about the basic facts and characters ... There arose, identifiable by standardized appearance, behavior, and attributes, the well-remembered types ... The conduct of characters was predetermined accordingly'. The introduction of types into silent film was necessary to help the audience confronted with the new medium 'understand the meaning of the speechless action in a moving picture'.

For Panofsky, the 'readability' of these types 'depend on pre- or extra-cinematic knowledge'. The idea of the pre- and extra-cinematic is particularly pertinent to this study, which seeks to demonstrate how pre-cinematic knowledge (nineteenth-century art, literature and mass culture) and extra-cinematic knowledge (stars and intertexts) inform the Parisienne type in cinema. *La Parisienne* may not initially be a recognizable type, particularly when compared with the more easily recognizable types of the silent era such as the villain, the gangster, the vamp or the 'good woman', due in part to the moral ambiguity of the Parisienne type and to the fact that she seldom resembles herself. Thus, built into the Parisienne type is an elusiveness or multiplicity which makes easy recognition more difficult than it is with the more generic types originally considered by Panofsky. Yet, *la Parisienne* is a type nonetheless and she does possess certain motifs which make her recognizable, provided these motifs are thoroughly and accurately identified.

Panofsky argues that the introduction of a fixed iconography became less important once the cinemagoing public was acclimatized to the different typological signifiers and that these signifiers were 'virtually abolished by the invention of the talking film'. Despite this, however, there survives 'the remnants of a "fixed attitude and attribute" by which types can be recognized. While Cavell and Bourget agree that cinema introduces a fixed iconography, both have challenged Panofsky's claim that sound cinema effectively abolished the need for typology.

Bourget remarks that he is struck by the persistence of iconography after the silent era. In a similar vein, Cavell writes that 'such devices persist as long as there are still Westerns and gangster films and comedies and musicals and romances. Which specific iconography the Villain is given will alter with the times, but that his iconography remains specific (i.e., operates according to a "fixed attitude and attribute" principle) seems undeniable'. Cavell further argues that cinema 'created new types, or combinations or ironic reversals of types; but there they were, and stayed', as well as for the 'continuing validity of a Panofskian iconographic program for the study of film'.

In *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, Panofsky proposed a model for the analysis of Renaissance painting which corresponds to three levels or strata of meaning. The first, or pre-iconographical, level of a work of art is made up of motifs, pure forms which are the 'carriers of primary and natural meanings'. The second level involves the identification and description of the images; that is, the secondary or conventional meanings conveyed by the motifs. 'Motifs thus recognized as carriers of a secondary or conventional meaning may be called images'. This is the stage of iconographical analysis proper. The third level consists of an iconological interpretation, that is, the interpretation of the images and their 'intrinsic meaning and content'.

Bourget argues that Panofsky's three-stratum model can be applied to cinema. For Bourget, an analysis of cinema which draws on models or methods from art history is highly productive, primarily because it restores an imbalance in film studies, which has often focused on questions of narrative or plot derived from the history of literature, often neglecting the image or figure. Bourget also considers a reference to art history in the analysis of cinema fruitful in that films will often cite motifs, either intentionally or unintentionally, which come directly from the history of painting. For Bourget, nothing assures that the reference to painting is completely intentional, while at other times the reference is manifestly intended.

In 'Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures', Panofsky raises the idea of medium specificity to found cinema as an art form, distinct from other art forms in terms of its technicality. Yet in terms of iconography, cinema can be subjected to the same type of analysis as painting. Having established cinema as a distinct art form through its medium specificity, Panofsky emphasizes not the kinetic but the photographic aspect of cinema. He de-emphasizes the technical specificity of the medium in favor of its origins in pictorial rather than narrative art: cinema originally not as 'filmed theatre' but literally as 'moving pictures'.

In 1982, Bourget adapted Panofsky's iconographical model for cinema; however, Panofsky's iconographic approach had already been used in film studies by Lawrence Alloway. Steve Neale writes that while Panofsky himself considered the application of the terms iconography and iconology to an analysis of films, it was Alloway 'who sought to apply them in a systematic way to the analysis of genres and cycles'. In a 1963 article for the film journal *Movie*, Alloway argues for the application of Panofsky's method to cinema: 'The meaning of a single movie is inseparable from

the larger pattern of content-analysis of other movies'. For Alloway, iconography provides a way of 'charting the flow and the evanescence' of films which belong to a popular art which does not possess 'an unchanging significance' but is rather in a constant state of flux.

For Alloway, the natural subject matter of Panofsky's first stratum when applied to cinema 'consists of the physical reality of the photographed world' which includes the actor and thus relates to the star system: 'The star whose personality and status are created as a product, is, when photographed, continually present in a more powerful form than the individual roles he or she may be playing ... Thus, even the "primary or natural subject matter" is not without its iconographical potential'. For Alloway, the realm of iconography begins, unlike in Panofsky's tripartite model, at the first level or stratum. Alloway's reworking of Panofsky for cinema deals primarily with motifs and images and less with interpretation. What Alloway was most interested in was founding a 'descriptive aesthetic'.

Ed Buscombe's synonym for iconography is 'visual conventions'. While there is some merit in this definition, the term is too narrow because iconography often encompasses more than just the visual, extending to more literary motifs such as narrative and character. Furthermore, these conventions are subject to historical variability. The limits of visual conventions can be seen in the following example: in the nineteenth century, the Parisienne type wears a crinoline and carries a parasol, whereas in Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (1960) she wears cropped trousers and has a 'pixie' haircut. The change but the general — that is, the notion or concept of fashionability and style — remains the same.

Alloway extended iconography to include cycles of films: a film cycle 'explores a basic situation repeatedly, but from different angles and with accumulating references', and 'provides the audience with a flexible, continuing convention and a body of expectations and knowledge on which the filmmaker can count'. Motifs appear repeatedly throughout certain films in different ways or from varied perspectives, each (re)appearance adding to the growing iconography of a type. When discussing cycles of films, Alloway is not interested in judgements of quality. Nor is he interested in an auteurist approach, arguing that 'treating movies as personal expression and autographic testament has led to the neglect of the iconographical approach'. Alloway gives the example of a cycle of films starring Frank Sinatra to demonstrate the 'necessity for considering movies in groups not necessarily dependent upon directors', and writes of Sinatra's 'iconographical profile'. These ideas are central when considering, for example, Jeanne Moreau's successive appearances in many Parisienne films which build an iconographical profile both for the actress and the characters she plays.

In adopting an iconographical approach to cinema, Alloway does not privilege only those films created by an auteur and considered masterpieces of cinema by some critics; rather, his selection of films is more encompassing and wide-ranging. Andrew Sarris, a proponent of auteur theory, criticized Alloway's approach, remarking that 'he transforms what is too frequently a dismal fact into a visionary ideal.

Badness and banality become sociological virtues; familiarity breeds contentment'. Sarris attacked Alloway for implicitly endorsing 'bad' films. However, Alloway wanted to avoid evaluation because he wanted to found his descriptive aesthetic not so much on quality as on repetition or enumeration. Discussing the debate between Sarris and Alloway, Nigel Whiteley remarks that far from privileging only so-called 'bad' films at the expense of quality cinema, Alloway 'took a far wider view of creativity', seeing culture as a continuum which 'ranged from individual masterworks to depersonalized, expendable, commercial products of consumer society'. In Alloway's judgement, Sarris 'mistook one end of the continuum as its only edifice'. The films set for discussion in this book are chosen from this continuum, ranging from celebrated masterpieces by auteurs like Carné and Godard, to more 'lightweight' films like Jules Dassin's *Reunion in France* (1942) and Michel Boisrond's *Une Parisienne* (1957), and lesser-known French romantic comedies such as Yvan Attal's *Ma Femme est une actrice*. Critical reception is of less interest than the way these films employ certain motifs. Taking the notion of cultural continuum into account, there then appears a vast cycle of Parisienne films and a limited space in which to discuss them. Chance and availability have played their part in the selection process as well, and there are certainly films which might take their place in the cycle of Parisienne films which receive no mention in this study.

While this book confines itself to an iconographical approach to the Parisienne type, the relevance of critical approaches such as feminism and feminist film theory must also be noted. While a sustained feminist engagement is outside the scope of this book, such engagement seems an obvious omission from any detailed consideration of the type. There are two reasons, however, why this is not the place for such an engagement. First, this book, intended as an introduction to la Parisienne and her iconography in cinema, deals predominantly with visual and narrative conventions, derived primarily from nineteenth-century art, literature and visual culture. Thus, it lays the groundwork for further scholarship which may consider concepts such as gender, race and ethnicity, all of which are relevant to the study of the Parisienne type. Secondly, a feminist or gender studies approach may appear too polemical for a work intended as an introduction or overview.

Beyond the iconographical approach, however, the Parisienne type in cinema could and should be critically examined through an engagement with feminist film theory, reception studies and theories of spectatorship. Laura Mulvey's seminal essay 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' (1989), for example, might be a useful starting point for a discussion of identification and spectatorship practices in relation to the Parisienne type in cinema. Mulvey's claim that the visual pleasure in cinema is 'split between active/male and passive/female' appears relevant to the films discussed here. Indeed, the following lines appear to describe well the way this heterosexual matrix functions, particularly in mainstream films featuring la Parisienne: Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the

looks on either side of the screen. For instance, the device of the showgirl allows the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in the diresis. A woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude.

While it can certainly be argued that Parisienne films, particularly those of 1950s Hollywood, conform to this notion of what Mulvey calls "neatly combined spectacle and narrative", there are certain traits of the Parisienne type which in fact work against this. As we shall see, the self-fashioning aspect of la Parisienne, alongside her role as active rather than merely passive muse, in some ways undermines the description of her as a purely male fantasy. In the representation of la Parisienne, one also frequently finds the comingling of life and art, the presence of 'real-life' women behind, or blended with, fictional characters. This is the case whether it is a historical personage overdetermining the representation, or the actress herself. Thus, it is argued here that feminist critiques of la Parisienne would have limited purchase, despite the visual pleasure and spectacle these films offer. La Parisienne is a fascinating figure precisely because she continually escapes representation, and as we shall see, more than one theorist of la Parisienne has noted the difficulty of capturing her essence.

In the nineteenth century (and continuing in cinema with a few exceptions), la Parisienne remains in part at least a male construction, but in part only. If, as Janet Wolff has argued, the "literature of modernity describes the experiences of men", women must appear colored by this experience, as objects rather than subjects of the modern world. Deborah L. Parsons, however, questions the notion that Baudelaire's depiction of women occurs within what Wolff calls a "classic misogynist duality". Rather, according to Parsons, Baudelaire's poetry raises the question of 'the place of women in the city and art of modernity that goes beyond personal prejudice'. Of interest for Parsons is the woman who appears fleetingly in the poem 'À une passante', the 'unknown woman who cannot be easily defined and thus controlled'. Parsons also notes that 'all the women common to Baudelaire's work are observers, and through them it is possible to question the assumption of the masculinity of public space and to formulate the beginnings of the conceptual idea of a flâneuse'. Indeed, the figure of la Parisienne was one of the first flâneuses in a time when women were liberated from the interior space of the home, primarily through changes in the configuration of social space through the introduction of arcades, parks and gardens. The image of the flâneuse, first captured in Baudelaire's poetry, is that of the liberated, autonomous woman. A more contemporary example of the way la Parisienne might circumvent the standard feminist critique of male fantasy is in the figure of Brigitte Bardot. According to Ginette Vincendeau, Simone de Beauvoir praised Bardot's new form of sexuality in *Et Dieu ... créa la femme* as 'progressive' and a 'welcome change from what she saw as the passivity of the femme fatale'. Vincendeau herself notes a 'tension between the Bardot character [in *Et Dieu*] as subject (agent) of the narrative, initiating action and expressing her own desire without guilt, and as object, both

of male desire and the camera'. However, elsewhere she admits a 'paradox' which makes Bardot fascinating: 'rather than being either pure male fantasy, or affirmation of women's desire, she is both. The force of her star persona is to reconcile these two antagonistic aspects'.

In confining this study to the development of a descriptive aesthetics and establishing the Parisienne as a type in cinema through developing an iconography of the Parisienne type based on the recognition of various motifs, the foundations are laid for future scholarship that will deploy other approaches to the subject such as feminism, gender studies, or indeed, other more critical or evaluative approaches, such as ethno-criticism, that could not be pursued here. Indeed, the Parisienne type contains a kind of in-built critique of ethnic/national identities, and is supposed to transcend national/ethnic borders towards a more cosmopolitan identity. It is important to remember that la Parisienne is not a stereotype (e.g. white, middle class, European) but a type in the iconographical sense; that is, recognizable through certain recurring motifs, yet also constantly being reinvented. That la Parisienne is 'from anywhere and everywhere' is one of the main arguments put forward in this book. This definition leaves room for Parisiennes from any number of national or ethnic backgrounds, as such films as Céline Sciamma's *Bande de filles* (2014) demonstrate. Indeed, the main character of Sciamma's film, *Vic* (Karidja Touré), rather than presenting a challenge to the Parisienne as a type, may reinforce it, by demonstrating both its fixed and mutable nature. Further, contemporary popular images of la Parisienne such as one finds in recent style guides or magazines like *Vogue*, as well as in photography such as in Baudouin's work, go well beyond any Eurocentric stereotype.

Iconography of la Parisienne

The iconography of la Parisienne can be categorized according to the following concepts: visibility and mobility (both social and spatial); style and fashionability, including self-fashioning; artist and muse; cosmopolitanism; prostitution; danger; consumption (the consumer and the consumed); and transformation. Central to the iconography is the city of Paris, its streets and monuments, and its overall signification as the capital of modernity. The nature of the project, however, is such that it is constantly expanding, shifting ground and overlapping, and indeed one of the main problems is the question of containment, of how to set limits and bring content under complete control of the proposed form. This is partly due to the nature of la Parisienne as a type, a figure who never resembles herself. What constitutes a chapter of this book, then, is really a limit set on the Parisienne type itself, a limit that is continuously exceeded. This excess will take the form of an overflow from one chapter to the next; however, it is difficult to avoid damming the flow with definitive statements. Thus, a more open-ended approach is taken, bringing the categories to bear on the films only to indicate certain fixed attributes or motifs while at the same time allowing the more mutable aspects of the type to emerge.

The six chapters set down in this book reflect the notions or categories associated with the Parisienne type and explore each of them in turn, building up an overall iconography

from the motifs associated with them. The titles of the chapters take not the categories themselves, but their associated figuration (not 'Cosmopolitanism' but 'Cosmopolite'; not 'Danger' but 'Femme fatale'), to shift the emphasis away from concepts which tend to fix the Parisienne toward the figure itself, which is far more mutable. The precondition for la Parisienne as a type is that she generally fulfils all the categories at once, but some more prominently than others within the films set for discussion. How she appears in each film also sets the tone and focus of the discussion in each chapter. Often visual considerations are paramount, while at other times the narrative function of the type is more evident. At other times, again it might be a question of reference, of the relation between cinema and other media such as painting, literature or advertising.

Chapter 'Muse' argues that la Parisienne is a type which exists between art and life, and who exists on the boundary between representation and reality. The figure that emerges from this blurring of art and life is la Parisienne as muse. Chapter 'Cosmopolite' considers the cosmopolitanism of the Parisienne type, in the sense of 'anyone' and 'anywhere', and argues that la Parisienne was conceived not only as a figure of French femininity but of femininity as such. Chapter 'Icon of Fashion' explores the relationship between la Parisienne, fashion and film. Chapter 'Femme fatale' looks at la Parisienne as femme fatale within the context of French film noir. Tracing her development in nineteenth-century art and literature, Chapter 'Courtesan' examines the way the Parisienne as courtesan is (re)presented in cinema. Finally, Chapter 'Star' investigates the contribution particular actresses' star personae have made to the Parisienne type in cinema and, reciprocally, how the type has inscribed itself on the personae of these stars.

Geographically speaking, the films come primarily from France and America because the Parisienne type is most ubiquitous in these national cinemas. Of interest for the development of the Parisienne type is what Vanessa Schwartz in *It's So French!* describes as the transatlantic cultural exchange between French and American cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, the development of the Parisienne type owes much to the rapport between French and American cinema of this period, because for la Parisienne to develop as a type, or even a stereotype, a global or cosmopolitan perspective was necessary. Indeed, this transatlantic cultural exchange figures as the culmination point in the development of the Parisienne type and it is therefore not surprising to find a concentration of films featuring la Parisienne made by Hollywood during the 1950s and 1960s. There are earlier cinematic incarnations, including silent cinema, but they have become more recognizable in light of this cycle of so-called Hollywood 'Frenchness' films. Thus, when approaching the Parisienne type in cinema (and this is something that can be said of any type in an iconographical sense), there is frequently a retrospective elaboration at work, insofar as much of what leads to recognizing the type in earlier films derives from exposure to later films, particularly from what Schwartz calls the cycle of 'Frenchness films' (*It's So French!*).

Chronology is not a necessary consideration for charting the iconography of a type.

The films included in this book were chosen for both for their affirmation and interesting treatment of the Parisienne type. There is certainly no claim to exhaustiveness in coverage of the field, nor does this book offer a comprehensive portrait or visual history of la Parisienne in cinema. Attempts to include many examples to demonstrate the ubiquity of the type in cinema, as well as the richness of variations of the type, have been tempered by the desire to provide more meaningful and sustained engagement with individual films.

The pleasure of living: Lucile in *La Chamade*

A quiet Paris boulevard in the grey dawn light; grand Haussmann buildings line one side of the street and a row of lamp-posts the other. Cut to a shot of a wide boulevard leading to the Place de la Concorde, the Madeleine and Obelisk prominent in the center of the screen. The buildings which line the street on the right hand of the screen take on the golden hue of the morning sun. The sky lightens and Paris begins to wake. Cut to a tree-lined residential street, the sky now pale blue; the camera pans slowly to the right to reveal a sandstone mansion with large curtained windows framed by gently moving leaves. Cut again to an interior shot, a close-up of a gossamer curtain lightly billowing in the breeze, before the camera pans slowly right to settle on a close-up of Lucile, her head resting on a soft white pillow, her face the picture of serenity. Cut to a long shot of Lucile, alone in a large bed in a high-ceilinged, tastefully decorated room. She slowly rises, walks languidly over to the open window and inhales with almost sensual pleasure the first hint of spring air. The slow pace of her elegant movements, accompanied by the dreamy score, suggests she is a lady of leisure. Dressed in a flowing white negligee, she gracefully walks into the adjoining bathroom. In the mirror, she contemplates her reflection before applying a light mist of floral water to her face and perfectly coiffed blonde hair.

The opening credit sequence of *La Chamade* establishes a languorous pace and emphasizes the pleasure of simply existing, a pleasure that is afforded to a kept woman who has ample time to enjoy life. The grandeur of the mise-en-scène suggests opulence, luxury, pleasure and wealth. The sequence mirrors the opening passage of Sagan's novel on which the film is based:

Elle ouvrit les yeux. Un vent brusque, décidé s'était introduit dans la chambre. Il transformait le rideau en voile, faisait se pencher les fleurs dans leur grand vase, à terre, et s'attaquait à présent à son sommeil. C'était un vent de printemps, le premier: il sentait les bois, les forêts, la terre, il avait traversé impunément les faubourgs de Paris, les rues gavées d'essence et il arrivait léger, fanfaron, à l'aube, dans sa chambre pour lui signaler, avant même qu'elle ne reprît conscience, le plaisir de vivre.

She opened her eyes. A bluff, determined wind had entered the room, billowing the curtain into a sail, bending the flowers in a large vase on the floor, and now attacking her sleep. It was a spring wind, the first: it smelt of earth, woods, forests, and having swept unscathed over the suburbs of Paris and the streets reeking of gas fumes it

arrived, brisk and swaggering, in her room, at dawn, to point out, even before she was awake, the pleasure of living.

The opening paragraph of Sagan's novel depicts the pleasure of living, of the utmost importance to Lucile and afforded her by Charles. Lucile tries, ultimately unsuccessfully, to maintain this pleasure of living when she abandons her life with Charles to embark on a relationship with the younger and significantly poorer Antoine. After deciding to live with Antoine and, at his instigation taking a job to occupy herself, Lucile finds herself at an overcrowded bus shelter in the rain. Her exasperation with her new situation is expressed thus in Sagan's novel:

Lucile attendait l'autobus place de l'Alma et s'énervait. Le mois de novembre était spécialement froid, spécialement pluvieux et la petite guérite devant la station était bondée de gens frileux, maussades, presque agressifs Le seul charme réel de l'argent, pensait-elle, c'était qu'il vous permettait d'éviter cela: l'attente, l'énervement, les autres.

Lucile impatiently awaited the bus at the Place de l'Alma. It was a particularly cold and rainy November, and the little bus shelter was crowded with shivering, sullen, almost aggressive people The only real charm of money, she thought, was that it permitted one to avoid all this: the exasperation, the other people. Lucile returns to Charles, and her choice to be a kept woman is ultimately tied up with her idea of what constitutes the pleasure of living. What Charles's money affords Lucile above all is leisure time and solitude. Lucile's philosophy of life is given voice in Harry's monologue from William Faulkner's *Wild Palms* (1939), which she reads aloud in a bar after having walked out on her job. The lengthy monologue, which espouses the virtues of idleness, ends with the line: '[N]othing is better, nothing to match, nothing else in all this world but to live for the short time you are loaned breath, to be alive and know it'.

The opening credit sequence of *La Chamade* also highlights three important motifs: the city of Paris, pleasure, and Lucile/Deneuve's hair and face. The setting is significant as it places Lucile within the tradition of the Second Empire and Belle Époque courtesan living in Paris, the city of pleasure: 'One of the myths of the belle époque that was not wholly untrue was that Paris was now the world capital of pleasure'. Lucile/Deneuve's hair plays a significant role in establishing her character, and in connecting it to the greater themes of affluence and idleness. Her well-groomed hair connotes a sophisticated elegance associated with la Parisienne but also identifies Lucile with the star image of Cathérine Deneuve. Ginette Vincendeau makes a direct comparison between Deneuve's hair and her physical gestures which are both 'graceful and controlled', while her blondeness connotes 'sophisticated affluence' and her hairstyle signifies 'the well-groomed woman'. Deneuve's hair both frames and illuminates her face, accentuating what Guy Austin describes as its mask-like quality. This quality contributes to the elusiveness and ambiguity of the characters Deneuve incarnates but also lends itself particularly to the roles of kept woman and prostitute.

