

Illumine

***The Journal of the Centre for
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Graduate Student Association***

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Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria
PO Box 1700, STN CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2
Web: www.csrs.uvic.ca

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Rachel Holmes

Jennifer Lee

Jenny Munro

Erin Ronsse

Wendy Wheatley

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Centre for Studies in Religion and Society Graduate Student Association

The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) was established at the University of Victoria in 1991 to foster the scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both contemporary and historical. The CSRS Graduate Student Association, led by graduate students who hold fellowships at the CSRS, draws together UVic graduate students from a range of departments and academic programs who share an interest in areas related to the research mandate of the CSRS.

This issue of *Illumine* represents a continuation of the Association's tradition of producing an annual publication containing graduate students' written scholarship exploring the interrelation of religion and society. Copies of these prior publications are available from the CSRS. In addition to the production of *Illumine*, the Association undertakes events such as luncheons and discussion forums. Questions or comments may be directed to CSRS, or to illuminejournal@yahoo.ca.

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Introduction

Featuring essays by BC graduate students, *Illumine* is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal produced by the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) Graduate Student Association at the University of Victoria. *Illumine* provides a forum for graduate work that contemplates religious and other moral, spiritual and philosophical systems enmeshed in diverse cultural, societal, temporal and geographic settings. The fine essays in this third issue of *Illumine* explore the ways in which religious values, spirituality, and moral ideologies are reflected in assorted cultural products, such as film, art, literature, oral histories, and print media. This year's issue has a strong focus on the entanglements of spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and value judgments in everyday life, in international contexts, and with state politics.

Eve Millar's unique experiences traveling in India for graduate research left her thinking about the spiritual significance of cows. Eve's article, "Linking Afro-Asian and European Traces of Bovine Veneration to India's Sacred Cow," traces the visual remains of cow reverence across temporal and geographic lines, from the Palaeolithic to the modern era, and from Ireland to Asia. Exploring bovine imagery in cave art, pottery, and mythology, she finds that in some circumstances the cow's veneration is related to its association with abundance and feminine fertility. In other circumstances, it is only clear that the cow was a significant spiritual figure in many parts of the world. Eve's paper is a thought-provoking contemplation on ancient values found in residual cultural artefacts.

Several authors in this issue explore how political and other authorities use religious or moral ideologies to articulate their vision of a modern nation. In the period after Mexico achieved independence from Spain, Mexican intellectuals took on the project of defining, articulating and producing a modern nation. Clint Westgard's article explores the scientific, religious, and "modern" philosophies of the Mexican elite, particularly those expressed in literature and poetry. In this postcolonial setting, Westgard argues, the elite were interested in trying to generate natural, social and moral order. His essay provides an insightful example of the way that religious and scientific faith intermingled with class differentiation, inequality, and the persistence of colonial discourses in the project of building the modern nation of Mexico.

Jennifer Lee's essay about anti-Semitic films in Nazi Germany discusses the German state's expression of religious-based hatred through popular media. She explores how the National Party used popular culture and the mass media to influence the German public and to promote conformity to state ideologies about the Jewish people. In particular, her paper discusses the representations of "the Jew" and "the Aryan" in film and film advertisements, arguing that the Nazi government's attempt to appeal to the public and sell films, and yet create a repulsive and non-human figure out of Jewish people resulted in complex representations of characters, plots, and themes. Her essay provides a provocative example of how state political and religious philosophies were expressed in film and marketing in the Third Reich.

Writing about state ideologies on development in contemporary Indonesia, Jenny Munro's paper finds that the seemingly neutral concept of "human resource development" is invested with strong value judgments. Through an examination of state discourse on "human resources" in Indonesian newspapers, her essay highlights the authoritarian state as a source of ideologies about correct behaviour and proper perspectives, and suggests that these moral ideologies can be used to obscure inequality and marginalization.

Anne Nguyen's article, "Two Villages," is a personal narrative about her travels to Vietnam in 2003. On that journey she began the process of collecting oral histories that reflect on the religious and political life of two villages, one Catholic and one Buddhist, each affected in its own way by the events of the war in Vietnam. Using detailed and articulate descriptions of local religious practices, her story considers spiritual activities, beliefs and affiliations that were, and were not, influenced by state politics in a time of conflict. Her contribution offers a story of two groups of people placing their affiliations to each other above potentially antagonistic religious and political attachments.

The essays in this issue contain thoughtful discussions of religious and moral ideologies, practices, and expressions that permeate the lives of people in distant places and, in some cases, divergent times. Nonetheless, it is clear from the quality of the authors' engagements that these topics, of sacred cows, of anti-Semitism, of the mixing of religious and moral ideologies in settings of inequality or conflict, resonate in closer and more immediate quarters. The vitality of the contributions in this issue

of *Illumine* is a testament to the scholarly inspiration that awaits those who venture into the entanglements of religion and society.

The CSRS graduate student fellows who formed the editorial board for this issue would like to express sincere thanks to all of the contributors for the effort they took to make their interesting pieces even more expressive and engaging, as well as those students who contributed submissions that were not published. We would like to extend appreciation to all of the editors of previous issues of *Illumine*, Andrew Wender, Angela Andersen, and Eve Millar, for setting excellent standards and welcoming our many queries. Support from the CSRS and its administrative staff, Moira Hill, Susan Karim and Leslie Kenny, was central to the completion of this project.

Jenny Munro and Jennifer Lee
Editorial Board 2004

Linking Afro-Asian and European Traces of Bovine Veneration to India's Sacred Cow

Eve Millar, University of Victoria

Abstract

India is unique among many contemporary cultures because parts of its Hindu population continue to revere an animal that is an important contributor to the survival of many pastoral and agricultural communities, the cow. Yet the cow also played a significant cosmological role in the lives of numerous peoples who inhabited the regions west of India. Visual remains in the form of bones from cattle burials, depictions of bovid iconography in cave art, pottery, relief and sculpture, as well as cow imaginings rendered visible through mythological accounts, point toward how the cow appears to have been associated with notions of creation and the divine feminine, which along with ideas of abundance, fertility and well being, are attributed to her by countless Hindus today.

In India, many Hindus consider the cow a wandering goddess. She is thought of as an incarnation of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and as an augmentation to the Vedic goddess Sri, whose odour of cow-dung betrays where she makes her home. The cow represents a living icon of goodness: she is a wandering goddess who freely dispenses milk as well as other useful by-products. Milk and *ghee*, clarified butter, are employed both as food and in ritual, and numerous rural, as well as some urban-dwelling, Hindu women not only use cow-dung as a fuel and a building material, but also apply it within religious contexts. Dung is a malleable substance ideal for sculpting images of goddesses and popular folk deities, and a cow-dung wash spread onto floors and walls of mud homes not only physically cleanses and renews domestic spaces, it also rids them of psychic or spiritual / psychological contamination. Emanated by a goddess, all cow by-products are at times, and during various circumstances, invested with notions of sanctity and purity, and cow-dung is considered a semi-divine substance endowed with disinfecting and purifying qualities.

According to the Vedas, the Hindu scriptures composed between 1500-1200 BCE,¹ the cow gave

birth to the “gojātah,” the cow-born Aryan gods,² and today, besides representing Lakshmi, the cow is also thought of as Kamadhenu, the wish-fulfilling cow, and as Surabhi, the cosmic cow who houses all the gods and goddesses of Hindu cosmology. An early poem from the Atharva Veda praises the cow:

Worship to thee, springing to life, and worship to thee when born!

Worship, O Cow, to thy tail-hair, and to thy hooves, and to thy form!

...

The Cow is Heaven, the Cow is Earth, the Cow is Vishnu, Lord of Life.

...

For Right is firmly set in her, devotion, and religious zeal.

Both Gods and mortal men depend for life and being on the Cow.

She hath become this universe: all that the Sun surveys is she.³

Even though in our society the cow is considered a crucial and economically viable animal contributing considerable wealth to industrialized nations, we have lost our reverence for her and have reduced cows to commodities who either give birth to future steaks and hamburgers or, via perversely prized and oversized udders, produce lucrative mountains of butter and cheese. However, we once considered the cow worthy of veneration. In this article I will explore via visual remains and mythological accounts, how many historical peoples outside of India - from North Africa, the Middle East and Europe - would never have dreamed of treating the cow with the disrespect we show her today, but rather appear to have regarded this animal as a sacred being associated with fertility and creation.

Historical Reverence for Cows in North Africa and the Middle East

Cattle were once elevated to a divine or semi-

² Asis Sen, *Animal Motifs in Ancient Indian Art* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1972), 61.

³ Atharva Veda X:10, quoted and revised in Ainslie T. Embree ed., *The Hindu Tradition. Readings in Oriental Thought* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 40-41.

¹ BCE refers to Before Common Era. CE denotes Common Era.

divine status in many parts of the world, and this idea was neither restricted to India nor to “Indian religious philosophies.”⁴ One of the clearest and most obvious links to India’s holy cow may be found in visual remains from Egypt where statues and relief inscriptions point toward a widespread veneration of the goddess in the form of the cow.

In ancient Egypt, the most prominent goddesses Isis and Hathor are represented either as cows, or with some bovine attributes such as cow’s ears, a cow’s head or horns on their head-dress. Similar to the Hindu idea of the cosmic cow or cow mother to the Ayrar gods, Hathor, “linked with the sky goddess Nut,” assumed the body of a celestial, or cosmic, cow and gave birth to the universe and all it contains.⁵ She was “the mistress of the stars,”⁶ her heavenly body was conceived of as the night sky and she nourished humans from a river of stars, the Milky Way.⁷ Hathor stood firmly upon the earth and her four legs formed the pillars of the four quarters: her legs held up the night sky, her belly was the firmament and the Milky Way flowed across it. At sunset, the god Horus, the golden solar falcon, would fly into her mouth holding the sun in his beak. The moon, travelling through the sky, was seen as his eye as he flew through Hathor’s body.⁸ At dawn Hathor would give birth to Horus and the sun.⁹ Thus Hathor was conceived of as a cosmic being associated with the birth and creation of day and night. This linking

of a cow with dawn also resonates with the Ayrar goddess Usas, the goddess of dawn, who is mentioned in the Rig Veda. She is likened to a cow whose milk, streaming forth from her udder, is thought to illuminate the world with ribbons of light.¹⁰

Hathor is also described as “the goddess of creation and guardian of the dead.”¹¹ A recent excavation of a tomb in Saqqara reveals a larger than life statue of Hathor as a cow wearing a disc between her horns and standing guard over Ramses.¹² He functions as a welcoming figure who is receiving Netjerwymes, a high ranking official from c. 1200 BCE, to the afterlife.¹³ In the realm of the dead, Hathor may also be depicted as a slender woman wearing a crown of horns supporting the solar disc. She is seen painted on the wall in Thutmose IV’s (1401 – 1391 BCE) tomb offering life in the form of the ankh to the deceased king.¹⁴ Figure 1 is an example of how Hathor is represented as a woman wearing the cow horn / solar disc headdress, here shown in communication with Seti I (1300 BCE).

One of the earliest surviving depictions of Hathor is engraved at the top of the Palette of Narmer, a slate relic from 3150 BCE.¹⁵ Here her presence is indicated in the form of a stylized cow’s head. Carved at the top of the palette, she seems to preside as a “protective” force over the events occurring below her, which show King Narmer of Upper Egypt smiting his foes and conquering his enemy of Lower Egypt.¹⁶

By the eleventh dynasty (2040 – 1991 BCE) cows marked with a distinctive physical feature were believed to be incarnations of Hathor on earth.¹⁷

⁴Deryck O. Lodrick, *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 43.

⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁷http://www.intent.com/nfgc/nicki_scully.html (18 Jan. 2002).

⁸Hat-hor means “house of Horus.” Joseph C. Campbell, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology* (1962), 53. http://www.xmission.com/~dmacleod/religion/jlindsey/FQ_Abraham2.shtml#meso (18 Jan. 2002).

⁹ This idea of the stable cow standing firmly on four legs provides an analogy to the Four Yugas, the Hindu world cycle. In his explanation on the Yugas, Heinrich Zimmer describes a stable universe using the cow as a metaphor. The Krita Yuga, the golden age, is the perfect or “four-quartered yuga” seen to be standing “firm on its four legs, like a sacred cow.” The Treta Yuga, the silver age, associated with three or the triad, is a world no longer in balance, and the Dvapara Yuga, the brass period, “is the age of dangerous balance between imperfection and perfection, darkness and light.” Dva means two and now “the cow of ethical order, instead of firmly standing on four legs, or resting safely on three, now balances on two.” Not only is the cow here seen as the cow of heaven and earth, but also of *rta*, “cosmic, moral and social order,” and of time. Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (Princeton, 1992), 13-14.

¹⁰David R. Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 8.

¹¹Alain Zivie, ‘A Pharaoh’s Peacemaker,’ *National Geographic* (October, 2002), 26-31.

¹²An excavation conducted by French archaeologist Alain Zivie, research director at France’s Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Zivie, Ibid., 26-31

¹³Zivie describes Ramses as Ramses the Great, one of Egypt’s most powerful rulers, who reigned from approximately 1279 to 1213 BCE, Ibid., 28.

¹⁴Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 125.

¹⁵ Hathor was the Hellenistic form of the name Het-Hor or Athyr, whom the Greeks identified with Aphrodite the goddess of love.

¹⁶ Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 96.

¹⁷ Hilda Ellis Davidson, ‘Otherworld cattle,’ *At the Edge*, no.1,(1996), <http://www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/Ocattle.htm> (20 June 2002). Hilda Ellis Davidson is a lecturer at Royal



Figure 1. Hathor and Seti I. After a bas-relief in the Louvre Museum, Paris. Illustration, Eve Millar.

These living animals were envisioned as providing a direct link between the Pharaohs and the gods. In Memphis, Hathor's earthly representatives were white cows kept and milked in the goddess' temple for the purpose of feeding this 'divine' milk to the Pharaoh's babies.¹⁸ Here Hathor's head is carved into capitals, her face flanked by cow's ears. The idea of having sacred cows attached to temples was not restricted to Egypt; temple dairies also existed in Sumer and thrive in India today. The cow goddess Hathor, an ancient pre-dynastic goddess, gradually assumed many roles over time; she combined both maternal cow goddess and creative sky goddess duties with roles as earthly queen, guardian of the dead and protector of kings.

Just as Hathor was ascribed to the heavenly spheres, Ishtar in Sumer, another goddess depicted with cow horns in old Babylonian art, also had celestial associations. In fact, Westenholz notes "every divinity in Mesopotamia wore a horned headdress," a fact that would again attest to the

sacred associations attached to the cow.¹⁹ Ishtar in particular was aligned with celestial bodies: she was identified with Sirius and with Venus. Like Hathor, Ishtar's womb was described as the gateway to heaven.²⁰ She was granted the ability to increase cattle herds and she eventually assumed the attributes of a cow, gradually usurping many of the functions of the Mother Goddess, Ninhursag, a powerful Mesopotamian goddess who was in charge of a temple dairy, which provided "milk for royal children."²¹ A frieze from the temple of Ninhursag in Al Ubaid, Iraq (2500 BCE) shows cows being milked and "temple priests preparing and storing the holy milk of Ninhursag, the nourishment of kings."²² Like Hathor's cows in Memphis who provided food for royal babies, these temples devoted to the goddess Ninhursag often had sacred cattle herds attached to them. In India, temples continue to host aging and disabled cattle in *goshalas*, cow shelters established to house cows that have outlived their usefulness, but many temples also keep herds of sacred cows for milk, which is used for ritual purposes. It is clear that milk and cows played a significant role in ancient Egyptian and Sumerian cosmology and that these ideas are also significant in India, where milk and butter today still feature prominently as a vital component in ritual.²³

These important early cow goddesses link Egypt and Sumer to the bovine inspired practices of India, but many aspects of Egyptian art, iconography, thought and language also link Egypt and India. These connections point towards a shifting and moving population exchanging goods, ideas and people. S.M. el Mansurail believes that thousands of years ago India was an integral part of an Ancient East that extended from the Mediterranean to the Ganges Valley.²⁴ He asserts that the practice of hollowing out rocky chambers emerged in Egypt and spread by 600 BCE to Iran and then to India where

¹⁹ Joan Goodnick Westenholz. 'Goddesses of the near East,' in *Ancient Goddesses*, 73.

²⁰

<http://www.louisville.edu/~aoclar01/ancient/sumer/ishtar.htm> (18 Jan 2002).

²¹ Hilda Ellis Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 30.

²² Lodrick, *Sacred Cows*, 44.

²³ In a rite called *Abhiseka*, milk, curds or other substances such as honey or scented water are used to bathe or anoint an image depicting or representing the divine. *Ghee*, butter, is also employed as a sculpting medium to completely wrap deities in garments of ghee that are embellished with beads.

²⁴ S. M. el Mansurail, *Art-Culture of India and Egypt* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1959).

Holloway College in London and author of numerous books.

¹⁸ Davidson, 'Otherworld cattle.'

Buddhist Chaitya halls were built between 300 - 200 BCE.²⁵ According to el Mansurai, the Mauryan polish, a technique employed by Indian Buddhist Emperor Ashoka's craft workers around 300 BCE to lend stone surfaces a lustrous sheen, also originated in Egypt, and he asserts linguistic elements provide further links between the two cultures.²⁶

Another link between the two cultures is the veneration of an ithyphallic deity represented through the erect male principle and connected to a bovine element. Egyptians once worshipped the phallus of the god Osiris who was married to Isis, one of Egypt's earliest cow goddesses. Although the Hindu god Shiva's phallus, venerated in India today as the *lingam*, is not directly linked to a cow goddess, part of worshipping rites surrounding this deity involve extensive ablutions of his lingam with cow's milk, thus making contact between these two deities, the cow goddess and Shiva, not only intimate, but frequent.

Moving back in time, it is interesting to speculate when the recognition of the cow as an aspect of the divine feminine emerged. In India the memory is alive and well although little exists in terms of monumental visual evidence to suggest how wide-spread cow worship is or was, evidence that assumes such a vital position along with myth and folklore in determining the importance of an ideology or a religious practice. So based on visual and verbal clues, how far back in Afro-Asian folk memory can cow veneration be traced?

According to professor of anthropology Dr. Fred Wendorf, excavations on Turkey's Anatolian plateau and in the eastern Sahara provide the earliest evidence of cattle depicted within a religious or devotional framework. In 1994, Wendorf discovered two small (7-8 m diameter) tumuli he described as ceremonial complexes, filled with cattle remains in Nabta Playa, the Eastern Sahara desert. The Neolithic tumuli (6500-5500 BCE) housed a "fully articulated" bovine of the long-horned African variety placed in a carefully sealed, wood-covered pit the likes of which were used to bury important

individuals.²⁷ Previous excavations in this area, in Tushka, Nubia, revealed horn cores of cattle placed in burial pits as early as 10,000 BCE. These findings suggest that bovids played a prominent role in mortuary rituals and the elaborate burials of cows and bulls taking place around 6000 BCE in Nabta Playa indicate that cattle "were an integral element of religious sentiments and beliefs."²⁸ Wendorf views "the apparent presence of a 'cattle cult' at Nabta [...] as intriguing, particularly [when] considering the importance of cattle in early Egyptian mythology."²⁹ These findings not only correlate with other discoveries of cow goddesses of Egypt, but also with the status cows apparently enjoyed at the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük on the Anatolian plateau.

