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Editorial note

In an essay entitled *The Analytical Language of John Wilkins* Jorge Luis Borges (1966: 108) cites an ancient Chinese encyclopaedia that classifies animals into the following groups:

a) Those that belong to the Emperor
b) Embalmed ones
c) Those that are trained
d) Sucking pigs
e) Mermaids
f) Fabulous ones
g) Stray dogs
h) Those that are included in this classification
i) Those that tremble as if they were mad
j) Innumerable ones
k) Those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush
l) Others
m) Those that have just broken a flower vase
n) Those that resemble flies from a distance

This list is often quoted as an example of the difficulty and arbitrariness of classification, but given the many scholars who have taken such an obvious fiction to be genuine, it perhaps also exemplifies the Western fascination with the category of the bizarre oriental who is incapable of rational thought.

Recently in several Nordic countries it seems academia has been placed in a similar category. At Copenhagen University, the largest in Denmark, government imposed austerity measures have axed 500 jobs, forcing several so-called smaller subjects such as Ancient Greek and Indology not to accept any new students this year, while other subjects like Tibetan Studies have been discontinued altogether. Similarly, at Helsinki University, 570 employees will have to go before the end of next year. Perhaps even more disturbingly, the government responsible for these cuts has evinced a blatant disregard and even contempt for academic learning.

Against such a bleak backdrop it is apposite that the four articles in this issue of *Temenos* are all written by scholars from Denmark and Finland – and that these articles are of such a high scholarly quality. First, Simon Nygaard of Aarhus University, in his article on sacral rulers in pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, takes us back in time in terms of both material and concepts.

However, instead of using the concept of sacral kingship rules in a kind of arbitrary comparison in the style of Sir James Frazer, he applies Robert N. Bellah's theory of cultural evolution to it, resulting in several interesting insights that will be useful for the comparative study of religions in general.

In their fascinating study of a novel about a Laestadian family Finnish scholars Sandra Wallenius-Korkalo and Sanna Valkonen take us closer to the present day, as they approach religious belonging as a state of embodiment in which some types of corporeality strengthen the cohesion of religious communities, while others threaten or weaken them. The issue here is, of course, the power relations, structures, and dynamics of change that are at play with religious groups, and the authors make a good case for the importance of an understanding of belonging to make sense of it.

Dietrich Jung from the University of Southern Denmark then lands us squarely in the present moment with his article on the multiple voices of Islamic modernities. He argues that the polysemic nature of contemporary interpretations of Islamic religious tradition mirrors in some way the increasing functional differentiation of modern society. In illustrating his argument with the institution of Jihad, he not only offers us more information concerning a very topical subject, but contributes to the debate on multiple modernities in general.

Finally, Ville Husgafvel from Helsinki University takes an exciting new look at the mindfulness trend that is currently so popular and so hotly debated in academic circles, by arguing that previous scholarship has overstated the links between the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) of Jon Kabat-Zinn and Theravada Buddhism. Doubtless correctly, Husgafvel argues that this leads not only to an oversimplified picture of Buddhist doctrine and practice (similar to the very problematic 'world religion' classification) but also to distortions in the comparisons made with secular forms of mindfulness. Instead, Husgafvel argues for a lineage-based approach.

In addition to the regular articles this issue also features the Temenos lecture delivered on 9th December 2015 at Åbo Akademi University, Finland, by Professor Christopher Partridge of Lancaster University, entitled 'Popular Music, the Sacred and the Profane: Reflections on why Popular Music Matters'. The Temenos lectures, which are sponsored by the Finnish Association for the Study of Religions, are annual lectures by noted international scholars of religion. Christopher Partridge's lecture is an example of such lectures at their best: informative, thought-provoking, and eminently entertaining.

On a more sombre note this issue of Temenos ends with an obituary of Professor Emerita Anna-Leena Siikala, a member of the advisory board of

Temenos and a Finnish scholar who refused to be trapped by the categories of Borges or anyone else. We pay tribute to her memory in the hope of living up to her standard of academic excellence.

Måns Broo

Sacral rulers in pre-Christian Scandinavia: The possibilities of typological comparisons within the paradigm of cultural evolution[1]

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Abstract

This article offers a new perspective on the century-old discussion of sacral rulers in the history of religions generally, and pre-Christian Scandinavian religions specifically, namely the application of a cultural evolutionary theoretical framework based on the work of Robert N. Bellah. In doing this, the article opens the possibility of wider typological comparisons within this paradigm and suggests a nuancing of Bellah's typology with the addition of the category of 'chiefdom religion'. This is utilised in the main part of the article, which features a comparison between the figure of the sacral ruler in pre-Christian Scandinavian and pre-Christian Hawaiian religions through an analysis of: 1) the position of the ruler in society, cult, and ideology; 2) the societal structure in which these religions are found; 3) the idea of a ruler sacrifice; 4) incestuous relationships and their ideological implications; and, finally, 5) the idea of a double rulership. Following this comparison, the perspectives in and the usefulness of cultural evolutionary theories in the history of religions are briefly evaluated.

Keywords: *sacral rulers, sacral kingship, pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, pre-Christian Hawaiian religions, Robert N. Bellah, cultural evolutionary theory, cultural evolution, typological comparison, chiefdom religion.*

The idea of sacral kingship is well-established in the history of religions, dating back to the late 19th century and James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (1890).[2] Since Frazer several scholars within the field of pre-Christian Scandinavian religions have discussed the idea of a sacral kingship in pre-Christian Scandinavia and the Germanic

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1 This article is based largely on research done for my Master's thesis (Nygaard 2014).
2 Frazer's methodology has been much criticised – and rightly so. His comparativism was almost arbitrarily self-defined because of his unconstrained global use of sources, which is a problem for modern day historians of religions.

area. This article offers a new perspective on the discussion through the application of a cultural evolutionary theoretical framework. This application enables new typological comparisons of pre-Christian Scandinavian religions with religions of the same type, for instance, with pre-Christian Hawaiian religions as in this article, shedding new light on sacral rulers in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

Through the application of cultural evolutionary theory certain characteristics within pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, culture, and society relating to the figure of the ruler will be revealed, examined, and compared with pre-Christian Hawaiian religions to demonstrate the usefulness of cultural evolutionary theory as a comparative and analytical tool in the creation of models for reconstruction in the history of religions.

Theory and method

The specific cultural evolutionary theory which I will apply in this article was proposed by the recently deceased (July 2013) American sociologist of religion, Robert N. Bellah. In his magnum opus, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Palaeolithic to the Axial Age* (2011), he outlines the evolution of religion as a deep history spanning everything from the Big Bang until the present time. He does not present a history of single temporal and geographical foci in different religions, but a general, convergent religious evolution (Jensen 2013, 11–2). In this perspective evolution not only concerns genes but also entire organisms and cultural systems; this draws on both Roy Rappaport's systems theoretical 'adaptive structures' (Rappaport 1979, 145–7) and Clifford Geertz's classic definition of religion (1973, 90).

Cultural evolution is seen as a biocultural coevolution, where religion is an inherent part of the evolution of the human mind along with, for instance, language as an element of culture. Within this cultural evolutionary framework it is reasonable to assume that religion may exist in distinctive types, corresponding with particular cultural historical phases, which simultaneously correlate with changing economic, social, and political-framework conditions. Importantly, when working with cultural evolution, these distinctive types of religion are characterised by an accumulation rather than a dismantling. Bellah puts it this way: 'Nothing is ever lost' (2011, 267), meaning that traits of less complex religions can still be found, even in very complex religions.

Utilising the above, Bellah proposes a convergent evolutionary typology of religion, comprising these distinctive types of religion. The basic structures

of this typology correlate with and are inspired by neuroscientist Merlin Donald's four-phase typology for the evolution of consciousness (2001). Bellah's typology comprises five types of religion: tribal, archaic, axial, early modern, and modern. I shall not discuss the last three types any further in this article, but they are discussed at length by Bellah ((2011, 265–606) for axial religions and (1964, 368–74) for early modern and modern religions). Of Bellah's types of religion, it is the pre-axial that is the most interesting for this article's purposes.

1) Tribal religion is characteristic of hunter-gatherer societies. Such societies are often nomadic and tribal, characterised by egalitarianism and a mechanical solidarity concerning the division of labour. The cosmological universe of the tribal religion is monistic and dedicated to supernatural beings with a relatively fluid identity, and a pantheon proper has yet to form. Bellah emphasises that supernatural beings in tribal religion are often theriomorphic. However, his emphasis may be too strong: there are also many examples of anthropomorphic supernatural beings in tribal religions.[3] As in society, rituals are egalitarian, and as a rule the entire tribe takes part. The use of ritual or religious specialists is limited to those, like shamans, who are more in touch with the spirit world and better equipped to lead the tribe in a ritual that ultimately benefits the entire tribe (Bellah 1964, 361–4, 2011, 117–74).

2) Archaic religion is a feature of the early states from the great river valley civilisations of the ancient Near East. They presuppose urbanisation, a polity with a marked hierarchical structure, and craft literacy. The division of labour tends towards a more organic solidarity, where specific groups take care of specific tasks and crafts. The cosmological universe, which can now accurately be termed a mythology, is still monistic and consists of a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods with a personality, gender, and approximate age. The distinctive rituals of this type of religion are handled by a specialised priesthood. In these societies monumental temples are built, as seen in Egypt and in the Mayan and Aztec societies in Central and South America. In archaic religion the ruler has a strong connection to the gods, and is often seen as a divine or semi-divine being (Bellah 1964, 364–6; 2011, 210–64).