As a modern-day version of the nineteenth-century courtesan, Lucile continues the association of the kept woman with fashionability, style and elegance through her hair and

make-up, and her wardrobe by Yves Saint Laurent. Lucile wears chic ensembles in a classic neutral color palette throughout the film: her everyday look consists of neat mid-length A-line skirts, turtleneck sweaters, paisley-print collared shirts, trench coats, double-breasted coat dresses, and low-heeled court shoes. For evening events, Lucile wears eye-catching, seductive couture dresses, including a long-sleeved, candy-pink, floor-length gown featuring sequined details; a red, white and navy geometric-patterned, long-sleeved, knee-length dress featuring a pussy-bow tie neckline; and a high-neck, floor-skimming black gown worn with an elaborate black coat featuring a froth of feathers. Deneuve once remarked of Saint Laurent's designs:

His clothes for daywear help a woman to enter a world full of strangers. They enable her to go wherever she wants without arousing unwelcome behavior, thanks to their somehow masculine quality. However, for the evening, when she may choose her company, he makes her seductive.

Lucile's costuming in *La Chamade* constitutes a fashionable, highly polished look in which she is mostly covered up, which adds to the clothing's restraint and elegance: there are no plunging necklines, short hemlines or excess exposure of skin; her arms and décolletage are seldom on display. Even when she is holidaying on the Riviera, Lucile eschews a bikini in favor of jeans or chino pants worn with crew-neck T-shirts or collared shirts with the sleeves casually rolled up. Lucile's tailored skirts and double-breasted coat addresses recall Saint Laurent's costuming of Deneuve in Buñuel's *Belle de jour*. Paula Reed characterizes Deneuve's costuming in Bunuel's film as 'chaste eroticism and French chic' and remarks that in her 'tailored coats and dresses, she is the perfect Parisienne'.

Lucile's status as both a kept woman and a Parisienne is communicated through her fashionability and style; the result, on the one hand, of her costuming by Yves Saint Laurent, and on the other, of Deneuve's star persona. By the mid-1980s, Deneuve was already an 'institution' with an established image, that of elegance. Deneuve has been described as possessing a 'provocative elegance', 'famous for her chic type of French beauty' and 'relentlessly typecast as the elegant and expressionless bourgeois woman'. Rocamora describes Deneuve as the 'ultimate Parisienne', claiming that Deneuve's identity 'cannot be dissociated from the glamorous fictional images — the imagined Parisian women that have made her famous the world over'. Sabine Denuelle refers to Deneuve's 'elegance naturelle', while James Fox, writing for *Vanity Fair*, describes her as 'a living symbol of French style'.

As a kept woman, Lucile's most notable cinematic precursor is the eponymous heroine of Max Ophüls's film *Madame de ...* (1953), played by Danielle Darrieux. Alongside her clothing, hair and makeup, Lucile's jeweler also connotes her fashionability and represents the gifts that she receives as a kept woman. However, her jewelry does not only serve to highlight her elegance; it also functions as a prop that propels the narrative which links her to Ophüls's heroine. In *La Chamade*, Lucile's earrings serve the function both of indicating to Antoine Lucile's ongoing association with her rich benefactor Charles and of underscoring for Antoine the

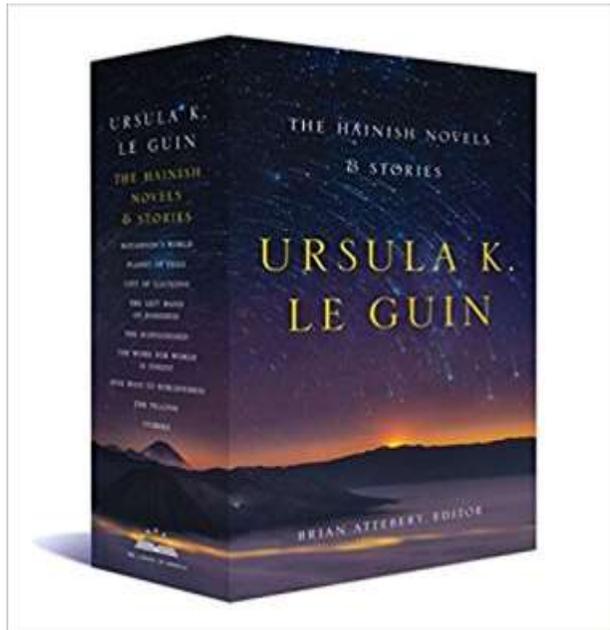
impossibility of keeping Lucile in the manner to which she has become accustomed. Similarly, the action of Ophüls's film turns around the circulation of a pair of gifted earrings which 'complete the circle to give the husband proof of his wife's infidelity'. In Ophüls's film, Madame de sells her earrings to pay off certain pressing debts. In *La Chamade* Lucile sells a necklace given to her by Charles to leave her job and still meet the expenses of her life with Antoine.

The title of Ophüls's film is deliberately elusive: it refuses to reveal to whom the eponymous Madame belongs. Instead, we are left with an intriguing ellipsis. This raises the question of ownership and of the woman as property or chattel. Madame de's very appearance on screen is preceded by all her accoutrements. In the opening scene of the film, Ophüls's camera pans around her boudoir, focusing on the contents of her wardrobe and her jewelry box, before finally settling on her face. This creates an inextricable link between Madame de and her accessories. In a similar vein, Lucile is also connected to her material possessions. When Lucile decides to leave Charles, he insists she take everything with her. She refuses, and he consoles himself with the thought that he can at least look at her dresses in the wardrobe and see her car in the garage. Like Madame de, Lucile's belongings are, in Charles's mind at least, an extension of her being, a reminder of her; they stand in for her and are indissociable from her.

For Sabine Denuelle, Danielle Darrieux as Madame de is a quintessential Parisienne: 'La Parisienne est encore est toujours du côté du plaisir, de la beauté et de l'amour, et Max Ophüls lui donnera pour longtemps les traits de Danielle Darrieux dans Madame de' (*La Parisienne* is still and always associated with pleasure, beauty and love, and Max Ophüls will long give her the traits of Danielle Darrieux in *Madame de*). Lucile, like Madame de, is also a Parisienne strongly associated with pleasure, beauty and love. The association of Lucile and Madame de also operates on an inter- and extra-cinematic level. Indeed, Lucile/Deneuve can be considered the spiritual daughter of Madame de/Darrieux, a fact highlighted by the fact that Deneuve also plays Darrieux's actual daughter in Jacques Demy's *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* (1966) and again, more recently, in François Ozon's *8 femmes*. Darrieux is considered in both her French and Hollywood films as incarnating the quintessential Parisienne type. Jean-Christophe Ferrari includes *Darrieux* (with Leslie Caron, Claudette Colbert and Audrey Hepburn) as among the main actresses who personified Hollywood's Parisienne: *Darrieux* had the elusiveness, piquancy and carefree manner of speech that Hollywood associated with the Parisienne. In her Hollywood Parisienne films *The Rage of Paris* (1938) and *Rich, Young and Pretty* (1951) Darrieux was, according to Ferrari, 'easily able to assume the role of the Parisienne thanks to her inimitable style and elegance'. Deneuve's star persona shares the qualities of style, elegance and elusiveness with *Darrieux*, all of which are accentuated in *La Chamade*.

Deneuve's role as Lucile is preceded by several other famous roles which inform Deneuve's star persona and infect the character of Lucile. When Truffaut cast Deneuve in *La Sirène du Mississippi* (1969) she had just finished filming

Belle de jour for Buñuel, in which she played bourgeois housewife-turned-prostitute Séverine Serizy. At the time, Truffaut wrote that what he liked about Deneuve was her mysterious quality: 'She is wonderfully suited to parts involving a secret, or a double life. Cathérine Deneuve adds



ambiguity to any situation and any screenplay, for she seems to be concealing a great many secret thoughts, we sense there are things lurking behind the surface'. Lucile's elusiveness is informed by two of Deneuve's other roles: her portrayal of Séverine in Buñuel's film, and Marion in *La Sirène du Mississippi*. Marion is visually linked to Lucile by way of a long, black coat trimmed with ostrich feathers which she wears to a soirée with Charles. The coat, especially in the snow-covered context of Truffaut's film, creates another visual connection, this time to Jean Béraud's painting, *Parisienne, Place de la Concorde* (1890), in which a black feather boa encircles the neck of a chic Parisienne crossing the snow-covered Place de la Concorde. In this way, Lucile's costume not only connotes the elegance of the chic Parisienne but connects her to her nineteenth-century predecessors in art. The black feathered coat also points to the way in which Deneuve's other roles infiltrate the character of Lucile.

Deneuve's star persona, particularly the specificity of her face, plays a vital role in the treatment of Lucile as both kept woman and elusive Parisienne. The following description of Lucile is found in Sagan's novel: 'Lucile était insaisissable. Elle était gaie, polie, souvent drôle mais elle se refusait obstinément à parler d'elle, de Charles ou de ses projets', 'Lucile was a most elusive person. She was gay, polite, often amusing, but stubbornly refused to talk about herself, or Charles, or of any plans for the future'. In Cavalier's film, this elusiveness is communicated primarily using Deneuve's face, which is often shot in close-up. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith remarks that Deneuve is an 'actress who always remains behind the screen, drawing the spectator towards her rather than projecting outwards, let alone inviting complicity'. For Austin, Deneuve is 'glacial' and incarnates 'the white woman, a figure of control, of

unattainable beauty, refinement and rigidity, pallor and poise'. Austin argues that Jacques Demy's *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964) established Deneuve's star persona: 'Deneuve drives out of the film a star, the white woman incarnate, with her mask in place'. Linked to this concept of the mask or the screen is Deneuve's acting style, which Austin describes as 'typically minimalist and impassive'.

If the face of Lucile/Deneuve always remains metaphorically behind the screen, then Cavalier at times literalizes this notion by way of *mise-en-scène*. Lucile is often shot behind glass. In a scene at a café she is shot from the outside looking in. In the many scenes in which she is driving or riding in the passenger seat of a car, she is filmed through the front windscreen. In a key scene, in which Antoine meets Lucile at the airport, their initial reunion takes place with a glass partition between them. In this scene, it is always Lucile, and never Antoine, who is shot behind the glass. This treatment creates another barrier, in addition to the mask of her face, between Lucile and the outside world and those who look at her. Being placed behind glass also suggests the way in which Lucile, as a highly paid courtesan, is a luxury good or precious commodity, who can be courted but not owned by the poor lover and who can be bought but not courted by the wealthy suitor. <>

[Ursula K. Le Guin: The Hainish Novels and Stories by Ursula K. Le Guin, edited by Brian Attebery, two volumes boxed \[Library of America, 9781598535372\]](#)

In such visionary masterworks as the Nebula and Hugo Award winners, *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. Le Guin redrew the map of modern science fiction, imagining a galactic confederation of human colonies founded by the planet Hain, an array of worlds whose divergent societies—the result of both evolution and genetic engineering—allow her to speculate on what is intrinsic in human nature. Now, for the first time, the complete Hainish novels and stories are collected in a deluxe two-volume Library of America boxed set, with new introductions by the author.

Volume one gathers the first five Hainish novels: *Rocannon's World*, in which an ethnologist sent to a bronze-age planet must help defeat an intergalactic enemy; *Planet of Exile*, the story of human colonists stranded on a planet that is slowly killing them; *City of Illusions*, which finds a future Earth ruled by the mysterious Shing; and the Hugo and Nebula Award-winning masterpieces *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*—as well as four short stories.

Volume two presents Le Guin's final two Hainish novels, *The Word for World Is Forest*, in which Earth enslaves another planet to strip its natural resources, and *The Telling*, the harrowing story of a society which has suppressed its own cultural heritage. Rounding out the volume are seven short stories and the story suite *Five Ways to Forgiveness*, published here in full for the first time.

The endpapers feature Le Guin's own hand-drawn map of Gethen, the planet that is the setting for *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and a full-color chart of the known worlds of Hainish descent. ∞

These Hainish fictions aren't a cycle. Rather "a convenience" than "a conception." So, Ursula Le Guin introduces this deluxe edition from Library of America in typically forthright, pithy, and sly terms.

Daughter of a groundbreaking anthropologist who taught at Berkeley and Columbia, Ursula Le Guin pioneered the meticulous investigation of her imagined societies within the popular genre of speculative storytelling. She began writing as a child during the Depression. Beginning in 1966, her contributions began in the Ace Doubles, SF pulp. Editors and fans recognized her skill. Although her sophisticated interplanetary system took a while to form, and even if its inconsistencies bother nitpicking critics, Le Guin avers this genesis gave her freedom to shift between stories and novels. She learned the difference between "willful suspension of disbelief" and merely "faking" it when invention stirred. (Her Hainish books need not be read in order, she has assured readers before.)

Part of Le Guin's innovation came through the "ansible," a device enabling instant communication across the universe. This became a standard tool throughout the science fiction cosmos. Her other innovation in the 1960s, she notes, has received less attention from a wider audience. The Left Hand of Darkness won both the Hugo and Nebula prizes, but it faced backlash, from pedants and from feminists. Le Guin's decision to use a fixed "he" for her people lacking a fixed gender--it alternates in the month--leads to her reiteration fifty years on. Despite many recent changes in social perception of gender differences, "we still have no accepted ungendered pronoun in narrative." Demurring from the term "prequel" for her story "The Day Before the Revolution" preceding her anarchist utopia novel *The Dispossessed*, "word-hound" Le Guin returns to her central verbal concern. "What matters most about a word is that it says what we need a word for. (That's why it matters that we lack a singular pronoun signifying non-male/female, inclusive, or undetermined gender. We need that pronoun."

This anthology's first volume gathers the first five Hainish novels. In a brief review, only a glimpse at the many realms Le Guin presents can suffice. Roncannon's World turns out for the Hainish ethnographer Roncannon an orb which will bear his name. (Hain's a planet resembling our own as the original homeland of humanity; the handsome endpapers in volume two make its earth-tones of continents heighten this suggestion, but it is not equivalent to Le Guin's *Terra*: an example of Le Guin's off-kilter approach to world-building.) Some telepathy occurs, but this wound up so overwhelming a condition for her menagerie of bio-forms that their creator edged away from it as a must as she expanded her fictional forays. Roncannon blends SF with fantasy. Its episodes entertain.

But eagle-eyed readers of venerable tropes may not be entirely convinced. There's a lot of humanoids evolving here on a smallish globe, so how they remain dispersed and sustaining may stem from Le Guin's anthropological curiosity more than a command of her developing talent in constructing plot.

Two more shortish novels follow. *Planet of Exile* as the title tells finds human colonists stranded on a hostile Werel. The arrival of attenuated seasons will become a factor in her present and future Hainish terrains: when winter comes, it stays for 15 years, and the "hils" arrive during this cold snap. These nomads call the humans "farborns." They both face savage hordes and snow-ghouls. One wonders if George R.R. Martin's vast audience knows of this 1966 predecessor, pitched again at the Ace crowd.

The following year, *City of Illusions* presents one raised by forest dwellers, but not born one of them. His quest across a ravaged earthscape and a dystopia full of occluded psychics also includes talking animals. Who can and cannot take life provides the complex theme, further taking on brainwashing.

The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) and *The Dispossessed* (1974) attain canonical status. Many will be most familiar with these dense novels. They deepen the SF genre. They will demand attention; they will reward reflection. This volume adds an "original" version of the experimental core of what became *Left's* alternating genders on Gethen. "Winter's King" sparked Le Guin's curiosity. What if "the king was pregnant" popped up in a tale? Both tales investigate how warfare equates with "predominantly a male behavior," "If some people reverted to being female with an overwhelming sex drive for a few days a month, while others were male, how might this play out for an Ice Age planet a.k.a. Winter? Furthermore, Le Guin addresses how language, power plays, and relationships evolve.

The last work in the first volume, *The Dispossessed* may not have lasted as long in curricula and on reading lists as its gender-driven counterpart. It emerges from Le Guin's weariness with the Vietnam War, and her Cold War affinity for Peter Kropotkin and Paul Goodman's non-violence. Pairing this via her youthful exposure to Lao Tzu, Le Guin incorporates the Tao into a study of no-coerced-order.

For it must recognize anarchy's discontents. Determined to leave his anarcho-syndicalist home on Anarres, physicist Shevek travels to a patriarchal society on Urras. Class war, religious dissension, and the grip of the in-group naturally mesh with Le Guin's intellectual interests. While less read now than *Left*, this novel of ideas also remains less popular than certain pulps penned by Ayn Rand. But Rand cannot match Le Guin's U.S.-of-A.-like A-lo for its ambiguous appeal as the Yang to the Yin of Urras. Capitalism gets its comeuppance, but so does socialism. Despite dense discussion, it's far more vivid than any Rand. For one "cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution." How one's possessive power gets mired in habit dramatizes--admittedly too tediously for readers craving more drama--its theories and its morality, as a thought-experiment.

As her fiction sweeps up allegory, her story arcs sometimes twine; but not neatly or necessarily. Her motivations push reflection arguably more than action. She leaves one

pondering, despite what can be ponderous to those weary of nuance. Her erudite character studies and linguistic riffs predominate.

Le Guin's Hainish elaborations continue into the mostly shorter pieces of the second volume. The novella *The Word for World Is Forest* has always struck me as a protest against the defoliation of Vietnam. It may align more with the Earth Day sentiments of the early Seventies, but either way, the revolt of those on Athshe against the invading Terrans bent on taking its resources to sustain their own depleted earth has remained topical. Le Guin acknowledges this sad truth in her appended 1976 introduction for *Word*. She relates how her own "fantasy" at that time that a Philippine tribe called the Senoi stood for a "dream culture" akin to her imagined one for her indigenous resisters. While these claims were largely debunked among anthropologists, Le Guin reasons that for her threatened world, the use of its scientific data may diminish accordingly as its "speculative element" compensates.

Hainish stories overlap in characters and ideas now and then among the seven compiled here. Her faster-than-light communication device the ansible excited her fellow scribes. By 1990, Le Guin took up a possibility akin to Madeleine L'Engle's "wrinkle in time." Le Guin was "allured by the notion of transience, the transfer of a physical body from one point in space-time to another without interval."

Christening it "churtening," she allows that those who pull it off in her fiction are never sure how they did it, or if they can do it again. "In this it much resembles life." Her 1994 collection *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea* weaves influences from a Japanese folktale with Hain-adjacent love stories. She attempted in this decade "to learn how to write as a woman." Her latest brainstorm, the "sedorutu," sets on the world named O an institutionalization of hetero- and homosexual relationships "in an intricate four-part arrangement laden with infinite emotional possibilities--a seductive prospect to a storyteller." Her "gender-bending" produces stories enriched by her own decision to speak out not only on behalf of women, but all who are loners and introverts. In an era bent on overpopulation, "unlimited growth," and "mindless exploitation," Ursula Le Guin retreats. She considers the misfit.

Her final entries twist more categories. Dark-skinned people enslave light-skinned ones. The emerging "story suite" becomes *Four Ways to Forgiveness*. Meanwhile, Le Guin learns of the destruction of "religious Taoism" during the regime of "aggressive secular fundamentalism" in China.

The Telling (2000) closes this volume. Le Guin sees around her in her own homeland the rise of similar "divisive, exclusive," and dogmatic instigators of hatred perverting "the energy of every major creed." This concluding novel depicts "the secular persecution of an ancient, pacific, non-theistic religion on another world." Those responsible, tellingly, originate among "a violent monotheistic sect on Earth." No matter what ignites the dynamic fusion of thought and action in her Hainish fictions, Ursula Le Guin generates

provocative and intelligent considerations of complex forces. A tribute to her craft, these elegant volumes combine into a welcome set for loners, introverts, and the rest of us.
∞ by [John L. Murphy](#) ∞



Peter Halley at Modern Art

[The Cambridge History of Modernism](#) by Vincent Sherry [Cambridge University Press, 9781107034693]

excerpts from Introduction: A History of "Modernism" by Vincent Sherry: In one received understanding, "modernism" emerges as a working term only in the teaching cultures of postwar universities in England and (especially) America. According to this understanding, "modernism" earned its currency as a word mainly in those academic settings, where it offered itself chiefly as a term of convenience, providing a departmental curriculum with course titles or doctoral dissertations with historical frames. In those college classrooms and library studies, "modernism" is supposed to have exerted a neutral, mostly descriptive, non-controversial and certainly nonpolemical function — at least at its inception. This is not an accurate understanding, and the history it outlines is wrong. The word "modernism" is circulating noticeably and in fact clamorously at the turn of the twentieth century. It emerges already and first as a fighting word, being fraught from the start with strident and contestable claims about the meaning of the experience of history in general and contemporary history in particular. This is the historical moment for which "modern" has recently been accepted as a designation and "ism" its newly challenging, and increasingly challenged, intensive. Such is the power of the denominator, in fact, that this Cambridge History of Modernism frames its broad historical subject through the word itself. "Modernism" provides the point of reference in this Introduction because it centers a debate about the meaning of being "modern," especially in the inflection which the additional "ism" attributes to it, and because this controversy frames many of the critical issues and interpretive questions that are most cogent to the body of work that is brought under its heading. The debate is lengthening now into its second (third) century. In a fashion, at least mildly appropriate to the temporal imaginary of its subject, this Introduction will move through this period

counterclockwise as well as clockwise — from the beginning of the twenty-first century to the end of the nineteenth — by entering in medias res.

"What is 'Modernism'?" So, opens the annual Presidential Address at the English Association meeting in London in 1937. The interrogative mood dissolves quickly as the speaker, the Very Rev. W.R. Inge, turns to the etymology of the word he has pronged between those inverted commas:

The barbarous Latin word modernus (from modo, 'just now') occurs first in the sixth century, in the grammarian Priscian, and Cassiodorus, an official Of Theodoric. In the twelfth century it was applied to the Nominalists by the Realists, and Roger Bacon called Alexander Of Hales and Albert duo modern gloriosi; even Thomas Aquinas was called a Modernist by the Platonists and Augustinians. During the Renaissance it was applied to the new humanistic ways of thought. In the seventeenth century a 'middle age' was intercalated between 'ancient' and 'modern'. Our Own age will perhaps someday be called the middle age, unless they prefer to call it 'the meddle and muddle age'.