In Çatalhöyük, James Mellaart uncovered the remains of a thriving cattle cult dating to around 6500 BCE. Much of the material was preserved due to fires, which seem to have randomly swept through the township halting all further bacterial growth on remnants of lower layer dwellings. Cloth, fur, bones, wood and even basketry survived the passage of time. Many of the excavated rooms, filled with horned bovid heads and female figures, appear to have been used for religious activities, which centered around a totemic cult dedicated to the divine feminine in association with cattle.

Homes in Çatalhöyük were decorated with horns as well as with other bovine motifs. Plaster "breasts" implanted with "jaws of carnivores (weasels and foxes), wild boar tusks or beaks of vultures" protrude from walls and are interspersed with bovine heads.³⁰ Mellaart interprets these decorations as "bulls' heads," "breasts" and "goddess figures," and he argues that these motifs dominate in the rooms he describes as "shrines."³¹ Although these horned

²⁵ Ibid, 12.

²⁶ Pharaoh is a Hebrew form of an Egyptian word "per-o," which means "the great house." In Bengal today many historically important old villages are still called *pero*. In addition, names given to pets in India show a typical non-Sanskritic system of nomenclature resembling Egyptian. This is seen in names like Tepi, Gua, Zoti or Nofra. Ibid., 12. El Mansurai also believes that a Bengal medicine known as Totka, is derived from Thoth-ka, a science of medicine connected with Thoth, the Egyptian god of medicine. Ibid., 94.

²⁷ The wooden fragments yielded a radiocarbon date of 6470±270 BCE.

<http://www2.smu.edu/anthro/old/fwendorf.html> (13 June 2002). Dr. Wendorf is Professor of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University, USA.

²⁸ Fekri A. Hassan, 'The Earliest Goddesses of Egypt,' Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris, *Ancient Goddesses. The Myths and the Evidence* (Madison, 1998,) 104.

²⁹ See <http://www2.smu.edu/anthro/old/fwendorf.html> (13 June 2002).

³⁰ Jacques Cauvin, *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29.

³¹ The use of quotation marks here indicates my hesitation in applying these terms coined by Mellaart. These images may be breasts or bull's heads, but they could just as well be other protuberances, such as the heads of smaller animals, or cow's heads, and they were quite likely

heads could belong to cattle of either sex, Mellaart consistently refers to them as bull's heads. He also describes the female figures as goddesses, even though there is no proof that people living 8000 years ago regarded them as such.³² In these interior spaces, female figures painted on the walls or inscribed in plaster are depicted with raised arms and legs giving birth to taurine heads. The women birthing cattle, sometimes consisting of "twin goddess" figures, are features repeated in many of the rooms and often painted abstract patterns or handprints mark the space below these sculpted motifs, an element which seems to indicate that they were of ritual importance. Red pigment was used to highlight muzzles and ears, to demarcate the bodies and to inscribe rings around horns.³³ Red may have been applied within a sacred context to connote reverence for life, a conclusion not only based on red's obvious symbolic significance of representing blood, but also on contemporary practices in India in which *kumkum* (red vermillion powder) is used to demarcate the sacred.³⁴

At Catalhöyük these "shrines" or sanctuaries are also decorated with *Bucrania*,³⁵ low-lying pillars adorned with cattle horns. Due to their angle, these would have cast flickering animistic shadows, implying the presence of living creatures. In addition, many of the rooms house benches ornamented with sets of horns. The stucco sculpted protrusions, the sexually ambiguous sculpted heads of cattle, the images of women giving birth and the presence of built-in recliners point to abundant female symbolism and suggest these spaces may have been devoted to midwifery, shamanism, healing or ritual activities. Catalhöyük likely represents one

created with ideas and ideals in mind other than what we perceive today filtered through our desires of history.

³² In their book, *Ancient Goddesses*, editors Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris suggest that Mellaart built "massive assumptions" into arguments for a goddess based culture and neglected contrary evidence such as phallic symbols also discovered at Catalhöyük, 8.

³³ Many consist of real horn cores. Mellaart, *Catal Hüyük*, 122.

³⁴ Just as the cow is remembered as a goddess in India, this practice of marking the sacred with red pigment may also be an aspect of ritual and worship that was forgotten elsewhere but survives in India where folk memories carried on through generations appear to have deep roots and where the tradition of reciting and remembering ancient Vedic sacred texts from 1500-1200 BCE has been carried forward in time.

³⁵ "Bull's pillars," is a phrase coined by Mellaart. Ian A Todd, *Catal Hüyük in Perspective* (Menlo Park, CA: Cummings Publishing Company, Inc, 1976), 63.

of many similar communities that stretched across ancient Europe and Asia Minor. Although later European societies were to revere the bull, this practice cannot be assumed for the people of Catalhöyük, and neither can the bovine heads and horns automatically be relegated to the male of the species. It is just as likely that it was the cow who held a special position in this society.

Archaeologist Marija Gimbutas writes, "With the advent of sedentary life, horns, bucrania, [...bovid] figurines and tauromorphic vases became omnipresent in the art of the Near East and Old Europe."³⁶ She discusses miniature clay bucrania stemming from 8000 BCE discovered in Tepe Guran, Iran, and a number of visual remnants scattered across Europe that not only depict numerous women in the Catalhöyük birthing position but also link the bovine to creation and the feminine. She suggests this linking occurs because the shape of a bull's head closely resembles the female organs, and as such it is a symbol of regeneration. This semblance could have been discovered in prehistory and may have provided a further link between the female's seemingly magical child bearing abilities and the "horns of the bull."³⁷ Since cows also sport horns, her attachment to the male species is rather curious, especially in light of the overwhelming evidence of Egyptian goddesses depicted as cows. This link to the bull also seems inappropriate when Gimbutas points out how "the Egyptian hieroglyph for uterus depicts the two-horned uterus of the cow."³⁸ It seems more likely that women were linked to cows, not bulls, and that the rise of the bull cult that became so prominent in southern Europe grew out of a tradition that once venerated the female of the species.

One of the most stunning links between the feminine and the bovid, and one clearly pointing toward human reproduction / creation, occurs in an artifact from Bilcze Złote (western Ukraine).

Here a female figure imagined in the "hourglass shaped" form of what Gimbutas describes as the "bee goddess," is depicted on a stylized cattle skull stemming from around 3500 BCE (see Figure 2).³⁹ A remarkable rendering, the punctuated silhouette of this woman, with her pubic triangle clearly emphasized and her arms raised upwards, beautifully

³⁶ Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 265.

³⁷ Ibid., 265.

³⁸ Ibid., 266.

³⁹ Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 186.

echoes the shape of the material on which she is carved.

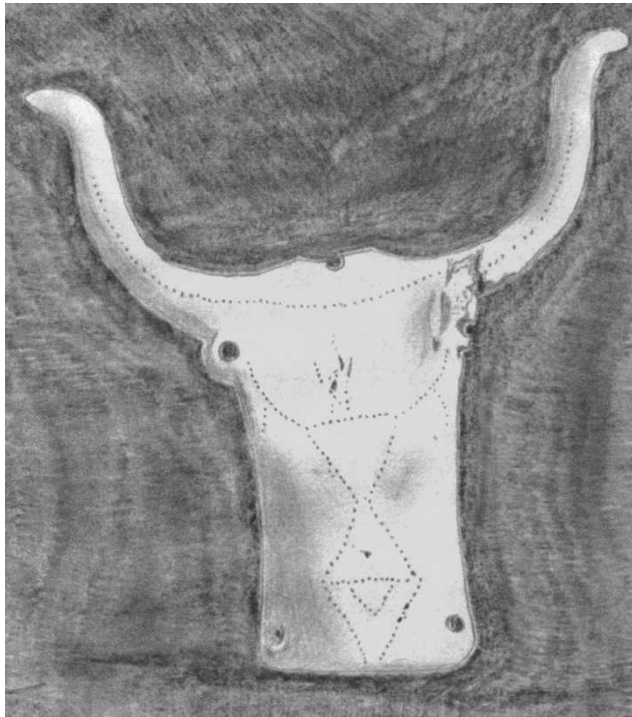


Figure 2. The punctate silhouette of a woman inscribed on a stylized cattle skull of bone. Bilcze Zlote, northwestern Ukraine, 3500 BCE. After a photograph in Marija Gimbutas, *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982) 188. Illustration, Eve Millar

Female attributes are also explicitly linked to the bovid through a horned terra cotta stand from 5000 BCE found at the Vinča site south east of Belgrade. The horned stand is gendered - below the horns breasts emerge to resemble a tiny torso. These horn stands, albeit without the breasts and described by Gimbutas as “horns of consecration,” are numerous at the Vinča site and also occur in abundance in Minoan art (3000-1000 BCE)⁴⁰ where a painting rendered in the palace complex in Knossos, Crete (1550 BCE) again links a woman with the bovid. She is seen grasping a bull by its horns in a sport described as bull jumping.⁴¹

Historical Reverence for Cows in Europe

Based on Gimbutas’ findings, it may also be ascertained that the bovine is tenuously linked to creation and the feminine through the relationship between the female reproductive cycle and the lunar

cycle, a connection noted in some vessels that are tauromorphic and shaped to look like cattle, or sport bucrania, bovid heads and horns, as well as abstracted motifs resembling crescent moons or horns. A tauromorphic lamp from 4500-4300 BCE covered in swirled designs and painted black on red was unearthed in northeastern Greece, and another tauromorphic vase from Bavaria (5000 BCE) is also decorated in concentric circles and features four dots on the animal’s forehead that Gimbutas interprets as possibly representing the four phases of the moon.⁴² It is interesting to consider the connection here between the cow as luminary vessel and the moon as a source of light. This is a linking that also occurs in the Vedas in association with Usas, the previously mentioned cow goddess of dawn; it is also a relationship English-speaking children are familiar with through a seemingly non-sensical nursery rhyme describing the cow jumping over the moon.

Further links between the lunar and the bovine may be seen on designs inscribed on a vessel found in northeastern Romania (dating from 3700-3500 BCE) that shows a sculpted relief of horns, as well as painted versions of crescent shaped lunar symbols,⁴³ in hundreds of subterranean tombs in Sardinia (4000-3000 BCE) where bucrania modeled in low relief on walls were discovered “with an egg or moon between the crescent shaped horns,” and finally in cattle skulls with horns buried into the foundations of Neolithic homes that were situated beside children’s burials in Hungary.⁴⁴ According to Gimbutas, the purpose of this burial practice was to encourage a speedy rebirth symbolically reflected in the horns representing the moon’s regular regeneration of itself every twenty-eight days.

Moving even further back in time from the Neolithic to the Paleolithic, a vivid rendering symbolizing the link between the lunar menstrual cycle and cattle is presented in a voluptuous female figure with large breasts and a swelling abdomen. The figure, carved in deep relief on a limestone block outside a rock shelter in Laussel, southern France (25,000 BCE), holds a bovid horn. She is usually interpreted as a goddess figure and, like the figures from Catalhöyük, she shows remnants of red pigment (ocher), which possibly mark her as sacred.⁴⁵ Her worn out body looks like that of a woman who has given birth to many children. The lunar shaped horn she carries is marked with thirteen

⁴² Taurine vase from Heinheim, Bavaria, ca 5000 BCE. Gimbutas, *Language of the Goddess*, 267.

⁴³ Ibid., 268.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 269.

⁴⁵ Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess*, 1.

⁴⁰ Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, 93.

⁴¹ Stokstad, *Art History*, 140.

notches, which seem to indicate the thirteen lunar months and the relationship between women's menstrual cycles, the moon, renewal, childbearing and creation.

When considering the number of prehistoric depictions of cattle that survive from caves in Chauvet, France (c. 31,000 BCE), Altamira, Spain (16,000 to 14,000 BCE), Lascaux, France (c.15,000 - 10,000 BCE) and Tassili N'Ajjer, Algeria, it is clear that bovids enjoyed an elevated status. Although the purpose for these creations is unknown, a cow / bull cult appears to have been widely dispersed. The animals were frequently depicted in clearly visible locations in caves, and Gimbutas argues that the "central position probably derives from the intimate relationship between the bison and the Goddess," a link she further establishes by the fact that both women and bison have gestation periods of equal length, nine months.⁴⁶ According to material evidence stemming from the Paleolithic and then moving forward in time to visual remains from the Neolithic, bovids in the form of bison or cows were clearly not only significant in parts of early Europe, Asia and Africa, they were often also thought of as magical or divine. Egypt, India and Sumer provide both physical and contemporary evidence for their status as goddesses, but folklore and myths from northern Europe also discuss the cows as divine.

One of these divine cows imagined as a creatrix, and by extension a goddess, was Audhumla. She is the primordial cow of Norse mythology who is thought to have emerged at the beginning of time from ice. She existed in the barren pre-world by sustaining herself through licking salt from hoarfrost and blocks of ice; this sufficed for her to produce milk that flowed in "four milk-rivers...down from her full udder."⁴⁷ These rivers nourished the giant Ymir. As Audhumla licked the ice, she shaped it into a handsome man whose son Bor married Bestla, the daughter of a giant. Their union produced three gods, Odin, Vili and Ve, who slaughtered Ymir and created the earth from his body. The cow Audhumla was thus an Ur-being extant before the world was born and an Ur-mother, nourishing the earth (Ymir) before it was formed.⁴⁸ Her emergence as a cow from a sea of ice and mist bears a remarkable resemblance to the story of the cosmic Indian cow, Kamadhenu, the wish-fulfilling or wish-granting cow, who,

according to the Indian epic, the Mahabharata, arose from an ocean of milk that the gods, with the help of their enemies, were churning in order to obtain *amrita*, the nectar of immortality.

In Ireland, images of cows also arise through stories and fragments of texts. According to A.T. Lucas, who studied written Irish sources from the seventh to the seventeenth century, everything people wrote about pertaining to the Irish and life in Ireland "teems with allusions to cows."⁴⁹ It is not cattle in general, but milk-yielding cows that were held in the highest esteem. Cows played a vital and central part in the Irish economy. They were the unit of value, dowries consisted of cows, cows were presented as gifts and many of the great Irish epics center around cow-raiding as a theme.

In this period, Irish society showed great reverence for the cow and some of the practices employed around cows point to similarities in customs between Ireland and India. Considering the geographical distance between these two countries, claims of links between Ireland and India may seem initially preposterous, but Indian goods and ideas travelled far where they left their legacy in South East Asia in the form of Buddhism, the Wayang shadow puppet theatre and in a Hindu *weltanschauung* unique to Bali, and to pre-Europe through trade. An ivory engraving of Indian origin was found in Pompei, and there is evidence that not only goods but also people travelled west.⁵⁰ Indian dancers, who arrived in Spain around 500 BCE and performed religious dances for royalty and at particular festivals, influenced Flamenco⁵¹ that today still retains elements of the original Indian dance.⁵²

Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, a Brahmin scholar and artist from Chennai (formerly Madras), south India, notes that from birth to death the cow and her calf play a vital role in Brahmin's lives, not only marking vital transitions, but also signifying minor life altering events. According to her,

when you [have a] house warming, then the cow and the calf are brought in. They are asked to walk...into the household first, before the people walk in. For everything we have to have the cow and calf. Even after the death of a person - you

⁴⁶ Gimbutas, *Language of the Goddess*, 265.

⁴⁷ Margul Tadeusz, 'Present Day Worship of the Cow in India,' *Numen*, vol. 15 (1968), 72.

⁴⁸ Lynda Welch, *Goddess of the North* (Samuel Weiser, 2001) and Hilda Ellis Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess* (London: Routledge, 1998), 38.

⁴⁹ A.T. Lucas, *Cattle in Ancient Ireland*, (Kilkenny, 1989), 3.

⁵⁰ Susan Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985), 113.

⁵¹ Gwynne Edwards and Ken Haas, *Flamenco!* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 31.

⁵² Dancer Karen Avery, In conversation, (Victoria: November 15th 2002).

are supposed to...donate...to the priest, a cow and a calf as your finances allow, otherwise a token payment for a cow and a calf. So from birth to death, for every ritual, the cow plays an important role.⁵³

In Ireland, saints were offered tributes of cows, a man's wealth was based on the number of cows he owned, cows were offered at funerals to churches or monasteries, they were provided as gifts of pardon and they were also offered as payment for poems. In addition, newborn babies were often bathed in cow's milk. The Irish word for cow is "Bo," and cattle pounds were called Gobhang.⁵⁴ Interestingly, "go" is the Sanskrit word for cow.

One of Ireland's beloved saints, Saint Brigid, is closely linked to cows and milk. St. Brigid is thought to originate from the earlier Celtic goddess Brigid. Brigid's father was the good god, the Dagda; her mother was Boanne the goddess of bounty and fertility whose totem was a sacred white cow.⁵⁵ The river Boyne is named after Boanne, and this link to rivers and cows also makes up a large component of Indian lore.⁵⁶ Brigid was born on the threshold between day and night; she rose with the sun and was known as "the bright one" or "the high one," terminology reminiscent of that used to describe Usas. Brigid was born to a milkmaid at dawn, just as her mother was walking over the threshold with a pail of milk. Then the newborn was bathed in milk, and because she could not digest ordinary cow's milk, she had to be nourished on milk provided by the fairy cow, or "the Otherworld" cow.⁵⁷

Brigid is the guardian goddess of domesticated animals. Her festival is celebrated on February first, Imbolg, meaning "of the womb," a day when livestock was traditionally let out to graze for the first time. On this day Brigid is believed to travel with her white milk cow and bring blessings to each

household. Even today in some areas of Ireland and Scotland, people leave offerings of food and grass on their doorsteps for her cow. It is also customary to leave a piece of cloth to be blessed by Brigid on the night of Imbolg's Eve. This cloth, known as St. Brigid's mantle, is used throughout the year to help cows with their calving and to encourage mothers to lactate. So devout was the fervour of the Irish toward Brigid that when Christianity arrived in Ireland her identity was molded to fit the ideology of the church. Brigid acquired status as the Virgin Mary's midwife.

