

Kripal argues that there is an “immunological response” working against their recognition. People are not able to bring together the immanent with the transcendent, the extraordinary. They focus on either the immanent (with backgrounds of extensive education and secularism) or the transcendent (based on their experiences). Many academicians act like the nuns pushing down Teresa of Avila in levitation to avoid scandal. While others simply disregard the “super” dimension and solely focus on the immanent. Kripal argues that the prevailing intense academic focus on issues such as racial and gender inequalities, while socially relevant, are limiting, often leading to “moral bypassing”—the avoidance of addressing “ultimate things.” This critique does not dismiss important perspectives like postcolonial theory or moral considerations but advocates for a more inclusive approach recognizing the “super”/transcendent, etc., dimensions often associated with religious or mystical experiences. While these experiences and dimensions are traditionally understood as religious, the criticism itself is not a religious criticism of academia. The superhumanities do not call for the leaving of the immanent for the transcendent but for a double focus on both human natures. While Kripal clearly states his focus is on intellectual history, academic practices, and academic politics, such a proposal calls for answering more practical questions, which are only hinted at in the book. Given its transdisciplinary relevance, the book is recommended for readers ranging from advanced BA-level students to professionals across all academic fields. It is an innovative and essential contribution to understanding the humanities and ultimately to (re)discover its current and future relevance. It points beyond the scope of Religious Studies as it could easily be interpreted as a transdisciplinary wake-up call about a suppressed essential element of humanity and the humanities. While it might provoke some “immunological response,” it is definitely worth thorough transdisciplinary attention and evaluation.

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THE FORBIDDEN BODY: SEX, HORROR, AND THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION. By Douglas E. Cowan. New York: New York University Press, 2022. Pp. xii + 315. Hardback, \$89.00. Paperback, \$30.00.

Cowan (b. 1958) is a professor of Religious Studies and Social Development Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He uses popular (Western) media—primarily films, books, and magazines from the United States—to demonstrate the transgressive nature of horror and how this transgressive horror intensifies when merged with the elements of sex and religious imagination. The possibilities of how to creatively combine these elements are plenty. However, in the Western context, this unholy trinity frequently includes the (Catholic) church and its dominant symbols (Christ, church, cross, crucifix, and dignitaries), a female figure (girl or nun), and the horror of transgression, illustrated either

through extreme sexual violence, or unsuitable (female) lust. In Chapter 1, Cowan employs a panoply of examples of “inappropriate bodies” (abnormal, disembodied, reanimated, and violated) from the horror genre (such as *The Exorcist*; *Kwaidan*; *Ju-on*; *Frankenstein*; *The Mummy*; *Walking Dead*) as an invitation for the reader to reassess the religious imagination, and to allow it to venture forth into more unconventional areas. Chapter 2 analyses the link between popular B-movies (for instance *Attack of the Crabmonster*; *Attack of the Giant Leeches*), (hetero)normativity, and moral conventions. Chapter 3 delves deep into the animated horrors of human sacrifice as found either on Netflix, in video games or in older formats from the 1930s (such as the film *King Kong* or the magazine *Weird Tales*). Chapter 4 offers a more historical outline and works around the trope of the sexualized nun, religious fetishism, and the Church as a variegated torture chamber. Chapter 5 discusses aspects of the female transgressive body, especially the complex field revolving around Paganism, witches, and alleged witchcraft. Chapter 6 concludes the book with somewhat scattered ideas about sex, liminal spaces, and female power vs. victimhood. This book is clearly original and partly strikingly convincing, arguing that more intellectual curiosity toward popular culture in general—particularly when infused by horror and sex—could help Religious Studies scholars reveal valuable insights about religious formation and imagination. However, this book might be quite a challenging read for readers lacking Cowan’s cultural references and cinephile background.

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East Asia

THE 7 DEADLY MYTHS: ANTISEMITISM FROM THE TIME OF CHRIST TO KANYE WEST. By Alex Ryvchin. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2023. Pp. ix + 105. Paperback, \$14.95.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many sought an answer to the profound question of “why.” Why the Jewish people? Why have Jews been so disparaged, hated, and brutalized throughout history? Ryvchin attempts to answer this question through a look at the seven deadly myths of antisemitism: The Blood Libel, Christ Killers, Global Domination, Chosen, Money, Dual Loyalties, and Oppressed to Oppressors. Ryvchin explores each myth from its inception to its present reality, focusing on its development, proponents, methods, and consequences. Through this, the reader can come to their own understanding of “why.” This book offers an excellent introduction to contemporary antisemitism and its Christian roots. It would benefit an undergraduate class that focuses on Christian anti-Judaism, antisemitism, and the Holocaust, as well as undergraduate classes that consider racism more broadly. Additionally, the book’s readable and brief nature would enable individuals outside academia to derive value from it. Ryvchin’s book offers a distinct advantage in elucidating the