The afterdinner humor concluding this first paragraph does not obscure a skepticism edging into enmity, which is manifest in that opening blast at the babbling Latinity of the early Dark Ages. Obviously motivated for attack, the philological learning in this overture includes nonetheless a precise understanding of the specific inflection of the Latin radical, which is indeed the root of the issue for Inge. Modo, as the Oxford English Dictionary informs him, means something narrower than an adjectival understanding of "recent" or "current"; it finds its meaning as a temporal adverb, telling the time of an action occurring not simply "today" or even "now" but "just now." So, modo enters into late antiquity as a most timely register of a temporality pressured by an immense sense of eventful change: a special present, a brink of time, a precipitous instant, all in all, a crisis time. These several associations move to the acutest register in the twentieth century through the addition of the suffix "ism," which adds a self-conscious awareness to this special experience of the "modern" moment, turning the uncertainty of instantaneous time into not just a feeling but an idea, maybe even a faith or belief in this condition of constantly disruptive change.

introduced into late Roman antiquity as the original indicator of crisis time. The notion of "just now" has been lived out indeed in a century already divided into decades with names and nicknames, ranging from the dynastic to the dynamic, from Edwardian to Roaring. Most important, an instant-by-instant difference in the actual experience of historical time lives out — and in — the rhythms of an unprecedented and accelerating pace of change in the history of material cultures. Accordingly, the imaginative experience of temporality moves beyond one of crisis time to one of time itself in crisis: a formerly natural, apparently gradual time of diurnal days and seasonal rounds has been sliced ever more finely and grandly by the developing mechanisms of chronometry, which have worked in ways little and large — from the division of the globe into twenty-four equal time zones to the parsing of micro-times within a supposedly seamless instantaneity — to unsettle temporal measurement itself. It is the feeling of free-fall within these conditions that most unsettles critics like Inge. And so, his and their attacks, which are more like counterattacks in the sense that they are manifestly reactive and panicky, tend to deflect from the source of their profounder dread to images of the predictably ridiculous, say, in the characterization of "modernist" sculpture as "figures apparently suffering from elephantiasis or acromegaly" or "modernist" painting as "zigzags" crisscrossing "a woman with green hair." No, it is not about the mannerisms, odd or otherwise, that are attached to "modernism" as its characterizing styles, which, in any case, are much too various to conform to any one version. No, it is about time: it is about this new experience of vertiginous instants in which "modernism" is most self-consciously involved, and it was about time, in the minds of those identified with this sensibility over the long turn of the twentieth century, that works of art constitute themselves in awareness of time and the changing conditions of time in their work. So, if the feeling of crisis time and time in crisis was undergone first in Inge's history in the final collapse of classical culture in the sixth century, it is, now in the fourth decade of the twentieth, implicitly but insistently — and recognizably, in the currency of this word "modernism" — the present condition of things.

The decade-by-decade chronology in the twentieth-century history of modernism begins of course with the "fin de siècle," where the French nomenclature frames an interval



The special motive and pressure for Inge's riposte comes then from the modern context of the twentieth, the assignably "modern," century, which, in his fearful apprehension, is realizing the meaning of a word

with an equal degree of self-consciousness about its own special time. Accordingly, in the archaeologies of the twentieth-century uses of this word, cultural historians usually find the foundational source of "modernism" in the later

nineteenth century, specifically, in the histories of European and especially French Roman Catholicism.¹ This "modernist movement" included an effort at updating the formulations of traditional church doctrines and, most important, at understanding the history of these doctrinal positions as historically determined and, so, as relative and changeable. And so, the "just now"-ism of the modernist sensibility was scored into the founding principles of this religious movement, too. What needs to be recognized, however, is that this ecclesiastical "modernism" was not the inaugural form of the word in European usage. Roman Catholic "modernism" was echoing developments in the broader cultural histories of Europe, where the term "modern" was already flourishing in contemporary continental milieus with that charged and often fraught sense of a special present, of crisis time and time in crisis.

Through the last two decades of the nineteenth century, cognates of the term "modern" were appearing with increasing frequency in Italy and Spain, in Germany and Austria, in Denmark and Scandinavia and Russia. Primary bibliographies display a range of periodicals and magazines, novels and anthologies of poetry as well as discursive works, which feature the word "modern" in the title. This flourish occurs with special intensity in Germany, where the pressures of modernization were occurring in the most accelerated form in Europe. German journals include *Die Moderne*, *Moderne Blätter*, and *Freie Bühne für modernes Leben*, while monographs particularize this "modern" condition in several specifically topical considerations: *Das sexuelle Problem in der modernen Litteratur* (1890), for example, or *Der Übermensch in der modernen Litteratur* (1897), and already in 1890 in *Zur Kritik der Moderne*. The increasing frequency of this word indicates a sense sufficiently self-conscious as to mean, in every relevant way, "modernism."

What is equally remarkable in continental Europe and, as Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane have pointed out, especially in Germany, is the sudden lapse of interest in the "modern," which occurs just as the supposedly "modern" century has turned. In 1909, for indicative instance, Samuel Lublinski titles his monograph *Der Ausgang der Moderne* (The Exit of the Modern).⁴ Similarly, in Italy, where the federation of the "modern" (as opposed to classical or Roman) state in 1870 coincided with the energies of a much-promulgated modernization: these developments of political and cultural history crested toward the century's end as their moment or realization, when, however, a change of terms occurs and, as Luca Somigli succinctly notes, "the label of 'decadentismo' has come to identify much of what in other traditions is described as 'modernism.' The Spanish variant on this pattern appears in modernismo, which, as a synonym of "modernity," centers an intensity of debate in the years approaching the turn of the century. In that process, however, and especially after 1900, modernismo was always disaggregating into a composite topic in cultural and literary history, where the still uncertain associations of the term look backward as well as forward for its markers and come to include Parnassianism, Symbolism, Decadentism, even pre-Raphaelitism. This backward-turning aspect in the term emerges in Latin America as a point of strong reaction "around the turn of

the last century," as Rubén Gallo notes in this History in his chapter on "modernism" in Spanish America. Here a "once" but no longer "controversial" verse became the rallying cry of a new movement called post-modernismo (not to be confused with postmodernism), which called for a poetic renewal and a new aesthetics."^{...}

The sense of crisis time and time in crisis in "modernism" thus clusters around the century's turn as its likeliest temporal environment. As Frank Kermode has written about the end-and-beginning feeling of the turn of centuries, it is at this (recurring) point in history that a sense of instability is at its most intense.¹ In this understanding, the feeling of unease is as urgently uncertain as it is necessarily brief. There are other ways of explaining the brief but intense life of the turn-of-the-century "modern," however, which involve the more particular history of the century then ending on the European continent. Recalling this history may allow us to understand some of the reasons why "modernism" fades as a critical descriptor for subsequent cultural histories on the continent even while it gains strength as a counter of value and center of attention from the beginning through the end of the twentieth century in Britain and America.

Those are the threats against which R.A. Scott James attempts to defend his "modernism" in the first book-length work of literary criticism to carry the English word in its title: *Modernism and Romance* (1908). He moves the meaning of the first of his title words toward the side of improvisatory opportunity. He puts "modernism" on the plotline of a "romance" novel of history that is driven to ever-better ends by a Progress-minded ideology. In this way, Scott James's book offers an inaugural form of a one-sided but defensive construction of "modernism" that will continue to be heard for at least a century longer. This early instance is indeed a radical form. So hard is Scott James pushing this single-minded idea of Progress-minded modernism, he reads even the novels of a late imperial age, Conrad's most conspicuously and in fact preposterously, as testaments to the assertion "that our civilisation so far from being very old is really in its infancy."

All this effortful work represents an attempt to counter the negative inflection of its Latin radical, the "passing moment" sense of its "just now" meaning, which is more than an inference insofar as it has already found a timely habitation and alternative name: "Decadence."

This sensibility flourished (if "decadence" can be said to flourish) in the English as well as the continental *fin de siècle*. This last decade before the last century of the millennium provides an initial, defining instance of the idea of crisis time or time in crisis that "modernism" denominates. This so-called "decade of Decadence" provides a primary, paradigmatic location of the imaginative time of "modernism" as a verbal concept. And it is a measure of the threat presented by this negative side of dissolving time — told and tolled in the countdown letdown of Northcroft's self-consciously "modern" time — that Scott James has to counter it so strenuously. This work extends past his chapter "The Decadents," which includes a single- and bloody-minded denunciation of that group, and into the strenuous efforts of passages like this:



Viewing Joan Miro at the Tate

It is a wearisome tale to tell ... He is happy indeed who does not understand what I have sought to suggest rather than to explain ... if he has not felt these and all the other parts of our over-developed community shaking and shivering in self-conscious postures, groaning in the agonies either of actual physical pain or the self-imposed torture of affectation, then he belongs to the happy few who have not been compelled to witness the "ache of modernism."

Readers still familiar with the art and literature of the fin de siècle recognized the type characters of *décadence* in this *mise-en-scène*. Their febrile exhaustion, more specifically their overripe ("over-developed") condition — these figures repeat the trope of civilization at its decaying-before-dying end that recurs among Decadent writers from Théophile Gautier on. Scott James's *tableau mordant* revives it all, and all for his own strenuous purpose — to make these figures alien to the optimist's "modernism," which he is trying to cure of the "ache" Hardy's phrase preserves still in the nerve it touches. The pain of decaying time remains a constitutive element of this modernism even — or especially — as Scott James works so hard to alleviate it.

This archive of turn-of-the-century writings restores some of the fullness of the discursive work being performed with and through "modernism." In this original force field, the verbal radical generates the primary terms of the relevant debate, which swings between the opposite possibilities of its twofold sense. These root meanings may be attenuated in due course, even in short course, but, even when renamed and rehabbed in the longer *durée* of its ongoing use, the core ideas will continue to apply.

In shorter course, those potent signifiers of instability and diminishment are shifted into an increasingly indeterminate range of dangers which, in their variety, preserve some of the original negativity but diffuse its threat. So dispersed, the meanings of "modernism" do not so much counsel-late as conjure up many (or any) convention-dismaying qualities, which, lacking specificity, come quickly enough to be

tolerated, even fondly tolerated, and so accommodated. Already in 1913 in *The Athenaeum*, for early instance, the author of "Modernism at the Albert Hall" asks "liberal-minded men" to look past the evidently "dangerous tendency" in some of the work on view, which includes cubism and futurism as well as post-impressionism, and recognize that "this revolution, if it is a real revolution, cannot be checked." The use of "revolution" in this article, which includes the intensifying repetition of the word, includes a history of political revolutions in Europe that has been rewritten and reoriented in English, it seems, into a promissory cultural rebirth. Recognized as inevitable, needing thus to be allowed, this specifically cultural revolution is accommodated now, in the closing note of the piece, as "the immediate herald of a new Renaissance." So, in 1917, in the American journal *New Opinion*, the worst that can be said about the impresario of the original Parisian production of Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, which earned far worse for its recognizably or assignably "modernist" quality in 1913, is: "Jean Cocteau, the daring modernist poet." So, in 1925, in a review of Marianne Moore's poems in the *American Dial*, a magazine already sided with a poetics identifiably and nominally "modernist," William Carlos Williams can write to this evolving consciousness of popular acceptance: "modernism is distressing to many who would at least tolerate it if they knew how. These individuals, who cannot bear the necessary appearance of disorder in all immediacy, could be led to appreciation through critical study."

The "critical study" that Williams asks for is the activity necessary to accommodate the quality of "difficulty" that comes increasingly to be attributed to "modernism." This "difficulty" needs to be understood as an attributed, not a synonymic or intrinsic, condition, and so denaturalized. It may be understood best in terms of the uses and motives it serves in a cultural economy broader than one reader's, one viewer's, one listener's experience.

While landmark works of modernism — from Schoenberg's to Joyce's to Kandinsky's — create perplexity even for their

most assiduous critics, the assigning of "difficulty" to this work also serves as a simpler equivalent — a euphemism — for the more challenging "difference" the works of modernism may register from conventional styles of representation. In fact, "difficulty" represents a quality of experience or a category of value that several modernists pointedly contest, seeing it as a misplaced understanding about what a work of art is or can do. "Never explain," T.S. Eliot is said to have said, providing that cryptic motto for this authorial advice for remaining cryptic. The elusiveness — the irreducibility — of an art identified as "modernist" may locate the essential difference it presents to mass-educated notions. In a cultural history that has witnessed a burgeoning growth in the extent of "general" education, which emphasizes basic comprehension as the aim or merit of its activity, a standard-issue art will be regarded as a conveyer of content, as a statement of reducible truths. An art that presents, however, rather than represents: such is the motive and means of work identified as "avant-garde," which, often staged as an art of its own event, its own making or happening defines the moment of its occurrence as the limiting but signifying condition of its existence. In its own ideation, at least, it cannot be converted into something else: there is no revisiting of some putative referent or anterior (let alone ulterior) meaning; the presentation of sheer experience locates the ground and warrant of the "special present" this radical form of modernism defines and occupies — however briefly. And brevity is the condition of the dozens and even hundreds of avant-garde phenomena in early and midcentury modernism, where their go-and-come-and-go pattern manifests the quality of the transitory in the core meaning of "modernism."

The displacement of this essential difference into "difficulty," however, is one of the chief means by which mainstream cultures first acknowledge and tolerate products identified as "modernist." What happens for a mass-educated readership applies as well to public consumption, to modernism as an increasingly mass-consumed product. This process is given a motivated pressure in the understanding of critics such as Theodor Adorno, who sees the threatening expressions of this avant- or radical modernism being converted by a master capitalist class into the commodities of a "culture industry," which stylize the difference and, converting it into the acceptable, ultimately the desirable, neutralize its danger." Whether one accepts the explicitly Marxist terms of Adorno's analysis, one of the subplots in the cultural history of the 1920s witnesses this growing acceptance of "modernism" as a term and reference, and this development spurs the countermotioning efforts of artists and critics to hold onto the difference "modernism" constitutes in the more radical manifestations of avant-garde attitudes and practices...

...At the beginning of the next decade, in prefatory acknowledgements dated "January 1981," Howe is included among the formative influences on Marshall Berman's [All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity](#) [Penguin Books, 9780140109627]. This book resumes where Howe left off Berman makes an impassioned attempt to live the history of modernism forward from the point at which Howe feared it had ended. To do so, Berman makes a move that is intellectually ambitious but tactically

simplistic, a measure all in all of the difficulty of the project and the urgency of a solution. The effort gains significance in terms of the existing history of the criticism of "modernism," which he recapitulates, and recapitulates at just that moment when "modernism" is about to emerge and flourish as a term in the discursive as well as analytical work of the decade.

Berman takes the paradox in the verbal concept of "modernism" — the improvisatory energy, the force of decay — and their elaborated consequences — the technical inventiveness, a refusal of futurity — and shifts these oppositions into the schemes and tropes of a dialectic that is explicitly Marxist (his main title is a phrase from Marx) and implicitly but insistently Hegelian. Progress, the resolving value in Scott James's early account of "modernism," once again provides the compelling conceptual force. In developing this argument, Berman turns the word "modernism" into an historical protagonist, a virtual character who is propelled by motivating aims and directive values and so, in the process of realizing these, faces situational difficulties, experiences global setbacks as well as local successes. This dramatic narrative emerges with the eloquence of a believer in Berman's book, drawing it a great deal of critical attention. If his simplifications come from the fact that he has forgotten that "modernism" is first and last a word, his narrative character "modernism" also represents his defiance of the historicity of "modernism" as a verbal concept: for him, the story of its referent is far from over. Indeed, in the subjunctive mood of Berman's report, in the imaginative grammar of his political commitment, the ideology of Progress that is inseparable from "modernism" must and will be spoken, in the future perfect tense, as its promissory consequence. Extending the memory of his "modernism" back to romanticism, then, he sends it forward as well in the last passages of his "Introduction": "I want to bring the dynamic and dialectical modernism of the nineteenth century to life again," he begins his peroration, so "that going back can be a way to go forward: that remembering the modernisms of the nineteenth century can give us the vision and courage to create the modernisms of the twenty-first."

The decade opened by this book ends with the publication of a volume that features "modernism" in its title (the first of those we've considered in the postwar era to do so): [Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists](#) [Verso, 9781844675807], a posthumously published collection of essays and lectures by Raymond Williams. The framing piece, his recent (1987) talk "When Was Modernism?", offers a nearly thirty-year-old echo and variation to the "What Was Modernism?" question of 1960, but it also launches a stronger, more pointed riposte to the dramatic exaggerations in Berman's history of "modernism." So well-known is this account, in fact, Williams does not refer to it by name — although the editor of this retrospective collection makes a point of picking through a lot of its negative press in his "Introduction." In the talk itself, Williams counters Berman's hyperboles, in particular the distended temporalities of the Progress plot for "modernism," by returning attention to the word, which is spurred not just by the currency it has earned in the intervening years but also by the inflation of sense that

Berman both initiates and typifies. Thus, Williams carefully establishes the "just now" meaning in the root as he follows the modulating sense of this verbal concept from its beginnings in late Latinity through a now nearly millennium-and-a-half lifecycle. Williams brings this long story of the "just now" moment to its meaningful use for the period stretching from the 1890s to roughly midcentury; he emphasizes how the extraordinary range and pace of change over these years stimulated the intense consciousness about time that lies in the inherent idea of the word: here, then, is the "when" for which his "modernism" is the proper denominator. But his tightening of the borders of its historical reference also coincides with a narrowing of its political possibilities. One of the strongest points in Williams's critique of any idea of a revolutionary or progressive and evolving "modernism" goes to the same fact that Levin and Howe and a lot of the commentators have already confronted in the years when the word is earning its sense. "Modernism" is becoming a subject of academic study just as the era to which it refers is ending, and the idea of crisis time or time in crisis, lived out as the very daimon on currency is outlived, seems to loop back from the circumstantial belatedness of the commentators into the motivating values of its subject. In this force field of acquired associations, "modernism" includes associations very close to the received order of things, so that any "anti-bourgeois" associations are indeed long gone. Any putative involvement of "modernism" in dynamic change — cultural as well as political — is effectively questioned. Williams certainly interrogates those notions.

This narrative line through four decades of midcentury scholarship follows a commentary that shows a predominance of Marxists, but not because Marxists owned — or opposed — "modernism" in any instrumental way. Rather, the time-mindedness of its verbal concept is critical to the story unfolding in the history to which Marxists bring their own political interests. And so, the essential, definite, specifically temporal sense of the word is furthered, contested, and confirmed, and confirmed as it is contested, in a criticism committed equally to longer- and shorter-range stories of historical change. These issues are simplified considerably in some of the slogans to which the consciousness of modernism is routinely reduced, say, "Make it New" (not written by Pound in fact until the mid-1930s, a date which might locate the moment when modernism is beginning to be made Old). Nonetheless, the idea of transformational change in cultural and political histories as well as in works of aesthetic invention remains in place as a frame of reference and a standard of value in a proliferating work on "modernism," which occurs through the turn of the next century.

Here, Marxist or not, Berman's view of the future proves to have been prescient. His pluralizing of "modernisms," in the remarkable tour-de-force finale to that book, was particularly prophetic. He already forecasts the reorienting work that Peter Nicholls will formalize in his 1995 volume, [Modernisms: A Literary Guide](#) [2nd edition, Palgrave, 9780230506756]. In multiplying the number of "modernisms" across cultural histories as well as cultural geographies, Nicholls's book provides a foundation for the soon-to-be-called New Modernist Studies, which will extend

the frame of temporal reference for the Old Modernism as well as diversify its personnel. The forward slash of Modernism/Modernity, the journal of a Modernist Studies Association formed in 1999, points the referent of its first word into the future tense perennial of its second. In this wise, in gesturing to the emergence of contemporarily "modernist" work on the African continent and the Indian subcontinent, Berman was also already bringing into focus an interest in global modernisms that has now grown under various rubrics. These range from the problematic principle of "uneven development" to the directing premises of scholars like Susan Stanford Friedman, who see an experience of "modernism" as intrinsic to the historical progressions and lifecycle of any cultural history and, so, decisively and even polemically pluralize the noun. What is occurring in a larger sense is a conversion of a mostly exclusionary idea, where the "ism" or "ist" of the "modern" requires the decision of an individual sensibility, to an inclusive notion, where an entire historical period may be called "modernist." Given the temporal significance of the root of the word, there is a constant, often productive tension between "modernism" as the circumstance of the modern and the sensibility of the modern, and much of the best recent scholarship turns this difference into a frame of reference and framework of analysis that is highly productive.

These developments also reveal impetuses not so abstract, and a memory of the instigating history may help to put some of the motivating interests of recent work into intellectual — and political — perspective. The consolidation of interest in "modernism" from the late 1970s through the late 1980s focused interest, predictably, on the then "usual suspects." "The Men of 1914" — Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Wyndham Lewis — provides as a referential phrase a site of passage between modernisms new and old. The fact that three of those four men — Pound, Eliot, Lewis — maintained political commitments at odds with anything like Berman's model of tolerantly progressive politics was certainly disconcerting to the institutionalization of "modernism" in university culture, which, at least in its transatlantic sphere, tended to go more rather than less "liberal." A counterturn occurred, and the political trials of "modernism" were pursued and fueled in the 1990s with energy commensurate with earlier efforts to suppress those truths. By diversifying its personnel, however, by multiplying its subsidiary or contributory "isms," all in all, by extending its temporal longevity, the "M" word earned its reprieve, and, newly spoken, offered a rubric renewed for a new era of "modernist studies," which, to switch the plurals, is now the "study of modernisms."

The title for this History remains in the singular, but not as a gesture of constriction or reaction to those developments in the history of criticism. Rather, the singular provides a means of maintaining a focus no less radical for remaining true to the root sense of the word, whose representative expressions are indeed multiple. Its brink-instant sensibility is associated necessarily with the ever-accelerating conditions of change in the circumstances of urban modernity, but it is essential to maintain the difference between "modern" (or "modernization") and "modernism," which, in turn, refer to the chronological location of the twentieth century (with its

dynamic of change) and a special, ramifying self-consciousness about living in these specific conditions. The Cambridge History of Modernism uses its title term thus to identify a distinctive temperament of "modernism" within the "modern" period, establishing the circumstances of modernized life as the ground and warrant for an art that becomes "modernist" by its demonstrably self-conscious involvement in this modern condition. This involvement dramatizes itself in the expression of a sensibility, the practice of an attitude, and, while the effects or metrics of its presence will vary necessarily from art to art and genre to genre, there will be a steady effort in these essays to discern this special identity of "modernism" as a (if diversely manifested) state of artistic and cultural mind. This "mind of modernism" may be invoked variously as sensibility, temperament, disposition, attitude, outlook — a range that indexes the extensive import of the special awareness we designate as "modernism" and that suggests something as well as the protean consciousness this History will document in its multiple centers of attention.

As already indicated, advance signals of this sensibility appear at specific points of mid-late nineteenth-century European culture, especially in France; the essays in this History follow it as it grows and changes in pan-European and transatlantic contexts, while developments in imperial and late imperial histories are reflected in representative postcolonial settings. The historical coverage moves between 1890 and (for reasons that should do with space limitations and current uncertainty about end-dates) roughly 1970. There is of course a tapering effect at the ends of that historical spectrum. In the four major sections of this History, there is an increasing preponderance of attention to literary modernism in particular; unlike painting or sculpture or music, literature requires translation or at least multilingual knowledge to exert its influence, and it gains greatest emphasis here, among other reasons, because it serves to assert and test the internationalism that is understood commonly to be the establishing circumstance of artistic modernism (the importance of translation warrants a chapter in this History). In the comprehensive logic, this volume follows from its initial sections, however, the emphasis on literature occurs within an understanding of "modernism" that presents this sensibility in its most widely working expressions, which include major developments in music, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, theoretical as well as practical science, painting and sculpture, and the allied arts of architecture and urban design.