The otherworld or fairy cow, which nourished the saint, is a common being in British folk legends. Usually this cow provides an endless supply of milk so that those in need will all be looked after. One tale of a pure white fairy cow who appeared on the top of a hill during a famine and allowed each family to milk one pail was captured pictorially when it was carved into a church pillar in 1879 in Shropshire, England.⁵⁸ The same idea is behind the naming of cow hill in Preston, Lancashire, where this legendary cow's bones are said to reside. In parts of Ireland, the cow with the endless supply of milk is said to have emerged, like India's cosmic cow Kamadhenu and Norway's cow goddess Audhumla, from the sea, which is interesting because these similarities, like so many others discussed, point to ancient folk memories that span not only generations, but cultures. Jung would describe these as archetypal memories.⁵⁹

In addition to tales of cows with divine properties, there are Irish goddesses who have links to cows. Davidson writes of a hunting goddess, Flidias, who owned a cow called Maol, and, in another case, describes Mórrigan, an Irish battle goddess assuming the form of a cow and followed by a herd of fifty cows.⁶⁰ Sanskrit scholar Wendy Doniger notes that people in most parts of Ireland refer to the Milky Way as the "path of the white cow," and by doing so they too are establishing the cow as an animal or goddess like Hathor and Ishtar who is of the heavenly realm of milky stars; likewise the goddesses Lakshmi and Kamadhenu emerged

⁵³ Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, In conversation, Chennai, May 2002.

⁵⁴ Lucas, *Cattle in Ancient Ireland*, 24.

⁵⁵ See

www.village.fortunecity.com/berhard/864/pantheon.html (20 June 2002).

⁵⁶ In India a number of rivers are named after goddesses and conceived of as feminine. Some are also named after cows or cow by products: such as the Payosni River, "cow's milk;" the Narmada, "cow's urine;" the Yamuna, "cow dung;" and many rivers flow through naturally or artificially created *gomukha*, or "cow's muzzles." See Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood* (Oxford, UP: 1995).

⁵⁷ Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess*, 36.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁹ Jung thought of archetypes as basic constituents to the human psyche shared cross-culturally as universal expressions of a cumulative memory or a collective unconscious, which embodies certain archetypal memories inherent in all human minds. Equally, these could be ideas that were shared through human interaction and travel, forgotten in some places, remembered in others.

⁶⁰ Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess*, 37.

from a milky sea to reside henceforth in the earthly realm as potent and magical forces.⁶¹

This survey approach to writing about cows and the divine feminine was chosen to demonstrate how the connections among cows, women, creative forces and notions of the sacred cross temporal, geographical and cultural locales. The idea of the cow as light or life giver is even expressed in Japan where, according to George Scott the sun “was represented seated upon a cow (the earth).”⁶² Cows seem to linger in ur-memory as beings associated with the starry cosmos, the milky heavens, with oceans and the creative forces of the earth. They are imagined as divine, invested with supernatural powers and connected to goddesses, the moon and creation. Based on legends and pictorial remains stemming from the Paleolithic to contemporary times and spanning from eastern India to northern Africa and northern Europe, it is clear that cows assumed prominent cosmological roles and that the idea of the cow as a sacred being is not unique to India, but was also fostered by other cultures and societies. Cows are linked to women, saints and goddesses in Ireland; the ur-mother in Norway; royalty in Egypt; shamanistic rites in Catalhöyük; temples, religious and domestic rituals in India as well as to the wish-fulfilling goddess, Kamadhenu, and the goddess of prosperity, Sri-Lakshmi, in Hindu traditions. Traversing time and memory, cows associated with the divine feminine appear to have been symbols of the sacred in many different cultures.

⁶¹ Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1980), 241.

⁶² George Ryley Scott, *Phallic Worship* (London: Luxor Press Ltd., 1966), 139 quoting E. Kaempfer, *The History of Japan* (London, 1728).

God Meditating on the Worm: Order, Religion, and Science Among Mexican Intellectuals in the Early Republic

Clint Westgard, University of British Columbia

Abstract

Following the establishment of the new nation in 1821 the Mexican elite sought to shape the form it would take, as well as the role they and others would have in it. Fundamental to understanding how they went about this and what led them to the decisions they made is an investigation of the underlying beliefs that formed their view of the world. By looking at the interactions of religious and scientific belief in the works of two Mexican intellectuals of the first half of the nineteenth century, Luis de la Rosa and Tadeo Ortiz, I illustrate the way in which religious and scientific understandings of the world reinforced each other and were in many ways inseparable for the Mexican elite. This is because of their conception of the universe as an ordered entity, with laws that could be discerned and applied to society. What order specifically meant for the Mexican elite had large implications for the way in which they imagined the nation.

Imperturbably maintaining
the order of those bodies that ply
the unfathomable abyss...

This powerful God
who maintains the worm that crawls
in the filthy mire
and the comet that follows
its immense ellipse in its prodigious course,
in a puff could unmake
the entire universe if He wished
*El Poder de Dios, Oda*¹
(Ode to the Power of God)

This poem, published in 1829 in the Mexican gazeta *El Pasatiempo*, by Luis de la Rosa, expressed much of what underpinned the religious beliefs of the Mexican elite in the early years of the Republic.²

¹ From, Luis de la Rosa, "El Poder de Dios, Oda," in *Obras: Periodismo y Obra Literaria*, Mexico City: (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Instituto Mora, 1996), 57. All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

² Luis de la Rosa (1805-1860) was one of the leading writers of the burgeoning periodical press in the years

For de la Rosa, God was powerful and imperturbable, maintaining order in the universe. The order that He maintained was a specifically hierarchical order in which both the comet and the worm have their particular places. The description of creation itself is particularly significant:

The space that bathes in the pure light
of the innumerable stars, what was then? [before
creation]
obscure depth

fearful darkness...
But God meditated,
a profound design there in his mind
penetrating it all.³

What is presented in this poem is creation as Enlightenment, for with creation, "in the abyss, the sad fear and darkness ceased" and was "dissipated by the light of the clear day."⁴ This image of creation had a certain currency for the Mexican elite since they saw themselves as engaged in a similar project in the construction of a modern nation in the wake of independence. They sought to form an enlightened and scientific nation, a civilized nation comparable to any in Europe, from the darkness they claimed to have existed in under Spanish rule. Thus, de la Rosa's poem was not only a celebration and affirmation of the power of God in designing and regulating the universe, but also a metaphor for the Mexican elite's struggle to realize their vision.

following Mexican independence. Independence was achieved in 1821 following ten years of intractable conflict that left the creole elite of the colony in control of the new national government. The state that emerged from this armed struggle and the various political struggles was a federal republic led by a president with a constitution based on liberal ideology. Creoles were individuals of Spanish descent born in the colonies. They were only a small portion of the population, the majority of people being indigenous or mestizo.

³ Ibid., 55.

⁴ The very term Enlightenment in English implies the bringing of light into darkness or other similar metaphors. This emphasis on light was even more emphatic in Spanish speaking countries where the Enlightenment was known at the time as *las luces* (the lights). Ibid., 56.

The popular classes of the new nation were often perceived as uneducated and unenlightened, and thus a threat to the new state's existence, by the Mexican elite.⁵ Great effort had to be made, according to the leading intellectuals of the day, to bring the masses within the confines of the state in order to create the 'civilized' society they desired. Writers like de la Rosa wrote extensively in the periodical press of the day proposing reforms to reshape the habits of the popular classes, and the very space they inhabited, through reordering of urban centres and the regulation of those living within them.⁶ They drew upon nature as their model for society, specifically nature as constructed by the naturalist through the study and practice of Natural History. It was their perception of nature as an inherently ordered place that shaped the elite's reform projects, as well as leading them to draw on such metaphors as creation, light and darkness to depict their efforts. The classification and description of flora and fauna by naturalists was also very useful for those seeking to write about the nation and its inhabitants, particularly in terms of its central project of defining categories as a way of claiming knowledge.⁷

It was order, I will argue, as the fundamental means around which to structure society, and as the way in which both religion and nature could be

understood, that deeply informed the Mexican elites' worldview and their conception of the nation. What order meant for them should not be taken as self-evident, for the laws of the order of nature the followers of the Enlightenment claimed to discover reflected what was excluded as much as they did what was included. Order implied simplicity, decorum and good taste. Nature was valued for its utility, which demanded a uniformity of laws, thus excluding rare or irregular phenomena from the field of study.⁸ By looking at the way in which scientific and religious belief reinforced cultural conceptions of nature, nation, family and the individual I will also interrogate what order meant for the creole elite and the implications of their definition. I will show that science and religion cannot be extricated from one another, that scientific fact and religious fact were the same for writers such as de la Rosa because of their understanding of the universe as ordered.

The Regulated Universe

'Civilized', 'enlightened' and 'modern' were three key words Mexican intellectuals sought to apply to themselves and to the nation as a whole. These terms were not seen as abstract or as comprising vague categories that eluded definition. They were demonstrable in an individual's comportment and the actions ascribed to the nation. Civilization emphasized a well-ordered daily life, while 'civilizing' required the policing of the lower classes through education and reform projects to create uniformity and order. While the elites had little doubt of their own enlightened civility they perceived the lower classes as disorderly and disruptive. European travelers who denigrated the natives as archaic reinforced the intelligentsia's fears.⁹ One of the most significant influences on Mexican intellectuals was the German naturalist

⁵ This was especially so because, unlike the colonial period, the elites of the Republic were forced to rely to some extent on the populace to maintain their control of the state bureaucracy. Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism*, Minneapolis: (University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 64-5.

⁶ For a discussion of the periodical press in the early nineteenth century see Jean Franco, "Waiting for a Bourgeoisie: The Formation of the Mexican Intelligentsia in the Age of Independence," in *Critical Passions*, Mary Louise Pratt and Kathleen Newman (eds.), Durham: (Duke University Press, 1999), 477. She also discusses literature as a utopian project, 483.

⁷ The practices that constituted Natural History as a science were quite diverse and eclectic, although all related. This paper emphasizes the collecting, classifying and writing aspects of the discipline, although naturalists were also engaged in experimentation, cultivation and preservation. As E. C. Spary has noted, "The practice of natural history itself reflected the concern of eighteenth century naturalists to explore processes of political, physical and moral preservation and improvement. The involvement of scientific and medical practitioners in countless projects for improvement, conceived on a national scale, led them to portray themselves as able managers of the lower social levels." E. C. Spary, *Utopia's Garden: French Natural History from the Old Regime to Revolution*, Chicago: (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5, 8.

⁸ See Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750*, New York: (Zone Books 1998), 350-60.

⁹ Franco, "Waiting for a Bourgeoisie," 482-3. There was a long history of European denigration of the New World natives. David Brading's *The First America: the Spanish monarchy, Creole patriots, and the Liberal state 1492-1867*, Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 1991) encompasses the literature from Columbus' discovery of the Americas to the middle of the nineteenth century. The eighteenth century and enlightened thinking on the New World are dealt with in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth Century Atlantic World*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001; and Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

Alexander von Humboldt, who drew a picture of a 'primal' America devoid of humanity and brimming with a wild and daunting nature.¹⁰ Writers like Tadeo Ortiz echoed such descriptions, speaking of forests that were impenetrable "to the rays of the sun" and "covered by species of wood and weeds, where rarely or never had man penetrated."¹¹ Nature appeared untamed, but just as the stars unerringly followed their orbits, so too did the natural world follow laws the enlightened natural philosopher had only to uncover. Nature was quantifiable: rivers were seen in terms of the speed of their current, the height of their banks, and their width and length, while the territory itself was a function of the number of species of plants and animals, as well as its temperature range and seasonal rain totals.¹²

Not only could nature be quantified, it could be named and described, bringing it within systems that sought to establish the relationship between all flora and fauna, classifying it. Naturalists like Humboldt described the natural world in terms of a totality. The discipline of Natural History sought to describe the contents, carefully categorized, of the visible (and sometimes the invisible) earth. In categorizing, Natural History constructed an order, removing plants from their surroundings and placing them in a system defined by their relation to each other.¹³

In ordering nature, in the act of naming and quantification, it was made useful. The periodicals of the Late Colonial and Early Republican periods in Mexico were filled with descriptions of plants, paying specific attention to their utility and the "application of [their] productions for the satisfaction of our necessities and pleasures, and the progress and perfection of industry."¹⁴ Gardens in particular represented the peak to which the ordering of nature could rise, and - in the proliferating botanical gardens of the period - the height to which plants

could be made useful.¹⁵ Their pruned, uniform vegetation and the 'ambiance of regularity' illustrated conceptions of social order and policing, with each individual having an appointed place in society within the gaze of others. The particular image of the social order seen in Mexican gardens was also expressed in *El Poder de Dios* with the worm and the comet having their respective places along with "those bodies that ply the unfathomable abyss."¹⁶ The universe was a regulated place in this vision, where the comet would not stray from its path and the worm could not leave the mire in which it crawled.¹⁷ There was a great deal at stake in being able to claim control of nature, for as de la Rosa stated: "The inclination for the cultivation of plants has always been considered as a test of civilization, because no people has dedicated themselves to gardening except after having left the savage state and acquiring a certain gentleness and mildness of custom."¹⁸ Thus, those who could control nature, and perceive its inherent regularity, were those who could make nature useful and were, as a result, at the pinnacle of nature's hierarchy. Nature, in the right hands, could be extremely beneficial, but the only way to access these benefits was through knowledge of its laws that could only be provided by the

¹⁵ In Europe botanical gardens also became public spectacles. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 29. For a discussion of the botanical garden in colonial Mexico City and its relation to the development of medical science and pharmacy see Luz María Hernández Sáenz, *Learning to Heal: the medical profession in colonial Mexico 1767-1831*, New York: (Peter Lang, 1997).

¹⁶ de la Rosa, "El Poder de Dios," 57.

¹⁷ This particular envisioning of the social order in the order of nature found in gardens had its roots in colonial elite culture, which can clearly be seen in its rigorously hierarchical understanding of order and regularity. Although the gardens may have been horizontally ordered it was categorized into vertical categories by the Mexican elite, as we can see with the worm and the comet of Rosa's poem. Juan Pedro Viquiera Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, Sonya Lipsett-Rivera and Sergio Rivera Ayala (trans.), Wilmington: (Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 173. However, gardens could be read quite differently. The revolutionary government in France saw the botanical gardens of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle reflecting the collectivity of the 'nation' they were creating. Thus the laws that ordered nature were contiguous with republican law. Dorinda Outram, "New Spaces in Natural History," in *Cultures of Natural History*, N. Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary (eds.), Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 257-58.

¹⁸ Luis de la Rosa, "Jardines Antiguos de México," in *Obras*, 152.

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, New York: (Routledge, 1992), 175-76.

¹¹ Ortiz (1780-1833) was involved in colonization projects on the southern and northern frontiers of Mexico and wrote extensively on the need to make nature useful for settlement and the commerce of the nation. Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala, *Istmo de Tehuantepec*, Mexico City: (Editorial Citlaltépetl, 1966), 31 and 32.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6-8, 20.

¹³ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 30-1.

¹⁴ Luis de la Rosa, "Utilidad de las Plantas," in *Obras*, 85. Pratt notes that "the systematic surface mapping of the globe correlates with an expanding search for commercially exploitable resources, markets, and lands to colonize." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 30.

education, training and discipline of the enlightened lifestyle.

The Ordered City

Ideas about nature and botany were inextricably tied to ideas about the social order. It was not enough to simply educate the lower classes; they had to be brought within an ordered universe. This involved not only regulatory bodies like the police but the regularization of the physical space Mexicans inhabited. The nation was quantified, situating it statistically in relation to the rest of the modern world. In *México Considerado Como Nación Independiente y Libre* (1832), a work that sought to re-imagine the nation and society through enlightened reforms, Tadeo Ortiz described Mexico in terms of its length and width, its climate zones, its lowest and highest elevations, and the population. Mexico City was viewed in terms of its size, the number of people living there, its elevation and its longitude and latitude.¹⁹ He felt the capital, and by association the entire nation, required new public establishments to encourage public health and comfort and “in sum a new and mended order of things, [in order to be] considered as a metropolis of a nation independent and free.”²⁰ Streets were to be renamed and have their positions fixed within clearly defined neighbourhood and parish boundaries. The city was to be clean and symmetrical with open areas lined by trees where people might safely congregate.²¹

The desire among the Mexican elite for ordered urban centres and a disciplined society had its roots in ideas derived from the Enlightenment and European science. But just as often as they invoked the authority of science to justify their reform programs, intellectuals also utilized moral and religious thought. Indeed the two were often linked together. This is especially seen in efforts to educate the lower classes, where the religious reasons for pursuing education of the masses were plainly set out: “if the present life is no more than a preparation for the future life...the perfection of the faculties of the youth should be, for the friends of humanity, the

object of a profound and religious solicitude.”²² Reflecting this moral concern, Ortiz declared that education should inculcate “discipline, instruction, customs, religion, and...the details of the food, dress, exercise and practice of the daily regime.”²³ It would provide, not only direction as to how to act properly in daily life, but also give the students a sense of what their relationship to the state was going to be, “by means of...a director of the college who, not only is a head and a father of a family, but the leader of a tiny state.”²⁴

If order was to be instilled within the home it was also to be imposed on the city as a whole. When the Mexican intelligentsia looked upon their streets they saw chaos. Ortiz noted that the byways of Mexico City were “disturbed by the noise of the beggars, processions, bells... and the continuous reverences and obeisance that forces on the passer-by and trader the practices of a devotion poorly understood.”²⁵ Not only would it be more useful and convenient for industry and morality if such disturbances were limited or fell into disuse, he felt that it would also allow the populace to find a true understanding of religion.²⁶ Faith was to be internal: the external, the appeal to the senses, was rejected as primitive. Both Pamela Voekel and Juan Pedro Viquiera Albán have argued that enlightened Mexicans considered God beyond an empirical understanding in the sensual realm. True understanding could only be gained through the scriptures, with theology providing the proper religious interpretation and ensuring the elites’ authority in the realm of belief.²⁷ Yet, as *El Poder de Dios* suggests, God could also be studied through discerning the order of the universe and the functioning of its laws. I would suggest that these two forms of understanding were not contradictory for the elite; in fact, both were necessary for proper understanding. The design of nature was apparent, both within and in the surrounding world. In the same way that meaning could be drawn from the scriptures, nature’s plan could also be elucidated. The sensual appeal provided by processions and the baroque architecture and art of the churches was

¹⁹ Ortiz, *México Considerado Como Nación*, 328-32.

²⁰ Ibid., 320.

²¹ Ibid., 328-32. As Albán states, “houses, like trees, had to be of the same height and placed on a straight line. The city...had to be symmetrical, clean and pleasant. Viquiera Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness*, 173.

²² Quote from the seventeenth century French thinker Charles Rollin in Ortiz, *México Considerado Como Nación*, 115.

²³ Ibid., 108.

²⁴ Ibid., 108.

²⁵ Ortiz, *México Considerado Como Nación*, 318.

²⁶ Ibid., 318.

²⁷ Viquiera Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, 114. Voekel *Alone Before God*, 47, 48, 51, 62-6.

different because it did not lead to an understanding of the order of nature. In the elites' view, it was mere spectacle, intended to excite the senses and little more.²⁸

Enlightened reformers in Mexico sought to separate the superstition of the plebeians from 'authentic' faith, equating faith with reason.²⁹ The Church called upon Science when claims for miraculous and supernatural occurrences were made. Doctors and pharmacists were asked to analyze fluids exuding from the bones of the dead, among other things, to see if they were natural or the result of divine miracles.³⁰ Most often they pointed to natural causes for such occurrences because the reformers wanted to discourage the cult of saints that was deeply tied to the baroque piety of display. The external did not allow contemplation of the moral truths of religion or for moral struggle brought on by the light of God to the soul. God was in the hearts and souls of everyone, but only through proper preparation and stoicism could one truly reach him. It was recommended that the baroque decorations inside most churches be removed, as well as loud instruments, to allow for serious contemplation and modesty in worship.³¹ Piety was to be individual just as the family was to be autonomous, and in both cases discipline and education were central.