contemporary manifestations of these entrenched antisemitic myths within our present-day context. For instance, the impact of the Gospel of John on Robert Bowers, the individual responsible for the tragic murder of 11 elderly Jewish worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018. Although the author does not have formal academic training in the area of Christian theology, he is able to navigate thoughtfully and precisely its profound impact on the “mythical Jew.” There is one correction to suggest, however, that *Nostra aetate* was a “landmark proclamation” of the Second Vatican Council, not “Pope John Paul VI” (39).

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UNDERSTANDING ZIONISM: HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVES.

By Anne Perez. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2023. Pp. vii + 277. Paperback, \$27.00.

An historian of modern Jewish and Israeli history, Anne Perez has written a much-welcomed book on the history of Zionism. It navigates a historical trajectory, chronicling the beginning of the Zionist movement to its modern evolution. Exploring diverse themes such as Christian Zionism, anti-Zionism, the Boycott, Divest, and the Sanction movement (BDS), Perez's book offers a comprehensive journey through this intricate narrative. This book balances accessibility and scholarly rigor, making it suitable for both undergraduate courses focused on Zionism and non-academic individuals seeking a deeper understanding of this pertinent topic outside of the academy. The readable nature of the book, alongside its exploration of contemporary issues, distinguishes it as an exceptional and unique addition to the array of existing academic literature about Zionism (i.e., *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* by Walter Laquer; *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* by Shalom Averini; and *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* by Melvin Urosky). Moreover, it holds a particular significance for those unacquainted with the history of Zionism (e.g., the role of Christianity in its inception or the different Zionist factions) and contemporary issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perez's remarkable impartiality underscores the book's value as an essential resource for those unacquainted with Zionism. Her unwavering neutrality serves as a defining feature, ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased exploration of the subject throughout each chapter. Although Perez's impartiality is a significant advantage of this book, it is important to underscore the disadvantages as well. The book's impartiality may have inadvertently, at times, overlooked or failed to address accordingly, a few complex ethical dilemmas (e.g., how BDS rhetoric, particularly in equating Zionism with Nazism, is antisemitic).

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NEW PERSPECTIVES IN MODERN KOREAN BUDDHISM: INSTITUTION, GENDER, AND SECULAR SOCIETY.

Edited by Hwansoo Ilmee Kim and Jin Y. Park. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022. Pp. xiv + 334. Hardback, \$99.00; Paperback \$36.95.

This work lives up to its titular promise by providing nuanced insights into the intricate dimensions shaping the formation, transformation, and contemporary complexities of Korean Buddhism within the context of modernity. This scholarly compilation, authored by ten distinct contributors, traverses the temporal spectrum from the nineteenth century to the present while also including consideration of the historical roots of Buddhism in Korea. The text engages in a comprehensive exploration of various facets that have hitherto been overlooked or underestimated. Noteworthy among these are gender issues, the often marginalized but pivotal roles of lay women and nuns in the historical preservation and evolution of Korean Buddhism, existential concerns, and the dynamic interplay with the state and societal currents that have molded the trajectory of Buddhism in modern Korea. This work scrutinizes influential individuals, societal concerns, clerical marriage, scandals, and the interface with secular society, offering a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted forces at play. A meticulous reconsideration of neglected factors elucidates the complex processes by which Korean Buddhism has transitioned into its contemporary manifestation. This scrutiny involves an assessment of both internal and external influences, with the latter historically stemming predominantly from China and, in more recent epochs, Japan. Such analysis challenges prevailing assumptions concerning the ascription of specific evolutionary facets primarily to external forces, notably the influence emanating from Japan. This examination accentuates the interrelatedness between these geographical regions and cultural terrains, highlighting a salient characteristic of Korean Buddhist modernity—an intricate engagement with the West, Christianity, Japan, and Japanese Buddhism. This scholarly endeavor not only advances our comprehension of Buddhism's role and nature in modern Korea but also addresses broader themes such as colonialism, nationalism, and modernity. By centering on individual lived experiences and recognizing the transnational and institutional dimensions of modern Korean Buddhism, the text challenges simplistic interpretations that narrowly focus on the current state of Buddhism in Korea. Instead, it underscores the intricate and nuanced factors that have collectively contributed to the multifaceted tapestry of Korean Buddhist development into its present form.

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