In any comprehensive account of "modernism," its dominance as a category moves in tension — sometimes amiable, sometimes not — with its various, constitutive, subsidiary "isms": Symbolism, imagism, futurism, vorticism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, etc. These groups will not be the subjects here of separate, dedicated chapters; they form a composite subject in a single chapter, which presents the evolving avant-garde of modernism in a kind of vertical profile across the early midcentury. These movements may differ considerably from each other in their visual and literary signatures, but they join in expressing the intensified faith of their adherents' programs of artistic attitude and practice and, as such, demonstrate the "just now" idea of modernism as an aesthetic sensibility and expression. As

advance-guards in cultural history, moreover, these movements locate the action of modernism in a signal time, a signature tense — a present intensified with the sense of the break it is making from the past and the breakthrough it makes to a future. At this core of modernism as a sensibility, a temporal imaginary dominates its consciousness, and for this reason, among others, the first of the four sections that organize this History is "Modernism in time."

Featuring time and space, the first two sections identify categories of perception and understanding that are fundamental to the sensibility of modernism. These headings also situate the expressions of this sensibility in the times and spaces of twentieth-century modernity. "Modernism in time" begins thus with a consideration of time as a subject of scientific and philosophical discussion as well as aesthetic representation, then moves this temporal imaginary in the complementary directions of the "avant-garde" and the "primitive" in the second and third chapters, then follows this sensibility through the historical locations which the consecutive decades mark. Similarly, in "Modernism in space," an opening essay on the science and sociology as well as the philosophy and aesthetics of space leads to chapters which feature the sensibility of modernism in visual and spatial media but also, necessarily, in the spatiality of urban modernity in various locations and modalities. In the larger frame of global space, newly imaginable with the dosing of frontiers, the concluding chapter of this section follows modernism into Latin American locations, where, in no peripheral instance, interaction between New and Old Worlds reveals an autonomously powered extension and refinement of continental sensibilities in Latin American locations.

The third and fourth sections feature the forms in which a consciousness of modernism reorganizes existing systems of thinking about individuality and sociality as well as types and kinds in aesthetic representation. In sum, "Modernism in and out of kind: genres, new genres, and composite genres" connects the major inventions in the traditional genres of artistic expression to equally experimental thinking about categories of identity in the established taxonomies of cultural systems — gender and race as well as art and advertising, politics and technology. As a signal of existing divisions over-come, an essay on "Literature between media" in the middle of this section indicates the space between older forms of literature and newer media of transmission as a signal site of modernism's improvisatory work with genre and media. This section opens thus with an essay on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art, which, as it developed first in Wagnerian opera, expanded the thinking about the genres of aesthetic experience, seeking to combine visual and aural materials in a newly enriched synthesis: this is the impulse followed in its many turns and counterturns in subsequent chapters across that range of cultural production. Where this third section focuses on the forms of organization external to the persons of modernism, the fourth, "Modernism in person, modernism in community," provides an account of some of the most significant individual figures in its history, who are seen both from the outside in and the inside out. An opening essay on Freud and Freudianism sets out the terms of then new and revolutionary notions of the person, which, among other

things, unmade and remade a nineteenth-century idea of the liberal individual as an autonomous rational agent. This is the premise compelling developments in conceptions of the woman, or re-conceptions of the already New Woman, who has appeared in the third section of this History as a newly constituted agent of her gender and now, in the second essay of the fourth section, becomes the subject who registers best some of the developing pressures on an older idea of individuality. These new ideas also set the pattern for the interactions of the characters of modernism in the rest of the essays in this section. The featured artists and critics — even the forty-five followed here are intended not as a comprehensive but a representative selection — are offered as case studies of modernism in person, but also in groups, here in groups of three. One figure in these trios sometimes provides an unexpected point of resemblance with the other two and so, in the triangulated pattern, may offer a newly revealing view on each of those in the group. They may also be seen thus as individuals developing as artists in relation to the main lines of a modernism that is evolving with them and that is embodied in the works of the artists with whom they are associated in the individual chapters and, in large, in this section.

As the "Epilogue" indicates in its subtitle, "Modernism after postmodernism," modernism's long history is lengthening beyond the compass of this volume. Developments in cultural zones far from those associated with the generative grounds or staging areas of early mid-twentieth-century "modernism" do not need that term to be legitimated, however, and time will tell what those names should be. In any case, the critical activity on "modernism" promises longevity equal to the vitality of inquiry in the pages that follow. May this History take its place — whether provocation or cornerstone — in the work of Modernisms New and Old: the modernism of a twentieth century lengthening into a modernist study of many decades to come. ∞

[The Cambridge History of Modernism](#) is the first comprehensive history of modernism in the distinguished Cambridge Histories collection. It identifies a distinctive temperament of 'modernism' within the 'modern' period, establishing the circumstances of modernized life as the ground and warrant for an art that becomes 'modernist' by its demonstrably self-conscious involvement in this modern condition. Following this sensibility from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, tracking its manifestations across pan-European and transatlantic locations, the forty-three chapters offer a remarkable combination of breadth and focus. Prominent scholars of modernism provide analytical narratives of its literature, music, visual arts, architecture, philosophy, and science, offering circumstantial accounts of its diverse personnel in their many settings. These historically informed readings offer definitive accounts of the major work of twentieth-century cultural history and provide a new cornerstone for the study of modernism in the current century. ∞

PART I: MODERNISM IN TIME

As a special consciousness of the present, "modernism" involves understandings of time, which, in turn, provide a resource for some of the richest innovations associated with

it. "Modernism in time" takes its place thus as the first section of this Cambridge History. It opens with an essay that follows the concepts of time as these evolve through the turn of the century in the discourses of scientific and philosophical inquiry as well as the practices of literature and art. This temporal sensibility finds some of its most conspicuous and controversial expressions in the "avant-garde" and "primitive" inflections of modernism; opposite but complementary, these two directions of imaginative temporality provide the subjects of the second and third chapters. The next four chapters locate the "time-mind" of modernism in successive decades — not only have cultural historians modeled the chronologies of modernism one decade at a time, many of the modernists themselves located and identified themselves historically in terms of ten-year intervals, most notably the teens and twenties. The decade does not span a generation, let alone an era, but it is at once large and small enough to be a period or even a micro-period with its own period feeling.

Framing these manifestations of the time-mind of modernism, the first chapter of this section follows some of the developing conceptions of temporality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Swift, extensive, manifold: changes in the metrics and so in the ideas and experiences of time have as their consequence a clear and even acute self-awareness about temporality. For these reasons, among others, a heightened knowledge of living in a moment of historical and experiential time becomes available as the establishing circumstance of the sensibility of twentieth-century modernism. Most notably because most boldly, the "avant-garde" names its forward place in time as well as in space, while the "primitive" is no less remarkable in the assignably retrograde motion it makes in its pursuit of interest and value. At opposing ends of the temporal spectrum, these two sensibilities stand as defining extremities of the time-mind of modernism. Each of those poles is constituted of course by individual sensibilities and conflicting interests, whose motive values may range from revolutionary to imperial, and the Chapters "Ahead of Time: The Avant-Gardes" by Jed Rasula, and "At Other Times: Modernism and the 'Primitive'" by David Richards populate the consciousness of those subjects with the variety and particularity of their expressions in the real time of history.

The subsequent chapters work with the decades and phases that provide the spots of time, the frameworks of Now, in the history of cultural modernism. These micro-histories begin with a turn of the century that goes longer than usual, extending not from 1899 to 1901 but from 1890 to 1910 or, in a tapering way, to points still earlier and even a bit later, too. New recognitions of the relativity of temporal measurement are playing with and pulling against the fixity of indicators like a round-numbered chronology, so that, even — or especially — as an arbitrary marker, the century's end is extended as an interval of awareness; it offers a staging area and establishing ground of a specifically modernist consciousness. The next two chapters mark the time and times of the teens and twenties, turning the first of these decades around the watershed event of the Great War of 1914-1918 and the second on — or about — 1922. Of course, the war takes its place as a milestone and turning point in the history of modernity: the

technology that offered the emblem and instrument of historical progress was now twisted to work in the service of hitherto unimagined, indeed unimaginable, destruction. Yet the years preceding and following the war emerge in this account as a little history of multiple turns, so that the war may be seen not as an instigating so much as a focusing or symbolizing event in the special history of the crisis times of modernism. And where 1922 takes its place as the *annus mirabilis* of cultural production in most standard histories of literary and artistic modernism, it also provides a point of perspective on the rest of a decade framed already and first of all — or second of all, by the second year — with a sense of its own special present. The artists and thinkers who identify themselves with this decade are charged with an awareness of something coming to term, an awareness that served in turn to make the rest of the decade at once expectant and retrospective. The monumental accomplishments of that year, let alone of that decade, seemed to amount to nothing less than a critical mass of "modernism," even if it wasn't called that at the time, and for that reason, understandable as it is, many of the early histories of literary and artistic modernism ended their stories in 1930. That frame has been breaking open as the major development in the scholarship of modernism over a very long turn of the twenty-first century, which has taken modernism into ever later days. So, the last chapter of this section follows a feeling of "late" modernism from the 1930s into and through the Second World War, providing a carefully qualified chronology for "lateness" and situating this idea historically and theoretically.

PART II: MODERNISM IN SPACE

"Modernism in Space" turns on a twofold conception. There is the space of the plastic, visual arts, including architecture. There is also the space within which — although the prepositional conception "within" involves a model of understanding that modernist thinkers are constantly modifying — the experiences of urban modernity as well as political history take shape. In these several locations, the defining idea of crisis time or time in crisis in modernism may be identified in ways sometimes striking, sometimes subtle. An acute form shows in the revolutionary manifesto proclamations for new visual art, whereas gradualist and rationalist understandings emerge in the subculture of architectural thinking, which tends to see the critical mass of existing traditions as an opportunity for refinement as well as a provocation for change.

The opening chapter, *Modernist Spaces in Science, Philosophy, the Arts, and Society* by Stephen Kern, frames these several dimensions with an overview of current developments in the understanding of space as a category of perception and extension. It considers some of the major breakthroughs in science and philosophy as well as aesthetics. Of manifest and ramifying importance is the recognition that space is not an empty container" for something else but a substantial and constitutive medium. Equally significant is a new cultural geography of space, which anthropologists as well as scientists of perception have opened. There is a social relativity to the construction of space, this discourse insists, and the cognitive modeling of spatial extension varies in ways that are attributable to the

historical and geographical particularities of a group; sound and touch and even smell and taste, not just sight, may provide orienting senses for the experience of space and, so, for its imaginative representation. These several developments turn space into a medium of manifold potential, featuring its essential materiality and plasticity, and its various manifestations provide the subjects of the following chapters.

The new spaces of modernist painting are taken up in the Chapter "The New Spaces of Modernist Painting" by Daniel Herwitz, where "space" includes not only the dimensions of its representation on the canvas but the spheres of its consumption in public as well as in private venues. Alternatively, new conceptions of architectural space appear in the Chapter "Architectures and Public Spaces of Modernism" by Miles Glen Dinning, which traces the deep time and longer arc of modernist architecture and civic designs in their development from domestic to public spheres, moving from the Arts and Crafts groupings of mid-late nineteenth-century Britain through the functionalist and collectivist plans of midcentury European and American cities. Urban modernity is understood by consensus as the main staging area of a modernist sensibility, and the next two chapters, featuring successive considerations of "Modernism and the Urban Imaginary," orient toward this experience of metropolitan space with emphases that are, in turn, perceptual and Political. The Chapter "Modernism and the Urban Imaginary 1: Spectacle and Introspection" by Matthew Beau Mont, offers a consideration of this pair of opposite but complementary experiences of perception in the modern city. "Spectacle" takes up the life of public culture, as focused and channeled through such phenomena as the "crowd" and the "event," while "introspection," turning away from the overwhelmingly intense sensorium of this new urban circumstance, becomes the characterizing action of modern urban life; these dual and sometimes dueling media outline the double rhythm of exterior and interior living that is essential to a larger understanding of the "urban imaginary" in modernism. The Chapter "Modernism and the Urban Imaginary 2: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Cosmopolitanism" by David James, proposes an understanding of modernism as a sensibility flourishing in the geopolitical site of the world-city; it maps tensions between nationalist and internationalist claims on artistic production as well as individuals and offers an understanding of modernist form as a product of the tensions, as well as the successes, of any attempted metropolitan synthesis. The dosing of geographical frontiers that occurred over the long turn of the century coincides with an inclusion of formerly distant locales in the imaginative understandings of Europe and America, as witnessed in the extraordinary proliferation of magazines devoted to an interest in travel to remote places. Conversely, the formerly far-flung locations of colonial culture are brought into communication and relation with the metropolitan capitals of imperial systems, resulting in an active interchange of Euro-American and South and Central American centers. There is a sort of world-cultural world-historical simultaneity in this emergent situation, and the main title of the final chapter, "Modernism and the new global imaginary," situates this sensibility in a location and specific manifestation of three southern

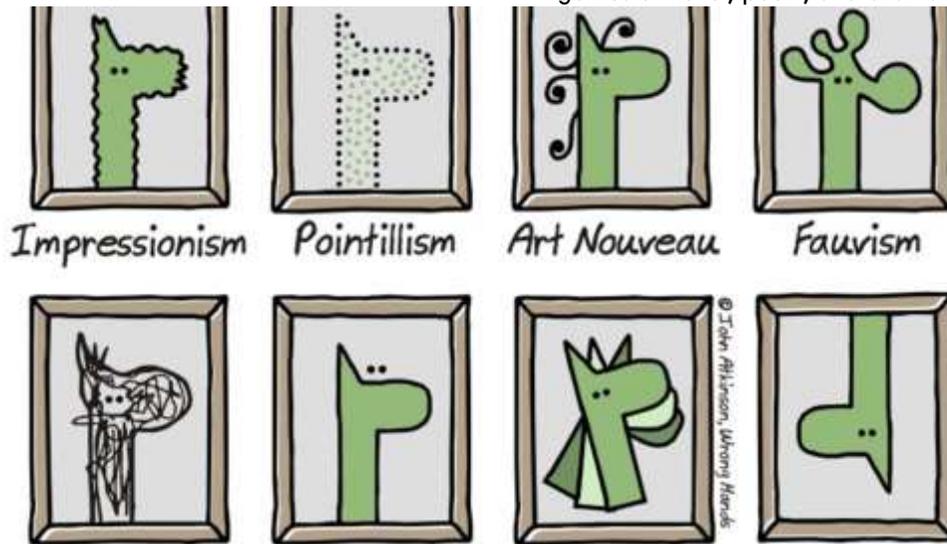
hemispheric artists. Its composite subtitle, "A tale of two modernisms: from Latin America to Europe and back again," fairly graphs the looping channels of transmission and interaction in the force field of a geographically expanded modernism's cultural production.

PART III: MODERNISM IN AND OUT OF KIND: GENRES, COMPOSITE GENRES, AND NEW GENRES

"Modernism in and out of kind: genres, composite genres and new genres" follows the significant inventions by modernist writers, artists, and musicians in the traditional genres of artistic expression. It also connects this

a motto for the generic compositing of modernism, this phrase directs a survey of music aspiring to be modernist in this way but also in other ways: in combining different kinds of aesthetic material within the acoustic register but also, and especially, in being open to the contradictions that being "modern" involves and representing these in a fashion that is not only dramatic but self-reflexive, self-conscious, in effect, modernist.

Similar initiatives appear as motivating forces in literary history, which provides the material for the next five chapters. Experiments with the form and content of the basic genres of novel, poem, and drama appear with differing



Modern Art Simplified by John Atkinson

experimental thinking about types and kinds to new ways of seeing categories of identity in the established taxonomies of cultural systems — gender and race, politics, art and advertising, and technology.

In the mid-late nineteenth century, Wagner's notion of the Gesamtkunstwerk or total work of art set out to combine the visual and aural materials of operatic production in a newly enriched synthesis as explored by Lutz Koepnick. This idea provides a model form and motive concept for some of the most important experimental work in artistic modernism, which includes intervention in existing genres and inventions of new and composite ones. So, the first chapter of this section will outline the concept and challenges of the Gesamtkunstwerk, noting how its intended synthesis also prompts a complementary interest in its opposite, especially in the second-stage iterations of modernism, which witness a compensatory attempt to isolate and radicalize the material and form specific to each art, which Ezra Pound dubbed "its primary pigment." These two extremes lift and reinforce each other and generate the tensions essential to some of the major work of experimentation in the individual as well as combinatory genres of modernism.

The subsequent chapters in the first half of this section bring these ideas into the several arts, genres, and media of modernism. In the Chapter "The Condition of Music: Modernism and Music in the New Twentieth Century" by Ronald Schleifer And Benjamin Levy takes as its title a well-known phrase, "the condition of music," to which Walter Pater had enjoined "all arts" to "aspire." Often repeated as

purposes and effects in the stories told in Chapters: "The Modernist 'Novel'" by Marina Mackay, "The Modernist Poem" by Marjorie Perloff, and "The Theatre of Modernity" by Ben Levitas. What joins these several literary histories in miniature is a powerful and empowering notion that the older forms must be unmade and remade in the image of a sensibility whose contemporaneity is its establishing circumstance. There is a kind of generative skepticism in all this experimental work with genre. The return upon the conditions of the art as the substance as well as the means of representation provides a sign of the crisis time of existing conventions, which may no longer be taken as sufficient or necessary to the representation of a consensus public understanding. The work that emerges from this recognition appears as a familiar and even signature feature of a self-consciously modern, and so recognizably "modernist," art.

The motivating pressure of newness in modernist art may represent an over-reading of Pound's now familiar dictum, "Make it New," but it is useful to recall that this advice was directed particularly at translators. Their work in the service of a transhistorical as well as transcultural readership locates the special present of a contemporary readership as its orienting aim. Accordingly, the Chapter "Translation" by Emily O. Wittman follows the poetics and practices of translation as a defining enterprise of modernism, while the compositing of author and translator as co-creators of the text provides its own version of modernism's combinatory genres. As a signal of existing divisions being fundamentally reworked, an essay on "Literature Between Media" by

David Trotter, at the end of the first half of this section locates the space between older forms of literature and newer media of transmission as the site of modernism's own mediating — and combinatory — work.

The chapters in the second half of this section follow the inventive, combinatory genres of modernism in related directions. This thinking extends to some of its most important consequences in social and political as well as cultural history. Here the established categories of sexual and racial identification are being fundamentally rethought and reworked.

These activities are compatible with and collateral to a questioning and testing of the nature and aim of art itself, where "itself" provides the subject of most concerted work. Thus, the second half of this section opens with a sequence of three chapters joined under the heading of "Art and its Others." The first, subtitled "The Aesthetics of Technology," by Nicholas Daly frames the challenge that new and ever larger resources of technology present to older models of the artistic subject and older media of artistic production. It picks up the consideration just advanced in the essay on literature between media as it follows the interaction between artists and technology into and through the various force fields of twentieth-century history, paying attention to the changes rung on earlier millenarian dreams of the machine by the nightmare experience of the First World War. The second in this series, subtitled "Advertisement and the Little Magazines," by Amanda Sigler unravels the supposedly paradoxical relationship between the "fine" or "pure" arts and the putatively coarsening "impurities" of commercial culture, advertisement most notably. In the venue of the 'little magazine', this chapter shows how a modernist art not only becomes its own commodity but, in doing so, demonstrates as well as accomplishes the historicity that is the basis of its claim on being modern in the first place. "Aesthetics as Politics," by Andrzej Gasiorek, the subtitle of the last of these three chapters, frames this difficult issue as a question of genre as it follows the combination of political content and aesthetic practice in the thinking of several major modernist artists. Most notable because most conspicuous in this regard are those figures who proposed some version of the "totalitarian synthesis," which is a function of the "total work of art" in the theory of Wagnerian opera. And so, this chapter curves back into the opening essay of this section to trace the fate of that conceit into one of the most important if problematical consequences of modernism's new thinking about the conditions and limits of existing genres.

Gender no less than genre is the subject of experimental work in a modernist consciousness, which presents a directed rethinking of existing forms of female and male identity, and this thinking extends as well to race; these linked interests provide the subject of the last three essays in this section. "The 'New Women' of modernism" offers an historically situated consideration of its topic, following the evolving concept not through the standard category of fictional prose, the so-called "New Woman Novel," by Cristanne Miller which is of course an extensive literature, but in the more experimental measures of an identifiably

modernist poetry, where some of the most interestingly and significantly innovative work occurs. "The Men of 1914" by Colleen R. Lamos — takes up the phrase it has pronged between those inverted commas, examining this once authorizing formulation for an exclusively male modernism and situating it anew in the context of real modernist preoccupations with the limits and conditions of genre as well as gender. What emerges is a recognition that, far from being a claim to an authentically masculine ownership of modernism, it is a counterfeit quotation, not exposed as such by us but already and first by its author, who is inscribing the uncertainty of its referent as an ostensible measure of the unmaking and remaking of such categories of established power and identity. "Modernism and the Racial Composite: The Case of America," by Mark Whalan brings this section to an end as it centers its "case" in the Harlem Renaissance. Here the cultural production of "blackness" by white as well as African American artists presents an extension of generic thinking into the complex and generative but also antagonistic dynamics of racial compositing, which, as it is seen in an international as well as American frame of reference, reveals the racial and racist undergirding for modernism in many of its locations.

PART IV: MODERNISM IN PERSON, MODERNISM IN COMMUNITY

"Modernism in Person, Modernism in Community" features many of the major figures of literary, musical, visual, and critical modernism in dedicated treatments. These chapters take the artistic biography not as an item of personalized interest but as a story developing in relation to modernism as an evolving consciousness, which is developing its concepts, attitudes, and practices through their individual lives but mainly through their contacts. Thus, the individual figures appear in the contexts of the communities of modernism that they establish and are established by. These communities are understood variously as personal and professional, intimate and distant, lived in at close range and constructed in retrospect according to shared characteristics. This section narrates the lives and contacts of forty-five of the major figures from the transatlantic and pan-European compasses of modernism. In each of these threesomes, one figure often provides some unexpected point of resemblance with the other two and so, in the triangulated pattern, offers a newly revealing view. Each of these groups usually includes artists working in different genres, different media, different nations or different generations, as such encompassing a trans-historical and multi-generic as well as international constituency of modernism; the triangulated narratives combine to provide a history of the faceted and variegated consciousness of modernism as it evolved through circumstances shared in various ways. There is also special attention to the miscellaneous accomplices of modernist coteries, those figures who may not have produced the best-known work but who constitute the thickness-through of the artistic cultures which the assignably "major" figures dominated. This census is representative but not exhaustive, and there are inevitable absences. Such lacunae are, as it were, the white space on the canvas where these smaller patterns of three provide the forms for this larger design. These featured artists are presented then as case studies of

modernism in person and in groups, as individuals developing in productive relation to the main lines of a modernism that is in process with them and that is embodied in the works of the artists with whom they are associated in the individual chapters and, in large, in this section. This comprehensive category of modernism is the ulterior frame of reference for each story and it provides, in sum, a sort of "elsewhere community" for all these individual figures who, in variously explicit ways, expressed their sense of generational membership.