The Model Citizen

The model citizen envisioned by the elite faced constant threats. The sensations of urban life always threatened to overwhelm his modesty and discipline, especially in Mexico where the majority of people did not meet the standards of modern citizenry.³²

²⁸ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 28. The denigration of the wondrous in religious belief (the miracles of the saints, etc.) was part of the broader shift to emphasizing the uniformity of God's laws and the perfection of His design. God's power no longer lay in the ability to interject in nature with miracles but in the regularity of its laws, although presumably he could still unmake what he had made. Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Enlightenment*, 354-55.

²⁹ Voekel, *Alone Before God*, 52-54. Viquiera Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, 113-4.

³⁰ Rosalva Loreto López, "Las pruebas del milagro en el proceso de beatificación de la madre María de Jesús en los siglos XVIII y XIX," in *Historia de la Iglesia en el Siglo XIX*, Manuel Ramos Medina (ed.), Mexico City: (Centro de Estudios de Historia de México Condumex, 1998), 360-1.

³¹ Voekel, *Alone Before God*, 48-51, 55.

³² Who qualified as a citizen was determined by the same distinction mentioned earlier between 'el pueblo' and 'la

Even among those of a higher class too much stimulation could be problematic:

In the most animated *tertulias* [salons], in the largest circles, in which talents appear with their most brilliant embellishment, the spirit becomes sterilized, and the same efforts of imagination for developing the most splendid creations, are put in a state of languor and weariness.³³

Yet life could not be spent entirely in solitude, for balance and moderation were key. A person's actions had value depending on their usefulness for society, so thoughts struggled with in solitude needed to be expressed in public.³⁴ Nature, or rather the ordered nature of Natural History, offered a place for proper reflection away from the pressures and difficulties of modern life, but not so distanced that one could not reflect upon them. Solitude allowed the intellectual to "find the well-being which he had lost," for "how sweet [was] the commerce of men for one who has wandered among the silent woods."³⁵ In this way spiritual order and scientific order reinforced each other providing the defining element of the Mexican elite's worldview.

Conclusion

I suggested at the beginning of this piece that the Mexican elite saw themselves as echoing the efforts of God: they believed they were creating the universe and bringing light to darkness on the much smaller scale of the nation. Underlying this view was the belief that science and spirituality, faith and reason, were equivalent, and in fact were not

plebe.' 'El pueblo' were not necessarily citizens, however, they merely retained the capability to become so with the support of the state and education, while 'la plebe' was beyond the control of the state and a threat to it. To be called a citizen was also a clear sign of distinction, thus it would be applied only to those who were exemplary. In a sense it served as yet another category that the elite could use to differentiate themselves from the general populace. Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*, 70-1.

³³ Luis de la Rosa, "Pensamientos Sobre el Soledad," in *Obras*, 63.

³⁴ Annick Lempérière, "República y Publicidad a Finales del Antiguo Régimen (Nueva España)," in *Los Espacios Públicos en Iberoamérica: Ambigüedades y problemas, siglos XVIII y XIX*, François-Xavier Guerra and Annick Lempérière (eds), Mexico City: (Centro Francés de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, 1998), 71.

³⁵ de la Rosa, "Pensamientos Sobre el Soledad," 63 and 66.

divisible, one from the other, within a conception of nature predicated on the belief in order. The desire to create a culture of order, in which the institutions of the state would regulate the nation and the populace, derived from the influence of Enlightenment thought, particularly from the discipline of Natural History. The totalizing systems of nature constructed by the naturalist, in which every object was ordered in relation to others, were applied to the nation by Mexican intellectuals in the many reform projects they articulated following independence. That they saw a design behind the order further justified their attempts to regulate society, for nature, as created by God and understood by them, provided the model for what the nation was to be.

The desire for an enlightened ordered space was ultimately an attempt by the intelligentsia to differentiate their own values, beliefs and morals from those of the common classes. It allowed them the possibility of constructing an identity that elided the popular culture of the majority of the populace, in favour of an elite culture that sought to ally itself with the bourgeois culture of Europe that viewed Mexico as uncivilized. The culture of order that developed not only served to provide the elite with an identity distinct from the lower classes, it also acted as a justification for their control of the state and their dominance in society. In defining themselves as citizens within a specific imagining of the nation the Mexican elite reaffirmed their right to rule, a right which had been brought into question with independence and the formation of a new state predicated on liberal notions of equality. In doing so the burden of responsibility for the success or failure of the nation also fell into their hands, and the instability of this new creation led to relations with the lower classes that were alternately paternalistic or filled with fear. Both aspects of these relations led to a desire to replicate God's design in nature in order to create heaven on earth.

Selling the Nazi Dream: Advertisement of the Anti-Semitic Film in the Third Reich

Jennifer Lee, University of Victoria

Abstract

*The anti-Semitic films of Third Reich stand as a vivid illustration of the hatred targeted at the Jews in Germany from 1933 to 1945. Two of the anti-Semitic films in particular, *Jud Süß* (Veit Harlan, 1940) and *Der ewige Jude* (Fritz Hippler, 1940), have received much attention from academics and the general public. In this paper, however, I will examine two other films that have been largely ignored: *Robert und Bertram* (Hans Zerlett, 1939) and *Die Rothschilds* (Erich Waschneck, 1940). These two films show that anti-Semitism could adopt very different guises in Third Reich film; it could appear in a light-hearted humorous farce film, like *Robert und Bertram* or in a serious historical drama, like *Die Rothschilds*. Just as anti-Semitism took different forms, so did the image of the Jew. Advertisers of the films walked a fine line between displaying the Jew as a repulsive, evil figure on the one hand and displaying him as an attractive, saleable figure on the other. As a result, the character of the Jew, and his counterpart, the Aryan, were often portrayed in very contradictory manners. By examining how advertisers marketed the genre, plot and characters for each of these two films, I will show how conflicting images and messages dominated even this cornerstone of Nazi ideology, the anti-Semitic film.*

Introduction

Among all the films of the Nazi era, the anti-Semitic film stands out as an expression of Nazi ideology. These films serve as a vivid reminder of the strength of genocidal feelings in the Nazi regime. Historians have extensively studied two such films: *Jud Süß*, advertised as a “true” account of the life of the Jewish finance minister, Suss Oppenheimer, in the eighteenth-century; and *Der ewige Jude*, advertised as a “documentary” film, which depicted Jews in the ghetto – what the Nazis claimed was their natural habitat. I will, however, examine the promotion of two less well-known anti-Semitic films: *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*.

These two films show that anti-Semitism could adopt very different guises in Third Reich film; it could appear in a light-hearted humorous farce film, like *Robert und Bertram* or in a serious historical

drama, like *Die Rothschilds*. The films were written, directed and acted by very different sets of artists who had strong links to various genres and, as I will discuss, they were often advertised in very different manners. These differences raise the question: to what extent can historians group these films within an anti-Semitic genre? I will argue that while these films certainly contain significant anti-Semitic themes, which can be compared, it is important not to disregard the differences between them. Differences reveal how the National Socialist party and the film industry attempted to balance the political need to indoctrinate with the need to entertain the public.

Even the anti-Semitic themes in *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* were not straightforward. Commercial pressures, competing ideological agendas, a reliance on old narrative paradigms, and the need to entertain a paying audience all had an impact on the portrayal of Jews in these films. Also, as many historians have pointed out, the image of the Jew in Nazi society was fraught with contradictions and confusions.¹ The films were certainly not immune to this confusion; the National Socialist party and the film industry struggled with how best to construct their image of the Jew so that it both repelled and attracted the German public. They also struggled with how best to portray the Jew’s nemesis, the Aryan. Through a case study of *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*, I will examine two very different presentations of the Jews. I will address how advertisers marketed the genre, the plot and the characters for each in order to show how conflicting cultural tendencies dominated even this cornerstone of Nazi ideology.

¹ See for example, Albert Lindemann, *Esau’s Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) or Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews: The Genesis of the Holocaust* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989). Also, for a theoretical discussion of the nature of racial stereotyping (although this discussion is based on a study of colonialism) and how stereotypes are inherently ambivalent and contradictory see Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Plot Summaries

Robert und Bertram is set in the 1820s and details the adventures of two good-natured vagabonds. When we first meet Robert and Bertram, they are behind bars on charges of vagrancy. Jail has reunited these two mischievous friends who soon escape together into the surrounding Spree forest. Robert and Bertram encounter Lenchen, the pretty, blond daughter of a local restaurant owner, who promises them lunch in return for their dishwashing services. She tells them of her father's debts to a Jew named Mr. Biedermeier who threatens to foreclose the family business unless Lenchen marries him. However, Lenchen is in love with Michel, a local simpleton who cannot build up the courage to ask her to marry him. In an attempt to aid Lenchen, Robert and Bertram steal Biedermeier's wallet, but instead of money, they discover inside it a letter that details Biedermeier's debts to a powerful Jewish banker in Berlin named Nathan Ipelmeyer. Robert and Bertram set off to Berlin. Disguised as the Count of Monte Christo and the distinguished music professor Müller, they gain access to a party at Ipelmeyer's house. With the skill of well-practiced pickpockets they relieve the house and all its guests of jewels, which they promptly send to Lenchen's family in the mail. Lenchen is now free to marry Michel, who, on an army training vacation, has been transformed, the story tells us, into a real man. He boldly takes her into his arms and asks her to marry him. Meanwhile, the law has caught up with Robert and Bertram, who, in order to avoid returning to prison, escape in a hot air balloon that takes them up to heaven.

Die Rothschilds professes to give a "true" account of the rise in wealth of Nathan Rothschild, one of the first Rothschilds to internationalize the family business by becoming a broker on the London stock exchange.² The film opens with Nathan receiving his big break in the London business scene in 1806. The elector (prince) of the Germanic state of Hesse gives Nathan 600,000 pounds, which he invests successfully, buying gold from the East Indian Company for a reduced price and then lending it at high interest rates to the Exchequer (the office of

the British government that deals with public revenue). Nathan tries to ingratiate himself into high society in London through Sylvia, the beautiful wife of a competing banker. However, this plan fails since, although London businessmen and politicians are willing to conduct business with him, they are not willing to break bread with a Jew. The film skips forward in time to 1815; Napoleon has escaped from exile and has gathered an army to challenge the English and Prussians at Waterloo. Financial speculators eagerly await the outcome of Waterloo, and Nathan plans to be the first to know the outcome by posting a secret military courier at the battlefield. When he receives the news that Napoleon has been defeated, he instead sends out the rumor that England, not France, has lost, triggering international stock market panic in which brokers sell all their bonds at the low prices. Nathan buys up these bonds and makes millions, while many English syndicates go under. The film concludes with Nathan peering over a map, showing the branches of his business spreading out all over Europe. The Star of David lights up over the map indicating, in no uncertain terms, that the victory of Britain, through Nathan's underhanded actions, has become a victory of Jewry over Europe.

Background

Jews in Germany in the late 1930s constituted only approximately one percent of the total population. Their backgrounds were diverse; they were employed in various sectors of the economy and represented very different levels of wealth. Most had resided in Germany for several generations and had assimilated into their communities. Only approximately twenty percent were 'Eastern Jews' or those who had since World War I immigrated to Germany from impoverished parts of Eastern Europe. This group was generally the most visible, wearing typical Jewish clothing and living together in quarters of large cities.³ The Nazis associated all Jews with this latter group and use them as a basis to form their image of the stereotypical Jew, which was meant to apply to all Jews.

Robert und Bertram and *Die Rothschilds* were released in Germany only a year apart (in 1939 and 1940). Their timing coincided with the intensification of anti-Semitic laws and policies.

² The film does follow the major events of the life of Nathan Rothschild when he first went to London. See Richard Davis' *The English Rothschilds* (London: Collins, 1983) for an account of Nathan's life. He says that there has always been much speculation surrounding Nathan's buying up of stock after Waterloo, but he believes the amount he made off these stocks has often been exaggerated (see pages 35-36).

³ Information in this paragraph derived from William Carr, "Nazi Policy Against the Jews" in *Life in the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Bessel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Historians debate when the National Socialists actually conceived the organized mass extermination of the Jews, known as the Final Solution. However, most agree that the years 1938-39 (coinciding with the outbreak of World War II) represented a turning point in the government's policy towards the Jews.⁴ Prior to 1938 there had been important anti-Semitic legislation, including, in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws, which forbade marriage between Jews and Aryans and denied Jews their full citizenship rights. In 1938, however, the government began to officially sanction violence towards Jews, and anti-Semitic legislation intensified. *Robert und Bertram* was in production in 1938 when the events of the "Night of Broken Glass" unfolded; on November 9-10, party activists murdered ninety-one Jews, burnt down synagogues and vandalized numerous shops.⁵ In 1939, when *Robert und Bertram* was released and *Die Rothschilds* was in production, Germany invaded Poland, exposing the eastern Jewish populations to Nazi persecution. In 1940-41, when *Die Rothschilds* was in cinemas, Jewish movements were severely restricted and Jews were forced to wear a yellow star. By early 1942 construction began on the gas chambers and crematoria in Poland, sites where millions of Jews were murdered. Therefore, *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* were part of a wave of state-sanctioned moves against the Jews by the National Socialist party.

A Difference in Genre

Besides the significance of their production and release dates, *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* also contain several similarities in plot. Both are set in the early nineteenth-century. They contain similar portrayals of the Jew as an evil financier, and they both contain a subplot of a young Aryan couple that must overcome obstacles presented by the Jew in order to marry. Otherwise, *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* are very different films. The most obvious distinction is that the former is a fantastical, light-hearted musical comedy, whereas the latter is a serious historical drama.

In fact, advertisers for *Robert und Bertram* strongly emphasized the light-mindedness of the film. For example, a reviewer in 1939 wrote that the

film "play[s] with a lightness that knows how to cast away the bad mood from the minds of even the most depressed visitors...general cheerfulness is guaranteed."⁶ The main goal of the film was to provide release to its audience from their everyday responsibilities. *Robert und Bertram*'s genre is the farce.⁷ It is actually based on a farcical play of the same name composed in 1856 by Gustav Raeder.⁸ Although advertisers said that anti-Semitism existed in the original play, they also promoted the portrayal of the Jew in *Robert und Bertram* as something new. For instance, one reviewer wrote, "for the first time in a movie, Judaism is made the target of superior mockery that is certain of its impact. When Herbert Hübner [who plays the Jew Mr. Ipelmeyer] strides, like a Jew, pompously and desirously through his palace...the audience roars with laughter."⁹ The film farce, therefore, presents the Jew as a comical figure.

In contrast, the Jews in the *Die Rothschilds* are certainly not meant to invoke laughter. The film was advertised as educational, meant to enlighten its viewers of the serious Jewish and British threat. For instance, Joseph Goebbels, under the penname Dr. G., wrote an article about the film that appeared in *Der Stürmer*, the most infamous Nazi anti-Semitic journal, in which he stated, "Based on historical documents, the film shows the Jew as he really lived and haggled, exploited and enslaved peoples, plotted wars and gained millions from blood and misery."¹⁰ Goebbels' direct endorsement of this film pointed directly to its ideological significance as an anti-Semitic film.

In contemporary discourse, *Die Rothschilds* was most frequently classified as a 'historical truth' film. Articles and press booklets repeatedly pointed out that it was "Based on historical documents" and that

⁶ *Tobis Werbedienst* (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst, 1939).

⁷ A farce is quite a broad category, which can include any sort of comedic literature, theatre or film. Albert Bermel, in a study on the farce genre, lists the following identifying characteristics: it is usually a very physical, "knockabout humor"; it is by nature popular, always meant to appeal to a wide spectrum of the public; it promises a release from everyday behavior (including an emphasis on the trance, spell or dream world); and it often includes scenes with men in drag (*Farce: A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, p. 21).

⁸ Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 235.

⁹ "Robert und Bertram," *Film-Kurier*, July 15, 1939, Nr. 162, p. 3.

¹⁰ Dr. G., "Die Rothschilds," *Der Stürmer*, 1940, Nr. 35, p. 7.

⁴ See, for example, Albert Lindemann, *Esau's Tears*, William Carr "Nazi Policy Against the Jews" or Jackson Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany A History* by (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001).

⁵ William Carr, "Nazi Policy Against the Jews," p. 72-3.

“History co-authored this movie.”¹¹ However, at the same time that the advertisers were praising history as the path to truth about Jews, they also argued that historians did not always tell the truth: “A movie about the criminal ‘rise of the financial dictatorship over Europe! What was treated by the far too considerate historiography as unimportant and marginal becomes overwhelmingly telling and enlightening in the plot of this film created with historical accuracy.”¹² In such cases, films could be trusted to give a more accurate picture. For instance, Goebbels complained that historians downplayed or ignored “the criminal ‘rise’ of the [Jewish] financial dictatorship over Europe” but that *Die Rothschilds* would set the historical record straight.¹³ The word most commonly used for the act of showing people the truth was *Volksaufklärung* (the people’s enlightenment), a word that the Nazis considered almost synonymous with the word propaganda.¹⁴ *Volksaufklärung*, as a concept, was utilized repeatedly throughout the advertisements with promises that the film would trigger a collective German consciousness by exposing one of the major atrocities committed by Jews in history.

The stark differences between *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* in terms of how they were marketed illustrate the extent to which anti-Semitism could take very different guises in Third Reich film. Whereas in the former film, the Jew is meant to invoke laughter; in the latter, he is meant to invoke shock and to enlighten Germans about the ‘true’ nature of Jewish domination. Despite these differences, the image of the Jew in both films serves to invoke derision and hatred. In both films, he is the antagonist or villain, but his villainy does not negate all his attractive qualities, nor did the film advertisers believe it should do so. For instance, one reviewer of *Die Rothschilds* wrote, “all psychological experience shows that sinners are more interesting than pillar saints.”¹⁵ Therefore, advertisers sought to portray the Jew as a filmic villain that was repellent enough to fit the Nazi’s anti-Semitic mould, but also attractive enough to intrigue the German public.

The Jew as Antagonist

¹¹ *Ibid.* and Ufa Werbedienst (Berlin: Ufa-Filmverleih GmbH, 1940).

¹² *Ufa Presseheft*. Berlin: Klang-Film Gerät, 1940.

¹³ Dr. G, “*Die Rothschilds*,” *Der Stürmer*, 1940, Nr. 35, 7.

¹⁴ For instance, the Ministry of Propaganda was named the *Reichministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*.

¹⁵ Dr. Richard Biedrzyński, “*Isreals Waterloo*.”



Caricatures of the characters Mr. and Mrs. Ipelmeyer and Isadora Ipelmeyer emphasizing stereotypical “Jewish” traits. Located in the *Robert und Bertram Tobis Presseheft*. Courtesy of the *Filmmuseum*, Berlin.