According to Bellah, these are the two types of religion present in predominantly oral societies. However, some religions seem not to fit these categories, pre-Christian Scandinavian religions included. Society in pre-Christian Scandinavia was not archaic because of its lack of polity and

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3 For example, the Inuit sea goddess Sedna, the Winnebago Earthmaker, and the creator god from French Polynesia, Ta'aroa, all have both human and animal traits.

urbanisation. An example is Hedeby,[4] which was the largest settlement in Scandinavia in the Viking Age, with a population of *c.* 1,500 (Skre 2012, 84). Grave finds also suggest a more tribal form of society, with the family as the locus, and not the heavily stratified, urbanised society implied by archaic society. Of course, stratification is found, as we shall see later, but there is no urbanisation. Does this mean that society in the Iron and Viking Age North was tribal? This is not necessarily the case. When Caesar, in *De Bello Gallico* (*c.* 50 BC), describes the Germanic warlord Ariovistus as having 15,000 people in his retinue, this suggests a form of hierarchical societal structure not found in tribal societies. This may be explained as the result of cultural interchange with archaic cultures like the Celts (Egeler 2013, Enright 1996). However, this is not the only possibility. I will present another plausible explanation, namely, that pre-Christian Scandinavian religions might be conceived of as 'chiefdom religions'[5].

The transition from tribal to archaic religion may be more than just a transition. In this article I shall explore the possibilities of nuancing Bellah's typology.

The sacral ruler – a brief research history

The discussion concerning the sacrality of rulers in pre-Christian Scandinavia has existed for many years. Some scholars in the early 20th century sought to prove the existence of a sacral kingship in pre-Christian Scandinavia (see Von Friesen 1932–34; Höfler 1952; F. Ström 1954; Å. V. Ström 1959), while later scholars simply aimed to refute it (see Baetke 1964; Picard 1991). In recent years the idea of categorically accepting or refuting the existence of a sacral kingship has been replaced by reflections for or against. This has been prompted by the increasing methodological awareness within the field (Nygaard 2013, 137–9), which has been a catalyst for research, especially within the history of religions, that has explored the possibility of some form of sacral or religious ruler-figure in pre-Christian Scandinavia (Schjødt 1990; 2010; Steinsland 1991; 2000; Sundqvist 2002; 2012) – research which I will draw on throughout this article's analysis.

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4 Of course, society in pre-Christian Scandinavia was neither uniform nor coherent, and Hedeby is not representative of the entire area, but serves only as an example of the lack of urbanisation.

5 Bellah (2011, 175–210) treats two Polynesian societies, Tikopia and Hawaii, as transitional societies between the tribal and archaic categories, but with a lack of stringency. I seek to remedy this by suggesting the establishment of the category of chiefdom religion. Similar suggestions have been made by Bernhard Lang (2013) and Turner & Maryanski (2008).

The earliest scholars all but took it for granted that a sacral kingship existed in pre-Christian Scandinavia (Å. V. Ström 1959, 702; F. Ström 1954, 35), while perhaps the most notable researcher into sacral kingship, Walter Baetke, did precisely the opposite (1964). He refuted the possibility of a sacral kingship having existed in pre-Christian Scandinavia entirely. Baetke's very source-critical approach is problematic to an historian of religions working with a model-based (re)construction of past religions (cf. Schjødt 2012a). Furthermore, a primary criticism of Baetke's theories has been the sharp distinction between kings and other social leaders without reference to important sources such as *Háleygjatal* (*c.* 885) and *Færeyinga saga* (*c.* 1215) in his conclusions (McTurk 1974–77, 150). Here, the wider definition of sacral rulership – or 'Religious ruler ideology', as Olof Sundqvist puts it (2012, 233–6) – as opposed to Baetke's strict definition, in which the king must be the object of a cult (1964, 39), seems more applicable, and will be the underlying understanding used throughout this article. It should also be noted that when comparable material from other cultures similar to pre-Christian Scandinavia is examined it would seem quite striking were the ruler not thought of as sacral to some degree, given that this is indeed the case in so many of these cultures (as Schjødt has commented (forthcoming)).

One such comparable culture is the pre-Christian Hawaiian culture, which will be the primary point of reference throughout this analysis. This comparison is possible because the two religions in question, as previously mentioned, seem to belong to the same type of religion in our cultural evolutionary typology of religion, chiefdom religion, and thus evince similar characteristics in societal structure, religious practice, and ideology, which the analysis will show. Indeed, the use of Bellah's theory makes this kind of typological comparison possible (see also Schjødt, forthcoming).

The themes I will address are: 1) the position of the ruler in society, cult, and ideology; 2) the societal structure in which these religions are found; 3) the idea of ruler sacrifice; 4) incestuous relationships and their ideological implications; and, finally, 5) the idea of a double rulership in chiefdom religion.

The position of the ruler

As previously mentioned, it is quite plausible that the ruler figure in pre-Christian Scandinavia possessed a certain degree of sacrality. As Jens Peter Schjødt (1990; 2010) stresses, he occupied a special position in society through his numinousity, which had probably been given to him by the

gods. This numinous power enabled the ruler to act as a mediator between men and gods. This is also seen in pre-Christian Hawaii,[6] where the ruler was the main mediator between the gods and men through his handling and consecration of the human sacrifice which set him apart from the rest of the Hawaiian nobility, the *alii*, and also contributed to his special position in society (Valeri 1985, 140–2). It was through sacrifice that the pre-Christian Hawaiian gods granted the Polynesian equivalent of numinousity, *mana*, to the sacrificer (Goldman 1970, 218). The degree of mana was given in ac- cordance with several factors, among them purity. Purity and completeness were signs of the divine and paramount in the acquisition and upholding of mana. The completeness of the ruler can be seen through the autonomy of the *alii*, as their endurance did not depend on anyone from outside their family and social stratum. This was exemplified by incestuous relationships, which I will consider later. Purity and its upholding was perhaps the most important means of acquiring sacrality in pre-Christian Hawaii. The pure and the impure related to each other as life and normativity to death and the loss of integrity. As the loss of this bodily integrity correlated with the loss of social integrity, the juxtaposition between the pure and impure functioned as a social status marker. Purity was thus a marker of the normativity and completeness of which the ruler and the gods were representatives. If the ruler lost his purity through war, for example, he could restore it and his social status through sacrifice, in which he gained mana and numinousity (Valeri 1985, 84–6, 146–8).

How, then, was this numinousity bestowed on the ruler in pre-Christian Scandinavia? Two possible ways are found in the sources: through inherit- ance and through initiation. These two kinds of ruler can be termed heredi- tary and elective. This ties in with the idea of double rulership, to which we shall return in due course.

The idea that initiation played a major role in pre-Christian Scandi- navian religions, and notably in the ideology of the ruling elite, has been convincingly described by Schjødt (2008). In connection with the ruler's numinousity, it is likely that he was initiated in order to gain the knowledge and abilities needed to rule. This initiation may have been used in combina-

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6   Valerio Valeri (1985) synthesises the sources for pre-Christian Hawaiian religion. These sources are normally catagorised into 1) eye witness accounts from pre-contact times until the Cultural Revolution in 1819 recorded by early Hawaiian scholars such as David Malo (1903); 2) sources written by Christian missionaries; and 3) sources from European seafarers. As is the case with pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, it is predominantly the religion of the elite which is recorded – and in Hawaii often through the lens of colonial Christians.

tion with inheritance, and the hereditary ruler may have been initiated to Óðinn in order to perform his duties as a ruler.

The idea of divine descent can be seen in Tacitus's *Germania* 2 (*c.*100 CE), where he writes that all the peoples are descendants of the gods. This may be taking it too far, but a reasonable assumption would be that those in the highest social stratum were seen as divine descendants (Schjødt 1990, 57–62).

Various traditions concerning rulers' divine descent can be found in our sources. In different parts of pre-Christian Scandinavia and in the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon areas rulers traced their lineage to different gods. In the majority of cases the role of progenitor was taken by either Óðinn or Freyr. The most famous example of divine descent is probably the *Ynglingar* of Gamla Uppsala, who traced their lineage to Freyr. This is described in the 9th century skaldic poem *Ynglingatal*, in which expressions like 'Freyr's descendant' (*Freys áttungr*) and 'Freyr's offspring' (*Freys afspringr*) can be found. These textual attestations are thought to portray the idea of divine descent quite clearly.

Another well-known example of the divine ancestry of a line of rulers is the *jarlar* of *Hlaðir* in Norway. In the skald Eyvindr skáldaspillir's poem *Háleygjatal* from *c.* 885 their lineage is traced to *jarl* Sæmingr, who was the son of Óðinn and the *jǫtunn* woman Skaði, and as such a divine ancestor. In another skaldic poem from around 990, *Vellekla*, Óðinn is mentioned as the ancestor of *jarl* Hákon: in stanza 20 he is described as 'generous relative of Ygg [Óðinn]', (*fémildr Yggs niðr*) (Sundqvist 2012, 240–1).

One of the *jarlar* in *Háleygjatal* is also called *Freys ǫttungr*, which may simply mean divine descendant, while Snorri writes that the *Hlaðajarlar* are descendants of Yngvifreyr or Ingunarfreyr. Some scholars have taken this to mean that Freyr was the original ancestor of the *Hlaðajarlar*, and that the idea of Óðinn being their ancestor must be an influence from Western and Continental Europe, i.e. from Anglo-Saxon tradition. This need not be the case, but in any event the underlying idea seems to be of the rulers' divine descent.

The Anglo-Saxon traditions also feature either Óðinn- or Freyr-like gods in their royal lineages. In Bede's 8th century *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Angolorum* Óðinn features as Wodan, while a Freyr-like god could be behind the names Saxnot and Ing (cf. North 1997). This, however, is widely debated.