These biographies are enriched as they are framed by two essays preceding them. These chapters serve, in effect, to focus the major issues attending the new conceptions of the personal subject in modernism. They show how the "individual" of a specifically nineteenth-century liberal tradition is being reconstructed in ways that serve, on one hand, to open new sources of expressive content in art and, on the other, to foster the broader conception of generational membership. The first essay takes up the importance of Freud and of Freudianism; it tells its story in the framework of cultural history, showing how the autonomous subject of liberal tradition is unmade and remade as a source of individual authority and so is opened into a new dimension of psychological or subconscious content, which modernism is commonly understood to have tapped. The next chapter frames the work of some of the major female modernists in relation to these issues, taking as its staging area the journal the *New Freewoman*, which on January 1, 1914 became the *Egoist*, perhaps the first venue of a nascent literary (and visual) modernism in England. It pays special attention to the subtitle preserved by both journals, *An Individualist Review*. Following the model of the editor Dora Marsden, female modernists take the category of individuality (gender-restricted by cultural tradition) as a target of radical revision, thus opening the personae of literary art to new potentials of expressive depth and supra-individual understanding that is one of the formative bases of the feeling of a modernist generation.

Epilogue: *Modernism after Postmodernism* by Steven Connor

Excerpt: In September 2013, Will Self broadcast a program for BBC Radio 3 entitled "Modernism Redux", which opened with the news of a code machine called a "remitter" developed alongside the first radio transmitters, the purpose of which was "to retrieve or 'remit' past radio signals out of the air." Self borrows from popular science fiction and supernaturalist belief the idea that, once transmitted, radio waves persist indefinitely and, given the right technology, can be restored. Self asks us to imagine that the remitter has itself recently been restored and augmented by more advanced technology, enabling the retrieval and re-broadcasting of "signals from the entire history of broadcasting and from all corners of the earth." Where the writers of a previous generation had consented to being thought of as the terminators of modernism, Self here constitutes his own function ironically in terms of the very machine he invents; for he is surely offering himself as the Remitter of Modernism. Like the "RP' Ethermatic Remitter," his move is "simultaneously revolutionary and reactionary." Like other revisionist modernists, Self sees significance in the coincidence of the fact that the BBC

began transmissions in 1922, the same year as the publication of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, and imagines "an investigation of the evolution of technology and culture, using newly-sourced 'remissions' to create an air-assemblage of modernist art and ideas." Predictably, the broadcast material does not in fact emerge from the turbulent moment of modernism itself, but from the later decades in which the ideas of modernism and the modern began to be canonized. Though Self imagines a modernism that would be "directly synchronous with the technology itself," the very terms on which program is constituted and transmitted, as a knowing pastiche, is an acknowledgement that the one thing that modernism can never in fact be, or ever have been, is on time, or in phase with itself. In fact, the only broadcasts that Self's Remitter is able to assemble are not emanations from the pulsing heart of modernism, but scraps of well-known recordings made at various times by certain writers — Joyce reading a passage from "Anna Livia Plurabelle," recorded by C.K. Ogden in 1929, Virginia Woolf broadcasting some thoughts (some rather traditional and unmodernist thoughts) about the nature of words in 1937, and T.S. Eliot's recordings of *The Waste Land* in 1935 and 1946. Modernism seems here to be the name not for a lost condition or tradition, but the name for a desire — the desire for there to have been an authentic modernism, that might be able to be recovered intact. Self's apparently earnest attempts to establish himself as the true apostle of modernism are indistinguishable from the acknowledgement of the belatedness of this gesture.

Incontestably, the modernism that has been awoken by the collapse of the postmodernism that was supposed to come in its wake is richer, more unexpectedly various and fuller of possibility than the kinds of modernism that postmodernism claimed to supersede or sought to push into crisis. One must however be allowed the suspicion that the pluralized and expanded modernism released by the exhaustion of postmodernism will come to seem like a thoroughly post-modernized affair. The new modernism is becoming so de-differentiated, and so supersaturated with so many things, that there is increasingly little that it can be said to exclude — unless it be the very forms of exclusion denounced by postmodernism in the old modernism. Those proscriptions would include: heroic individuality, transcendental appetite, contempt for the popular combined with sentimental yearning for the primitive, the drive to ethnic and aesthetic purity, fanatical overestimation of the powers of art, ahistorical absoluteness, and authoritarian body-worship; these attitudes are subject to discreet and citizenly purging in the new modernism. These wholly unexceptionable inhibitions make it clear how thoroughly the new modernism has been programmed by the now-concluded interlude of postmodern reformation. Modernism seems to have inoculated itself against postmodern critique by assimilating almost all of it; while perhaps all postmodernism needed to ensure its indefinite survival after all was a change of name to *Modernist Studies*.

What seems most of all to belong to the kind of outlook that used to be designated as postmodernist is the cat's-cradle chronicity that connects us to modernism. Modernism is more than ever what it anyway always was, at once analeptic and retroactive. It is not just that we had the experience but

missed the meaning of modernism; now, several generations on, the experience of modernism (which is certainly ours rather than the modernists') must wait upon the meaning that we make out for it. For the more that modernism multiplies, the more implausible it seems that there could ever have been a modernism for or, as opposed to the many modernisms that are currently teeming in the womb of time, ready to fulfil the different functions required of them. The more it continues to unfold in our ways of happening upon it, the less it may seem that modernism can be said in any simple sense to have happened. Modernism is no longer something in the past to which we are compelled to make out a relation; it is the product of that relation itself, to a past continually new-minted as whatever we will need to mean by "modernist." It remains to be seen whether this need will itself come to be understood as an outcome of the era in twentieth-century cultural history we call "modernism."

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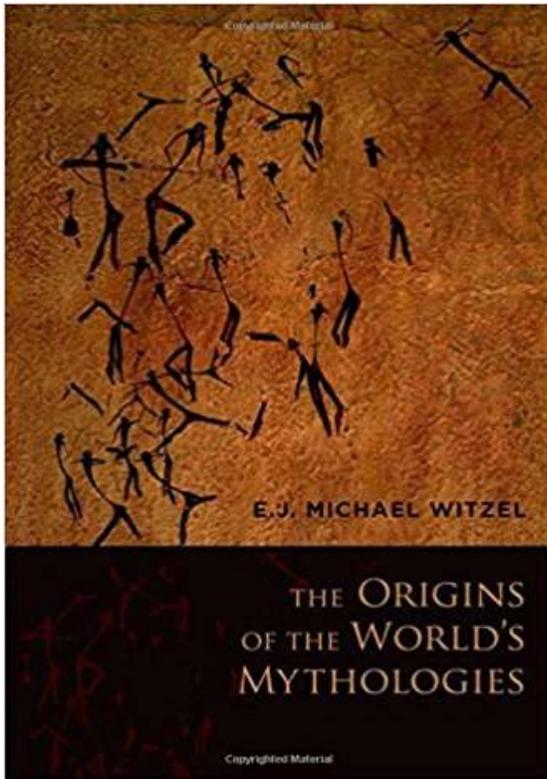
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[The Origins of the World's Mythologies](#) by E.J. Michael Witzel [Oxford University Press, 9780195367461]
[Paperback](#)

This remarkable book is the most ambitious work on mythology since that of the renowned Mircea Eliade, who all but single-handedly invented the modern study of myth and religion. Focusing on the oldest available texts, buttressed by data from archeology, comparative linguistics and human population genetics, Michael Witzel reconstructs a single original African source for our collective myths, dating back some 100,000 years. Identifying features shared by this "Out of Africa" mythology and its northern Eurasian offshoots, Witzel suggests that these common myths--recounted by the communities of the "African Eve"--are the earliest evidence of ancient spirituality. Moreover these common features, Witzel shows, survive today in all major religions. Witzel's book is an intellectual hand grenade that will doubtless generate considerable excitement--and consternation--in the scholarly community. Indeed, everyone interested in mythology will want to grapple with Witzel's extraordinary hypothesis about the spirituality of our common ancestors, and to understand what it tells us about our modern cultures and the way they are linked at the deepest level. ∞

Advances in the field of population genetics have increased rapidly in recent years. Through a process of world-wide genetic testing, it is now possible to form a accurate picture of the migration patterns of the world's many ethnicities

including the approximate time-frames involved. For example, it is now widely accepted that the first wave of northeastern Asian immigrants crossed the Bering Straits into North America about 20,000 years ago. All modern humans who are descendents of those early arrivals share key genetic markers, and these allow for a general reconstruction of that population's migratory history.

The evidence is now very strong that the first anatomically modern humans originated in East Africa approximately 200,000 years ago. About 65,000 years ago a relatively small part of that population began to migrate eastward along the southern coast of Arabia and on into India, thence to Southeast Asia, finally arriving in Australia some 45/50,000 years ago. The evidence for this early migration out of Africa is found in the genetic code of the descendent populations, but it is corroborated by the findings of comparative linguistics, which traces the history and family relationships between the world's languages.

In "The Origins of the World's Mythologies" Michael Witzel argues that the many cultures descended from those early migrations share common mythological features. Remnants of these groups can be found primarily in South India, the Andaman Islands, Australia, Malaya and New Guinea. According to Witzel, the mythologies of these peoples were derived from an original African source and then carried with them on their long journey eastward. Indeed, additional isolated remnants of this same mythological complex can still be found in those areas of central Africa that have been relatively undisturbed by outside influences during the subsequent millennia.

Witzel's point of view thus differs greatly from those who claim that myth arises independently in various cultures, and that the many similarities between those myths are due to a shared collective unconscious mind, as proposed by the psychologist, Carl Jung. It also differs from those who would argue that such similarities can best be explained by a later process of diffusion, where myth was spread widely by travelers or traders who carried the myths from major cultural centers into the existing populations of outlying areas. Witzel argues that, on the contrary, myth is part of an original cultural patrimony in the same way that language is.

About 40,000 years ago, another great migration pattern emerges, following the receding glaciers at the end of a major ice age. Spreading out from a center in southwestern Asia, these migrating groups reached North Africa, Europe, Siberia, East Asia, and much later, the Americas. These migrations can be detected in the genetic code shared by their modern descendents, as well as through the related language families that they exhibit. Witzel argues that they can be further traced through shared mythological features that have persisted along with the linguistic and genetic markers. The mythology carried by these later migrations, while sharing some features of the earlier groups, also shows numerous important innovations.

Key features of this more recent mythological tradition

include an account of the origin of the world--that is to say, a cosmology. Then there follow a series of world ages or generations of the gods, as seen, for example, in the Greek myths where the original Titan gods are supplanted by their Olympian offspring. Later, as a result of hubris, humans are punished by a great flood, but trickster-deities bring fire and culture to a surviving remnant of humanity. Semi-historical descriptions of early kings and kingdoms usually occur at this stage of the myth-complex, where culture-heroes form the first political dynasties. Eventually the myths describe the end of the world--and often, ultimately, a fresh beginning.

But more than a mere collection of similar individual mythical themes, this new cultural tradition shows a coherent story line, a typical progression linking the various myths into an ordered sequence from the beginning of the world to its end. Here again, Witzel argues, this new mythical system spread out through vast migrations: it was part and parcel of the cultural inheritance carried by those migrating groups from that original, west Asian center.

Archeological data supplied by Witzel supports his theory. Cave paintings, sculptures, burial customs, skeletal features, etc., offer evidence in support of these migrations and subsequent belief systems. The multidisciplinary approach taken in this investigation--including genetics, linguistics, archaeology, and mythological history--result in conclusions that are highly persuasive.

But yes, there are a few problematic areas. Southeast Asia, for example, shows a somewhat confusing mixture of mythical patterns that are not easily explained. It appears that one migration traveled south from Taiwan, bringing the later mythical system into the area, while another, carrying the earlier mythical complex, originated somewhere in Southeast Asia and traveled northward into China. Much additional study will be required to clarify and sometimes modify Witzel's theory; and he acknowledges this. His work provides an initial road map for a productive plan of future inquiry. The details may evolve and change, but the general outlines of Witzel's theory will almost certainly endure the test of time.

After describing the characteristics of the two major mythological systems in the book's early chapters, Witzel shows how the second (and now more widespread of the two systems) arose out of the shamanistic tradition. Myths common to both systems are presumably descendents of a common ancestor: a Pan-Gaeon mythical predecessor that must have existed prior to the African exodus.

In the final chapters, Witzel gives his view as to the meaning of the second of these two mythical systems, the one that has manifested itself in the major religions of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, India, and Central America, among many others. He points out the attractive--even seductive--nature of the mythical storyline, and shows how it has been incorporated into the four great modern religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Finally, he issues a warning--lest we, unknowingly, become victims of our own

myths.

Michael Witzel, now Wales Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University, was originally trained as a comparative linguist. The discipline of comparative linguistics demonstrates how individual modern words have evolved out of ancient forms through various discrete stages. The genius of "The Origins of the World's Mythologies" is that Witzel takes the tried-and-true methodology of comparative linguistics and applies it to the historical development of world myth. This is a significant achievement that will surely put the study of mythology onto a much stronger scientific basis for the future. By [Gregory Haynes](#)

The excessively negative review by [Tok Thompson in Journal of Folklore Research](#) points out the flaws of reach and interpretation of the shape of regional mythologies, but even if, given that the facts and theories that Witzel marshals for his evidence, are already well under revision in their details; the audacity of his theories offers a visionary synthesis of human origins in language and myth to suggest the primitive shape of dream and culture. As such, it deserves a thoughtful reading. ∞

Excerpt

THE MEANING OF LAURASIAN MYTHOLOGY

Like any extant mythology, Laurasian mythology should form a meaningful whole,' a system that made sense to its adherents. It also should not just be a simple "social reconstruction," a sort of Durkheimian social "glue" or Marxist Überbau that is based on an external (so-called etic) analysis of archaic society. Much more than that is required because Laurasian mythology encompasses many disparate societies: from hunter-gatherers via horticulturists, agriculturists, and pastoralists to highly evolved town and city civilizations, early states, and modern civilizations. In short, the reconstruction should not be a simple hypostasis of society in myth and religion, as seen, for example, in Dumézil's tripartite reconstructions of Indo-European myth and society, an interpretation that is, incidentally, neither restricted to Indo-European nor always just tripartite.

Nevertheless, just as the Dumézilian scheme presupposes an ordered system of disparate myths, so does the Laurasian one. But the Laurasian order is of a different quality. It is not based on a straightforward analysis of a pre-state society with three categories of priests, nobles, and commoners and their reflection in mythology. Rather, it is one that can be analyzed sui generis as a collection of myths and, more importantly, as a structured collection of such tales. As has been repeatedly stressed, Laurasian mythology has a well-developed narrative and is not a simple, disparate agglomeration of tales but, instead, a novel of sorts.

Ordered, logical structure

The Laurasian invention of a "first novel," with its unique story line from creation to destruction, produces order where in Pan-Gaeon, Proto-Gondwana, and pre-Laurasian times, we had only a disparate group of "first tales," such as those about a High God and about the origins of humans

by sending down his son and of totem animal ancestors. The very story line, as such, expresses and underlines that structure is intended. But it obviously does not explain why there is this structure: the consistent tale of first creation and generations of gods, demigods, and humans until final destruction. We will have to investigate its inherent logic in some detail.

The inherent order is obvious in some items: a great all-covering flood cannot occur before the emergence of the earth. Other features, too, such as the generations of the gods, are arranged in an apparent and logical order: from the simple (chaos, darkness, or primordial waters) to the more complex (bisexual) creation of the later generations of gods and, finally, the descent of humans from the gods.

Once we take the complex contents and structure of the Laurasian "novel" seriously, it is obvious that it tells the story from the "birth" of the universe until its "death" (and its eventual rebirth). In other words, it takes its inspiration from something that is very close to human experience: the human life cycle from birth to death (and desired rebirth, as already seen in Pan-Gaeon myth). It sums up our experience in life: growing up from childhood through teen, middle, and old age; and it expresses the ineffaceable wish for something positive to happen after this life—a new life or a rebirth, however it might be shaped. The Laurasian novel enumerates the gradual life stages of the world, from emergence out of chaos or darkness to the appearance of human beings and of the oikumene, society and culture, and the final threat to its existence.

Metaphor of human life

The Laurasian story line thus is a metaphor of the human condition, of human life from its mysterious beginnings to its impending ominous end. It was the genial stroke of the creator of Laurasian mythology that it correlates and thus explains at the same time both the universe and the human conditions where we came from, why we are here, and where we will go. Laurasian myth is a metaphor applied to everything around us, to the world and to the divine powers that govern it. It answers, in an encoded and shrouded way, and on a symbolic and metaphoric level, the eternal question: why are we here?

Viewed from the present vantage point—after detecting the Laurasian story line—Lurasian "ideology" seems to be based on a simple idea, the correlation of the "life" of humans and the universe. But someone, about 40,000 years ago, had to come up with it first. As it is closely related to the concepts of the Paleolithic hunt, the rebirth of animals, and shamanism, it must have been a shaman who did so.

Apparently, the new concept was so obvious and fascinating to a large section of the contemporaneous Eurasian descendants of the Out of Africa migrants that—excluding those adhering to Gondwana mythologies—its basic idea was taken over on a large scale. Its patterns and ideology have persisted in various guises and continue to have deep resonance and meaning even for many of us today. Those who adhere to its current forms still feel—even if they do not recognize the Laurasian scheme as such—that it sums up, in large measure, our experience in life, our growth from childhood to old age. More importantly to many, this

mythology expresses the wish for a positive afterlife or rebirth.

The structure and underlying metaphor of Laurasian myth have deep resonance and meaning. In various forms, we still pursue the same goal. For many, it may be articulated as Zoroastrian, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or even Buddhist rebirth in some sort of blissful state or Heaven. For quite a few of us, it may now appear as the contemporary, eager search for powerful, almost supernatural extraterrestrial "relatives" or in looking for human origins beyond, in the cosmos (Carl Sagan). It may be reflected by the wish to physically overcome death and destruction through technology (cryology). Or it may be epitomized in the old but persistent Indo-European formula of "undying fame" and the resulting wish to preserve, at least, our personal name. Such desire commonly leads, in America, to the donation of money to cultural institutions and to having one's name "immortalized" in buildings, street names, foundations, and the like.

Yet there is more to the Laurasian "novel": Its myths work on many levels, as all well-constructed myths and other artistic creations should indeed do.' Laurasian myth

- is an interesting story, one that people like to retell constantly and elaborate upon;
- is based throughout on common human experience, something that, due to common human brain structure,' is easily translatable, understandable, and applicable by correlation to the world around us; and
- explains the human condition and of the world around us in our own (human) terms.'

First, there is the "translation" of human experience (and, importantly, dreams) into myth.' Any such translation is based on similes, metaphors, analogies, homologies, and correlations: "the sky is shaped just like a human skull," or "in the beginning the world was an egg that split open:' The establishment of such correlations has been explained in detail for China, India, and Europe (by Farmer et al.) as an overextension of social categories to the universe, in other words, the tendency to build anthropomorphic (or animistic) models of the world as seen in the early mythological or religious models of the world. This is a natural outgrowth of well-known features of brain structure and its early development.

The important, though actually banal point in this is that everything outside of ourselves is seen, how else, through human eyes: birds talk or in the beginning even trees and rocks talked (Kojiki 1.13). Poets, tellers of fairy tales, and common people still make use of such correlations and homologies: trees whisper, Valmiki's krauñca bird (in the Rā mā yana) cries and laments about the death of its companion, the (temperate) forest sleeps at night, the birds in the Rgveda or Japanese "crows" (ravens) fly home in the evening. The lion is the king of animals, the owl is wise, the fox is sly, the cow is stupid (at least in Europe, though certainly not in India), bees and ants are diligent and thoughtful (in providing for the winter). The Ethiopian leopard is a Christian and fasts, while the hyena is a pagan

and gluttonous;" in Siberian tales,¹² the hare is fearful and boastful; the fox is very clever; the goose is dignified, diligent, and thoughtful; the bear is slow in understanding and—surprisingly—also fearful. The raven, often a creator figure or demiurge, is regarded by the Chukchi, Koryak, and Itelmen as very clever but also oversexed and a thief.

Laurasian myth describes the spirits and deities, too, in human terms. The gods are fashioned in the form of humans (unlike in the Bible, which says exactly the opposite). They, and the animals likewise, "act like humans. They speak, ponder, and scheme; they create and destroy alliances among themselves; they honor commitments and take revenge; they are born, and they can die or be killed. The border line between deities, humans, and animals is vague, and many categories that we now so clearly distinguish largely overlap. In numerous myths, animals are ancestors of humans—as Australian, Tasmanian, Papua, and Austro-Asiatic totems—and so are the gods. Deities can take on animal characteristics, notably in medieval and modern India and in Old Egypt—though this is sometimes seen, as in the case of Egypt's many animal-faced deities, only metaphorically. Further, certain famous persons can become gods, such as the Greek hero Herakles, Roman emperors, the Indian Purū ravas, and the Japanese Hachiman, and they then rise to heaven. So do some animals, such as the llama seen in the Milky Way with the Incas, the archaic Great Bear with the Indo-Europeans, and the animals in many other asterisms worldwide.

Taking a closer look at the correlations made between humans and the universe, we first investigate the obvious correlations with the human life cycle.

1. Life cycle

The story of the engendering, birth, "growing up," and death of the universe closely follows that of the human life cycle: procreation by sperm and "the blood" in the mother's womb (as the ancients saw it, for example, in Old India);" then progressing from an amorphous (egg-like) mass, as observed in miscarriages and through animal slaughter, to an emerging fetal form and to birth; of the "life cycle" of the universe, the stages in life or even the age-based groups seen in some societies. The development of the world proceeds with the heroic elimination of monsters, the creation of culture, and the emergence of human beings, who should sustain their ancestors, the gods. Yet even gods can die, and so does the universe itself: it will be burned up (like human bodies in cremation) in a final conflagration at the "end of time"—however, as held out in many mythologies, with the hope for a new life, new gods, and a new world, followed by infancy, childhood, and teenage; to emerge in adult life, from strong physique to diseased old age—frequently mourned by the Greeks—and inevitable death. The universe, likewise, developed from the mixture of sweet and salty waters—corresponding to blood and sperm, in Mesopotamia—to an undefined (or egg-like) shape). This may have given rise to or reinforced the idea of the universe as born from an egg. It continues its "pregnancy" by giving birth to a primordial giant or to the first pair of twins(?), father heaven/ mother earth. The bipolar and bisexual world grew "stronger" and older with

the ensuing generations of the gods. They may represent, from the point of view

2. Bisexual nature of life, dualism, dichotomy

Laurasian mythology makes a clear, intelligent distinction between the first amorphous, vegetative origins of the universe and the later, structured, bisexual, dichotomy-like world of gods, nature, humans, and human culture. Just as it uses the human life cycle, it clearly makes use of the bisexual nature of observable living beings, from fish and reptiles to apes and human beings, to explain the nature of the universe, of humans, and, often enough, of the dichotomy of cultural constructions.