There are several components to the image of the Jew in the advertisements for *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*. One component is the portrayal of the ghetto as being the Jew’s natural environment. This point is made repeatedly in *Die Rothschilds*, since the real Nathan Rothschild and his family did in fact come from the Jewish lane in Frankfurt. Advertisers also frequently depicted the ghetto as being overcrowded, unsanitary and the place of shady business dealings. For instance, a reviewer wrote, “After they were spit out by some Galician ghetto, they were sitting in another small grimy ghetto, the Jewish Lane in Frankfurt am Main.”¹⁶ The historian Baruch Gitlis points out that prior to the Third Reich the ghetto was normally associated only with the east Jewish immigrants to Western Europe; however, during the Nazi regime this association spread to all Jews and the National

¹⁶ “*Die Rothschilds: Zur Berliner Uraufführung*.”

Socialists were particularly eager to tie prominent Jews to origins in the ghetto.¹⁷

From the ghetto, the advertisements asserted, Jews would attempt to move into and infiltrate high society in the Western nations. In Nazi ideology, the Jew would try to “blend into German society and erase his Otherness.”¹⁸ In both *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*, while the Jew may succeed in entering the business world, he does not do as well in the social world. This is because although his special, and allegedly inherent, Jewish talent with finances will always appeal to greedy Aryans (like the English in *Die Rothschilds*), even these Aryans will not be able to sufficiently overcome their natural repugnance of Jews in order to socialize with him. The Jew, therefore, while attractive in the business world, is repulsive in the social world and his attempts to enter the latter are thwarted by his inability to hide his innate Jewishness. A scene from *Robert und Bertram* emphasizes this point by comparing the Jew to a fat man who can never hide his belly: the banker Ipelmeyer, “I have a secret...I am an Israelite” to which the robust Bertram responds “I also have a secret...I have a belly.” Several scenes in both films mock the Jew’s imitation of a high society lifestyle; these scenes were prominent in the advertisements. For instance, an article on *Robert und Bertram* describes how when the two vagabonds first approach Ipelmeyer he is sitting in the Café Kranzler, an actual café on the elegant *Unter den Linden* street, attempting to look the part of a member of Berlin high society.¹⁹ Robert and Bertram similarly try to disguise themselves in the café by adopting the personas of the Count of Monte Christo and Müller. In their ridiculous disguises, they mock the Jew’s obvious attempt to disguise himself as a member of German high society.

In the description of the scenes where the Jew imitates the upper class, the advertisements asserted that the Jew could not hide his true nature behind such an appearance. However, advertisements also professed that the ability of the Jew to successfully hide his identity was his most dangerous talent. As already discussed, the Jew was often presented as disguised or masked. The purpose of the film was then to expose the Jew; *Die Rothschilds* was touted as “a great German film about the unmasking of

Judas.”²⁰ The Jew was also portrayed as a formless or invisible entity – a metaphysical threat. For instance, a *Die Rothschilds* press booklet threatened, “on the sky over Europe a pale, ghostly gleam flashes, radiating from the new alliance, the star of the English-Jewish plutocracy.”²¹ The Jew had no boundaries: the Rothschilds were supposedly a “pernicious super-national power” who easily spread their influence from one country to the next.²² Coinciding with this lack of boundaries was the frequent portrayal of the Jew as a traveler without real roots or a real home.²³

Characterizing the Jew as a formless and masked being who could blend into any foreign surrounding obviously presented difficulties for portraying his or her physical appearance. Using cartoon caricatures, the Nazis developed a stereotypical appearance for Jews; the Jew was portrayed as short and stocky, with dark, curly hair, an elongated nose and dark shifty eyes. In advertising photographs, the Rothschilds and the Ipelmeyers epitomize this look. In *Robert und Bertram*’s case, caricatures show stereotypical “Jewish” features. However, some of the Jewish characters in this film do not possess the stereotypical look. In particular, the young Jews in *Robert und Bertram*, namely Lenchen’s suitor, Mr. Biedermeier, and Ipelmeyer’s daughter, Isadora, are more attractive, Aryan-looking characters (with lighter skin and fitter bodies), suggesting perhaps that the younger generation of Jews is increasingly able to blend into German society.



Film still from *Jud Süß* depicting Dorothea Sturm and Süß Oppenheimer. Courtesy of the Filmmuseum.

¹⁷ “Redemption” of Ahasuerus: *The Eternal Jew in Nazi Film* (New York: Holmfirth Books, 1991), p. 97.

¹⁸ Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, p. 238.

¹⁹ “Unter’n Linden, unter’n Linden...Die historische Kranzler-Ecke im Film,” *Tobis Presseheft* (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst GmbH, 1939).

²⁰ *Ufa Presseheft* (Berlin: Klang-Film Gerät, 1940).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ufa Webedienst* (Berlin: Ufa-Filmverleih, 1940).

²³ *Ibid.*

Several historians discuss the attractive nature of the Jew in Nazi-era films (most often in relation to *Jud Süß*). In *Jud Süß*, the Jew is transformed into an attractive character, able to erase almost all of his Jewishness when he enters German high society. The popular actor Ferdinand Marian was cast in the role of Süß and apparently after appearing in the film, he received numerous letters from love struck fans.²⁴ Schulte-Sasse compares the Jew in anti-Semitic films to another attractive villain: the vampire in horror films. She argues that both exude incredible erotic energy that allows them to lure in the unsuspecting: "One might say that precisely what makes *Jud Süß* work as a film, with its codified organization of desire, undermines it as anti-Semitism."²⁵ In *Robert und Bertram*, one can see the attractive nature of the Jew starting to appear in the younger Jewish characters, and even old Mr. and Mrs. Ipelmeyer are attractive in terms of their comical appeal. The Jewish characters in *Die Rothschilds* do not really hold a similar appeal. In fact, Régine Friedman argues that the film did not succeed at the box office quote "precisely because it systematically avoided implementing the process of visual pleasure and identification."²⁶ The Jew in *Die Rothschilds*, therefore, was not attractive enough for audiences. However, advertisers worried that putting images of the Jew and Jewish symbols on screen and on advertising posters could give the images an unintended significance. For instance, in the press booklet, the industry directed advertisers to use the Star of David on posters for the film, but they instructed them to be careful to clearly delineate this image a negative one:

It is essential to operate very carefully and skillfully with it; this symbol should only be used according to its strict meaning in the decoration of the theatre, so that it does not give the impression of having a purpose separate from the film! Let our respective designs be your sole example and guideline and only bring the symbol into context with typically Jewish picture presentations – meaning for instance with the heads of the Rothschilds – or with texts that describe the typical Jew negatively.²⁷

²⁴ Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, p. 120.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 81.

²⁶ "Male Gaze and Female Reaction: Veit Harlan's *Jew Süß* (1940)," *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions*, eds. Sarah Frieden, et al. (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993), p. 121.

²⁷ *Ufa Presseheft* (Berlin: Klang-Film Gerät, 1940).

Therefore, National Socialism and the industry walked a fine line between displaying the Jew as a repulsive, evil figure on the one hand and displaying him or her as an attractive, saleable figure on the other.

The Aryan as Protagonist

In *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*, the Jewish antagonists are made very obvious to the potential viewer; the Jews have distinguishing names, physical features and personality traits. However, the same cannot be said of the protagonists; they are not as clearly drawn as the Jews. In fact, the advertisers seemed to have made a conscious effort to point out the heroes of the film, suggesting that they were not otherwise readily apparent. The Aryan characters in the two films are actually more anti-heroes than heroes; in *Robert und Bertram* they are two delinquent vagabonds and in *Die Rothschilds* they are the greedy and power-mongering British. In fact, the lack of true heroes may be said to have plagued all the anti-Semitic films; many historians discuss how the Aryan male often appeared insipid and uninteresting compared to his Jewish counterpart.²⁸

In both *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*, the Aryan couple represents the ideal. In the former film, Lenchen and Michel are the ideal couple, while in the latter film, Phyllis, the daughter of an English banker, and George Crayton, an officer in the English army, make up the Aryan couple. In both films, the couples are stereotypically blond and bright-eyed and their love together is portrayed as very innocent and natural. The Jewish characters and their evil plans threaten to come between the Aryan couple. The underlying message inherent in this portrayal is that the Jew threatens procreation and thus the continuation of a pure- blood Aryan generation.

In both films, the ideal Aryan male is a soldier; Crayton is an officer in the English army and Michel becomes a corporal in the Prussian army. It is only as a soldier that the Aryan is truly able to become a man and defy the Jew. For instance, in *Die Rothschilds*, when George Crayton, in his duties as a military courier, discovers Nathan Rothschild's plan to manipulate the stock market by lying about the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo, he rushes back to

²⁸ See, for example, Karsten Witte, "The Invisible Legacy of Nazi Cinema," *New German Critique* 24-25 (1981-1982), p. 252, Antje Acheid, *Hitler's Heroines* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), p. 37, or Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, p. 81-2.

London to expose this plan to the English businessmen. In *Robert und Bertram*, prior to entering the army, Michel is portrayed as indecisive, shy and simple-minded. Most importantly, he is unable to build up the courage to ask Lenchen to marry him even though Biedermeier, the Jew, is competing for her attentions. In fact, the press booklet described Michel's character as a *Hampelmänner*, a 'Jumping Jack' puppet, who has no mind of his own: "A real woman doesn't want a puppet for a husband. That is as much a fact as water is wet. But then, some men pretend to be real men and then turn out to be true puppets during the marriage, as weaklings that suffer being hit by their angry wives with a cleaning rag."²⁹ The article then stated that the army can transform puppets like Michel into real men. It read, "he joins the army and when he returns he is a true man without the psychological and cowardly restraints. Then he doesn't hesitate long, he takes Lenchen into his arms and kisses her. Then, finally, she knows he is not a puppet." At this point in the film, Michel finally stands up to Mr. Biedermeier, telling him to leave Lenchen alone. Through the military drill machine Michel is defeminized and reborn a man. Of course, it is ironic that the Aryan male needs to undergo such a rigorous transformation process in order to become a true man.³⁰

The Jew and the Aryan Mirrored

As a soldier and as the natural lover of the Aryan woman, the Aryan male is the complete antithesis of the Jewish male. However, the Jew and the Aryan do not always counter each other, in fact sometimes they mirror one another. Several historians have discussed this phenomenon. Eric Rentschler, in a discussion of *Jud Süß*, argues that by creating the Jew as a necessary counterpart to the Aryan, the Nazis connected the images so closely that they became co-dependent. Rentschler states: "In fabricating this counter identity, the Nazis constituted a double, a self that they could acknowledge only in the form of a reverse image...under his mask: the Semite is an Aryan."³¹

²⁹ "Männer und Hampelmänner," *Tobis Presseheft* (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst, 1939).

³⁰ See, for example, George Mosse, *The Image of Man* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 158, or Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, p. 242.

³¹ Rentschler discusses how the films' cuts and dissolves often create parallels between the Aryan and the Jew: "The repetition of gestures and words by different characters establishes links and dissolves borders between

There are certainly parallels between the Aryan and the Jew in *Robert und Bertram* as the two main characters exhibit many stereotypical Jewish character traits. Like the Jew, Robert and Bertram are travelers, without any home or roots to one particular place. As vagabonds, they are societal outsiders and their escape to heaven in a hot air balloon at the end of the film, reinforces the fact that they cannot be rewarded for their good deeds within any society on earth. Also, like the Jew, Robert and Bertram often don disguises and do so to invade the spaces of others; they disguise themselves as the Count of Monte Christo and the music professor Müller in order to gain access to the Ipelmeyer house. Their similarities to the Jew allow them to trick him – they are able to beat him at his own game of disguise. While Robert and Bertram may be similar to the Jew, there is one crucial difference: Robert and Bertram lie outside the capitalist system; they represent pre-industrial artisans or journeymen who are left to wander unemployed as vagabonds because they have no role in a new modern capitalist system. This makes them immune to Jewish seduction since the Nazi regime claimed that the Jew operated by appealing to material greed within a capitalist system. However, this distinction was not sharp enough for some Nazis; Hitler apparently protested against Robert and Bertram's characters, claiming that they were not sufficiently virtuous to represent German Aryans.³²

Another area of discomfort for advertisers was the Aryan actor who played the Jew on screen. The actor, in general, exhibited some uncomfortable parallels with the Jew. Like the Jew, the actor was a dissembler; both had a talent for adopting the appearance and personality of others. However, the Aryan actor playing the Jew was an obvious area of unease for the National Socialists. Uneasiness was evident in the advertisements for *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds*, which repeatedly mentioned that the 'real' personality of the actor was not Jewish in the least. The advertisements emphasized that it was difficult for the Aryan to play a Jew on screen, involving self-denial on the part of the Aryan actor. These articles stressed that the actors needed to undergo a transformation or a masking in order to hide their natural Aryan traits and adopt those of the Jew. In an interview, Hans Zerlett, director of *Robert und Bertram*, claimed that this transformation

the Jew and his Aryan counterparts." *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 163.

³² Dorothea Hollstein, *Jud Süß und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Ullstein Materialien, 1971), p.52.

was so complete that on the set no one would recognize his actors as Aryans: "It is obvious that the six Jewish roles in the film had to be played by non-Jews, but the masks – a least to judge after the screen tests – are so real that nobody will doubt the reality of my Semites."³³ Some of Zerlett's actors expressed concern with being associated with a Jewish persona. For example, Tatjana Sais, who plays Ipelmeyer's daughter Isadora, stated in an interview, "You know, it is a somewhat strange feeling to be identified in the consciousness of the public as a Jewish girl. I noticed that in the horrified gazes with which many visitors sized us up during the filming period."³⁴ The advertisers made a conscious effort to distinguish the actor and the Jew. What supposedly lay at the heart of the Jew's evil nature was the purposeful manipulation of his surface appearance, while inside he remained unchanged. The advertisers therefore argued that while the Jew's act of disguising himself involved craftiness and a conscious effort, the actor supposedly just drew on pure spontaneous emotions:

Oftentimes, the development of the opponent's personality demands from the author a specific knowledge of the soul and psychological depth, and from the actor the gift of showing a real human face, that, in the moment of creation does not only derive its expressiveness from the brain, but from the re-feeling of emotions.³⁵

In this way, the Aryan actor's ability to become fully immersed in the character was actually seen as far more sincere and honest. Nevertheless, the fact that the advertisers needed to point out this difference suggests that the distinctions were not immediately clear – there was an uncomfortable similarity between the Aryan actor and the Jew.

Women and the Jew

One final theme that appeared in the advertising for *Robert und Bertram* and *Die Rothschilds* involves gender identities. This theme may be split into two categories: the Jewish woman and the relationship of the Jewish male to the Aryan woman. In anti-Semitic film and in Nazi ideology as a whole, the Jewish woman was a much less prominent figure than the Jewish man. In Nazi ideology, the Jewish male, after all, was seen to be the larger threat; he

was more likely to enter positions of power in business and politics and he posed a dangerous sexual threat because he sought to actively contaminate the Aryan blood chain. In *Die Rothschilds* and *Jud Süß*, there are no major female Jewish characters. In *Robert und Bertram*, in contrast, there are two: Mrs. Ipelmeyer and Isadora Ipelmeyer. Like their men, they are portrayed as conniving, pretentious and garish. Advertisers especially attributed this last trait to the women, since they, like the Jewish male's house, represented a physical manifestation of the Jew's attempt to mimic an upper class lifestyle. Another important aspect of the female Jew is her lasciviousness, as clearly depicted in the two Ipelmeyer women: Mrs. Ipelmeyer makes sexual gestures towards Bertram even when sitting right next to her husband, while Isadora shamelessly flirts with several suitors at a time. The character of Isadora, however, possessed more threatening qualities than her mother. A review of the film stated:

Very skillfully, the generation-problem is treated: Ipelmeyer's daughter was not born in Lodz, but was raised in Berlin and received an expensive education. She speaks French, is embarrassed by her parents, and is not comical any more, but she is a self-assured and intelligent person that only rarely loses her composure. Therefore, she is the type that contributed directly to the success of the Jews before 1933.³⁶

Therefore, Isadora represented a new generation of Jews who were supposedly better able to hide their innate Jewishness because they had achieved a degree of acculturation into Aryan society. As the article points out, Isadora was the most dangerous type of Jew because her outer appearance and personality allowed her to more easily infiltrate and spread her influence into Aryan society. Of course, her danger was attributed mostly to her youth by reference to the generational gap between her and her parents, rather than her gender. However, the filmmakers chose to represent a daughter rather than a son. Her gender – her beautiful, exotic appearance as seen in the actress' press photo – was used to enhance her dangerous seductive qualities.

Unlike the Jewish woman, the Aryan woman is an essential character in anti-Semitic film. As the object of the Jew's greedy gaze, she is portrayed as the ultimate victim of the Jew's machinations.

³³ "Das Lokalstück: Die menschliche Komödie."

³⁴ "Ein beinah genormtes Interview" Tobis Presseheft (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst, 1939).

³⁵ "Das grosse Erlebnis des Schauspielers" Tobis Presseheft (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst, 1939).

³⁶ "Robert und Bertram" Film Kurier, July 15, 1939, Nr. 162, p.3.

Because of this, the Aryan woman, above all else, needs to be protected by the Aryan male because she is the key to racial purity in future generations. Dorothea, in *Jud Süß*, is the ultimate Aryan female: passive, emotionally and physically pure and naïve in her innocence. Her naivety leads her to inadvertently help Süß; he actually enters the town of Württemberg on her carriage after his breaks down. In fact, this scene directly parallels a scene in *Die Rothschilds* when Nathan gives Sylvia a ride in his carriage after her carriage breaks down, an offer that is part of his plans to seduce Sylvia and to gain a footing into London high society. Therefore, she, like Dorothea, is the gateway for the male Jew into the Aryan world. However, the similarities between Sylvia and Dorothea end here. Sylvia is portrayed as a very intelligent and assertive woman. Unlike Dorothea, who is completely ignorant of the Jew's evil plans, Sylvia is portrayed as one of the only Londoners who sees through Nathan Rothschild's wealthy facade.³⁷ Similarly, in *Robert und Bertram*, Lenchen is the one who stands up to Mr. Biedermeier, until Michel becomes a soldier at the end of the film. The image of the Aryan woman was not constant in all the anti-Semitic films; filmmakers wavered between depicting her as naïve and innocent, and depicting her as strong and assertive – sometimes the only one fighting off the advances of the Jew.