The idea of the sacrality and numinousity of the ruler gained through sacrifice, initiation, and divine descent thus seems a prominent feature of both religions.

Societal structure

Through both the Iron and Viking Ages pre-Christian Scandinavia consisted of a variety of more or less organised societies, like those around Lejre in Denmark (Christensen 2012, 121–5) and Mälaren in Eastern Sweden, the land of the Svear (Hyenstrand 1996: Sundqvist 2002). The latter will serve as a tentative example of the societal structure of pre-Christian Scandinavia.

In the area around Lake Mälaren archaeological finds show continuity in habitation from the Bronze Age to the Modern Era. Finds from the Bronze Age bear witness to something similar to chiefdoms and trade, and the import of high quality goods can be established. Through the Iron Age a more organised society can be found, supported by cattle husbandry and early agriculture, as well as hunting and fishing (Roesdahl 2010, 96, 102). This, along with the production of iron and the working of gold, provided the foundation of trade in the area in the Iron and Viking Ages (Hyenstrand 1974). Not much in the way of writing existed in Scandinavia before the advent of Christianity. Runic inscriptions can be found as early as the 2nd or 3rd centuries CE and are more widespread in the Viking Age, but this does not mean that society in pre-Christian Scandinavia was literary. These runic inscriptions are for the most part short texts carved in wood, stone, or metal, some featuring names of gods and cultic leaders or curses, invocations, or incantations; but more often they relate simply who made them, for whom, and why (McKinnell et al. 2004). The Latin alphabet was brought to Scandinavia by Christian missionaries, along with the use of parchment and ink.

Society in pre-Christian Hawaii consisted of various more or less autonomous chiefdoms throughout the archipelago. On each island one paramount chief ruled over the others, leading to much warring between chiefdoms to gain this position of power. This structure was displaced in 1810, when the first Hawaiian king, Kamehameha I, unified Hawaii. Economically, pre-Christian Hawaii was quite simple: it was sustained through horticulture, the raising of poultry, swine, and dogs, and through aquaculture (Kirch 1984, 181–4). No writing can be found, and compared with the rest of Polynesia the architectural achievements are mediocre (Goldman 1970, 200). The remarkable feat of pre-Christian Hawaiian society lies in its bureaucratic and administrative development and the specific social system. The stratified class system found in pre-Christian Hawaii is probably one of the main reasons for the development of the complex, warrior-like chiefdoms and eventually the kingdom of Hawaii (Bellah 2011, 198).

Grave finds from Late Iron Age Eastern Sweden give a picture of a more stratified society than was previously the case, and the existence of a ruling warrior-elite may be discerned from this point on. This is more marked in the Viking Age, as finds throughout Scandinavia have shown (Price 2012, 32–42). Society was kinship-based and bilateral, with a slight paternal skewing (Sundqvist 2002, 64). In the Iron Age the area around Mälaren constituted a decentralised society divided into districts led by independent leaders or rulers. Names like Arland, Valand, and Soland indicate such districts (Brink 1996; 1997), which may have been a form of chiefdom. In Iron Age society central places like Gamla Uppsala seem to have played a significant role as seats for local rulers, often acting as *primus inter pares* among the other rulers in the area. In time, through a process of centralisation, these chiefdoms were united in a form of socio-political unit – a large chiefdom or, eventually, a petty kingdom. This may be the Svearike or Svitjod of the sources. Both archaeological and written sources point to Gamla Uppsala as the central place of Svearike, as names of different parts of the area seem to refer to their placement relative to it. This process of centralisation may have been the result of ideological changes in the ruler ideology. Through the Iron and Early Viking Ages the rulers seem to have been hierarchically equal, with the ruler in Gamla Uppsala acting as *primus inter pares*, as previously mentioned. In *Ynglinga saga* 36 (*c.* 1230) it is said that 'Ingjald son of King Anund became king in Uppsala. The Uppsala-kings were the most eminent of kings in Svitjod when there were many kinglets there.' The development towards one paramount ruler seen in the Late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages may be the motif behind the further narrative in *Ynglinga saga* 36, where King Ingjald invites the rulers of Svitjod to the old King Anund's wake. In the night, when all the rulers are drunk, Ingjald burns down the hall in which they are sitting and thus gains power over all their lands. The essence of this narrative may be inspired by the change in ruler ideology – from hierarchically equal rulers, with the Uppsala ruler acting as *primus inter pares*, to the Uppsala ruler as the paramount ruler (Sundqvist 2002, 65–72; 2016).

In pre-Christian Hawaii a ruling elite, the *alii*, also existed. There could be no genealogical contact between the *alii* and the common people. This is why a peasant was not allowed to trace his family more than three generations back, while the *alii* were required to be able to trace their lineage ten generations back, as well as to be able to prove a blood bond between them and the paramount ruler (Bellah 2011, 198). In pre-Christian Hawaii status was gained through genealogy, but these genealogical questions also had the function of a political alliance, as it was the ruler in power who had to

approve and acknowledge the genealogies of his supporters in the rest of the *alii* once he had gained power.

What we seem to see here are two different kinds of chiefdom, both gradually developing into what one could term petty kingdoms or very early territorial states (see Trigger 2003, 92–119; Bellah 2011, 213). With the coming of Christianity in the late 1770s, the long-held ambition of a united kingdom of Hawaii became reality with the aid of some European seafarers (Goldman 1970, 203). Larger kingdoms, like Haraldr blátǫnn's 10th century Denmark, also began to form in Scandinavia, probably in the late Viking Age, assisted in various ways by the coming of Christianity.[7]

Ruler sacrifice

In pre-Christian Scandinavia signs of human sacrifice have been found in connection with wetland areas. This archaeological evidence suggests that these sacrifices were collective offerings of an enemy army (Sundqvist 2002, 72; Andrén 2014, 90–8). Early Iron Age bog bodies such as Grauballemanden and Tollundmanden have been found, suggesting that some humans may have been individually sacrificed.[8]

In pre-Christian Hawaii human sacrifice seems to have been a much more integral part of the ritual system. The *luakini* ritual, which helped tame and purify the paramount ruler, was a human sacrifice. Indeed, only the paramount chief could authorise such a human sacrifice, a ritual in which he was sacrifier, sacrificer, and sacrifice (Bellah 2011, 202). I shall return to this shortly.

This leads us to the notion of ruler sacrifice. Is it possible that the ruler was a viable sacrifice in chiefdom religion? We will begin with examples from pre-Christian Scandinavia.

Direct archaeological evidence of ruler sacrifices in pre-Christian Scandinavia has not been found. However, written sources do mention rulers who have been sacrificed. These written sources are not, of course, historically accurate, but we can at least assume that they portray ideas and conceptions that may have been part of pre-Christian ruler ideology (see Schjødt 2012a). Here, I will use the sources about King Dómaldi's death and the sacrifice of King Víkarr.

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7 This development is, of course, also historical, but the understanding of evolution used in this article does not exclude the influence of such external factors (cf. Petersen 2013, 69–71).
8 P.V Glob (1969) suggests the bog bodies were sacrifices for the gods, while Anders Hultgård (2001) refutes the sources for human sacrifice altogether.

Ynglinga saga 15 tells the story of King Dómaldi of Svitjod, under whose rule famine and hardship led the Svear to hold a large ritual (*blót*) in Uppsala. The first autumn they sacrificed oxen; the next they sacrificed humans (*mannblót*); but the season did not improve. The third autumn the chieftains gathered to hold council and agreed that the famine was due to King Dómaldi, and that they should sacrifice him for better seasons (*blóta til árs sér*), which they did. The narrative in the considerably older (*c.* 900) *Ynglingatal* 5 is almost the same. Dómaldi is sacrificed (*sóa*) by his own people because they are eager for crops (*árgiarn*), while the 13th century Latin work, *Historia Norwegiæ*, relates how Dómaldi was hanged as a sacrifice to Ceres. Ceres in usually thought to be an *interpretatio romana* for Freyja, both being fertility goddesses per se (Sundqvist 2002, 241–50). Although the sacrifice of King Dómaldi has been variously interpreted through the years, one thing seems certain: the idea of a ruler sacrifice seems to be genuinely pre-Christian, and the age of *Ynglingatal* lends weight to this claim. The reason behind Dómaldi's sacrifice seems to be the same in all three instances. The harvest has failed, and the people try to re-establish the proper order of the world by maintaining the ritual coherence. If they do not, the world will suffer and eventually come to an end. This ritual immanence is a common trait in ritual and cult based cultures (Assmann 2006, 126). In this example the sacrifice of Dómaldi restores order by securing the land's fertility. The function of the ruler as the mediator between gods and men had not been fulfilled by Dómaldi, so sacrifices had to be made. Why then was Dómaldi ultimately chosen when all other sacrifices had failed to work? The answer is likely to be found in the sacrality and numinousity of the ruler, as previously discussed. The object to be sacrificed to the gods has to be made sacral in the process, and if the ruler is already sacral and is possessed of more numinousity than other humans, then he is better suited for sacrifice than others (Schjødt 2010, 174).