This is where Lévi-Strauss's bipolar structures of myth could come into play: they are not based on the bicameral structure of the human mind. Laurasian mythology is based, instead, on the simple but brilliant culturally generated principle, used by many societies, of ordering items, beings, and people into "male" and "female" categories—or just into any two categories, which Lévi-Strauss has so frequently explored. These could be the north and south wind, seen with the northwestern Amerindians, or the two monsoon winds, regarded as the primeval deities by the Andamanese).

Many items in human experience and myth are indeed expressed in a dichotomous, bipolar fashion: that of birth/death, father heaven/mother earth, male/female sections of a clan or of a settlement; that of a simple dual social structure of leaders and followers, applicable even to a basic hunter-gatherer society; that of culture versus nature (Lévi-Strauss's cooked :: uncooked or raw); and that of "wild" versus "civilized" (ripe/unripe or "green" in China), of "human" versus "animalistic," of gods versus "demons," and so on. However, the resulting bipolar, dichotomous structure is not enough for an "explanation" of the world or of society. It remains just a facile division of facts and a description, but it lacks what humans always strive for: meaning.

3. Family and clan

Laurasian mythology, instead, makes use of the immediate experience of the nuclear family and its surrounding small-scale society. In Stone Age times, this meant just that of small scale hunter-gatherer bands and clans. Thus, it views the development of the universe and its dominant forces by taking recourse to the family structure inherent in three-level, transgenerational societies. It therefore describes the several generations of the gods as having typical humanlike qualities, as alluded to earlier: their wheelings and dealings, their desires and animosities.

Importantly, it also views the forces of the universe as being related to each other, just as humans are. Such forces take on the form of spirits and deities, who are father/mother and their children, brothers and sisters, their grandchildren, and so on. The gods must live and work together, interdependent just like a nuclear family, band, or clan. They have definite areas of responsibility and "work": some may gather (and later, produce) food, such as the Greek Persephone and the Japanese goddess of food, Ōgetsu. They must be protectors and/or hunters of animals (as the "Lord/Lady of the Animals"). Others may protect the clan

and guard against monsters and enemies (such as the pan-Asian "bow shooter": the archer Yi, Indra, Amaterasu, etc.). Some, often the primordial father figure, may even watch out over the rules of behavior and cooperation, over truth and keeping agreements (such as much later, the Vedic Varuna etc.). On a larger scale, they watch over the orderly working of the universe (see below).

We all are the direct or less direct children of these gods, like them with all their good and bad traits of character, but we also are weaker than the gods and tainted by death, which, generally, is the result of or punishment for some primordial mistake made by our divine or semi-divine ancestor. This "explanation" of the origin of death, satisfying as it may have been in the Stone Age, still is preserved—pathway fashion—by the major world religions today. It thus shapes the outlook on life of billions of fellow humans. This pessimistic attitude is irrational but nevertheless persistent, and it has severe consequences for the more orthodox followers of these religions, especially for women.

During one's lifetime, be it that of a god or a human, stress is not on the modern individual "pursuit of happiness" but, rather, the pursuit of goals that are compatible with the archaic transgenerational social contract: of cooperation in family and clan, which is a perfect Stone Age solution for small bands of hunter-gatherers. This meant producing children (often preferably sons) for the continuation of one's lineage, gathering food and "wealth" (in hunting, later on in gardening products or cattle), and achieving "nondecaying fame," as Indo-European Europeans liked to say. The benefit of "fame" is that one will be remembered for what one did, even by one's great-grandchildren, when one will long have been gone or returned (by rebirth) to one's clan. One's name will not die, as the Old Norse Edda sums it up: "cattle die, friends die, likewise one dies too, but never will good fame die ... but I know one thing that does not die, the judgment about the dead" Such ideas are not obsolete even today: the verse was recently quoted in an interview—pathway fashion—by Iceland's president. And its repercussion in modern society—giving one's name to buildings, foundations, and the like—has been described above.

4. Four generations of gods and humans

As indicated, Laurasian mythology makes use of the general human experience of living together with several—usually three—successive generations to explain the development of the world and of its governing forces, the deities. Even today, normally only three or four generations are personally known to us. And it is four (sometimes five) generations of deities, ages, or "suns" that figure prominently in Laurasian mythology (§3.6). Even this experience is symbolized in myth: there is natural decay from the age of the (great-)grandfather, from perfect primordial times—"things were better, then"—to the present, weak human condition, seen in Eurasian myths (while there is increasing perfection in Mesoamerican mythology).

As pointed out, we are descendants of the gods, usually of the sun deity. As children of the gods, we are like them, having all their good and bad traits of character. The aim and the reason for our existence in this world therefore are

to honor the "social contract" with our ancestors, feeding them after their death and allowing their survival in the otherworld—until they return to our family or clan, usually in the third or fourth generation.

This relationship, which necessarily includes our ultimate ancestors, the gods, is ultimately kept up in our own interest. For we will also depend on it, after our death. The scheme therefore offers, next to fame, a measure of reassurance in facing personal annihilation. In fact, it is the basis of a different and older golden rule: "Do not do to your



ancestors and the gods what you do not want to be done to you after death." Or to put it in positive terms: honor your ancestors and their ancestors, the spirits or gods. This transgenerational obligation includes the feeding, in ritual, of one's direct human as well as one's ultimate divine ancestors, the gods. Yet even the gods must feed their own ancestors, as is seen in Indian and Greek ritual.

In sum, the world of the gods and that of the humans have wide-ranging parallels. Whatever happens in the universe (or in heaven or the nighttime sky) is mirrored here on earth in human life and society. Many rituals are based on such correlations, the most notorious perhaps being the post-Rgvedic Indian *srauta* ritual that linked everything with everything.²⁹ Some of this stance is also seen in Africa.

5. The workings of society and the universe

Laurasian mythology views the workings of the universe and human society in a coherent, orderly, and harmonic way. There is a universally underlying, positive, and ordering force at work that affects humans as well as the deities and the universe.

This is an aspect that has been little studied in comparative fashion. The point of all-embracing harmony is especially seen in ancient China (*li*), but it is also reflected in India (*ṛta*) and apparently in several other ancient cultures, such as in the Old Egyptian *ma'at* and maybe in the Sumerian *me*. Details cannot be spelled out here; however, it may be underlined that the ancient Indo-Iranian **ṛta* (c. 2000 BCE, and its descendant, the Zoroastrian *aša*, Old Persian *arta*) is a positive force. It encompasses truth and its active aspect, the realization of truth that works in human speech acts, in keeping agreements, in the actions and commitments of the gods, and in the incontrovertible laws of the universe that govern both humans and gods. Universal, tribal, and band harmony is more important than personal happiness or bliss (as indicated above).

From this worldview follow many aspects of ancient customs and rites, especially the effort for a regular renewal of life

in concert with the gods and the ancestors. The renewal is performed in the great yearly, seasonal, and monthly offerings, sacrifices, and festivals, especially during the dangerous period preceding the start of the new year. The important inherent bond and agreement exist between, on the one hand, nature, its deities, and its seasons and, on the other hand, human society and its constituent parts. Their connection must be sustained and ensured through rituals that often include the narration of myths, such as that of the *Enuma Elish* at the Mesopotamian New Year. To carry these out regularly is a prerequisite for personal bliss as well as that of the clan's and of society at large, at first local amalgamations of clans and tribes and later, the state.

The concept of harmony reinforces the structure of (early) society. In Stone Age times, society did not mean much more than small families, bands, clans, and loose tribal groupings. Harmony is habitually reinforced by the voluntary sharing of food and other supplies (as still seen with the San). Yet even then some distinctions are made, as contemporary hunter and gatherer societies indicate: a certain man is more skillful in hunting than another and thus becomes a leader (at least on a hunt), and a successful hunter may feed several wives (Australia, San). Some others will have specialized, besides their daily hunt and search for food, in tool making, and some, most important for the study of myth, in spiritual matters. This means that they were early shamans, as can be observed in the cave paintings of southern France and elsewhere —though we must note again that shamanism is different from typical Gondwana spirit possession.

In later times, when simple hunter societies developed into horticultural, agricultural, and finally state societies, social division increased. We can observe these changes in certain areas with a continuous development attested over several millennia, for example, in highland Mexico. However, it is very important to note that Laurasian mythology was maintained during these developments, as has been detailed earlier (§7.2), which, incidentally, is another testimony to its inherent force and attractiveness. Nevertheless, such social developments caused some changes toward a more complex setup of society. Small indications of this are reflected in the Neolithic and later development of Laurasian myths.

As discussed earlier, the typical Laurasian feature that human descent from a (sun) deity has been supplanted by the restricted descent of just the nobility from the solar deity. This is prominent even in the late Neolithic societies such as that of Polynesia that have a clear distinction between nobles, common people, and slaves; in addition, there are (the very prominent) priests. This is a four-class society and not a Dumézilian tripartite one. In many parts of Polynesia only the nobles have souls and go to the otherworld after their death. Common people just jump off a cliff at the western end of their island. In Polynesian societies, priests or shamans play such an important role that they could paralyze society by declaring certain taboos (Hawaiian *kapu*). In many other societies, male or female shamans wielded considerable influence as they could communicate directly with the deities and ancestors: from the shamans of the Inuit (Eskimo) to those of Amazon hunters,

from those of the Saami (Lapp) or Mongol cattle herders to the Japanese female shamans of the fully agricultural, Bronze Age state society of the Yayoi period, and until today.

Where we can observe Laurasian shamanic and priestly tradition, such as among the traditional Siberian and Nepalese shamans, the Trobriand Islanders, the Ami priests of aboriginal Taiwan, and the Vedic Indian Brahmins, it puts considerable, even extraordinary stress on the power of speech. Therefore, more or less fixed secret texts emerged as well as their exclusive transmission among initiates. In other words, shamans formed a separate group from early on. They also guaranteed the transmission of Laurasian myth and the form of the story line from creation to destruction.

6. The explanatory force of Laurasian myth

Finally, as hinted at earlier, Laurasian mythology offers a convincing "explanation," as far as that could be done in prescientific times, of the world and its origin and of the origin and nature of humans. It thus provides a satisfying answer to the typical Laurasian questions of "from where, how, why?"

How can such an explanation work? Lévi-Strauss has given a cogent answer: "[In] societies without writing, positive knowledge fell well short of the power of imagination, and it was the task of myths to fill this gap." (This includes the knowledge of plants, medicines, the stars, the universe, etc. as described for the Andamanese by Radcliffe-Brown.) In other words, humans knew so little of the actual physical background of the workings of nature that they needed myths to explain it, as well as to summarize all observed and known facts. Apart from myths, people have found other clever devices to "store" knowledge, such as "on the bones" of a fish in Polynesia and in the classical loci and medieval "memory palaces" of Europe and beyond.

Lurasian mythology, instead, achieves this by a framework familiar to early humans, that of human life, of birth and death, of several generations, and of clan interaction. The human life cycle, bisexuality, family, and small-scale society are woven into a well-built structure with many levels of meaningful tales, a "novel" that explains our origins, and that of everything around us, in the anthropomorphic image of procreation, birth, growing up, aging, and death. Significantly, the scheme also holds out the hope, even the certainty, for rebirth, both for oneself and for the world.

The result is a well-laid-out garden of symbols: a complex, interwoven, "logical" studied South Asian variety of the well-known Papuan cargo cult, or it can appear as various modern American myths (George Washington, Superman, Elvis, Star Wars, Star Trek, Campbell's monomyth). Burkert notes, with some discomfort, that "the most glaring pieces of science fiction still invariably cling to the most ancient mythical patterns of quest and combat tale."

structure with many levels of meaningful tales, a "novel" that explains our origin, nature, and culture. It is more than the "forest of tales" of Gondwana myths. It depicts our personal, psychic (and dream) experience, our tribal memory and imagination, and it provides for the social need of justification of customs, rules, and beliefs. In short, the Laurasian story line offers the individual many tales built

into a composite, inherently successive, and therefore "logical" structure. It offers, in anthropomorphic form, a satisfying "explanation" of the world in which we live and of our own nature and fate.

This concept must have been of persistent appeal to many if not most peoples of Eurasia and the Americas, and we witness the constant inroads that it has made and still makes into many African, Melanesian, and other Gondwana societies. It represents a unique case of very early but persistent "path dependency that emerged some 40,000 years ago but still holds most humans in its thrall." The power of early, Stone Age mentality and imagination set the pattern for all subsequent societies to come. To repeat, we witness the lasting effects of long-term, ancient pathway dependencies that are no longer recognized by subsequent societies. This certainly includes our own civilizations: culturally acquired patterns of thought and belief normally are not obvious to their followers. Otherwise, would more than 90 percent of current humans follow the current descendants of Laurasian mythology, great world religions and their secular offspring, such as Marxism? What we have inherited from our distant Stone Age ancestors still informs us today.

BEYOND LAURASIA, GONDWANA, AND PAN-GAEA

In constructing the complex Laurasian mythology story line, its authors made selection of much older Gondwana and Pan-Gaeian tales (§6.1). However, the Gondwana mythologies of the Africans, Andamanese, Negritos, Papuas, and Australians cannot be expected to represent today, after 65,000 years or more, the original Pan-Gaeian forms in pristine purity, even in isolated New Guinea and Australia, though they have retained the loose arrangement of tales and much of their content.

As detailed earlier, the various Gondwana and Laurasian societies have made use of prior mythology while selecting features and structures appealing in their own time, following the inherent pathway dependencies of their respective cultures. This can take diverse forms, such as the so-called Vedic ideas of current modern Indian myth; it frequently appears as a little- In all such cases, the local cultures depend on millennia of path dependencies that have shaped their modern realizations. For example, modern American myth and its social repercussions heavily rely on the ancient concept of the "hero"; Campbell's monomyth), as earlier exemplified in medieval and classical European tales that ultimately go back to Indo-European concepts. They include those of Roland, Sigurd/Siegfried, Beowulf, the Iliad's heroes such as Hector and Achilles, classical Greek accounts of Alexander's life by Arrian and others, Christian myths such as that of St. George and the dragon, and the ever-popular god-hero Rā ma in India.

Many of them follow the underlying structure of fairy tales, a feature that has recently also been shown to apply to the beloved Indian epic Rā mā yana. This or a very similar, abbreviated scheme is most typically seen in Hollywood films and television series: good always wins, even if the "lone rider" hero stays tragically aloof or leaves as soon as his feat is accomplished (Campbell's monomyth), which is a typical variant of the challenges put to the hero in

traditional hero tales. His incarnations in other countries with Laurasian mythology are comparable.

In contemporary India, hero tales still take the form of the typical Bollywood movie, often with mythological themes directly taken from the epics and Puranas or from classical poets, such as Kālidāsa. Their motifs are based on Vedic myths and tales, many of them ultimately Indo-European, if not older: and so it goes on, "turtles all the way down." The line of descent is another long-lasting effect of pathway dependency. The Indian case of dependency can be indicated clearly as it is based on still extant literature, from the Vedas down to late medieval, poetic re-creations of the same topics (Urvaṣi, Śakuntalā, Rāma as hero). The most notable re-creation perhaps is the recent adaptation of the Rā mā yana for a television series in the late eighties, which drew huge audiences and emptied the Indian streets each Sunday for more than a year. No wonder, as the tale follows Propp's pattern of fairy tales, where good always wins over evil. The series also seems to have played a role in the rise of the nationalistic-religious cargo cult—inspired Hindutva movement, leading to India's first right-wing government (1998-2004). Interestingly, the actors portraying such mythical figures are often received in villages as if they were the very gods whom they portray, and they get elected—just like "cowboys" and other mythical "heroes" in America. Myth and politics still are closely wed, as they always have been in recorded history.

In Japan things are somewhat different. Old mythological motifs (from the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki) are rarely reproduced in films, perhaps as there is very little in the way of hero tales. The "first emperor," Jimmu, is a heroic figure, though he lacks the tragic end of traditional heroes and is said to have died peacefully at the age of 127, after having reigned in Yamato for some 73 years (Nihon Shoki) The only real hero of the Kojiki, Yamato Takeru no Mikoto (Kojiki II 79:8, 80:13 sqq.), conquers the enemies of the Yamato realm west, north, and especially in the east. But he, too, dies of old age and fatigue (Kojiki II 87) and has not become a movie hero.

However, medieval Japanese epics and early modern tales regularly do make it onto the screen, recently again the great and tragic Heike story. Their heroes usually are tragic, much more so than in India or America. The underlying sentiment (or *rasa*, to use the India term) is one of Buddhist impermanence and that of the current "age of decline" of Buddhist teaching, *mappa*. The closest we get to the American monomyth in Japan is in the ever-popular television series of Mito Kōmon, where good always wins—but good is enforced by a powerful relative and agent of the reigning Tokugawa shoguns of the past few hundred years.

China, too, has many series with heroic motifs from various periods of its history teaching traditional lessons about Confucian fidelity. In contrast, European cinema (unlike Hollywood versions) only occasionally picks up topics from Greek mythology, Roman history, medieval legends, and tales from early modern history and myth—such as Jason, Siegfried, Robin Hood, Richard the Lionhearted, Les Trois Mousquetaires, and so on—but they have relatively little

popular resonance. Heroes are not much in vogue, or sought after; after the devastations of the last two world wars.

Persistence of myth

We must now ask: why does myth, whether in the form of hero tales or otherwise, persist at all in modern societies? The short answer is: myth apparently is something inherently human, typical for *Homo sapiens sapiens* and maybe even for Neanderthals. Recent tests have indicated that humans indeed seem to be "hardwired" for religion. While education plays some role in the attitude of adults toward religion, it rather depends on one's general personality whether one becomes increasingly more or less religious in later life. The brief survey given below agrees with this view.

The inherent danger of this dependency, obviously, is that the tendency of humans toward mythological and religious explanations of reality can easily be misused by unscrupulous leaders and politicians. The concept of "nation" itself is a mythical concept. So what about the (recent) formulation, daily repeated and reinforced in schools, of "one nation under God"?

A recent example of a powerful new myth is the rise of Nazi mythology, as depicted in Rosenberg's in part Indian-inspired book *Der Mythos des Jahrhunderts*. Though Rosenberg was the official Nazi ideologue, Nazi politicians paid relatively little attention to his confused book and instead pursued their own versions of romanticizing "Germanic" projects. As Cassirer puts it, "[myth] was regulated and organized; it was adjusted to political needs and used for political end." Myth often has played this role, especially in all kinds of state societies, and this judgment also applies to its other recent emanations.

Myth reasserts itself even in societies that propose to do away with traditional culture, such as the former Soviet Union and communist Korea and China: merely, new myths or new versions of existent myths were created. Again, in Cassirer's words: "They were brought into being by the word of command of the political leaders." We have the Stakhanov myth of the successful worker in the Soviet Union (1935) and the miraculous birth of Kim Il Sung on a mountain in North Korea—instead, he was born near Pyongyang—and his transformation into a war hero—instead, he stayed away from the front in the Soviet Union during World War II. Or there are various stories and picture books of the sixties and seventies about young Chinese heroes who, Mao style, overcame all natural and human-made difficulties, relying on Mao in their heart (just like others have Jesus or *Rā ma* in their hearts). During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-75), dozens of such tales were created and propagated in comic books, theater, films, and so on.

Myth also is very potent right now in the religious and political landscape of America: "the end and rapture are coming," according to a myth based on a 19th-century reinterpretation of the last book of the Christian Bible, John's Revelation, which—ironically—has strong Iranian, Zoroastrian-based relationships. This belief influences not only the thinking of a large proportion of the population but, dangerously, also that of politicians who already carry

the heavy burden of other 19th-century and older American myths (the "manifest destiny" of "god's own country"). Ever since the deist Founding Fathers of the American Republic, one semisecular myth after another has taken shape, starting with George Washington, "who never told a lie," up to the strongly myth-oriented presidency of George Bush "the Lesser," as Arundhati Roy has it: the world is divided into (Zoroastrian) evildoers and the rest. Environmental problems, as one of Bush's high government officials said, "will be taken care of by Jesus"—who is anyhow coming back soon, according to the current evangelical interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

Right from the start, the American self-image has been strongly myth oriented, even though the new republic emerged out of an Enlightenment background. In addition to the exceptionalism of "god's own country" and Manifest Destiny, there is the myth that "all men are created equal" (minus women and slaves); the myth of "everything is possible, only in America"; the myth of being able to become "rich and famous" and to achieve "the American dream" (neglecting the c. 40 million citizens who cannot afford health insurance and the growing lower classes); the myth of a classless American society; and finally, the recent, clearly politically motivated and widely broadcast political myth of America embodying and spreading "Freedom" and/or "Democracy" abroad—while not taking care of its many internal problems, such as lack of food, health care, housing, and education for all of its own citizens.

The misuse of mythology for political reasons is, again, evident, just as it was in the times of the British Empire, with its "civilizing mission" due to the "white man's burden," and in the Japanese Empire, with the latter's misuse of ancient mythology and Shinto religion. Hindu myth, or rather, its very modern modifications, including the invention of a glorious past way before Egypt, Mesopotamia, and, of course, China, has been misused recently to stir up nationalistic and chauvinistic sentiments in India and beyond, in the Indian diaspora.

Why do we still need myth? One reason seems to be that even in contemporary society, "positive knowledge so greatly overflows our imaginative powers that our imagination, unable to apprehend the word that is revealed to it, has no alternative than to turn to myth again," which echoes Giambattista Vico.

Hübner saw the same inevitability already over two decades ago: though it has little percolated into general consciousness, it is clear now that there is no absolute foundation for science, and anarchism reigns in certain sections of the sciences and humanities. Thus, one can no longer rely just on science as the "sole possessor of truth." Further, research over the past 200 years has shown that myth is not just the result of fantasy, though it is not foreseeable how myth (or religion in the wider sense) and science will come closer to each other.

For Hübner, the question is how contemporary humans can find meaning and a sense of worth in a world seemingly governed by the laws of science (and increasingly, by unrestrained commerce and all-out competition, we may add). In this situation, he has warned against irrationalism, pessimism, and demagogues using the current crisis and

increasing insecurity stemming from technological and economic "progress" as well as environmental threats. The last one or two decades have proved him right: either people have increasingly turned to the traditional religions again, or they have constructed, in New Age fashion, ones for themselves. As the Dalai Lama recently said in an interview, when he was asked why Buddhism is so popular in the West now: "[it is] something new d Or as an Australian shaman put it: "white men have lost their Dreaming."