Conclusion

Several historians have argued that the National Socialists were trying to perfect their image of the Jew on screen throughout the years 1938 to 1941.³⁸ They point to *Robert und Bertram* as being among the first attempts at this endeavor; the film is lighter and less serious than earlier films in its approach, but nevertheless succeeds in “transforming the image of the Jew from comical and grotesque to dangerous and sinister.”³⁹ *Die Rothschilds* swings to the other side of the pendulum, providing a very heavy-handed approach, detailing every insidious characteristic of the Jew. *Jud Süß* supposedly balances these two approaches, providing enlightenment by portraying the Jew as a serious economic and racial menace to

Aryan society, and the entertainment aspects by providing a compelling plot and a seductive Jewish character. In Nazi anti-Semitic ideology, there was a great deal of uncertainty, contradiction and confusion over the representation of the Jew. However, the medium of film presented a unique challenge. Its popular appeal and the emotional and physical involvement of the audience offered to intensify anti-Semitism by making the Jew appear as a very real and present danger. However, by placing the Jew on screen and in film advertisements, Nazi-era filmmakers established him as a commodity to be consumed by the German public. His image needed to attract ticket buyers and captivate audiences during the screening, while still repulsing them with its anti-Semitic messages. The image of Jew, therefore, occupies an unstable position in the Third Reich film since it had to both disgust and appeal to the German public.

³⁷ *Ufa Presseheft* (Berlin: Klang-Film Gerät, 1940).

³⁸ While these historians often fail to mention that the production of these films often overlapped and thus there was little time in between them for one to have an effect on the other, they do capture a sense of how the image of the Jew is constantly transforming on the screen during this period.

³⁹ Baruch Gitlis, “Redemption” of Ahasuerus, p. 109.

Cultivating Good Human Resources: Morality, Conformity and Marginalization in an Indonesian State Development Ideology

Jenny Munro, University of Victoria

Abstract

Scholars of Indonesia argue that the state has a long history of using development ideology to regulate behaviour, define gender roles, and judge the conduct of citizens. Through a critical examination of state discourse in national newspapers, this paper draws attention to “human resource development” as an ideology used by the government to promote conformity and morality. Looking at discourse on “human resource development” in Indonesia’s easternmost province of Papua, I argue that the ideology is highly entangled in state politics, and obscures marginalization in Papua.

Introduction

For the last five decades, the priority of national development (*pembangunan*) has permeated local lives in Indonesia. By “development,” I mean a focus on economic development believed to overcome poverty and backwardness. For example, according to the government, citizens should be devoted to national development.¹ In Indonesia, the state has a language of development that includes mental, moral and spiritual improvement. Because they should be devoted to national development, they should use family planning.²

¹ Michael Van Langenberg, “The New Order State: Language, Ideology, Hegemony,” in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman (Melbourne, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990); Suzanne Brenner, “On the Public Intimacy of the New Order: Images of Women in the Popular Indonesian Print Media,” *Indonesia* 67 (1999) 13-37; Cynthia Hunter, “Women as ‘Good Citizens’: Maternal and Child Health in a Sasak Village” in *Maternal and Reproductive Health in Asian Societies*, ed. Pranee L. Rice and Lenore Manderson, (Australia: Harwood Academic Press, 1996), 169-189.

² Lynda Newland, “The Deployment of the Prosperous Family: Family Planning in West Java,” *NWSA Journal* 13 (2001) 22-48; Helen Pausacker, “Dalangs and family planning propaganda in Indonesia,” in *Love, Sex and Power: Women in Southeast Asia*, ed. Susan Blackburn (Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University Press, 2001), 89-114.

Development ideology defines appropriate gender roles³ and “proper” ways of living. From the perspective of the Indonesian government, people in isolated areas of the country should re-make their lifestyles in line with the priorities of national development, by reorganizing the layout of their villages, planting crops that are approved by the government, adhering to a designated world religion, and showing allegiance to Indonesian political, economic and cultural beliefs over their own customs.⁴ Scholars have argued that these values and practices mean that the Indonesian government uses ideologies of development to make moral claims about how citizens should behave.⁵ This paper critically examines the concept of developing the “human resources” (*sumber daya manusia*) in Indonesia, arguing that although largely overlooked by scholars, it is, like family planning and programs for “isolated” populations, also an attempt to regulate behaviour and promote good conduct.⁶ The concept of “human resource development” highlights the role that local people play in development, which makes it a powerful means to celebrate the cultures, qualities or conformity of local people or to belittle and blame them for “underdevelopment.” After providing background information on Papua and reviewing the concept of “development” in Indonesia, this paper will discuss the nature of “human resource development” using examples of state discourse from national newspapers *Kompas* and *The Jakarta Post*. Scholars of Indonesia have

³ Laurie J. Sears, “Introduction: Fragile Identities,” in *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, ed. Laurie J. Sears (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 1-44.

⁴ Tania Murray Li, “Compromising Power: Development, Culture, and Rule in Indonesia,” *Cultural Anthropology* 14 (1999) 295-322; Tania Murray Li, “Marginality, Power and Production: Analysing Upland Transformations,” in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands: Marginality, Power and Production*, ed. Tania Murray Li (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 1-44.

⁵ Brenner, 22-23; Newland, 23, 37; Hunter, 169, 186-7; Li, “Compromising Power,” 300-302.

⁶ See Loren Rytter, “Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto’s Order?” in *Violence and the State in Suharto’s Indonesia*, ed. Benedict Anderson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 137-138, for a brief discussion of “human natural resources” in Indonesia.

consistently argued that the Indonesian government uses the national media as a tool to disseminate development ideology, and to encourage the public to support national development.⁷ In fact, “national narratives of development and modernization” are said to be strongly evident in popular print media in Indonesia.⁸ My discussion of “human resource development” in Indonesia will demonstrate that this ideology is understood to include more than just skill development or education; it promotes conformity and morality among citizens for the sake of national development. Second, this paper will examine state discourse on “human resources” in Indonesia’s easternmost province of Papua, showing that this ideology promotes acquiescence and moral education for Papuans. Because it also blames Papuans for “underdevelopment” or “backwardness” in the province, I argue that the Indonesia’s use of the ideology of “human resource development” obscures marginalization and inequality in Papua.

Indonesian Rule and Papuan Resistance

Papua, occupying the western half of the island of New Guinea, is home to two million people, approximately half of whom are indigenous Papuans of Melanesian descent. Traditionally, Papuans were, and sometimes are, organized into small, autonomous tribal groups engaged in farming or fishing. The variation in Papuan landscapes is reiterated in the variety of languages and cultural practices of the indigenous people.⁹

Papua is the easternmost province of Indonesia. It is an area that was essentially colonized by Indonesia in the 1960s.¹⁰ Indonesian rule has

continued largely against the wishes of the one million indigenous Papuans who live there. State practices include military operations against civilians, involving killing and torture, forced relocation, migration of Indonesians who are dominant in business and in politics, as well as racist attempts to destroy Papuan cultures.¹¹

This area has the poorest health care and education services in the country,¹² and is home to an emerging HIV/AIDS crisis. In 2001, health authorities in the province stated that there were just 599 cases of HIV/AIDS. In 2003, authorities have announced that there are 1,398 cases, although they call this estimate the “tip of the iceberg.”¹³ While just 1% of Indonesia’s population of 220 million lives in Papua province, 40% of Indonesia’s HIV/AIDS cases are found there.

The province is also a center of political resistance. An active movement for independence continues to evolve, supported by some church leaders, political activists, Papuans in diaspora, and with a strong following in many rural areas of the province.

1,025 members of referendum councils handpicked by Indonesia. The members voted unanimously to join Indonesia, and the UN General Assembly formally acknowledged the outcome. The new province of Indonesia was called Irian Jaya, and the indigenous people, Irianese. In 2000, the name of Papua, preferred by many Papuans, was officially permitted. Nonetheless, the terms Irian Jaya and Irianese continue to be used. Since Indonesia colonized Papua in 1969, Papuans have been staging periodic flag-raising to call attention to long-standing aspirations for independence (*merdeka*). See Danilyn Rutherford, “Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order and a Flag Raising,” in *Violence and the State in Suharto’s Indonesia*, ed. Benedict Anderson (New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 2001) for an analysis of “flag-raising.”

¹¹ Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People* (UK: TAPOL, 1988); Chris Ballard, “Papua,” *Contemporary Pacific* 14 (2002): 467-476.

¹² Roosmalawati Rusman, “Youth, Education and Employment in Irian Jaya,” in *Perspectives on the Bird’s Head of Irian Jaya, Indonesia: Proceedings of the Conference, Leiden, 13-17 October 1997*, ed. Jelle Miedema, Cecilia Ode, and Rien A.C. Dam (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 364-384; Leslie Butt, Jenny Munro and Joanna Wong, “Border Testimonials: Patterns of AIDS Awareness across New Guinea,” *Papua New Guinea Medical Journal*, forthcoming.

¹³ Dean Yates, Reuters, “AIDS nightmare looms in Indonesia’s Papua,” September 10, 2003.

⁷ David T. Hill, *The Press in New Order Indonesia* (Nedlands, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 1994), 139.

⁸ Brenner, 15.

⁹ Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People* (UK: TAPOL, 1988).

¹⁰ Papua, like the rest of what is now Indonesia, was colonized by the Dutch. Indonesia became an independent country in 1945, but the Dutch and the Indonesians disagreed over ownership of Papua, which the Dutch called West New Guinea. There was some talk on the part of the Netherlands about helping Papuans to create an independent country. During the dispute (1949-1962) the area was called West Irian. In 1962, the New York Agreement was ratified by the United Nations. It gave Indonesia administrative control of the area, pending a referendum of self-determination by Papuans. The vote for self-determination was not administered as promised. Rather, in 1969, an ‘Act of Free Choice’ was held amidst widespread political unrest and resistance. It involved

Developing “Good Conduct”

“Development” in Indonesia is associated with ideas about mental, moral and spiritual development.¹⁴ It is promoted as a way to overcome poverty, backwardness, and isolation. According to the Indonesian state, these are hallmark features of “underdevelopment.” For 33 years former president Suharto was styled as the “Father of Development” (*Bapak Pembangunan*), and his government, the “Development Order.” In the 1990s, dissent from the principles of “development” was potentially subversive.¹⁵ The lives of local people were saturated with the imperative of development, and many ways of life were targeted as “traditional” and therefore problematic for development. The ideology of national development was taught in the national school system, and young people, before graduation, were sent to villages to promote activities related to national development.¹⁶ Other young people were sent to the outer islands of Indonesia to teach ethnic minorities “proper” ways of eating, dressing, speaking, and making a living.¹⁷ In other words, “development” defined and articulated a moral order, complete with codes of evaluation used to judge local people, particularly indigenous minorities deemed primitive. In the post-Suharto era (1998-present), development remains a core component of state power.¹⁸ Both the ideology of “development” and the government programs that arise from it communicate correct conduct for citizens.¹⁹ One site where the state uses development to shape conduct is through programs that “define a complete set of ethics,” on the grounds that certain conduct is necessary for national development.²⁰ The following section explores state discourse on “human resource development” using examples from Indonesia’s national newspaper, *Kompas*.

¹⁴ Hunter, 169.

¹⁵ Van Langenberg, 124.

¹⁶ Helmut Weber, “The Indonesian Concept of Development and Its Impact on the Process of Social Transformation,” in *Continuity, Change, and Aspirations: Social and Cultural Life in Minahasa, Indonesia*, eds. Helmut Buchholt and Ulrich Mai (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), 196.

¹⁷ Richard Chauvel and Ikrar Nusa Bakti, *The Papua Conflict: Jakarta’s Perceptions and Policies* (Hawaii: East-West Center Policy Studies, 2004).

¹⁸ Li, “Compromising Power,” 300.

¹⁹ Li, “Compromising Power,” 296-297.

²⁰ Newland, 23.

“Human Resource Development”

In the 1960s and 1970s, international organizations paid new attention to economic development in Indonesia and elsewhere. Under the administration of Suharto (1965-1998) national economic development in Indonesia was given top priority. Development initiatives emphasized technological advancement, and required new types of citizens, accomplished in “technology,” “management” and “leadership.”²¹

“Human resource development” is typically understood as the improvement of the skills or education of “manpower,” or “the workforce.” In Indonesia, “human resource development” is understood as much more than the development of a skilled workforce. Human resource development includes religion, education, health, and morality. Government officials described a program to develop human resources as follows:

This program to improve the human resources will include a variety of sectors such as religion, education, health, social welfare, agriculture, and other aspects which can improve the quality of one’s self and the morality of the people.²²

In the above quote, human resource development is ultimately understood to include any interventions or efforts that involve self-improvement and/or the improvement of public virtue. According to former president Habibie, human resource development is defined by the 5K: for “*kualitas*” (quality), namely, quality of faith and piety, quality of life, quality of work, quality of creative labour, and the quality of the intellectual life of the Indonesian people.²³

Current President Megawati and Vice President Hamzah Haz are also strong proponents of human resource development. Like other state authorities, they talk about human resources in such a way as to promote ways of behaving and thinking that benefit national development, in the arenas of education, health, faith, morality, skills. For example, President Megawati interprets human resource development to include such things as “attitude” and “way of

²¹ Gordon Means, *The Rural Sector and Human Resource Development in Indonesia* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto-York University Joint Centre on Modern East Asia’s Southeast Asia/ASEAN Project, 1985), 15.

²² *Kompas*, “Tahun 2002, Sultra Prioritaskan Investasi SDM,” December 17, 2001.

²³ *Kompas*, “Muktamar III ICMI Dibuka Tingkatkan SDM Melalui ‘5K’,” November 10, 2000.

thinking,” and promotes these virtues as necessary for national progress.

Kindergarten is a decisive factor in the formation of Indonesian character in national life. Character is evident in point of view and way of thinking, along with attitude and behaviour, and must be implanted through lessons beginning when children are still in kindergarten. If the nation is currently troubled with many new problems, stemming from the *reformasi* [reform] movement, it is indicative of the unpreparedness of the human resources. This includes immaturity in perspective that affects the nation. The mindset must be implanted from a young age through education and teachings. I think this is important because, in the first place, the problem of mindset is tightly interconnected with the formation of attitude, behaviour, point of view and way of thinking...It is best if these features are shaped early on. It is the early lessons in life that determine the development of the soul of the child, this development in turn can plant the seeds of the values of togetherness, tolerance, and fellowship so that youth will later become strong seeds for creation of the human resources.²⁴

In the above quote, the development of human resources is understood to include certain values such as togetherness as well as “point of view.” Character must be implanted from a young age so that children will become strong human resources. “Human resources” are understood to be synonymous with “citizens”; Megawati suggests that the nation is having a difficult time because citizens/human resources have not been educated about, or prepared with, certain values that benefit the nation. Thus, the moral education of children into human resources is also used to make a statement to the population at large about important virtues for “Indonesian national life.” Youth, called the “*generasi masa depan*,” or the generation of the future, are given a special focus in human resource development, demonstrated by the statements of the Minister of Health, Achmad Sujudi in 2000:

Healthy human resources are the capital of successful local development. Children with good nutrition, free from diseases and health problems, and who are living in a physical and

social environment that is pleasant and comfortable, will grow up to become the next generation of high quality that can bring the nation and the people of Indonesia into the arena of global competition.²⁵

In Indonesia, human resource development has taken on new moral properties, such as “ways of thinking,” and “virtues.” In state discourse, human resource development is understood to require character building, right ways of thinking, and devotion to the state’s agenda of national development. Called “the generation of the future,” the development of young people as good-quality human resources is also a priority.

The above examples show state authorities promoting conformity and intimate an agenda of evaluation. The following section shows that evaluation and conformity are also evident in language about marginalized ethnic minorities such as Papuans.

Human Resource Development and Marginal Peoples

Indonesia is home to approximately 220 million people dispersed unevenly over 6,000 islands. The world’s largest archipelago is a land of diversity, but diversity does not mean equality. In fact, heterogeneity sometimes obscures hierarchy:

In contemporary Indonesia, people and their ways of living in the “uplands” have been marked as both different and deficient in and through state discourses.²⁶

Under Suharto’s “development” regime (1965-1998), tribal people came to be classified according to their overriding shared cultural trait - their primitiveness.²⁷ Anna Tsing describes the state’s evaluation of indigenous minorities, which it has termed, isolated/estranged populations (*masyarakat terasing*).

In Indonesia there are...1.5 million members of isolated populations. The manner of life and livelihood of these people is very simple. They live in small groups isolated and scattered in mountain areas....Their social life is influenced

²⁴ *Kompas*, “Taman Kanak-kanak Tentukan Pembentukan Karakter Bangsa,” July 3, 2001.

²⁵ *Kompas*, “Pemda Tingkat II Sepakat Tingkatkan Anggaran Kesehatan,” July 29, 2000.

²⁶ Li, “Marginality,” 3.

²⁷ Li, “Compromising Power,” 304.

by a tribal way of life, and they are always suspicious of what comes from outside. Their thought patterns are very simple, static and traditional. Thus, too, their social system, economy, and culture are backward. They lack everything: nutrients, knowledge, skills, etc. In the effort to raise their standard of living, the program to care for isolated populations is operated with the goal of guiding the direction of their social, economic, cultural, and religious arrangements in accordance with the norms that operate for the Indonesian people.²⁸

“Human resources” is a term that became part of Indonesia’s vocabulary when World Bank experts identified Indonesia’s predominantly rural agriculturalist population as a hindrance to development: “unskilled,” “uneducated,” “isolated,” and needing improvement.²⁹ The premise of “human resource development” was to prepare local people for their role in development. An example of human resource development in practice is marginal peoples, particularly those groups of indigenous minorities, like Papuans, who are considered “isolated/estranged populations” in the language of the state. Programs for isolated populations came into being around the same time that Indonesia’s lack of educated “human resources” skilled in “leadership,” “technology,” and “management” became an issue for the state. The agenda of “modernizing” the lifestyles of “primitive” minorities is comparable to the premise of “human resource development”: making local people more suitable for the goal of national development. Like human resource development, programs for isolated people articulate “a complete set of ethics”³⁰ for how “the Indonesian people” should live, reaching into areas such as religion, education, health, social welfare, and “economic arrangements.”³¹

Papua is one part of Indonesia where the indigenous people have been classified as “different and deficient.”³² Local politicians in Papua regularly speak of Papua’s problem of “underdevelopment.” The following section presents examples of state discourse on human resources in Papua. Belittled by negative language and described as “primitive,”

Papuans are represented, on the whole, as poor-quality human resources.

In fact, as the following example argues, inadequate human resources are not only caused by Papuan culture, but are the primary roadblock to successful development in the province.

The weakness of the human resources in Irian Jaya [Papua] is the major problem faced by the local government. The lifestyle, ways of thinking, and a variety of local cultural practices have hindered their ability to follow the agenda of development.... Because of that, the local government must make bigger sacrifices to improve the human resources of the young generation. It is not easy to guide and educate the young generation of Irian Jaya [Papua], but it must be done.³³

Purported cultural problems lead authorities to propose that it is the young generation that must be targeted for human resource development. Papua’s lack of human resources is cited as a major problem because their culture and ways of thinking prevent them from participating in the government’s agenda of development.

Papuan aspirations for independence are a significant concern for the Indonesian government. Human resource development is seen as a way to promote good behaviour for youth, so they do not engage in separatist activities:

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) agreed on Thursday to build three vocational high schools in border areas to improve human resources in both countries, and later help counter separatism....A cooperation agreement on education was signed by Indra Djati Sidi, the director of elementary and high school education at the Indonesian ministry of education, and the acting deputy secretary of the PNG education department, Damien Rapese....Sidi said the building of the schools in the border areas was also expected to help counter separatist disturbances and provocations against Indonesia as the locals will be more educated.³⁴

Authorities hope education will end separatist activities. This confirms that human resource

²⁸ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 92.