In the *fornaldarsaga Gautreks saga* 7 (late 1200s) and in Saxo's 12th century *Gesta Danorum* 6, 5,1–8, 8,12 another ruler sacrifice is described. The sacrifice of King Víkarr by the warrior Starkaðr is described similarly in both sources. Here, I will use *Gautreks saga*. King Víkarr, Starkaðr and the rest of the king's retinue are plagued by a strong headwind while on a raid. To change the wind, they try casting lots (*fella spán*), and it is augured that Óðinn demands a sacrifice by hanging by the drawing of lots. The king's lot is drawn. During the night Starkaðr's foster father, Hrosshárs-Grani, who is really Óðinn in disguise, comes to take Starkaðr away to a forest, where Óðinn and Þórr decide Starkaðr's fate. For the help Óðinn gives Starkaðr

in this, Óðinn demands that Starkaðr give him King Víkarr as a sacrifice. Óðinn gives Starkaðr a spear, reassuring him that it will look like a reed stem. Starkaðr is to use this in a mock sacrifice resulting from the council's decision to give the king to Óðinn. The king does not think it dangerous and lets 'fate decide what happens' (*auðna ráða, hvat sem gerist*). The mock noose is put around his neck, and Starkaðr thrusts the reed stem into him saying, 'Now I give you to Óðinn' (*Nú gef ek þik* Óðni), at which point the stem becomes a spear and the mock noose a strong rope, and the king dies.

Now, many elements of this ruler sacrifice are interesting. It seems to be an Odinic sacrifice, with all its characteristic hallmarks. Óðinn is said to be able to 'turn the wind whichever way he want[s] to' (*snúa vindum hverja leið, er hann vildi*) (*Ynglinga saga* 7), and it seems reasonable for King Víkarr's men to sacrifice to Óðinn in their situation. As for the actual sacrificial act, the connections to Óðinn are many. Hanging seems to be strongly associated with Óðinn throughout the Old Norse text corpus. The Eddic poem, *Hávamál* 138–41, (probably composed between the 9th and 10th centuries) describes how Óðinn, 'wounded by spear' (*geir undaðr*), hanged himself, sacrificing 'myself to myself' (*siálfr siálfom mér*) in order to gain the numinous knowledge of the runes, a passage often called Óðinn's self-hanging. He is also said to be the 'lord of the hanged' (*hangadrottinn*) in *Ynglinga saga* 7, and in *Hávamál* 157 he relates how, by carving runes, he can wake a 'dangling hanged man' (*váfa virgilnár*). The spear also has strong connections to Óðinn. He uses a spear to institute 'the first war in the world' (*enn fólkvig / fyrst i heimi*) (*Vǫluspá* 24 (*c.* 9th century) in *illo tempore*, while *Ynglinga saga* 9 tells of how on his deathbed he is marked with a spear in order to dedicate all men who die by a weapon to himself. Furthermore, the way in which Óðinn procures the sacrifice of Víkarr seems characteristic of this god. Using cunning and a false identity, he assists his hero, Starkaðr, giving him Odinic gifts, and in return he gains another great ruler and warrior for his army in Valhǫll. As with Dómaldi's death, Víkarr is a potent sacrifice because of his numinousity, and also a desirable addition to Óðinn's army of *einherjar*.

These two ruler sacrifices basically serve the same purpose. They are simple do-ut-des sacrifices given in order to remedy a situation, but they are given to two different gods with different functions. Dómaldi is sacrificed to secure the fertility of the land, possibly to Freyja, one of the collective of fertility gods known as the Vanir.[9] Víkarr is sacrificed to Óðinn at his behest,

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9 Recently, the term 'Vanir' has been much discussed. Some (Simek 2010) have argued for the abolition of the term; some (Frog & Roper 2011) have sought a more balanced approach; others have been more positive towards it (Schjødt 2014; Tolley 2011).

to turn the wind and the fortunes of the raid, while Óðinn possibly grants him a place of honour in his army of *einherjar* in Valhǫll (Schjødt 2010, 180). Fertility and war are thus juxtaposed in the two pre-Christian Scandinavian ruler sacrifices, a motif which seems ubiquitous in chiefdom religion.

As has been noted, human sacrifice was an integral part of pre-Christian Hawaiian ruler ideology. Very often it was blood relatives of the ruler who were sacrificed. It can therefore be seen as one of the 'fundamental symbolic conditions' of the religious system (Valeri 1985, 161). As in many other ritual-based cult cultures, in pre-Christian Hawaii sacrifices were made in order to uphold the relationship between the social hierarchy and the gods – a relationship in many ways essential for the upholding of established society (Valeri 1985, 165). The ruler, however, always ran the risk of being sacrificed himself. The war for power in pre-Christian Hawaii was almost never ending. The victorious chief was then elevated to divine status, while the pretenders to the throne were sacrificed to the god of war, Kū. Through this sacrifice the pretenders to the throne were absorbed into this deity. As all those who aspired to the throne and tried to claim it identified themselves with the ruler, they were structurally convergent with the ruler (Valeri 1985, 165). It was therefore symbolically the paramount ruler himself being sacrificed and absorbed into Kū, thus restoring the completeness and purity so essential to the pre-Christian Hawaiian religions, which had been disrupted by the violence of war. As previously mentioned, purity was a marker for normativity, of which the paramount ruler and the gods were representatives. To uphold the ruler's purity was to uphold his divine status (Valeri 1985, 84–6). In addition, by sacrificing his rivals, who were often either brothers or half-brothers, the paramount ruler could obtain their mana and genealogical rank, thus strengthening his claim to the throne (Bellah 2011, 203). It is here that the symbolic sacrifice of the ruler is connected with incestuous relationships in pre-Christian Hawaii. Indeed, incestuous relationships are an integral part of ruler ideology in pre-Christian Hawaii. I shall return to this having touched upon incestuous relationships in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

Incestuous relationships

Gro Steinsland (1991 *passim*) has posited that a *hieros gamos* motif was part of the ruler ideology in pre-Christian Scandinavia. In this connection it has also been suggested that the female in a sacred wedding may have been of the same blood as the ruler (Schjødt 2012b, 78). The *hieros gamos* can be

viewed as an important part of the ritual and mythological cycle in many pre-axial religions (Lang 2013, 34–5 with references).

In pre-Christian Hawaiian mythology a *hieros gamos*-myth actually legitimises incestuous relationships. The feminine earth, Papa, is fertilised by the masculine sky, Wākea, and their first-born son becomes the important Hawaiian crop, the taro. In this myth the sacrifice is also instituted, which entails the separation of men and women in certain situations along with the establishment of *kapu*, the Hawaiian taboo. This separation enables Wākea the sky-god to sneak away during a night of separation to sleep with his daughter, whom he eventually marries. Wākea thus proves his autonomy, and that of all rulers who descend from him, and their independence from the traditional exogamous bridal exchange system, thus legitimising incestuous relationships. The myth shows that it is the sacrifice and the separation of the sexes that enable this, which, as we shall see, ultimately produces the heir to the throne (Valeri 1985, 169–71).

There may be remnants of this in the incestuous relationship of the Vanir in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

These incestuous relationships are mentioned several times in the Old Norse text corpus. In *Ynglinga saga* 4 we are told that while Njǫrðr was among the Vanir he was married to his sister. The offspring of this marriage were probably Freyr and Freyja, although its chronology is not entirely clear (see Hopkins 2012). They are also accused of incest in the Eddic poem *Lokasenna* 32 (composed *c.* 10th century), and Njǫrðr's relationship with his sister is also mentioned in *Lokasenna* 36, where Loki says that Njǫrðr had a son with her. This sister mentioned both in *Ynglinga saga* and *Lokasenna* may well testify to a tradition stemming back to the Iron Age. In *Germania* 40 Tacitus describes a procession ritual, in which the fertility goddess Nerthus is transported through the landscape in a ritual wagon, bringing joy and peaceful, festive days. A parallel to this is seen in *Gunnars þáttr Helmings* in *Flateyjarbók* (late 14th century), where Freyr is driven through the landscape with a female priest in a wagon. This parallel, together with the fact that the functions of bringing peace and joy in connection with the landscape are those of the Vanir, makes it reasonable to view Nerthus as a Vanir-esque deity. There is also a linguistic connection between Nerthus and the Vanir. The Proto-Germanic cognate of both Nerthus and Njǫrðr is reconstructed as **nerþuz* (power) (cf. Steinsland 2005, 147–9). This has given rise to the idea of Nerthus and Njǫrðr as divine twins, as is often the case with fertility deities, for instance the Nâsatyas of the *Rigveda* (*c.* 1900 BC). The names Freyr and Freyja also have a common root, meaning 'lord' and 'lady' in

Old Norse,[10] and the pair of siblings has been seen as a younger version of Njǫrðr and Nerthus, or *Njärð.[11] *Njärd is a reconstructed name based on Swedish place names, and has been posited as a possible Old Norse name for Nerthus by Britt-Mari Näsström (1995, 50–60), although the gender of *Njärd and indeed also *nerþuz is ambivalent (cf. Vikstrand 2001). Another possibility is the enigmatic goddess Njǫrun (Hopkins 2012).

If Nerthus/*Njärð is accepted as the sister-wife of Njǫrðr, the idea that legitimate incest is the motif behind the relationship mentioned in *Lokasenna* and *Ynglinga saga* and the relationship between Freyr and Freyja in *Lokasenna* is strengthened. The question remains: why? As previously mentioned, a *hieros gamos* with consanguine exigencies may have been the underlying motif. This may have been necessary to concentrate and accumulate the numinousity of the couple to facilitate the best possible outcome for the marriage, in this case, the fertility of the land. This accumulation is the basis of another example of incest in Old Norse literature.

This example is found in *Vǫlsunga saga* 7 (late 13th century; however, the narrative was known as early as the 9th century, cf. the Ramsund carving), where the woman Signý uses *seiðr* to take the appearance of another woman to trick her brother Sigmundr into having sex with her. Sinfjǫtli, the son conceived through this relationship, gains all the positive attributes of the *Vǫlsungar*, which enable him to avenge the killing of his grandfather King Vǫlsung and his nine sons. This accumulation of qualities is similar to that seen in pre-Christian Hawaiian ruler ideology, where the *mana* and rank of the married couple is accumulated in their offspring; but what was inherent in pre-Christian Hawaiian society is only a mythical idea in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

As the kinship system in pre-Christian Hawaii was bilateral, with both sides carrying equal weight, finding an heir was a very complicated matter. This is why it was essential for the ruler to have the best possible genealogical claim to the throne. He therefore neutralised his negative, destructive male doubles with positive female equivalents, that is, sisters (Valeri 1985, 165). To secure the best possible genealogical claim to the throne, the paramount ruler had to monopolise as many women of high rank as possible. This was effected by incestuous relationships, which helped legitimise the genealogy of the ruler, and as the mana of both parents was accumulated in the offspring, they were then thought to be divine (Goldman 1970, 218).