Occidental movements back to myth and religion have been witnessed several for security, a harkening back to a "secure" that was imagined having existed during the Middle Ages. The inward-looking Romantic period ensued; it captured the newly emerged bourgeoisie for several decades.

times over the past two centuries. After the onset of the Industrial Age, the large-scale changes in society and the resulting social tensions led to a yearning Both world wars resulted, again, in turning to the "wisdom of the East," notably to supposedly "rational" Buddhism. Further technological advances, along with the resulting social disruptions, increasing competition within a global economy, and more recently, yearning for personal and national security, led to similar results: many new belief forms, sects, and cults emerged, some of sinister character like the murderous Japanese Om sect, which combines aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, or other doomsday cults. In other words, the unexplainable must be made immanent and visible, and myth takes over again, as Hübner (or long before him, Vico) prophesized.

Other reasons for the persistence of myth and mythical thinking are, first, that humans indeed seem to be "hardwired" for religion (see below) and, second, that we are heavily "preconditioned" by the predecessors of our current cultures. Cross-cultural comparison indicates that once a certain foundational, central motif has been established in a civilization, it has an enormous persistence over time. Farmer et al. have called this the "path dependency" of cultural traits. The Laurasian story line that has survived several tens of thousands of years would be a primary example. Others include the following.

Over the past 2,000-3,000 years Laurasian mythology has been reformulated by the world's major religions, which now hold an ever-greater sway over the majority of the world's population due to continuing inroads in areas of various tribal and Gondwana mythologies. However, Japanese Shintō , numerous forms of Hinduism, and small Eurasian and Amerindian tribal religions (such as that of the Kalash of northwestern Pakistan and the Hopi of Arizona) retain the old polytheistic framework.⁷⁹ This has been overlaid, even in Hinduism, by ever more syncretistic and abstract levels of interpretation. Old spirits of nature and universal forces, personified as particular deities, lurk underneath its in part quasi-monotheistic or, rather, henotheistic and pantheistic varnish. Shintō cataloged, more than a millennium ago, some 8,000 major deities and 3,000 shrines. Their story is told in the first section of the "national mythology," the Kojiki of 712 CE, and they continue to be worshipped in every ward and village, next to Buddhist deities. Other, smaller and tribal religions in

Asia and the Americas have likewise maintained the Laurasian story line.

The Laurasian narrative also holds true for the other major world religions. Among them, Zoroastrianism is the earliest monotheistic faith. Zoroaster (and his priests) abandoned the old Indo-Iranian concept of two competing groups of universal principles and deities (rta and druh, Deva and Asura) in favor of the supremacy of one God, Ahuramazdā , who nevertheless is opposed by the Evil Spirit (Anro Mainiu) and devil-like creatures. The Laurasian story line is central to Zoroastrian myths: Ahuramazdā creates a world that will be destroyed at the end of time, while Ahuramazdā 's allies, enemies of the Evil Spirit, will live on in a world of bliss.

Judaism, too, moved from polytheistic beginnings ("no other gods next to me") to actual monotheism, reflecting Iranian influences during the so-called Babylonian captivity. All "Abrahamic" religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) have replaced the ancient multiple deities with a monotheistic framework that encompasses, rather precariously, even the Christian concept of the Trinity. Yet the Laurasian narrative was retained intact: Abrahamic accounts commence with the world's creation by God (rather, elohī m, "the gods") and end with its destruction, mitigated by hope for a new, paradise-like world. "Paradise," again, is an echo of Old Iranian influence, where pari-daeza means "the walled-in [garden]."

Increasingly, Christian and Islamic versions of Laurasian myth are seriously impacting the last holdouts of polytheistic Laurasian and Gondwana mythologies in Africa, New Guinea, and many tribal enclaves elsewhere. Stiffer resistance is offered in areas dominated by the (Laurasian) Hindu, Daoist, and Shinto religions, as well as by practitioners of some new religions like the Melanesian cargo or African syncretistic cults.

In all such areas we can witness various degrees of syncretism and increasingly, "new religions" that include many aspects of the local, indigenous religions: "Christian" Europe has retained many of its pre-Christian folk beliefs and festivals, from "superstition" to the classical, Iranian, and Germanic aspects of Christmas (sol invictus) and Easter, with Easter eggs, Easter bunny, Christmas tree, and so forth. Buddhism has included various Southeast Asian "folk" deities such as the Burmese Nat and the Thai Phi, with their spirit houses, not to forget the wholesale inclusion of the Hindu gods (Devas) in Sri Lanka and Nepal. The Buddhist coexistence and overlap with Daoism and Confucianism in China, and the same with Shinto in Japan, are other pertinent examples. Hinduism is still in the process of including "tribal" religions, for example, in Nepal and Orissa. The local deities are merely given Sanskrit names, and their rituals are "updated" according to standard Hindu forms. This, however, goes hand in hand with a tendency to "standardize" Hinduism, not least due to the influence of emigrant Hindus (nonresident Indians), who look for a Hindu "standard" in their new homelands and frequently finance Hinduizing organizations (Vishva Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) back home. A similar tendency is observed with fundamentalizing movements in some



Christian denominations and Islamic sects that want to "cleanse" their respective religions of such "folk elements?"

The current tendency, together with the continuing onslaught of the Abrahamic and some other Laurasian-derived religions on tribal and other polytheistic forms of belief, puts these under great, increasing pressure, and the prospects for their survival are slim, except for the larger religions such as Shinto. Human culture will be the poorer if remaining non-Abrahamic pockets of religion, mythology, and rituals disappear. By now, the Laurasian story line and various (also secular) versions of its mythology already inform the lives of more than 95 percent of humanity.

Current and earlier cultural forms that precondition, through path dependency, most of humanity's adherence to the Laurasian story line also guarantee its survival. Cross-cultural comparisons indicate that, once established, motifs persist in given civilizations over enormous time spans. The Laurasian story line, a prime example of the "path dependency" of cultural traits, is perhaps the oldest of such dependencies. Others include concepts like duty (*rna*) toward gods and ancestors as well as karma and rebirth in India, "suffering" and compassion in Buddhism, purity versus impurity (*tsumi*) in Japan, ancestor worship in China and elsewhere, the notion of "chosenness" (in Judaism, America), and monotheism (in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam).

A final reason for the survival of myth seems to be that, just like ritual, which even animals need, we seem to need myth to structure our experience and to explain it. Also, it is necessary to transmit all our acquired traditional knowledge and all cultural trappings to our children, by way of socialization (see above, Lévi-Strauss). We still do so, whether we say, in the United States, that G. Washington never told a lie or that we are primordial and hereditary sinners who can only be delivered by Jesus;⁸⁴ or in much of Asia, that we are suffering due to our basic human condition, which we can only overcome by realizing its cause and the Buddhist way out of it; or that we merely must retrieve our ancestors' access to "the goods," as in Melanesia and in the current, very seductive Indian cargo cult of *Hindutva* type; or that our conditions will be made perfect due to perpetual material "progress"; or that the future lies in an attainable, if always distant workers' paradise on earth, as was preached in the socialist countries. People may make any number of other utopian promises, in hundreds if not thousands of other, culturally conditioned and path-dependent ways.

Even then, what unites us all—individual politics, religions, and cultures apart—is the same old question, put in so many ways. It is not just the typical, limited Laurasian one: "where does the earth come from?" but the truly human question: "Where do we come from, and where do we go?" The answer to this universal question has been given by all cultures, but, as the ever-evolving explanations still show, the question remains perpetually open. Our oldest forebears of Pan-Gaeon and Laurasian times were caught by same unanswered query and quest that we still are.

It is moving to notice that they, many thousands of years ago, tried very hard to give an answer in myth and ritual. Observing and utilizing elements of their natural surroundings, they postulated that the universe and humans develop just like the animals and vegetation they saw around them. Mythological thinking, after all, develops by analogy and correlation, just like much of human thought in general and even scientific thought—though we often forget that.

What, then, can we learn from this investigation? Pan-Gaeon humanity, with our most ancient tales and their meaning, is very close to us, and its Stone Age way of thinking is still akin to ours. Like the still earlier Neanderthals, who buried their children with tools to help them along in the next world, our early *Homo sapiens* ancestors worried about their fate after death. They tried to explain this basic fact underlying all existence, just as we try to do today. Whatever belief system or religion people now belong to, they try to find meaning in their lives to provide some assurance that their stay here is not altogether accidental, brief, and futile, that they have a prospect to look for.

Or, in some cases, they try to find assurance that they are not alone and that the imagined extraterrestrial Others have to face the same eternal problem as we do. The recent phenomenon of looking for Others in the universe also indicates that we all, on our increasingly small globe, feel that we belong together. In all scenarios involving extraterrestrials, humans act together in a new and downright mythic undertaking, based on "the sacralization of the extra-terrestrial," which has spawned many new myths and cults, such as those of the Raelians and the notorious Heaven's Gate.

This time, it is not the founding story of a new nation with assorted myths (Pilgrim Fathers, G. Washington's cherry

tree, Manifest Destiny, etc.). It also is not a myth that speaks about a new, U.N.-led peaceful world. Instead, the new mundane myths like those of science fiction speak about us as humans, united in diversity, albeit still divided by some 200-odd countries and territories, while looking for a better world without war, pollution, illness—and, maybe, death.

The first few years of the new millennium seem to provide ample examples pointing the other direction—epitomized by Huntington's pathway-derived American mirage of a clash of civilizations, by recent wars, and by increasing religiously inspired violence. But we can also detect some convergence of beliefs. Ecologists refer to Amerindian beliefs in Mother Earth or praise Buddhist and Hindu attitudes toward all living beings. We witness increasing discussion of a new, different social setup, though without an accompanying myth so far.

Here, traditional East Asia can teach the Abrahamic Western world, its epigones and its new ardent disciples elsewhere a lesson: not absolute, raw capitalist competition, and frequently with devastating human costs, but, rather, a combination of a socially responsible economic setup (as practiced in much of Western Europe after World War II) and the ancient quasi-religious Confucian idea of living together in society in balance and harmony.

This must now include the globe's many different, supposedly clashing cultures. We need something like a new Confucianism attuned to our times. This has largely been practiced—so far—in contemporary Japan, whose internalized Confucian-influenced culture stresses mutual respect, cooperation, and interdependence as well as the otherwise still widely neglected basic human rights of access to food, clothing, housing, and education. So far, Japan has had an unspoken but lived mythology going along with it, which is now in the process of being heavily eroded by the forces of globalization. Perhaps a new, captivating global myth is in order.

Looking back at the beginnings of our common mythologies in the Paleolithic, we cannot be but profoundly stirred and moved by the search of our early human ancestors for structure and deep meaning in their natural surroundings, society, and their individual lives. What they conceived—Gondwana and then Laurasian mythology—still moves and guides most of us even today. And it is not likely that this spiritual quest will abate, as was predicted during the last century. In a period of general uncertainty, the continuing, even growing strength of the Laurasian-derived otherworldly mythologies of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity—each now about a billion or more strong—indicates exactly the opposite. At the same time, ever new forms of mythology are constantly evolving as well. As for those who are tired of the old mythologies and are looking "for something new," I am sure someone will come up with a new myth, supported by entirely new ideas for humanity in the global society of the 21st century—for a very simple reason: we merely should look back at our small blue planet from outer space. ∞

[The Origins of Shamanism, Spirit Beliefs, and Religiosity: A Cognitive Anthropological Perspective by H. Sidky](#)
[\[Lexington Books, 9781498551892\]](#)

[The Origins of Shamanism, Spirit Beliefs, and Religiosity](#), H. Sidky examines shamanism as an ancient magico-religious, divinatory, medical, and psychotherapeutic tradition found in various parts of the world. Sidky uses first-hand ethnographic fieldwork and scientific theoretical work in archaeology, cognitive and evolutionary psychology, and neurotheology to explore the origins of shamanism, spirit beliefs, the evolution of human consciousness, and the origins of ritual behavior and religiosity.

Excerpt: This book is the result of my efforts to answer a number of questions that have arisen over the years while I have been conducting ethnographic field research on shamanism in Nepal. Early on in my research in 1999 it occurred to me that one cannot understand the phenomenon of shamanism without also understanding peoples' spirit beliefs. It is only now that I have had the opportunity to explore this idea. Spirit beliefs are significant because shamans are the quintessential specialists in spirits and ghosts, and shamanism is a spirit-centered belief system and practice. Without postulated spirit beings shamanism cannot exist. Here I am using the term spirit as a referent for all kinds of paranormal beings from demons and goblins to ghosts and gods

The epistemological problem that arises is: How can we best apprehend spirit beliefs? Do we embrace them? Do we dismiss them as the product of ignorance and superstition? Do we study them symbolically, hermeneutically, psychologically, or neurologically? Conventional cultural anthropological approaches to understanding and explaining peoples' spirit beliefs are based upon the premise that these are imaginative cultural constructs explicable in terms of learned tradition, historically passed on from generation to generation through the process of enculturation, and must be apprehended in these terms and in their own contexts. Stating this differently, people believe in spirits because these are part of their belief system (i.e., culture). Aside from the problem of gross circular reasoning, this approach fails to answer the following two questions: (1) Why have people in cultures across space and time, including cultures that have never been in contact with each other, come up with comparable ideas about spirits and ghosts? and (2) Why do people have spirit beliefs in the first place, given that there is no tangible empirical evidence for the existence of such entities anywhere and in any time?

Ethnography alone cannot answer the questions raised here. The inevitable result of ethnographic endeavors has been particularistic descriptive narratives that possess little or no explanatory power. Without explaining why people have spirit beliefs it is impossible to understand shamanism, religiosity, and religion itself. Religion is defined here as a constellation of myths, concepts, and practices developed around a core of spirit beliefs. This idea is like British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor's view of religion as belief in spirit beings. In its updated version, that is, that religion is about behavior and ritual concerned with and paranormal agents and forces, this is a perspective shared by many

anthropologists. The problematic part of Tylor's position was how he attempted to explain why people came to believe in spirits in the first place. He sought to answer this question by reconstructing the logical mental steps ancient humans took to come up with the notion that the world is populated by paranormal agents. His reasoning was as follows: there are living people, then they die, their bodies decompose, but we still see them in dreams and visions, therefore these people continue to exist in a nonmaterial or spirit form. Critics have latched on to this aspect of Tylor's ideas and have rejected his view of religion as a "just-so-story" like "how the leopard got its spots". Other critics have asserted that Tylor is wrong because there are religions that lack spirit beliefs, for example Buddhism, a point first raised by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. However, this is a faulty assertion based on the confusion between philosophical Buddhism and Buddhist religion in practice, which is saturated with gods, goddesses, demons, and hosts of other paranormal beings. It is a fact that no one has been able to demonstrate that spirits are not the focal part of all religions. Indeed, over 150 years of anthropological research among cultures around the globe has failed to uncover a single religious belief system that is not centered upon spirit beings.

Spirit beliefs are not the mere products of human creative imagination, otherwise the types of postulated spirit beings across cultures around the world would be unlimited. But they are not. Also, if imagination is a key factor then the various types of religious belief systems documented around the world would be as numerous as the number of extant cultures. But they are not. Instead, we find a finite set of postulated types of spirit beings and a limited set of religious patterns worldwide.

Ethnography is not irrelevant, but to explain the ubiquitous presence of nearly identical spirit beliefs across cultures in space and time, we must look beyond ethnography to the works of scholars in several different fields, including cognitive and evolutionary psychology, cognitive anthropology, and neurophysiology. Research in these areas indicates that people believe in spirits because the human mind is evolutionarily predisposed to entertain ideas about such beings. Spirit beliefs emanate from the way humans are embodied in the world and the parameters set by the operation of our cognitive apparatus and the wiring of our central nervous systems through which we process experience and apprehend the world. Thus, people have spirit beliefs and those beliefs are remarkably similar across cultures because of the cognitive and neurophysiological commonalities among all humans throughout the world.

A parsimonious approach to shamanism, religiosity, and religion must take into consideration our evolved neurophysiological and biopsychological attributes as well as the cultural software that altogether make us think and act as human beings. Moreover, findings by archeologists, paleoanthropologists, and rock art specialists are particularly relevant in providing us with a temporal and evolutionary framework. Historians and anthropologists who insist that religion must be apprehended solely in humanistic terms from the perspective of history and human values and

morals are dealing with only one dimension of religion and have failed to explain human religiosity without which other aspects of religion would not exist.

Determining why and when humans first developed ideas about the existence of paranormal beings will take us a long way toward an understanding of the origins of shamanism, modes of religiosity, and religion in human prehistory or history. Some critics might say that any effort to determine the emergence of spirit beliefs, shamanism, and religion is futile, doomed to failure, and must be abandoned because the evidence is too sparse. Such a pessimistic attitude is inimical to the growth of knowledge and intellectual inquiry. It is certainly correct that there are somethings we will never be able to know because of the paucity of data. Few would deny that. However, our fascination with these questions tempts and compels us to try to find out as much as is possible. This is the perspective I have adopted in undertaking this project.

[Mountain Mandalas: Shugendo in Kyushu](#) by Allan G. Grapard, series editor Fabio Rambelli [Bloomsbury Shinto Studies, Bloomsbury Academic, 9781474249003]

In [Mountain Mandalas](#) Allan G. Grapard provides a thought-provoking history of one aspect of the Japanese Shugendo tradition in Kyushu, by focusing on three cultic systems: Mount Hiko, Usa-Hachiman, and the Kunisaki Peninsula. Grapard draws from a rich range of theorists from the disciplines of geography, history, anthropology, sociology, and humanistic geography and situates the historical terrain of his research within a much larger context.

This book includes detailed analyses of the geography of sacred sites, translations from many original texts, and discussions on rituals and social practices. Grapard studies Mount Hiko and the Kunisaki Peninsula, which was very influential in Japanese cultural and religious history throughout the ages. We are introduced to important information on archaic social structures and their religious traditions; the development of the cult to the deity Hachiman; a history of the interactions between Buddhism and local cults in Japan; a history of the Shugendo tradition of mountain religious ascetics, and much more.

[Mountain Mandalas](#) sheds light on important aspects of Japan's religion and culture, and will be of interest to all scholars of Shinto and Japanese religion. Extensive translations of source material can be found on the book's [webpage](#). ∞

Excerpt: Shugendō and the Production of Social Space

The term Shugendō may be translated as "Way to Supernatural Powers" and refers to an institutional and ritual system that was elaborated over a period of several centuries on the basis of various cults in the mountains of Japan.¹ On the ritual level Shugendō evolved as a vehicle to realize Buddhahood by means of austerities and ascetic practices that were executed in mountains, and through the performance of rituals that were drawn, for the most part, from Esoteric Buddhism. These practices were sometimes related to Daoism as well, and Shugendō practitioners also

created and maintained diverse cults dedicated to a multitude of native (Japanese) and foreign (Indian, Chinese, and Korean) entities. On the institutional level these mountain cults were managed by what is often referred to as (Shinto) shrines and (Buddhist) temples, but it is imperative to point out that these shrines and temples were associated for most of their history and formed vast cultic centers contemporary Japanese scholars call "shrine-temple complexes" (jisha or, less commonly, shaji). Popularly known as yamabushi, Shugendō practitioners were ubiquitous in Japanese society for nearly one thousand years; they almost completely vanished from the landscape in 1872, when the Japanese government issued a decree that abolished Shugendō and forced its members to abandon their institutions and return to lay life. This decree was enforced until 1882 when the government allowed yamabushi to reorganize (along its rules), but the profound damage done by the 1868 events was irreversible. The post-war constitution of 1945 guaranteed freedom of religion, and some Shugendō groups reconstituted themselves as best they could, and are quite active.¹ Before they were submitted to the political and social erasures characteristic of Japan's modern reconfiguration of cultural discourses and reorganization of social, economic, and physical spaces, however, these yamabushi had produced a striking culture. Based on pan-Asian ritual practices issued from Indian cults as well as Chinese Daoist practices, Korean mountain cults, and indigenous, local cults, this culture was also the result of combinations with the high theological and ritual traditions of Esoteric Buddhisms. In their Shingon (tōmitsu) and Tendai (taimitsu) forms, Japanese Esoteric Buddhisms long dominated Japanese ritual practices and soteriology, within institutional contexts that were often related to the imperial court's outlook on power and legitimacy. Due to these multifarious combinations and to very diverse local conditions, the yamabushi produced social and cultic systems that are distinct from (but sometimes related to) other mountain cults in Asia and this sets them apart in ways that must be reflected in the means devised to study them. Shugendō institutions were sponsored or controlled successively by emperors, courtiers, warlords, and commoners, and their adherents had an apparently unlimited ability to assimilate, retain, create, or transform a variety of practices ranging from sophisticated "technologies of the self" to the most peculiar therapeutic devices and to self-torturing mortifications, including dances as well as contests of physical and spiritual strength.¹ Constituted through the combinations of elements of several Asian cultures and through interactions between diverse social groups as it was, Shugendō formed a cornerstone of Japanese culture: it produced or refined elements of the philosophy and practice of space which characterize that culture, and it was instrumental in the formation of the concept of Japan as a territorial entity suffused with a sublimed character. It was, therefore, far more than a "folk religion;" the status to which it has been relegated by some Japanese scholars as well as by most Western scholars. Sustained academic attention to the world of Shugendō should contribute to a more provocative history of the relations between the physical and cultural landscapes of Japan, and may also lead to a reconsideration of the

categories customarily used in the analysis of that country's social, cultic, and political history. Because of the features outlined above, and whenever possible, the term "religion" will be abandoned in this study and will be replaced with the term "cultic and cultural systems:"

Japanese scholars almost invariably state that nature worship (shizen sūhai) and mountain creeds (sangaku shinkō) represent some of the oldest traceable components of their country's spiritual character. Basing himself on the fact that about 74 per cent of the Japanese archipelago's landmass consists of mountains, Murayama Shūichi, for example, suggests that Japan's history is really the history of its mountains.¹ He adds that the yamabushi's attire and institutional affiliations linked them to major Buddhist temples, but that the mountains where they practiced and to which they dedicated cults as though they were living sacred entities, were pre-Buddhist sites of worship, a worship he says never dwindled. Murayama goes on to list the sites of mountain shrines recorded in official documents of the tenth century, thereby giving the impression that Shugendō came to be practiced in mountains that had long been regarded as sacred, and that it evolved as a Shinto-Buddhist combinatory cultic and cultural system in which one can also identify traces of "primitive magic," Yin-Yang views and practices (onmyōdō), and mystical and therapeutic practices of various origins.¹ Furthermore, Murayama points out that the study of Shugendō belongs to the domain of the ethnographer (because the yamabushi had a long history of complex interactions with commoners), but that it is also, though only collaterally, the domain of historians of religions and politics (because Shugendō was necessary to the aristocratic and military ruling classes, which used it for their own political and personal purposes.) This stance toward Shugendō is shared by leading authorities on the topic such as Miyake Hitoshi, Wakamori Tarō, Gorai Shigeru, and many others. Indeed, it is appropriate to reiterate here their view, according to which the world of the yamabushi has left deep traces not only on many mountains, but also on literature, the performing and visual arts, and concepts of legitimacy. All Japanese scholars agree on these points, and their research, which must be deemed of outstanding quality, is germane to some arguments this study will propose.