²⁹ Means, 15.

³⁰ Newland, 23.

³¹ Tsing, 92.

³² Li, “Marginality,” 3.

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³³ *Kompas*, “Irja Hadapi Masalah Pelaksanaan Otonomi,” February 7, 2001.

³⁴ *The Jakarta Post*, “Three Border Schools to Help ‘Counter Separatism’ in Papua,” May 14, 2003

development is seen as a way to counter 'disturbances' and other kinds of poor conduct. In the following example, Papuans are scolded for poor behaviour that threatens development, and youth are encouraged to become good-quality human resources who are skilled, loyal to the nation, and disciplined. This particular message emerged against the backdrop of a symbolic challenge to Indonesian authority in Papua: raising the Morning Star independence flag.

In July 2003, the Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, gave a press conference in Jayapura, the capital of Papua, to mark two occasions: a flag-raising, and the opening of "Youth Sports and Arts Week." His speech was reported in national and local newspapers.

By 'flag-raising,' I mean that a group of Papuan students and other interested parties had gathered in front of the local government office in the town of Wamena in Papua, and raised the Papuan independence flag, the Morning Star, as a sign of protest against Indonesian authority. Papuans are frequently injured or killed after state security forces bring 'order' to situations like this by trying to disperse the crowd or force protesters to lower the Morning Star flag (Rutherford and Mote 2001). In July, the incident resulted in the death of one young person and the injury of another.

The Minister made the following comments about the raising of the flag, suggesting that incidents like these, initiated by Papuans, are causing problems for development:

Trouble shouldn't happen if everyone wanted to create security and develop Papua...According to Yudhoyono, situations like these need not be repeated if everyone had the same commitment to develop a prosperous, safe and orderly Papua.... "We very much regret this incident. Why must events like these happen? Why must there be a flag-flying and victims? All sides must be aware of the importance of security and order so that the process of development can proceed in a safe and orderly fashion," said Yudhoyono.³⁵

The above quote shows the government using development to promote acquiescence by threatening that development will not occur if Papuan activities continue to produce disorder. Minister Yudhoyono also questions Papuans' commitment to developing a

prosperous and safe society, implying that Papuans' play a role in creating the opposite: poverty and insecurity. At the opening of "Youth Sports and Arts Week Papua," Yudhoyono said, "at this time the people of Indonesia need to feel safety, peace and prosperity, including the Papuan people. Security and order are important to develop the nation."³⁶ Standing side by side with Manuel Kaisiepo, the National Development Minister, Yudhoyono continued his speech by telling Papuan youth to make choices that will promote prosperity and development:

Because of that, what the young generation must possess is character, personality, and a body that is strong and healthy. They must also be highly-skilled. The young generation must love the nation and hold safety and law and order in high esteem and...must firmly exhibit togetherness, unity, and discipline.³⁷

In this example, criticism of Papuans is followed by suggestions to Papuan youth that they focus on developing skills, morality, healthy bodies, and other resources for national development. The minister promotes attention to human resource development in response to the critical incident of the flag-raising, a challenge to Indonesian authority.

In summary, the concept of human resource development underlines the role that local people play in obstructing development or making it happen. Discourse on human resource development in Papua is overwhelmingly negative, with government officials saying that Papuans have problems that interfere with development, such as backwardness, isolation, laziness, and the wrong mindset. In other words, human resource development is like longstanding ideologies of primitiveness that judge Papuans and find their cultures and ways of living deficient. The moral imperatives of human resource development, such as discipline, skills and patriotism, are used to promote compliance. Exhortations to skill development arise in circumstances of political tension and challenges to Indonesian authority.

As the following section demonstrates, these exhortations to moral discipline and skill advancement also crop up out of the rising HIV/AIDS crisis in Papua.

³⁵ *Kompas*, "Disesalkan, Pengibaran Bendera Separatis," July 9, 2003.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

HIV/AIDS and Human Resources: “Native Villagers,” Blame, and Moral Education

Since 2001, AIDS in Papua is increasingly in the news. New numbers of HIV/AIDS cases are released monthly, and government officials do not pretend to have things under control. In fact, they usually propose that HIV/AIDS is out of their hands, and it is up to the people of Papua to heed warnings about casual sex. According to predominantly Indonesian health and other government officials, so-called “native villagers,” or Papuans, are said to be at the root of rising infection rates.³⁸ My examination of print media in *Kompas* and *The Jakarta Post* shows that there is a new language of AIDS, namely that AIDS, and by extension Papuan behaviour, will ruin the human resources needed for development. The imperative of human resource development leads to further calls for Papuan youth to be educated in “virtues” and “proper sex.”

In the following examples, authorities interpret AIDS in relation to the agenda of human resource development. They propose that Papuans are to blame for “the HIV/AIDS problem.” According to health official Gunawan Ingkokusomo, the HIV/AIDS problem in Papua was similar to a fire ignited in a dry forest:

If we are not alert to the fire, it will spread and scorch a big part of the human resources needed to build this province.³⁹

Ingkokusomo presents a frightening image of the HIV virus “scorching” the human resources. In the same news article, Governor Jaap Solossa and health official Ingkokusomo propose interventions to protect human resources, and development, from AIDS. Significantly, neither proposes more accessible, flexible, or comprehensive AIDS education. The first proposes a ban on “traditional” sexual activity,⁴⁰ while the second proposes a bylaw to legislate the use of condoms.⁴¹

In 2003, an initiative was announced that aimed to teach “healthy living” to students. The program taught appropriate sexual conduct to youth. Moral

education was proposed so that youth would become, in essence, good-quality human resources.

The healthy living program...is used to develop awareness and attention of the young generation towards the importance of health...so that from early on students respect sex as something that is holy and a gift from God...The program is an attempt to impress upon the young generation how to respect and implement healthy lifestyle choices.⁴²

According to Dr. Gunawan Ingkokusomo, who is the director of the proposed Healthy Living program, the program is needed because

Development in Papua requires a young generation that is healthy, educated, intelligent, skilled, and free from the virus HIV/AIDS.⁴³

In 2000, a seminar was held in Papua with the theme of “Moral Endurance Can Deter Drug Use and the Virus HIV/AIDS.”⁴⁴ At the seminar, experts were quoted saying:

We must strengthen the morals and character in the family. The appearance of the use of drugs and the spread of AIDS are related to several factors, namely family, school, lack of social controls and individual characteristics. Nyai Lien, the representative of the organization, said that the impact is not only on the individual but can influence the preparation of quality human resources. ‘How can we obtain a generation with high quality human resources if they can only get drunk and follow nonsensical fancies?’⁴⁵

In the above quote, the spread of HIV is said to threaten a generation of human resources. This threat is caused by moral lapse in the family, the community, and among youth, such as “following fancies.” Ultimately, AIDS fuels the agenda of human resource development, which promotes a “complete set of ethics,” especially for young people, including how they should treat their bodies, where they should direct their political energies, why they should obtain education, and how they should feel about the Indonesian nation.

³⁸ Leslie Butt, Gerdha Numbery, and Jake Morin, “The Smokescreen of Culture: AIDS and the Indigenous in Papua, Indonesia,” *Pacific Health Dialog* 9 (2002) 284.

³⁹ *The Jakarta Post*, “Irianese Women Targeted in HIV/AIDS Campaign,” September 30, 2001.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *Kompas*, “Irja Akan Keluarkan Perda Penggunaan Kondom: Penyebaran AIDS/HIV Sangat Memprihatinkan,” January 22, 2001.

⁴² *Kompas*, “Guru dan Murid Diajari Hidup Sehat,” June 28, 2003.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *Kompas*, “AIDS Terus Merancam, Dharma Wanita Prihatin,” February 3, 2000.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

This paper has presented examples of state discourse on human resource development. In Indonesia, human resource development is an ideology concerned with more than improving the skills of the workforce. State discourse on human resources, or “*sumbu daya manusia*,” attempts to shape conduct by defining what is appropriate, necessary, and virtuous behaviour. Morality, along with education, is said to be a requirement for development. Human resource development is understood as a possible way to curb aspirations for independence in Papua by eliciting conformity from young people. Rising rates of HIV/AIDS in Papua have exacerbated attention to “human resource development,” which authorities say will be destroyed if youth do not “respect sex as something that is holy and a gift from God,”⁴⁶ or if they “follow nonsensical fantasies.”⁴⁷

This paper has presented evidence that the ideology of “human resource development” is used by the Indonesian state as an instrument for controlling citizens. The politics of human resource development in the Papuan context have especially wide-reaching consequences. Under Indonesian rule in Papua, scholars have described widespread violence, including rape and race-based murders that have resulted in an estimated 3,000 deaths.⁴⁸ The military’s control over natural resources is widely documented, as is collusion between the military and dominant resource extraction firms such as Freeport McMoRan.⁴⁹ A recent report on human rights abuses in Papua also describes the destruction of Papuan resources and crops, as well as forced relocation.⁵⁰ Yet according to state discourse on human resources, Papua is underdeveloped because of Papuan culture,

behaviour and mindset, not because Papuans are terrorized by state security forces or excluded from good-quality education and decent health services. In conclusion, the premise that Papua is underdeveloped because of the poor qualities of Papuans covers over a history of humiliation, violence and inequality that has led scholars to describe Indonesian-Papuan relations as “colonial.” The ideology of “human resource development” is significant because it obscures the fact that it is difficult to be educated, healthy, and skilled in the midst of exclusion and state terror. Ignoring these disadvantages, the Indonesian government uses the imperative of developing the human resources to articulate a set of values and directives for “proper” citizens, to disparage Papuans, and to press for compliance from politically active youth who oppose Indonesian rule.

⁴⁶ *Kompas*, “Guru dan Murid Diajari Hidup Sehat.” June 28, 2003.

⁴⁷ *Kompas*, “AIDS Terus Merancam, Dharma Wanita Prihatin.” February 3, 2000.

⁴⁸ Rutherford, 189-212; Budiardjo et al, 77-92.

⁴⁹ Jim Elmslie, *Irian Jaya Under the Gun: Indonesian Economic Development Versus West Papuan Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); Susan Browne, *Irian Jaya: 30 Years of Indonesian Control* (Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1998), 4, 11-15.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Brundige, Winter King, Priyeha Vahali, Stephen Vladick, and Xiang Yuan, *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control* (New Haven: Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School, 2003).

Two Villages

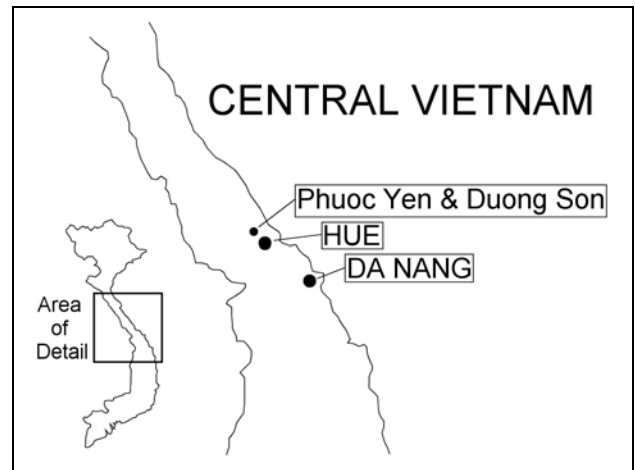
Anne Nguyen, University of Victoria

Abstract

In recent years there has been a steady rise in the number of anthropological and ethnological studies on religious life within the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), home to fifty-two officially recognized ethnic groups, every major world religion, and myriad forms of local religious practice. Simultaneously, there has also been an outpouring of academic studies on political history and political life in contemporary Vietnam. Within Vietnamese studies, the intersection of these two fields of inquiry - the religious and the political - is marked by an almost complete absence of scholarly reflection. The following is a story about two villages in rural central Vietnam: one Buddhist and one Catholic, where I have been conducting preliminary ethnographic research for an M.A. thesis. The research explores how religion has affected political practice, and in turn, how politics has affected religious life in these villages from the beginning of the Vietnam War (1960), to the present. This story describes the religious practices of each village, and how a bond was established between the two villages during the Vietnam War.

It is Christmas Eve. In Phuoc Yen, it is a day like any other day. Children go to school, farmers work in the rice fields, women shop at the market, the elderly gossip and reminisce while drinking tea and rolling cigarettes. Christmas in Phuoc Yen, as in most hamlets of central Vietnam where the people practice a mixture of Buddhism and ancestor worship, passes by without notice and without celebration. This is my second trip to Phuoc Yen, the village where my father was born and where my grandparents continue to live. Phuoc Yen's origins date back to the early seventeenth century when the first Viet colonists decided to make it their home at the end of a southward trek from the ancestral heartland of the Viet people in the Red River Delta. They were led to Phuoc Yen by Nguyen Hoang, who is credited with founding the first southern Viet state, on the long narrow stretch of coastal land that is present day central Vietnam.¹ Today, the

population of Phuoc Yen is comprised of almost thirty different family lineages, but it is still commonplace to hear people refer to the *thap nhi ton phai* (twelve founding families) who were the first Viets to live and cultivate wet rice on this narrow flood plain north of the imperial city of Hue (see Map A).



Map A. Central Vietnam.

As one of the few living elders who knows Phuoc Yen's history well, my grandfather is frequently called upon to preside at weddings, funerals, local feast days, and grave-site consecrations, to ensure that ceremonies are conducted proper to form. Moreover, as my grandfather is the most senior man in the Nguyen Van family lineage, my grandparents' house doubles as an ancestral shrine where the descendents of the lineage gather once a year to pay homage to those who came before them. Step into the main room of their home, as in any other home in the central Vietnamese countryside, and the first thing one notices is the altar, which looks like an over-sized dresser without the drawers. At the front of the altar, it is customary to see a statue of a woman in a flowing white gown (the Bodhisattva of Compassion), encased in a glass box, flanked on both sides by vases of tall flowers – usually yellow chrysanthemums or birds of paradise. Behind the

¹ Li Tana and Anthony Reid, *Southern Vietnam under the Nguyen: Documents on the Economic History of Illumine*, Vol. 3, No. 1

Conchinchina (Dang Trong), 1602-1777 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993).

altar to the Buddha stand anywhere between one and three smaller altars dedicated to the family ancestors and deceased children. Hanging on both sides of the altar are cloth banners colourfully embroidered with Chinese proverbs and sequined dragons and phoenixes.

On the full moon and new moon of each lunar month, villagers arrive home from the market with baskets full green bananas by the bunch, fresh flowers, and packets of jasmine incense: gifts to be offered on household altars, in the family temples and in the village pagoda.² Whenever special foods are made, people are mindful to always leave an offering on the altar for their ancestors. Even for those who find it difficult to make ends meet, which is almost everyone in the village, maintaining a proper altar is a top priority. Knowing this, I shouldn't have been surprised when my famously stingy grandmother (who refuses to use any of the electrical appliances that her children buy for her because she hates paying for electricity) dropped eight hundred dollars a few years ago for a new and even more auspicious altar. The ornately carved wooden structure now dominates my grandparents' modest concrete house and makes their home feel very much like a temple, which is the intended effect. Tucked away at the back of this altar, my grandfather keeps the book in which all the names of the descendants of the Nguyen Van lineage are recorded. My brother Peter and I, along with our numerous cousins, are all listed as the most recent entries. We are the eleventh generation on record. I am told that within a two-kilometer radius of this shrine lie the remains of our ancestors going back at least fourteen generations.

In December, as Christians prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ, the villagers of Phuoc Yen are also busily preparing for celebrations of another kind. The twelfth lunar month, which generally straddles December and January of the Gregorian calendar, is *the* month for ancestor worship in rural central Vietnam. This month marks the lull in the agricultural year of the region – the time when farmers sow the seeds for their spring crop of rice. For centuries, these cold, misty days towards the end of the rainy season have been the time when peasants steal away from their work in watery fields in order

to tend to the business of the ancestors, bringing together the past and the present.

Early on in the history of Phuoc Yen, each of the founding twelve families chose two days during the twelfth lunar month for their annual ancestor worship celebrations. The first day (*ngay chap ho*) is dedicated to the commemoration of the ancestors who have been admitted into a proverbial ancestral hall of fame, by virtue of being dead for more than five or six generations. The second day (*ngay chap nhanh*) is dedicated to the members of the ancestors of the *nhanh* (branch) – that is, to family members who have died within living memory. On these feast days, all the members of the family lineage return to Phuoc Yen to tidy the gravesites of the ancestors, to pay their respects at the family temple, and to share a meal of sticky rice and pork.

The cult to the dead is one of the many aspects of Vietnamese culture that has been influenced by over one thousand years of Chinese colonial occupation spanning from the first to the twelfth century. Today, these feast days are a precious opportunity for cousins from Hue, sisters now married with families in Da Lat and long-lost grandnieces from Canada to meet and greet one another. In times of less mobility, when people rarely left or married outside of their birth villages, the feast days were extremely important as a means of ensuring that people could know how they were related to one another so as to avoid the shame and potential danger of marrying too close within the family bloodlines. Over the centuries, these feast days, a living expressions of the Confucian values of filial piety and right relation, continue to be a call to the living not to forget from whom and whence they came. Weeding gravesites, offering incense, waking up before dawn to prepare a feast of slaughtered pig and sweet rice, making offerings of food and flowers to the ancestors, are small gestures meant to express an awareness that our present is possible only because of the sacrifices of those who came before us.

To visit Phuoc Yen during the month of December is to constantly be asked the question “Are you going to stay for *ho nhanh* (family feast days)?”

.....

On this day before Christmas, I am out for a walk with Uncle Lieu, my father's cousin. As the mayor of Phuoc Yen from 1965 to 1975 and one of the most senior members of the Nguyen Van family lineage, Uncle Lieu knows more about village and family history than just about anyone else in Phuoc Yen. On our walking tour, he points out local places

² The village pagoda (*chua*) is the place where Buddhist rites are observed. In larger cities, the *chua* is usually adjoined by a monastery, where monks and nuns live and study. In small villages like Phuoc Yen, the *chua* is attended to by one or two resident monks.

of worship: buildings freshly painted blue or yellow, adorned with soaring dragons and graceful phoenixes, their concrete bodies covered with mosaics made from broken china. In a village with less than a thousand inhabitants living in fewer than two-hundred homes, there are dozens of ceremonial structures: the *chua* (pagoda) where the people worship the Buddha, dozens of *nha tho ho*, where they worship their ancestors, four shrines to local tutelary gods (called *am*), yet another shrine dedicated to Nguyen Hoang, as well as the *dinh lang*, or the village temple, where the people of Phuoc Yen gather twice a year, in the spring and fall, to pay respects to the village founders, to celebrate the rice harvest, and to deliberate over village business. And we must not forget the hundreds of gravesites that sprawl all over the rice fields each one over four meters in diameter. In a country with one of the highest population densities in the world, and where arable land is a precious commodity, it amazes me that people willingly dedicate more land (and often spend more money) to commemorate the dead than to house the living.