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10   Disputed by Lennart Elmevik (2003).
11   Other such name pairings may include Ullr and Ullinn, and Fjǫrgyn and Fjǫrgynn (Hopkins 2012).

To retain this monopoly, the ruler had to sacrifice his rival brothers, and 'what begins as a fratricide must end as incest; the destruction of a brother must, through marriage with a sister, become the production of an heir. The negative double of the king is thus turned into a positive one.' (Valeri 1985, 165) This is also why human sacrifice in pre-Christian Hawaii was always ruler sacrifice, either symbolically, through the double's identification with the ruler, or literally, if the ruler had been dethroned (Bellah 2011, 202–3).

Double rulership

As previously mentioned, there seems to have existed a double rulership in pre-Christian Scandinavia, consisting of the hereditary ruler and the elective ruler. Tacitus may allude to this in *Germania* 7: 'They take their kings on the ground of birth, their generals on the basis of courage.' (*Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt.*) *Reges* are here thought to refer to the hereditary rulers, and *duces* to the elective rulers – one ruler who was of the right family and one who had proven himself in battle. In the late Viking Age both aspects were seen in the same ruler, and the two roles have probably merged at a point in time (Schjødt 2012b, 79). This possible double rulership can also be seen in the mythology, where the two gods already mentioned as progenitors of the rulers in pre-Christian Scandinavia, Óðinn and Freyr, are representatives (Schlesinger 1956).

Freyr can be seen as the prototypical ruler in times of peace, the hereditary ruler, while Óðinn is the kind of ruler preferred in times of war, the elective ruler (Steinsland 2000, 52). These characteristics can also be seen in their functions in pre-Christian Scandinavian religions and in their relationship with rulers. As previously mentioned, initiation seems to have played a major role in pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, and it seems probable that the elective king was initiated to Óðinn, the god of initiation, as is seen with many rulers (Schjødt 2008; Schjødt 2012b, 74–6). The fact that Óðinn is seen as the progenitor of the *jarlar* of *Hlaðir* and almost all ruler families in the Anglo-Saxon area may be due to his having at some point been the personal god for the *duces*. This relationship may then have evolved into Óðinn being the progenitor for some of these ruler families (Schjødt 2012b, 76–9), which seems to be the aspect of rulership thematised in the sacrifice of King Víkarr.

Freyr, however, was a fertility god, and the god of sexuality and rulership (Steinsland 2005, 143–63). He seems from the outset to have been connected to genealogies as the god who maintained the fertility of the

land, and thus the prosperity and wealth of society (Schjødt 2010, 185). This aspect of rulership seems to have been thematised in the sacrifice of King Dómaldi. Furthermore, Terry Gunnell (2000) has proposed that the year in pre-Christian Scandinavia was divided into two spheres. Winter was dedicated to the female powers; summer was controlled by the masculine powers. The relationship between these two gods and their relationship with rulership seems to be structural:

Óðinn	Freyr
war	fertility
violence	peace
duces	*reges*
summer	winter

As we shall see in what follows, this relationship can also be found in pre-Christian Hawaiian ruler ideology.

In pre-Christian Hawaii double rulership can be seen in the ritual cycle, which was divided in two, much like it has been suggested in connection with pre-Christian Scandinavia. Four of the months were dedicated to the fertility god Lono, the god of horticulture, growth, and life in general. One of Lono's bodies was the gourd, evoking images of pregnancy and femininity. Eight months were dedicated to the war god Kū, god of the *alii*, violence, and human sacrifice, and very much a masculine god. The four months dedicated to Lono were called the *Makahiki*-festival, a festival with carnival-like undertones, during which violence and killing were prohibited and sexuality, orgies, feasting, and merrymaking took over. This meant that the regular ruler took a back seat and handed his power over to Lono (Bellah 2011, 200–1; Valeri 1985, 207–19).

The ritual cycle started with the collection of taxes, which was followed by four days of festivities, dance, and orgies, where work and everything to do with the normal ruler and Kū was *kapu*. Then an idol of Lono was prepared for a circumambulation of the island for the collection of first fruit. This happened in an initiation-like ritual called *hānai pū*, in which the ruler surrendered his power to Lonomakua (provider-Lono) by hanging a necklace of whale teeth called a *niho palaoa* around Lonomakua's neck – a symbol of rulership (Valeri 1985, 207–8).

During the *Makahiki*-festival the normal order of the ruler and the *alii* was suspended, and an order of the people held sway. Only pigs were allowed to be sacrificed, but during the other eight months of the year, when the normal

ruler held power, human sacrifice to the war god Kū in the *luakini*-temple was the central ritual (Schjødt, forthcoming). This ritual was legitimising for the ruler, and, as has already been said, he was the only one who could authorise human sacrifice. This was also the time when wars were fought and when death and violence were imminent threats.

The structural relationship which we saw in pre-Christian Scandinavia can thus also be found in pre-Christian Hawaii:

Kū	Lono
the ruler	Lonomakua
alii	the people
death	sexuality
hierarchy	equality
violence	peace

Conclusion

This descriptive comparison between pre-Christian Scandinavia and pre-Christian Hawaii seems to show one thing clearly: a relationship exists between the ruler's position in society and its religion and structure. It also suggests tendentious similarities between the way this relationship is seen in pre-Christian Scandinavia and pre-Christian Hawaii. Do we indeed need to nuance Bellah's typology then? The comparative analyses above suggest this may be necessary. In any case, the strictly egalitarian structure of tribal society, with small tribes of roughly 150 people, does not fit any of the above societies, but neither do the very stratified urban city-states of archaic society. We begin to see stratification in both pre-Christian Scandinavia and pre-Christian Hawaii, but urbanisation simply does not happen before Christianity. This suggests a society between the tribal and the archaic. This crux seems to be found in the religious and ideological material of both societies as well.

In this article I have aimed to open a discussion concerning the possible category of chiefdom religion, rather than irrefutably to prove that such a category must be established. However, I think it is eminently plausible. I have also sought to illustrate the usefulness of cultural evolutionary theory[12] in the reconstruction of past religions. It can be utilised to optimise

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12 Among other things, Bellah's specific theory has been criticised for not being grounded in evolution (see Assmann 2012) and not engaging properly with other evolutionary theories. I cannot here delve into all the criticisms of Bellah (see Stausberg (2014) for an overview of the reception of Bellah's theory).

the models that we work with in our reconstruction, for example, of pre-Christian Scandinavian religions, and if a larger scale comparative study into such religions were to be made, it might help fill out the textual lacunae in mythologies such as the Slavic or the Baltic, where very many sources have been lost, by creating a larger scale model of this type of religion. An illustration (*Fig. 1*) of the typologisation used in this article will further the understanding of this usefulness (see also Nygaard 2014; 2015).

The usefulness of cultural evolutionary theory is also apparent in comparative studies. It makes it possible to construct typological comparisons that might otherwise seem far-fetched (cf. *Fig. 1*). This is most definitely the case with the comparisons in this article, but, as I have argued, this comparison is possible because the religions in question, however far apart geographically and temporally, seem to belong to the same cultural evolutionary type of religion: they show similarities in religious aspects such as the ruler's position in society, his relationship to sacrifice, different types of gods, and the relationship of these gods to war and fertility. It could be argued that this is just a matter of coincidence and that such tendentious similarities carry no real weight in drawing conclusions. If such criticism is to be countered, further studies into the possible category of chiefdom religion, and further comparative studies based on cultural evolutionary theory, will be needed (cf. Bulbulia et al. 2013).

Comparative studies of other societies that may have had chiefdom religions are one such area to investigate, and potential societies to study could be the early Greek polis states *c.* 800 CE. Here, societal structures were very similar to what we see in pre-Christian Scandinavia and pre-Christian Hawaii, with many more or less autonomous societies centred around and ruled from the local akropoleis. The Celtic Hallstatt and La Tène cultures also seem to merit similar investigation, along with several Polynesian societies and African kingdoms. Comparative studies of this kind may help create the useful models mentioned above.

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Appendix: Figure 1.

	Religion (In General)

First Level	Pre-Axial	Post-Axial

Second Level	Tribal	Chiefdom	Archaic

Third Level	Pre-Christian Scandinavian	Pre-Christian Hawaiian	Other similar
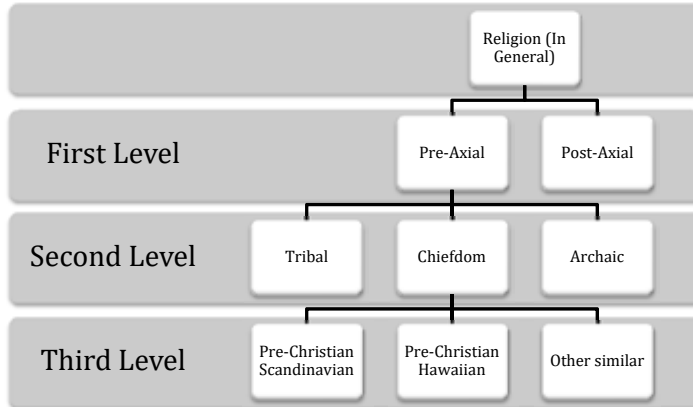
For ourselves and for each other –
Politics of embodied religious belonging in the novel
We Sinners

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Abstract

This article analyses religious belonging in a Christian revivalist community through a reading of Hanna Pylväinen's novel *We Sinners*, a fictive history of a Laestadian family in the modern American Midwest. Like many conservative religious groups today, Laestadianism is increasingly affected by secular society's norms and practices. We claim that the study of everyday religious belonging is essential in order to make sense of the power relations, structures, and dynamics of change within religious groups. The article approaches belonging as a thoroughly embodied state, taking the view that certain kinds of corporeality threaten the cohesion of religious communities while others strengthen it. The politics of belonging in the novel – the practices of inclusion and exclusion – are constructed in, on, and through the regulation of individual bodies. Control over clothing, behaviour, sexuality, movement, and being-in-common produces and governs embodied Laestadian subjectivity, as well as the ways in which belonging is shared.