A significant aspect of Shugendō is missing from most of studies published heretofore, however, and it can be characterized in two words: spatial knowledge. That is, even though Shugendō occupied the majority of Japan's mountainous areas, and even though its practitioners stressed spatial aspects in their soteriology as well as in their cosmography and rituals, virtually no scholar has attempted to reconstruct the spatial dimensions of a meticulously elaborated world. Surprisingly, human geography and cartography are absent from most of studies of Shugendō that have been written in or out of Japan.¹ A possible explanation is that Japanese scholars have taken mountain sites of cult for granted; indeed, their understanding that cultic and cultural systems are primarily grounded in specific sites is shared by most scholars of history, if not by the Japanese population at large. When this notion is not critically analysed, however, and when it is coupled with the equally shared premise that sacred

mountains are extremely ancient and self-evident phenomena, students of Shugendō are prevented from problematizing space and from explaining how and why sites of cult became the object of elaborate cults of sites, or the object of so many conflicts.

In contradistinction to the position outlined above and espoused by many interpreters of Shugendō, it may be argued that the generally accepted but unexamined claim that mountains were sacred to begin with is ideologically biased, in that it privileges supposedly native conceptions while positing an ontological argument to the effect that sacredness was "always already there."

This claim has no plausibility as an explanation for the phenomena investigated in the following study, for it appears to be the grandchild of early-modern nativist views and of modern totalizing trends informed by nationalistic ideology. Alternative attempts to define the sacred character of Japanese mountains by describing exotic practices or linking them to concepts of the other worlds have equally failed, in that they lack comprehensiveness or historical depth." In a similar vein, the classical or paradigmatic view of sacred space held in the past by many Western historians of religions has tended to obfuscate the concept, in overloading it with metaphysical properties while emptying it of its historical and locale-specific features, and this academic trend may have been instrumental in preventing a detailed analysis of the ways in which some Japanese constructed, interpreted, and contested both the space of their existence and those apparently special cases of sites to which the term "sacred" has been affixed uncritically. The following study attempts to remedy this presumed inadequacy by positing "space;" and the yamabushi's understanding and construction of it, as one of its central problems. In undertaking to illuminate both the temporal and spatial components of Shugendō's world, it borrows from both history and geography, looking for elements of a geohistorical synthesis that might yield more distinctive features of that world's spatial and social character, and it must therefore be limited to a given region. To resist any totalizing wish, Shugendō will not be treated here as a single phenomenon thought to have remained the same throughout Japan's history and space, but as a set of specific modalities of the relations of a given population to its geographical and historical conditions. The region proposed for consideration is in the northeastern part of Kyushu Island and consists of three major sites of cult discussed below in relation to each other: the Usa Hachiman Shrine-temple complex, Mount Hiko, and the Kunisaki Peninsula.

Five reasons for this choice may be offered here. First, Mount Hiko's summits and those of the Kunisaki Peninsula are separated by only fifty kilometers and share profound ties with the original Hachiman site of cult that is nested between them in Usa. Geographical proximity notwithstanding, the inhabitants of these three neighboring regions elaborated remarkably different habits of thought and practice over time and, as we will see, the experience of space the yamabushi constructed in each case was related—only in part but specifically—to their perception and interpretation of the geographical and morphological

features of their surroundings, and to the nature of their rituals. Second, the regions under consideration are ideally suited for the study of the historical appropriation, assimilation, and transformation of non-Buddhist cults by Buddhist systems of thought and practice: the Hachiman cult is Japan's foremost and oldest combinatory cult, and neither Mount Hiko's nor the Kunisaki Peninsula's cults were ever independent from it prior to 1868—when the great divide between Shinto and Buddhism was institutionalized. It may sound strange to mention in the same breath Shugendō and the Hachiman cult. However, they were tightly associated in Kyushu, in their origins as well as during their long history: all historical sources at our disposal mention them together, and this association needs elucidation. Third, in the late sixteenth century Mount Hiko was home to Akyūbō Sokuden, a yamabushi whose works became the backbone of Shugendō's unified doctrine and ritual procedures during the early modern period (1615-1868). Fourth, the post-Meiji fate of these three closely related sites of cult was strikingly different, and the reasons for this difference need elucidation and have some bearing on the nature of this study. Finally, the Hachiman cult was an oracular and territorial cult sponsored by the imperial lineage, by courtiers of the Nara (710-84) and Heian (794-1185) periods, as well as by warlords of the Kamakura (1185-1333) and Muromachi (1333-1570) periods. This cult's spatial and other properties will in some significant ways assist in outlining the parameters of concepts of territoriality that were operative during much of Japanese history, in the sense that they sustained the production of a number of ideological propositions, ritual practices, political decisions and acts, and conflicts. The Hachiman cult, indeed, spread far and wide: in 1992, the National Office of Shrines (Jinja Honchō) listed 79,165 Shinto shrines; of these, about 46,000 are dedicated to Hachiman, while an untold number of Inari shrines remains to be accounted for. If nearly half of the Shinto shrines of Japan are dedicated to Hachiman, this deity's cult needs serious attention. This study will have reached one of its goals if it enhances our understanding of the phenomenon while it does away with the common but erroneous and oversimplistic view that "Hachiman is the Shinto God of War."



Kunisaki Peninsula viewed from the North. Done by A.G. with digital data courtesy of the Japan National Institute of Geography, on Katlenet 3-D software.

Esoteric Buddhisms formed the ritual and philosophical system undergirding much of Shugendō's formulation, but they were not merely a set of doctrinal statements and ritual practices favored by the yamabushi; they also included epistemological configurations that sustained a domain of representation through the agency of semiotic techniques and rules, as well as a large number of

institutions. Parts of the following discussion are attempts to identify some of these rules, to suggest how they were applied to the construction and interpretation of social and other types of space, and to thereby posit some of the ways in which cultural identity and action were shaped on a local level. From a semiological perspective, it may already be advanced that mountains were treated by the yamabushi who resided there as signs to be deciphered and forming some sort of "natural text" from which a type of wisdom deemed necessary to salvation might be extracted. These signs, however, were also inscribed within the slow rhetorical processes of emulation between Buddhist and non-Buddhist representations and practices, and within the economic context of relations between institutionalized sites of cult and ever-changing governmental policies. Mountains were thus covered, layer upon layer, by many texts, of which the yamabushi and others provided different readings. Conceived of as a set of signs, space became the locus for conflicts of interpretation. And because it was the object of appropriation (both subjective and objective), space also became the object of conflicts between the various institutions and people that laid claim to its interpretations and ownership.

Kyushu Island: an ignored world

Japanese scholars emphasize time and again that Shugendō evolved in three geographical areas: first, the mountain ranges between Yoshino and Kumano in central Honshu (south of Kyoto and Nara, in the Kil Peninsula); second, Mount Hiko in Kyushu Island; and third, the mountains of Dewa (Haguro, Gassan, and Yudono) in northwest Honshu. Third in size among Japan's four main islands, Kyushu was said in the early modern period (1600-1868) to contain some 120 "sacred mountains" (reizan), the majority of which were objects of Shugendō cults. Mount Hiko was the second largest among those and, arguably, the most distinctive. One might be tempted to study this mountain alone, for its presence on the Japanese cubic and cultural landscape is indeed compelling. Should one do so, however, it would soon become evident that the world of Mount Hiko cannot be understood separately from the Hachiman cult's main shrines, which stand in the town of Usa, forty-two kilometers east of Mount Hiko's summit. Usa itself is located on a narrow alluvial plain extending between the towns of Nakatsu and Bungo-Takada, along the northeastern coast of Kyushu facing the Suō Bay and the Inland Sea. Extensive archaeological investigations have evidenced the fact that Usa was a regional center for very long, but came to be inhabited as early as the fourth century of the common era by many immigrants from Korea, and that it was also the site of cults that gained in size, wealth, and notoriety soon after the recognition of Buddhism by the imperial court in the sixth century. A cult dedicated to the Buddha of the Future (the Bodhisattva Maitreya) was conducted not only in the Buddhist temples erected in the eighth century on the compounds of the Usa sites of cult, but also on Mount Hiko, that came to be regarded as the site where Maitreya would manifest

itself in the world and institute a new golden age." This cultic similarity could not have evolved by chance, and although the creeds dedicated to the Buddha

Usa: Hachiman's return in disguise

Badly destroyed as Mount Hiko and the Kunisaki Peninsula may have been in the late nineteenth century, they cannot compare to the utter devastation the Usa Hachiman Shrine-temple complex was subjected to. Medieval drawings indicate the vast size of the Mirokuji Temple located next to the Hachiman Shrine, and a recently constructed model of the entire site of cult (visible at the Ethnographic Museum of Usa) shows the stunning amplitude and scope of the temples that crowded the vast expanse located at the foot of Ogura Hill. Of course, the shrines atop Ogura Hill were not touched in 1868. In the case of the Buddhist temples, however, putting it bluntly and briefly may be the best way: none of these pagodas, temples, halls, belfries, refectories, libraries, and residences crowding the plain at the foot of the shrines—none—remains. The erstwhile grounds of the Mirokuji Temple are now filled with parks, ponds, a baseball diamond, the museum, and the sprawling offices of the Usa Hachiman Shrine. The erstwhile presence of the Buddha of the Future (Miroku) is completely obliterated.

In 1868 the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, as it was known for more than 1,000 years, was transformed overnight into a kami that was put to the service of ultra-nationalism, the epitome of which was the use of the medieval term kamikaze to refer to the youthful pilots who directed their planes onto US Navy ships at the end of World War II, in a desperate echo of the typhoon that thwarted the thirteenth century Mongol invasions of the territory. One of these Zero fighter planes (many of which were built in Saeki, just south of Ōita) can be seen today on the grounds of the Nada Hachiman Shrine located on the southeast corner of the Kunisaki Peninsula; the sign placed long ago over the main gate of this shrine reads, "Destroy the Three Kingdoms"



(sankan seibatsu), that is, Korea. And as in the myriad Hachiman shrines located all over the country, doves and

pigeons flutter around and coo peacefully. It is instructive, however, that the Kunisaki peregrination starts at the Usa Hachiman Shrine: temple priests and shrine officiants stand side by side, sutras and mantras are chanted within the inner compounds of the main shrine, and all share miki cups in front of the three sacred stones at the summit of Mount Omoto. Indeed, none of the participants with whom I spoke with at the end of days of arduous walk found anything strange or surprising about that; the contrary was true. But the Great Bodhisattva represented for centuries as an entity dressed in monk robes has evaporated: it is today an invisible kami, period.

Afterword: From Spatialities to Dislocation

A great amount of work remains to be accomplished before anyone can claim a proper understanding of the intertwined history and geography of the areas I have just written a few words about. The cultic sites of Mount Hiko, Usa Hachiman, and the Kunisaki Peninsula have been disrupted and dislocated many times; they seem today out of place and as though drowning under the contemporary calls for state-sponsored material uses (the mantra of so-called "public works" one hears almost every day, and the renewed military thirst). In writing this, I do not wish to sound like those who claim that nostalgia is not what it used to be, but merely hope to strike a word of caution concerning abstract categories often used in the study of the immensely rich world of Japan's cultic/cultural systems; these categories do not help reveal past practices or understandings, in that they often ignore historical breaks and merely hint at modern classificatory schemes that do not take space or place into deep-enough consideration, and therefore cannot bring to light some material conditions of (and for) being; nor do they account for the new place that has been given to cultic practices and history in the twentieth century. In my view, many of the disruptions suffered by these sites of cult were spatial (territorial) in character: the entire country's space and history schoolbooks have been taken prisoners by the cold hands of the modern nation-state, and that new places have been assigned to everybody.

As for the temporal character, well, time will tell. It must be noted, however, that the Meiji period caused major "disconnects" between the traditional unisolar year dates for rituals and the Gregorian calendar adopted in early 1873. To give but a few examples of a massive set of temporal glitches, the New Year is officially on January 1, but the lunar date varies each year; some shrines and temples observe their rites on either, or both, calendars' dates. Another important rite is the Tanabata observed all over Japan, but most famous in Sendai: it should occur on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, but now it is observed on July 7: this discrepancy voids the main reason for the lunar date, on which the constellations of the Weaver and Herdsman, separated all year by the Milky Way, meet to consume their love for each other. On July 7, their actual position in the sky is completely different. These two brief examples typify the non-sequiturs found almost everywhere today, seemingly echoing Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities in his chapter on Perinthia. In these cases,

time does not tell the proper story anymore: time too has been dislocated and impoverished.

Rays of light

In 1882 the government relented in its aggressive condemnation of Shugendō and allowed yamabushi to perform some ritualized peregrinations, but damage had already changed practices and outlooks. Both Shingon-related and Tendai related Shugendō surviving groups slowly re-organized; indeed, the government had forced the yamabushi to belong to either the Tendai or the Shingon sect, and placed them at the lowest possible, humiliating rank. This treatment eventually led to resentment and resistance, and the yamabushi began to perform their main rituals as they had in the past. The leaders of Shingon yamabushi based at the Sanbō -in temple in Kyoto re-organized during the first years of the new century and in 1909 started the publication of a magazine called "Jinben", in which calls for organization as well as scholarly articles on Shugendō were published. The three volumes of the Shugendō Shō so remarkable doctrinal and practice-oriented documents were published from 1916 to 1919. It is also necessary to underscore an important theater event of 1917: Tsubouchi Shō yō, one of the great literary figures of the Meiji period, and the translator of Shakespeare, wrote a play that was immediately performed as a grand piece of the emerging "Shingeki" (New Theater) movement: the name of the play is En no Gyō ja. It was such a success that it was translated into French to be performed in Paris in 1920, but this did not happen for a reason I do not know, and I never was able to put my hands on that translation, said to be the first foreign translation of a Japanese play in any Western language.¹ It is an enticing play based on the life of En no Gyō ja, the putative founder of Shugendō, his relationship to his mother, and his resistance to the sexual entreaties of a bewitching maiden, and the play ends in a cataclysm. It was even the object of an opera of the same name, composed by Kan Ishii in 1965. Tsubouchi also wrote an etiological record of the life of En no Gyōja, so he was obviously fascinated by Shugendō. His legacy is kept alive in many universities around the globe and by the eponymous Museum of Theater located at Waseda University in Tokyo, where he taught.

The Tendai-based yamabushi, for their part, started publication of their own magazine, "Shugen," in 1923. It is not before 1946, however, that the Tendai-based yamabushi groups splintered from the Tendai sect and formed an independent school called Shugenshū. As one may suspect, the wars with Russia, China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and the United States left little or no room for peregrinations for about four decades, and Shugendō suffered even more. It reemerged in the 1950s and 1960s, and is now quite popular. There is a trendy movement to use Shugendō in "Anime" and "Manga," but it is superficial when compared to the vast amount of solid scholarship Japan has produced, although it may provide a solid thirst for knowledge on the part of fans around the world.

It is imperative that the works of Akyūbo Sokuden be translated and analyzed, that GPS-based three-dimensional maps be accomplished for all Shugendō sites, so that a much clearer picture of this remarkable cultural

and cultic phenomenon may emerge. Japanese scholars of great distinction have amassed countless documents and artifacts and superb studies, and this may make the effort a lot more attractive and deeply satisfying. ∞

[The Scent of Time: A Philosophical Essay on the Art of Linger](#) by Byung-Chul Han, translated by Daniel Steuer [Polity, 9781509516049]

Excerpt: Today's temporal crisis is not a crisis of acceleration. The age of acceleration is already over. What we experience today as acceleration is only one of the symptoms of temporal dispersal. Today's temporal crisis is caused by a dyschronicity which leads to various temporal disturbances and irritations. Time is lacking a rhythm that would provide order, and thus it falls out of step. Dyschronicity lets time whizz, so to speak. The feeling that life is accelerating is really the experience of a time that is whizzing without a direction.

Dyschronicity is not the result of a push for further acceleration. In the first place, it is the atomization of time which is responsible for dyschronicity. It is also the reason for the feeling that time passes much more quickly than it used to. Due to the temporal dispersal, no experience of duration is possible. Nothing comports time.' Life is no longer embedded in any ordering structures or coordinates that would found duration. Even things with which we identify are fleeting and ephemeral. Thus, we become radically transient ourselves. The atomization of life goes hand in hand with an atomization of identity. All we have is our self, our little ego. We are subject to a radical loss of space and time, even of world, of being-with. Poverty of world is a phenomenon of dyschronicity. It reduces the human being to a tiny body that is kept healthy at all costs. Otherwise, what would we have? The health of one's fragile body is a substitute for world and God. Nothing outlasts death. Thus, dying is particularly difficult today. And we age, without becoming old.

This book investigates the causes and symptoms of dyschronicity in historical as well as systematic terms. But it also offers reflections on possibilities for recovery. While these touch upon heterochronic or uchronic moments, the present study is not limited to finding and rehabilitating these exceptional, extraordinary places of duration. Rather, its retrospection draws attention to the prospective need for life to take on a different form, down to its everyday details, so that the temporal crisis can be averted. It will not mourn the passing of the time of storytelling. The end of narration, the end of history, does not need to bring about a temporal emptiness. Rather, it opens up the possibility of a life-time that can do without theology and teleology, but which possesses a scent of its own. But this presupposes a revitalization of the *vita contemplativa*.

Not the least cause for today's temporal crisis is the absolute value attached to the *vita activa*. This leads to an imperative to work, which degrades the human being into an animal laborans. The hyperkinesia of everyday life deprives human existence of all contemplative elements and of any capacity for lingering. It leads to a loss of world and time. So-called strategies of deceleration do not overcome this temporal crisis; they even cover up the actual problem.

What is necessary is a revitalization of the *vita contemplativa*. The temporal crisis will only be overcome once the *vita activa*, amid its crisis, again incorporates the *vita contemplativa*. ∞

[Face to Faith | Mount Kailash | Tibet](#) photography by Samuel Zuder, graphic design by Peter Schmidt, Belliero & Zandée [Hatje Cantz, 9783775741507]

Breathtaking photographs from the hub of the world text in English and German

In 2012, Samuel Zuder (*1965) set out to one of the most fascinating places in the world. According to legend, the yogi Milarepa was the only one to have scaled it in the twelfth century, although thousands of pilgrims circumambulated it: Mount Kailash—also known as the “Jewel of Snow” due to its unusually symmetrical form—in the middle of the rocky desert of Tibet's Changthang plateau. Venerated by four religious orientations—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bön—the photographer harnessed the magnetism of this site, its promise of happiness and enlightenment, in his images. With his large-format, analogue camera, Zuder accompanied pilgrims over a period of several weeks on their approximately fifty-three-kilometer-long path around Mount Kailash—which they regard as the origin of the world—to capture its silent grandeur.

Excerpt: Kailash is considered a sacred mountain. The four great religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Bon even regard it as the origin of the universe and as the navel of the world. Also called the “Gangs Rin-po-che” (Jewel of Snows) by Tibetans, it towers up like a white pyramid—from the rocky desert of the Tibetan Changtang plateau. Four of the most important rivers in Asia—the Indus, the Sutlej, the Brahmaputra, and the Karnali (tributary of the Ganges)—spring forth in its territory.

Pilgrimages are always strenuous—here, this means that many hundreds of the faithful set out on the pilgrimage to Mount Kailash each year and circumambulate it on a route extending fifty-four kilometers—the so-called *kora*—to free themselves from the sins of life. The route leads from the point of departure in Darchen, at the foot of the Kailash, over the highest point, the Dolma La Pass, at nearly 5,700 meters. Completing the route in one day brings good luck, the Tibetans believe. Most pilgrims, however, need two to three days. Devout individuals, in contrast undertake this circumambulation while performing full-body prostrations, therefore requiring up to three weeks. Where their fingertips touch the dust is where they set themselves upright, to then immediately prostrate themselves again. A *kora* is supposed to free a person from the sins of life. According to the Buddhists, 108 circumambulations lead to enlightenment. [Continue next page]



from *Face to Faith* by Samuel Zuder

Out of respect for its spiritual significance, the Kailash has so far never been scaled. Reinhold Messner received a permit to do so in 1985 but consciously chose to forego this peak. The Chinese government continues its attempts to improve the development of the Kailash region. For 2003, it even planned a track around the sacred mountain. But all these plans failed due to fierce international protest. Mount Kailash is therefore one of the rare locations on our planet that remains untrodden. Pilgrims approach it with awe and, while on their pilgrimage, show stoic serenity and firm belief in the power that allegedly emanates from Mount Kailash.

My plan was to photographically accompany the pilgrims—and the, for them, so important Mount Kailash—with the same deference. *Face to Faith* Mount Kailash Tibet portrays this unusual place, and the people for whom it has such great significance, in silent images taken from a certain distance, without too much intervention for staging purposes. At various points on the kora, I asked pilgrims if I could take their portrait. In front of the camera, they were supposed to look as they also did underway on the kora around the Kailash—as far as possible without correcting their clothing or visibly reacting to the camera. The photographic process could, so to say, be described as "slow photography." For most of the pilgrims, the portrait shoots offered a welcome rest—an additional little ritual besides the conventional pilgrim routine.

This resulted in the creation of a series of iconic portraits highlighting both the typical and the individual in the appearance of the Kailash pilgrims. On the one hand, we view faces filled with humility, modesty, and lack of vanity, but, on the other, we also recognize self-confident

independent personalities, equipped with a distinct sense of style.

What connects these individuals first and foremost is great spiritual commonality: they have traveled long distances to subordinate their own ego to a higher, nonhuman authority and to experience catharsis from their spiritual center of power—the sacred Mount Kailash. The landscape photos are intended as metaphors for this encounter between the human and the divine, which lends this place its special significance. Signs of the earthly are found everywhere. Huts, tents, houses, paths, vehicles, horses, yaks, and not least the figures, small as ants, on their circumambulation of the sacred peak. Toward the top, they then transcend into pure nature. In the landscape photos, Mount Kailash seems to dissolve into light, mist, and clouds, precisely where the mountain touches the sky—hence, at exactly that mystical point that many pilgrims consider the seat of their gods, and others no less than the origin of the whole universe or simply the navel of the world. Samuel Zuder ∞

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