Being in Phuoc Yen in December has allowed me to be immersed in the rhythms of a life based on Confucian values and feudalistic social structures that are quickly being eroded as Vietnam becomes increasingly integrated into the global economy. Being in Phuoc Yen in December has also shielded me from the frenetic commercialism and wasteful consumption that has unfortunately become such a dominant element of the North American holiday season. However, as Christmas day approaches, I find that a desire arises in me to celebrate the day, as I would in Canada. Having anticipated that I might feel this way, and knowing that Christmas would surely be a day like any other in Phuoc Yen, before I left for Vietnam, I had asked my father where I might go to attend a Christmas worship service, assuming that he would probably direct me to one of the Catholic churches in Hue.

Instead, my father said, "Ah! Why don't you to Duong Son?"

"Where's Duong Son?" I asked, never having heard him mention this place in the twenty-three years he has been telling me stories about his birth village.

"Duong Son is the only village in the entire region that is Catholic," he continued, "A hundred per cent Catholic! They're famous for their Christmas Eve celebrations. Big parties that go on all night: singing, a giant manger, paper lanterns everywhere. Even the Buddhists go to check it out.

And you know, it's the only village that the Viet Cong were never able to infiltrate during the war."

I was definitely intrigued. According to my father, while most villages in central Vietnam (including Phuoc Yen) were deeply divided during the war, with some villagers being supporters of the NLF (National Liberation Front, more commonly known as Viet Cong), while others supported the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) who fought to prevent Ho Chi Minh's efforts to reunite North and South Vietnam, Duong Son experienced no such internal divisiveness. Somehow, the villagers were able to present a united front against the NLF, well known for their effectiveness in infiltrating villages, which they did by winning over the sympathies of the disaffected Vietnamese peasantry.

Once I arrived in Phuoc Yen, I asked my grandmother to tell me what she knew about the village across the river called Duong Son – the only village for miles that has a building with a pointy steeple and gravesites crowned with crucifixes instead of lotus blossoms. She confirmed my father's story.

"During the war, the people of Duong Son guarded their town so tightly, not even an ant would have gotten in!" she said.

As I tour Phuoc Yen with Uncle Lieu, my mind turns again to the Catholic village across the river. Surely there, Christmas day is *not* a day like any other day. At the village temple, I asked Uncle Lieu if he knew anything about Duong Son.

"Of course I know Duong Son!" says Uncle Lieu, casually. "I hid there every night for years during the war. In a few days, I will take you there."

.....

Now it is the eve of the Gregorian New Year. Again, another day like any other in Phuoc Yen. Children go to school, farmers work in the rice fields, women shop at the market, the elderly gossip and reminisce while drinking tea and rolling cigarettes. Tet, Vietnamese New Year, and the most important celebration in Vietnam, is more than a month away, and people in Phuoc Yen won't even begin preparing for a couple of weeks yet, until the ancestor worship days have passed.

On this grey afternoon, with the rain swirling around us in a spraying mist, Uncle Lieu and I cross the Thanh Luong Bridge to the western bank of the Bo River. Our boots sink shin deep into the soft

muddy path that separates the line of tall bamboo shadowing the river's bank from fields of *dat mau* (coloured earth), on which the people of Duong Son grow beans, sesame, and vegetables for pig feed. It is too rainy to work in the rice fields on this afternoon, so Uncle Lieu has obliged my request to connect me with friends of his in Duong Son, so that I can satisfy my desire to learn more about the village's distinct religious character and fascinating political history. Walking through the gates of Duong Son, we first pass the church, and the village kindergarden school. Unlike Phuoc Yen, where the village pathways feel narrow because of the high arching bamboo on both sides, there is a feeling of spaciousness about the paths of Duong Son, which the villagers have lined with flags of blue, yellow, red and green cloth, for the Christmas season. The village also strikes me as unusually prosperous compared to all the others that I have passed through in the area. Most homes still have their cheerful star-shaped Christmas lanterns hanging on the veranda. Uncle Lieu comments to me that this is what is possible when a town is left untouched by war.

We enter a well kept two story house and are greeted by Aunt Kien and Uncle Duc, a sister and brother in their fifties, who greet Uncle Lieu warmly and offer us thimble-sized cups of the most bitter tea I have ever tasted. Upon learning that I am the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen Muu from Phuoc Yen, Aunt Kien takes my hand as though we have known each other forever. In addition to being farmers, the villagers of Duong Son have for generations earned their living from making rice wine, selling it to neighboring villages, whose inhabitants consume the turpentine-like brew prodigiously during family feasts and other special occasions. Thirty years earlier, as young wine seller, Aunt Kien's delivery route included Phuoc Yen. Due to her natural warmth and congenial nature, she quickly became endeared to all in the village and a confidante to many, including my grandmother.

"Your grandfather and my father were both soldiers in the French army as well as great friends," she related.

Aunt Kien continues to disclose the story of our two families. She tells me how much it meant to her that Uncle Lieu and my grandfather were part of her father's funerary procession: a sign of true friendship, in her mind. I soon discover that Aunt Kien knows more gossip about Phuoc Yen than perhaps many of the people who actually live there.

"Your grandmother and I have shared many things," she recalls.

"After the Revolution, she used to hide all the pictures that your parents and uncles sent from Canada and the U.S. When I would come to visit, she would take them out to show me, and me alone."

"Why did she have to hide family photographs?" I puzzled.

"Everyone hid the photos of their overseas relatives back then."

In the years following the Revolution, possessing photographs of overseas family members was sufficient cause for harassment by the police, who considered such artifacts to be signs of attachment to Western bourgeois ideology and a danger to the ideals of the new socialist state. As such, family photos were only shown to those one most trusted.

While Aunt Kien related stories about our two families, her brother, Duc, a former seminarian, began to tell village stories of another kind. From Uncle Duc, I learned why this rural village of a thousand people is considered to be one of the greatest strongholds of the Catholic faith in all of central Vietnam.

The first Viet settlers arriving from the Red River Delta came to Duong Son in 1307. In the mid-seventeenth century, about fifty years after the Nguyen Lords began to develop Phuoc Yen across the river, the first Catholic missionaries had arrived and begun their proselytizing in Duong Son. By the end of that century, the whole village had converted to Roman Catholicism, and in 1696, Duong Son was officially entered into the records of the Vatican. Up until the Vietnam War, Duong Son was home to a convent of female religious belonging to the order of the Lovers of the Cross, as well as a *petit seminaire*, dedicated to the formation of novices for the priesthood.

Duong Son flourished until the early 19th century, when tragedy struck at the heart of the village. Unlike his predecessors who tolerated Catholic missionaries, King Minh Mang of the Nguyen dynasty, who reigned from 1820 to 1841, viewed the spread of the Catholic as a potential threat to his sovereign rule.³ As a result, Minh Mang

³ Oscar Saleminck, "One country, many journeys," in *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind and Spirit*, eds. Nguyen Van Huy and Laurel Kendall (University of California Press, 2003), 20-51.

ordered the execution of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Vietnamese Catholics during his reign. The bridge where Catholics were often summarily executed several kilometers outside Hue bears the name *Cau Chem* (Beheading Bridge) to this day. Seventy-three of those killed during this period hailed from Duong Son. In 1994, while in the process of exhuming the remains of their ancestors for reburial in a newly created cemetery, some villagers unearthed four skeletons lying in the fetal position, each wearing a rosary. It is believed that these are the remains of four female religious who were martyred during this period.

Every morning at 5:00 a.m., before the first light of dawn, the church bells toll in Duong Son. By 5:30, most of the villagers are quietly filing into the church, sitting closely together on the hard wooden benches. All the women are sitting in the pews left of the centre aisle, and all the men on the right, as is the common custom in Vietnam. In Duong Son, Catholicism has not displaced the ancient practices of ancestor worship that developed centuries prior to the arrival of European missionaries, but rather, traditions have blended to produce a fascinatingly syncretistic religious life. One sees examples of this syncretism most clearly in the way that mass is celebrated in the village.

At the beginning of each mass, the priest offers three sticks of incense before the main altar, just as Buddhists offer incense at the altar of their ancestors on the first and fifteenth day of each lunar month. The presentation of the Eucharist is not accompanied by the customary ringing of steel bells, but rather, with the beating of an ox-skin drum and copper cymbal, powerful sounds that not only send chills up one's spine, but are also deeply meaningful to anyone who knows that the drum and cymbal were used by Vietnamese warriors over many centuries to rouse their people during times of foreign invasion. When the parishioners pray the rosary in Duong Son, the rising and falling drone of their voices sounds eerily similar to the chanting of monks and nuns in Buddhist temples all across Vietnam.

Every house in Duong Son, as in Phuoc Yen, has a large altar for commemorating ancestors and deceased relatives. The main difference is that the centerpiece of a family altar in Duong Son is not the statue of a bodhisattva, but a Christian icon, such as a crucifix or a portrait of the Virgin Mary. Banners of embroidered Chinese characters have been traded in for framed pictures bearing the smiling face of John Paul II or beloved Vietnamese cardinals. And whereas the original twelve family lineages of Phuoc Yen celebrate ancestral feast days separately

throughout the twelfth lunar month, all the families of Duong Son commemorate their ancestors together on the same day of the year (the eighth day of the third lunar month) and in a village-wide ceremony. On the evening of this village-wide day of ancestor worship, the parish priest of Duong Son delivers a special outdoor mass at the village cemetery. For this service only, he sheds his customary scapula in exchange for navy blue *ao dai* (the traditional blue tunic worn by Vietnamese men on ceremonial occasions). The villagers weed the graves of their forefathers and foremothers, offering incense to them, and inviting them back to the family home to share in a meal with the living, just as they would if they were in a Buddhist village.

However, unlike in Phuoc Yen, Christmas is not a day like any day, but the most festive occasion of the year. On Christmas Eve, the pathways into Duong Son are choked with bicycle and motorcycle traffic, transporting youths from Buddhist villages nearby who hope to catch a glimpse of Duong Son's famous Christmas pageant, and participate in all-night parties of karaoke singing.

I ask about the connection between Uncle Lieu and the Phan family. What did Uncle Lieu mean when he said that he used to come here to hide during the war?

"Well, you know there were Viet Cong in our village," begins Uncle Lieu.

"They only came out at night though. During the day you didn't know who was loyal to whom. But night was when they would come out and assassinate people. Nobody knew whom he or she could trust. And those of us who were ARVN soldiers were easy targets. Several people were murdered in their beds. So, for years, I would paddle my sampan across to Duong Son every night to sleep, and then come back to Phuoc Yen in the morning."

Uncle Lieu pauses and Aunt Kien continues the story. She begins by repeating what I have already heard from my father and grandmother. To prevent infiltration by the NLF, the villagers of Duong Son guarded every entry and exit point to the village with the greatest vigilance, rarely allowing people from outside the village to enter. They were convinced that this was the only way to keep themselves safe and free from the constant state of fear and mistrust that people in other villages suffered from, as a result of not knowing the true political loyalties of their neighbours and, oftentimes, of one's own family members.

So why did the people of Duong Son make an exception for my Uncle Lieu, and other men from the village of Phuoc Yen, who came to Duong Son seeking refuge?

“My mother was from Phuoc Yen,” Aunt Kien explains.

“She was from the Hoang lineage. If you go the Phuoc Yen cemetery, you’ll see the gravesite. I had it built there for her.”

Remembering Phuoc Yen as the place where his wife’s ancestors were buried, Aunt Kien’s father felt that the two villages were bonded in a special way. As such, he ensured that anyone from Phuoc Yen who fled to Duong Son would be treated as a member of the family. Aunt Kien and her sister, Y (pronounced “ee”) recall years of their youth when it seemed like for months and months on end their days were spent laundering the clothes of these asylum seekers and cooking enormous pots of rice with which to keep them fed.

In the worst years of fighting, upon hearing the roar of American B-52’s overhead, people from Phuoc Yen routinely abandoned their homes and fields to seek refuge in the cities. As they ran terrified along National Highway 1 towards major cities like Hue, Quang Tri and Da Nang, they knew that it might be months, or even years, before they would return to decimated farmlands and ransacked houses. Those from Phuoc Yen who were able to plan their departure from the village in advance often stopped through Duong Son to meet with the young Aunt Kien. Since she had a reputation for being honest and trustworthy, people entrusted her with purses full of gold and jewellery for safe keeping as they fled, to be reclaimed a few months or years down the road when they would finally return.

My grandmother, who is infrequently generous in her estimation of the living, cannot speak highly enough of Aunt Kien and her family.

“In those days, we lived together and we died together,” grandmother sighed to me one night. Her voice becomes grave when she talks about the *cuoc song hai chieu* (two way life) of the war years. At nighttime, the NLF ordered the villagers to dig tunnels. During the day, American troops came by and ordered them to fill up the same tunnels they had just dug. Meanwhile, most of the villagers just wanted to live and let live, to continue growing rice and worshipping their ancestors. During these confusing times, grandmother remembers that our family and the Phan family were able to depend on

each other for support and survival. “*Song chet co nhau.*” In life and death we had each other.

When she talks about the Phan’s grandmother often says, “*Doan ket thi song, chia re thi chet.*” If we united we lived, if we were divided, we died.

The generosity of the Phan family towards the villagers of Phuoc Yen is particularly striking if we keep in mind the political backdrop against which this drama unfolded. In addition to this story about taking refuge in Duong Son, another thing that caught me by surprise on my Christmas Eve walkabout with Uncle Lieu had been an off-handed remark of having spent six months in prison during the war. When I asked him why, he responded, cryptically, that there were actually three sides to the Vietnam War.

In addition to the American supported ARVN forces and their NLF adversaries, Uncle Lieu considers the Buddhist revolt against the regime of Southern Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem to be the “third force” in the conflict. During the Vietnam War, the Catholic Ngo brothers who ruled Southern Vietnam with the backing of the U.S. government, severely persecuted Buddhists during first years of the 1960s that they believed supported the NLF. When Buddhist monasteries in South Vietnam were shut down or effectively turned into prisons and Buddhist monks began to be massacred on orders by the Ngo brothers, seven Buddhist nuns and monks burned themselves in protest, bringing worldwide attention and criticism to the Saigon regime. Uncle Lieu, although an ARVN soldier himself, felt that as a serious Buddhist, he could not stand on the sidelines and watch the escalation of government violence against his religion. In 1962, Uncle Lieu spent six months in a state prison for participating in the Buddhist revolt, sentenced by the very government for which he was fighting.

I have not yet asked Aunt Kien, or anyone else in Duong Son, for their thoughts on the Buddhist revolt and the government repression that instigated it. What I do know from Aunt Kien is that she believes that it was certainly divine intervention that kept Duong Son safe during the war. Awe fills her voice and excitement flashes across her eyes as she tells a story known by all in Duong Son: the one about the holy family appearing by the banks of the Bo river one day during the worst years of fighting. As she tells it, the Virgin Mary, riding on the back of a donkey, was seen with her arm stretched out across the Bo River, literally shielding the village from the onslaught of bullets being fired from the opposite river bank. While they witnessed many villages being levelled by bombs several times over, not one

of Duong Son's sons or daughters died in the war. This is one reason that the people of Duong Son believe in miracles.

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As we amble towards Phuoc Yen I tell Uncle Lieu that what strikes me as miraculous is that while Buddhists from Phuoc Yen were being persecuted by their own state, the most reliable place of refuge for them was the home of a Catholic family in a village across the river. Arriving home, I tell grandma about my incredible day in Duong Son, and again talk about miracles – like the way Phan family opened the gates of their village to the Buddhist villagers of Phuoc Yen, risking their own safety in order to save the lives of men like my Uncle Lieu, who surely would have been murdered in the night by friends-turned-enemies had they slept in their own beds. Grandma, always armed with the perfect verse for any situation, says, “*ai cung co mau do gia vang.*” Everyone has red blood and yellow skin.

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Phuoc Yen and Duong Son are two villages separated by a river and differentiated by religions, whose bond, forged from family ties, was tested and strengthened through a war. These two villages have not only been valuable sites through which to glimpse important aspects of contemporary religious life in rural Vietnam (Phuoc Yen's ancestor worship traditions and Duong Son's syncretic Catholicism) but are also interesting portals into the nation's religious history. Prior to the arrival of European missionaries in the seventeenth century, religion and politics had little to do with each other in Vietnam. This situation changed with the persecution of Catholic missionaries and their Vietnamese converts by the Nguyen emperors, the affects of which were intimately experienced by some of the people of Duong Son. The South Vietnamese state's persecution of Buddhists would draw international scrutiny during its war with America; and during this collision of between religion and politics, it would be people from Phuoc Yen who would be the victims of intolerance. Through the stories of Uncle Lieu and the Phan family, we can gain an intimate view of the historical encounter between the main religions of Vietnam (Buddhism and Catholicism) and the political regimes of the country, as well as an opportunity to see how the interaction between politics and religion has affected the lives of some everyday Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics.

Recommended Reading

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Notes on Contributors

Eve Millar is a graduate student in the History in Art Department at the University of Victoria. This April she successfully defended her M.A. thesis, which focused on a body of work produced by contemporary Indian artist Sheela Gowda. Many of Gowda's paintings and installations are created using cow-dung, and her use of this material links her work to rural women's ritual art as well as to notions of the sacred cow. Millar's essay, "Linking Afro-Asian and European Traces of Bovine Veneration to India's Sacred Cow," grew out of her thesis research.

Clint Westgard recently completed his M.A. in History at the University of British Columbia. His thesis dealt with the use of Natural History by Mexican intellectuals to construct modes of seeing as a means of claiming authority in the nation. This paper grew out of thesis research and his interest in religion and science.

Jennifer Lee recently completed her M.A. in history from the University of Victoria. Her essay in this journal is derived from one chapter of her thesis entitled "Selling the Nazi Dream: The Promotion of Films in the Third Reich," for which she traveled to Berlin to conduct research in the *Filmmuseum* and

Bundesarchiv. She held the Winifred Lonsdale Graduate Student Fellow (2003-2004) at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society. Her main interest is popular culture and mass consumerism in twentieth-century Europe.

Jenny Munro recently completed her M.A. in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Victoria. Her thesis, "Taking On Development: Papuan Youth, HIV/AIDS, and State Discourse in Eastern Indonesia," is based on research she conducted in 2003 on ideologies of development, state/indigenous relations, and youth politics in eastern Indonesia. Jenny recently co-authored an article for the *Papua New Guinea Medical Journal* and hopes to publish a chapter in a book on youth, agency, and culture in the Pacific published by the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania.

Anne Nguyen is completing her M.A. in History and Cultural, Social and Political Thought at the University of Victoria. Her forthcoming M.A. thesis studies the impacts of religion (Buddhism, Catholicism, Confucianism and Taoism) on the way that people in Phuoc Yen and Duong Son remember their ancestors and the histories of their villages.

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