Keywords: *politics of belonging, embodiment, Laestadianism, literary fiction*

This article analyses the complexity of embodied practices of belonging and not belonging in a Christian revivalist community, Laestadianism.[1] Like many conservative religious groups today, Laestadianism is under pressure to change as it is increasingly affected by secular society's norms and practices (cf. e.g. Aune 2011; McGuire 1997). The movement's power structures

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1 Laestadianism is a conservative Lutheran revival movement founded on the spiritual work of a Swedish-Sámi scientist and priest, Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–61). Laestadians today are characterised by their large families, conservative values, and exclusive social identity. There are an estimated 200,000 Laestadians worldwide, most of them living in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and North America (see e.g. Lohi 1997; Talonen 2001).

are being debated within the community, as well as in public forums, the media, the internet, academic research, literature, and film (see e.g. Hurtig 2013, 33–42; Nykänen 2012, 220–59). These discussions raise the many challenges that the community faces as it tries to maintain its traditional way of life, internal cohesion, and membership. The debates attest to the community's practices of inclusion and exclusion, and ponder questions of belonging and identification. In this article we approach the problematic of belonging to a religious group through a reading of Hanna Pylväinen's novel *We Sinners*, a fictive history of a Laestadian family living in the modern-day American Midwest. The movement's debates on belonging are made tangible through the lens of the book's narrative and the experiences related by the characters.

Nira Yuval-Davis (2011, 2, 113–45) identifies religion as an impetus for one of the major political projects of belonging in the contemporary world. Religions are forces of cohesion and conflict, constructing, as well as dividing, collectives and groups (Berger 1990, 100–1). Religions are politically significant entities in societies, nations, and world politics; social-scientific and political research on religion thus often focuses on socio-politically meaningful, macro level issues (e.g. Yip & Nynäs 2012, 8). This article situates its analysis on the micro level, and approaches belonging as a thoroughly embodied matter. We claim that the study of the representations of the micro level of lived religious belonging is essential if we are to make sense of the power relations, structures, and dynamics of change within religious groups, as well as between these groups and society at large.

Religious norms have a fundamental influence on the embodied subjectivity and everyday life of people in religious communities. Everyday life is lived under different structural constraints, which are simultaneously negotiated, reinterpreted, and challenged; at the same time the structures of everyday life affect wider political projects of identification (e.g. Pink 2012; Yip & Nynäs 2012, 8). This interplay of power structures in everyday life is situated fundamentally in bodies. As Meredith McGuire (2008, 173) argues: 'Body postures, gestures, use of space and time serve, simultaneously, to express metaphorically and actually perform political arrangements— power relationships.'

This article argues that belonging to the Laestadian movement is constructed in, and regulated by, bodily practices. The body underpins belonging in the world spatially and physically, as well as mentally and emotionally. Bodily, sensory, and affective engagement is foundational to human orientation (Riis & Woodhead 2010, 207); belonging is about identification as well as emotional and corporeal attachment. People can belong in

many ways and to many groups, with some forms of belonging being more important than others in terms of self- and group identification: belonging bears on the question of what makes us who we are (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2011). In Laestadianism belonging consists of belonging not only to a social community, but to the Kingdom of God. It is regulated by both religious and social norms. As Vikki Bell (1999, 1; see also Probyn 1996) points out, there is 'yearning implied' in the concept of belonging: it is 'not just be-ing but longing'. People want and need to belong, and in Laestadianism this longing is directed not only towards the temporal community of believers, but also the eternal Kingdom of God.

However, belonging is never a fixed entity; it is a constantly fluctuating project. In everyday life belonging is often naturalised as part of mundane practices; only when it is threatened in some way is it articulated (Yuval-Davis 2011, 10–2). Bodily acts can reinforce and naturalise belonging. Such acts can also problematize, contest – and therefore politicise – the norms and boundaries of a religious community, and hence belonging to it. Using Yuval-Davis's (2011) concept, we call this process 'the politics of belonging', the separation of people into 'us' and 'them', the struggle to maintain boundaries, and determine who a member is and what being a member of the community of belonging entails.

In this article we look at the points at which belonging is constructed and challenged in light of the fact that certain kinds of corporeality threaten the cohesion of a religious community, while others strengthen it. We claim that in these situations embodied belonging becomes politicised. We ask the following questions: (1) Through what kinds of bodily practices does belonging become affirmed or politicised? (2) What are the consequences of the politicisation of belonging for the individual and the community? and (3) What does the novel tell us about the dynamics of inclusions and exclusions in religious communities?

While the perspective of the controlled body is a focal one, research needs to be sensitive to the lived and experienced body, as well as to recognising the creative capability of bodies, that is, their potential for changing their social environment (Schilling 2012, 241–56). We address these questions in a threefold inquiry into the novel: first, we analyse the norms and control of the religious body in its physical appearance and movement; second, we look at the corporeal choreographies and limits of lived bodies; and finally, we examine the embodied practices and experiences of regulative sin and grace. At the end of the article we return to the wider question of belonging in religious communities and to the role fiction can play in its study.

Laestadianism and literary fiction

Laestadianism originated around the mid-1800s in the northern parts of Finland and Sweden, from where it rapidly spread through Finland, northern Scandinavia, and elsewhere (e.g. Lohi 1997). Finnish immigrants brought the movement to North America as early as the 1860s (Raittila 1982, 11–2). The history of the movement is characterised by successful expansion, but also by several disputes and divisions. The main branch of Laestadianism, today with more than 100,000 followers, is *Conservative Laestadianism* (Talonen 2001, 11; Hepokoski 2002). The *Laestadian Lutheran Church* (LLC), which forms the setting of the novel *We Sinners* and the writer's background, is a sister organisation of Finnish Conservative Laestadianism. The LLC was established in 1973, and today it has about thirty member congregations in the United States and Canada, with the highest concentrations in Minnesota, Washington, Arizona, Michigan, and Saskatchewan (see LLC 2016). The church arranges and conducts services, teaches children and youth, publishes literature and magazines, and works with its sister organisations around the world (ibid.).

Laestadianism is usually a family tradition: the movement grows mainly from within, and socialisation to the movement happens as a child through upbringing (e.g. Hurtig 2013, 42–9; Kutuniva 2007, 19; Snellman 2011). What distinguishes Laestadians from most of Western secular society is that they live by strict moral codes and practices and standards of religiosity. They do not generally, for example, approve of premarital sex, allow contraception, use alcohol or make-up, dance, or watch television. Many Laestadians today do, however, use the internet. Laestadians participate actively in their congregation and emphasise strong personal religious conviction. Conservative Laestadians also believe that their church represents Christianity in its purest form, and that outside the church there is no salvation (see e.g. Hurtig 2013, 24–49; Linjakumpu 2012; Nykänen 2012). The LLC shares the main characteristics and norms of the latter concerning, for example, the position of women, birth control, alcohol, and dancing; but it is an even more close-knit and introverted community than its Finnish counterpart (Hepokoski 2002; Lohi 1997; Talonen 2001; see also LLC 2016).

In recent years, especially in Finland, the Laestadian movement has been increasingly discussed in the media, research, and literature.[2] The movement received wider international attention when *We Sinners*, a critically acclaimed debut novel by Hanna Pylväinen, a young American writer, was

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2 The main debates revolve around the position of women in Laestadianism, reported cases of child abuse, as well as accusations of spiritual violence and the community's relationship with its past (see e.g. Hintsala 2012; Hurtig 2013; Linjakumpu 2012; Rauhala 2013).

published in August 2012. The novel, one of the very few works of literary fiction in English featuring Laestadianism, quickly gained attention from reviewers and readers.[3] The work follows the Rovaniemis, a family of eleven with Finnish origins, who belong to the Laestadian Lutheran Church in the modern day American Midwest. In each chapter the story is told from the perspective of a different family member, portraying the Rovaniemis' everyday life as they struggle with their faith.[4]

Hanna Pylväinen is a fourth-generation Finnish immigrant and her family is Laestadian, although she herself has left the church. The novel is not an autobiography, but the author draws heavily on her personal background and experiences.[5] As such, the writer has an intimate relationship with the novel's theme. She is both an outsider and an insider where the movement is concerned. Pylväinen's background gives her profound knowledge of the everyday practices and norms of Laestadianism. However, having left Laestadianism, her perspective may be critical towards certain aspects of the community. It must also be recognised that a novel is constrained by the demands of literary genre, and, as a narrator, Pylväinen can choose to emphasise themes that she finds important for a discussion of Laestadianism. A single book cannot present a general view of Laestadianism, but the way it ties into other contemporary representations and research suggests that it does capture a wider perception (cf. Sjö & Häger 2015, 39).

In the present case literary fiction offers an intriguing insight into the different aspects of individuals' struggles with their faith and life choices in Laestadianism. We claim that the book and its story are a part of the discussion about belonging in Laestadianism. Given this focus, the novel addresses various sensitivities and potential blind spots in the practices and consequences of inclusion and exclusion. As fiction, the work may also reveal themes that are otherwise difficult to broach. In the hegemonic discourse of the Laestadian movement these include sexuality and violence (Hintsala 2012). Through a literary genre the description of bodies, as well as of bodily experiences and practices, becomes approachable and tangible.

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3 Pylväinen received the 2012 Whiting Writers' Award for the book, and *We Sinners* was also listed among Amazon's Best Books of the Month when published.

4 The last chapter of *We Sinners* is not included in this case study, as it is a separate story from the rest of the book, narrated by a fictional Sámi woman living in Finnish and Norwegian Lapland in 1874.

5 For more about Hanna Pylväinen, see e.g. interview on NPR books <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/26/159928880/faith-family-and-forgiveness-in-we-sinners>, accessed 2 February 2016; see also Pylväinen's website <http://www.hannapylvainen.com/>, accessed 2 February 2016.

As Sarah Pink (2012, 44) notes, 'there is a well-established tradition of the study of everyday life through the analysis of its representations' especially in cultural studies. In the following analysis we approach the novel as a source of knowledge about possible Laestadianism. We do not claim that the novel reveals Laestadian empirical reality as such. The novel is a representation, a story written by a person with a certain background and perspective. However, and as such, we see it as a valuable insight into everyday Laestadian life which *could be* so (see also Pink 2012, 45). Our reading of the novel searches for contingencies and ruptures, structures and norms that appear within the novel's narrative. We trace how the novel portrays the practices of inclusion and exclusion, and its embodiment in Laestadianism.

Literary fiction may acquire different meanings in altered contexts. As Rita Felski (2008, 9–10; see also Rusu 2014) maintains, literary texts are 'formative in their own right': that is, they are representations which summon up new ways of seeing. It is important to study and dissect such fictional material since, in addition to being emphatically engaging and medial in nature (or perhaps because it is), fiction has the power to shape individual and shared cultural ideas (Erll 2008, 389, 396–7). *We Sinners* has a potentially large readership: people unfamiliar with Laestadianism are also likely to read the novel. It mediates Laestadianism to its readers and perhaps others too. *We Sinners* thus contributes to the public discussion about Laestadianism and is involved in the construction of the image of Laestadians. Furthermore, while the novel discusses themes that are particular to Laestadianism, it also evokes questions that might apply to religious communities in general.

Recent studies of Laestadianism have examined the community from the perspectives of Foucaultian conceptions of power, focusing on various inherent power structures and mechanisms (e.g. Linjakumpu 2012; Nykänen 2012; 2013), while gender perspectives have highlighted the gendered nature of the community's structuring (e.g. Hintsala 2012; Nissilä 2013; Pelkonen 2013; Valkonen 2013; see also Ahonen & Vuola 2015). The appearance of Laestadianism in fiction, especially in film, has also been discussed (e.g. Sjö & Häger 2015; Wallenius-Korkalo 2013). In the following analysis of religious belonging in the novel we claim that the power of individual bodies and, in particular, power over them are central in the making of the Laestadian community.

Boundaries dressed up – Physical appearance and movement as bodily expressions of (not) belonging

Religious groups exert control over the physical bodies of their members. Being Laestadian and belonging to the community are expressed bodily in various ways. One of the most evident practices constructing and reinforcing a person's belonging to the Laestadian community, but that can also contest it, is outward appearance. Applied directly to the body, concretely worn and put on, dress is one of the most effective symbols of social control (Arthur 2000, 2). Dress, including clothing and accessories, as well as the use of cosmetics and other means of changing one's appearance, is crucial in social interaction: it is an expression of identity and a means of non-verbal communication. Through dress we locate ourselves and others in our social environments (Arthur 1999, 3).

Laestadianism adheres to a strong ideal of both internal and external modesty. In Laestadianism bodily adornment is frowned upon and deemed sinful. Prohibiting the use of jewellery, make-up, and revealing clothing constructs and reinforces the boundary between Laestadians and others (Kutuniva 2007, 21). Dress constitutes a representation of visual cohesion, communicating the religious group's boundaries (Utriainen 2006, 46; Arthur 1999, 3–4). However, Laestadians today lack any easily distinguishable dress code. Negotiating sameness and difference in what Laestadians wear becomes, therefore, an issue of how belonging – and not belonging – are expressed, not only to the other members of the movement, but to the outside world as well.

In the novel Laestadians show their belonging to the community through their choice of dress, but at the same time try to fit in with the rest of the world. The teenagers in particular dress to emphasise solidarity with or distinction from their peers. Nels, the eldest son of the Rovaniemi family, makes observations about the dress style of a Laestadian girl, Tricia, who, compared to the people around them, looks 'both the same and apart':

> Tricia smiled without showing her teeth […] slightly infantile—her T-shirt was plain and white—and average in every way, in what she wore, in how she did her hair. It occurred to him that almost everyone in the church dressed this way, as if dressing like a modest version of everyone else would keep them both the same and apart. (Pylväinen 2012, 76.)

The Laestadians' dress style is similar enough to others' that they do not stand out immediately: while it reflects what others wear, it is more modest, a plainer version of popular fashion, effectively distinguishing them as a

group of their own. However, the Laestadians in the novel are not indifferent about clothes. Sibling rivalry and jealousy are common when someone gets a new pair of jeans; and the Rovaniemi girls dress up and try to impress the opposite sex, even though they are not supposed to: 'The Karvonen boys were in town and Tiina didn't mean to dress carefully, but she did. All of her sisters did, even Brita, who was pregnant again.' (Pylväinen 2012, 86.)

Even after leaving the Laestadian church, as some of the characters in the novel do, the effect of the Laestadian 'dress code' does not disappear. Maintaining appearances is a matter of maintaining family and community ties. After her separation from the church, one of the Rovaniemi daughters, Julia, works in a lingerie shop, a secret kept from her family. As she returns to visit her parents, she tries to fit in by putting her body back into the mould of a Laestadian woman and daughter.

> [S]he had tried to seem like an approvable daughter […] she took off her nail polish and makeup when she went home, and kept her shirts long and loose. She wore bras that shrank her chest. […]
>
> She wanted to prove that she could leave the church and not become a disaster. (Pylväinen 2012, 123.)

The novel vividly depicts how, when Julia is back in the community people study her, looking for signs of difference now that she is no longer a member of the church. Julia wants, or feels obliged, to show that she can still belong to an extent, that she is not a 'disaster'. She uses dress to play a role, to look approvable. Belonging in the novel seems to imply a need to look the part. To belong in Laestadianism, women at least are required to a certain extent to look the same. Likewise, one is expected to look different if one does not belong. In dressing, people can cover, frame, correct, and change their bodily identity, and attest to their belonging (see Utriainen 2006, 54–5). Dressing is a question of who we are and who we wish to be (Arthur 2000, 2). This seems to underlie Julia's anxiety as she maintains a Laestadian appearance.

Indeed, the norms and practices regulating the social acceptance of bodies in various contexts are often gendered. Religious meanings are attached to gendered bodies and religious practices socialise people into gendered roles (McGuire 2008, 160–1; see also Ahonen & Vuola 2015). In the Laestadian community the expectations of what acceptable female and male bodies are derive from the prevailing conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and the role of women and men in the community. Gender hierarchy is woven

deeply into Laestadianism. The gender matrix of Laestadian community has been described as hegemonic masculinity: women's lives and position in the community are strongly regulated by the movement's normative, conservative, and patriarchal doctrines (Hintsala 2012, 29–30; Ihonen 2001).

Use of cosmetics is a clear symbol of not being Laestadian, especially visible on the female body. Applying make-up, be it mascara or nail polish, represents a transformation or signals insurgency, a breaking away from the community. In the novel the daughter Tiina exhibits this when she lies to her family about going to a seminar. Instead, she goes to meet her boyfriend and plans to announce that she is leaving the church: 'She'd painted her fingernails a bright green—tropical tango—and when she walked toward the baggage claim she knew the nails were a puerile rebellion against the church' (Pylväinen 2012, 89).

In the novel belonging to Laestadianism is possible only within quite specific boundaries of dress; transitional forms are hard to find. Although women are not completely bound by their community's dress codes, they are very aware of their existence: when they take liberties with dress, women are balancing the acceptable and unacceptable (e.g. Utriainen 2006, 49). Tiina's behaviour evinces a protest, but she only shows her painted fingernails to her non-Laestadian boyfriend, not to her family. Tiina, with her polished nails, and Julia, who dresses like a Laestadian, are balancing precariously between two worlds, but neither is ready to show the symbols of not belonging to the Laestadian community.

Struggles of belonging are played out not only *on* the body, but in the *movement* of the body and bodies. Eeva Puumala (2012) has discussed the political potential of the moving body and bodies: bodies reach, touch, and stretch towards other bodies, constituting a 'corporeal choreography' of being-in-common. Movement can also interrupt, challenge, and resist cohesive or hegemonic being (Puumala et al. 2011, 86–7). Applying the concept of corporeal choreography to Laestadianism allows an examination of the political potential of moving bodies or, in other words, the disruptiveness of certain kinds of moving. For example, dancing is a type of movement in which the Laestadian (body) does not engage; dancing is a sin. Dancing can produce powerful ecstatic experiences and evoke spiritual attentiveness. However, many conservative Christian communities prohibit dancing or limit music and dance to songs and movements considered appropriate by the church (Kraus 2010, 462; McGuire 2007; 195–6).

In the novel Nels experiences dancing in a club for the first time: letting oneself go, surrendering to the rhythm, appears to him to be a trance-like state, comparable to a religious experience.

> He felt […] alive—there was a strange synchronicity to the dancing, like everyone raising their hands to give forgiveness in church. There was a contagion to the movement. […] He felt a hundred old happinesses rise in him as one. How had this desire—to move like an animal, with crude and sudden movements—waited in him so long? (Pylväinen 2012, 72–3.)

Dancing can be seen as sinful in itself or as an occasion for sin (McGuire 2007, 196). The sinfulness of dancing in Laestadianism stems partly from the implied sexual component; dancing allows bodies to be close to each other. Use of alcohol is also often associated with dancing occasions, compounding the sin. Both these elements are present in Nels's experience. Connecting with other bodies brings him feelings of intense happiness. Spontaneous emotional outbursts and losing control of one's body in this manner are not acceptable for a Laestadian. However, losing control in religious trances has been quite common in Laestadianism. Religious sermons often provoked powerful emotional and corporeal reactions: people cried, rejoiced, shouted, jumped, and fainted (Lohi 1997; Hepokoski 2002). Today this practice of *liikutus* [literally 'being moved'] is frowned upon, perhaps particularly because the body in a trance or ecstasy is unpredictable and powerful, and inescapably beyond the control of the community (cf. Riis & Woodhead 2010; see also Linjakumpu 2012; Valkonen 2013).

Dancing is an example of a bodily boundary between Laestadianism and the world. Restricting dancing not only restricts the movement of the body, but may also limit social relations between people. In the novel young Brita's religious conviction is discovered when she declines an invitation to a high school dance. After this her crush leaves her and the whole school starts to gossip about the 'weird cult' she is in. Dancing epitomises the line between the acceptable and unacceptable in two ways: for a Laestadian it is unacceptable to dance; for an American high school girl it is unacceptable not to. Brita tries to overcome her disappointment: 'It was okay, she was different. They were different. They were in the world, but not of the world.' (Pylväinen 2012, 6–7.) The novel highlights a conflict of belonging and not belonging in which belonging to one community, Laestadianism, makes it impossible to belong socially to another, a high school. Here, belonging to a Laestadian community is exclusionary belonging. 'Being in the world but not of the world', as Brita puts it.

Dress and outward appearance signal belonging, or not-belonging, to the Laestadian community. Besides drawing boundaries on the body, the struggles of inclusion and exclusion are expressed and experienced in the movement of the body and bodies. Using dress makes it possible to a certain

extent to balance the norms of the Laestadian community and the expectations of the rest of the world. A distinct line is drawn in the case of dancing, however. Dancing bodies are out of (Laestadian) order. They attest to the bodily foundations and limits of Laestadian subjects, and to how those foundations and limits underpin the construction of the Laestadian community.

Intensive togetherness – Lived belonging and limits of bodies and space

The everyday life of a Laestadian is imbued with the embodied practices and material consequences of belonging to the Laestadian community. The sense of connection and identification with family and community arises from seemingly unexceptional functions: mundane activities link individuals' materiality as humans and their religiosity (McGuire 2008, 99, 115). Being within oneself and with each other is extensively structured by Laestadianism; belonging is lived in the (Laestadian) body and between bodies. Lived belonging also introduces *limits* to the body. It is these limits that are inscribed on and lived in the female body.

Marriage and family are (at) the core of the Laestadian community (Nykänen 2012, 107; see also McGuire 1997, 56).[6] The primary role of women in the community is that of mother. The religiosity of a woman is tightly bound to her role of bringing up new generations and taking care of mundane chores; women have an important role in keeping and continuing Laestadian tradition (Hintsala 2012; Kutuniva 2007, 27–9; see also Aune 2011, 279; Snellman 2011). As birth control is practically prohibited within the movement, the number of children in Laestadian families is noticeably high. Children are seen as God's gifts to their parents; at the same time, repeated childbearing significantly dictates the life choices that Laestadian women can make and, accordingly, the career opportunities available to them.

The Rovaniemi family has nine children, two of whom have not been born at the beginning of the novel. A stretched belly and an infant in her arms are the essentials of a Laestadian mother: religion for a woman is unavoidably embodied. If the lot of a married Laestadian woman is to be constantly pregnant, it is also the lot of Laestadian children to see their mother constantly pregnant and with another baby, as illustrated by young Brita's observations concerning her mother:

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6 The LLC (2016) states on their website, in LLC Position Statement: 'God has established marriage and family in His creation work and they are thus defined and governed by the natural law of God's creation (Gen. 2:18, 23, 24). Attempts to redefine marriage and family and to alter or resist their intended purpose thus injure families and society.'

> Her mother was already lying on her side on top of her own [sleeping bag], the baby asleep against her. Brita realized her stomach looked bigger than she remembered, and she wondered if her mother was pregnant again. Probably, she decided. (Pylväinen 2012, 22–3.)

Laestadian girls learn from early childhood to tie their expectations of the future to motherhood (Nissilä 2013, 64; Pelkonen 2013, 183). Brita's life follows the same path as her mother's. She becomes the mother of a big family herself. However, repeated pregnancies are not without risks: the movement's ban on contraception puts women's health and even lives in jeopardy, as Brita experiences. She nearly dies during her seventh C-section, but later recovers and is able to return home. Mervi Kutuniva (2007, 25) talks about the fear of death and the doubts Laestadian women may encounter every time they deliver a baby. Brita questions, to her own horror, whether the new baby was worth her almost dying and leaving her other six children without a mother. She feels that she has no strength to carry on; and her beloved piano becomes a symbol and locus of her depression.

> She looked up, and she saw the sun running off the top of the piano, and as if still in the morphine world she saw not a piano but a table, herself flat upon its back, wanting to get up and never able, the rest of her life stretching across its planes. Always there would be more to give, and she had nothing left to give at all. (Pylväinen 2012, 151.)

Puumala (2012, 202–14; Puumala et al. 2011, 97–111) has discussed melancholy, silence, and passivity in the body and bodies of asylum-seekers: she claims that numbness can be seen as a way of overcoming or escaping the grip of a power. Laestadianism's demands on women and their bodies, the burden of continuous pregnancies and motherhood – a lifelong requirement for belonging – become too heavy for Brita. She escapes this power structure in numbness, melancholy, depression, and silence. Brita's child asks her to play the piano and, as she obediently presses a key, it makes no sound at all. The soundless piano echoes Brita's silence.

Although, as Puumala observes, the numb and melancholic body cannot always be interpreted as conscious protest, it is a form of survival and, in a sense, silent resistance. Being melancholic and silent shakes the foundations of established ways of being and belonging in Laestadianism, and calls into question the ever-caring and ever-able mother figure. As Puumala et al (2011, 98) note, 'the "unspeakable" that is incorporated into the body in

the form of pain and grief, and therefore that which cannot be said takes the form of gesture and silence' (see also Edkins 2003, 206–8). Even passive and silent bodies are not isolated from their surroundings and other people. They call forth being-in-common in their own way, provoking, for example, silent gestures of compassion (Puumala 2012, 202–14; Puumala et al. 2011, 100), as in the encounter of Brita and her mother on the home porch: 'She stepped slowly to the front door, hand to sore stomach, her own mother on the porch, her quiet suggesting she was impressed by what her daughter had endured' (Pylväinen 2012, 150).

All children are welcomed in Laestadianism, but some, those born illegitimate, perhaps less so. It is a great shock to the Rovaniemi family when one of the dutiful and 'good' girls, Leena, becomes pregnant as a teenager. Later readers get a glimpse of Leena and her child. She is raising the boy as a single parent, but with the help of her siblings and mother. Leena's child is playing with Brita's boys and the two women's experience of motherhood, however different, connects them. The ties of motherhood bind the Laestadian women and community (see also Kutuniva 2007, 27). Even a single mother, a grave sinner in the eyes of the community, can belong. She can redeem herself and (re)claim her place through her child and through motherhood.

The novel repeatedly returns to the question the Rovaniemis have to face as their family and faith are coming apart: do we live and believe for ourselves or for each other? The religious subjectivity and agency of the Laestadian women in the novel culminates in their taking care of others. This is especially visible in practices and experiences of motherhood – repeated pregnancies, giving birth, and raising children are how Laestadian women live their faith – but also in the women working in and outside of the home in different types of services, education, and nursing. The women who stay in the church also participate in organising religious meetings by doing chores behind the scenes, such as cooking. At home the Rovaniemi daughters try to be helpful by taking care of their siblings and the household; Leena, a school girl, secretly gets up at night to clean so she can surprise her mother with a tidy house. As McGuire (2008, 118) has argued, material bodies thus become linked to spirituality, through myriad mundane activities such as preparing food, working, childbirth, and care. The Laestadian community's 'ethics of care' – the ways in which people relate to and care for each other – arise from and materialise in the family. Whom we care for is inevitably a question of belonging too; the practices of care are sites of social connection and acts of building belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011, 175–99).

The presence of family members and their bodies dominates the experience of living in a Laestadian family. Bodily togetherness reveals the ways and sites of shared belonging, and also the interruptions and limits of being-in-common (see also Puumala et al. 2011, 86–7). Living Laestadianism, engaging in the Laestadian 'corporeal choreography', governs both being in oneself and with each other. A constant lack of sufficient space characterises the everyday life of the Rovaniemis. The children sleep, play, eat, study, do hobbies, and go everywhere together. They are never alone. There are also so many of them that outsiders – and sometimes even their parents – have trouble telling them apart, and the children have to struggle to be recognised as individuals.

In limited space togetherness is given and sharing inescapable. Belonging obscures individual subjects and their desires, their need to be seen and recognised. Nonetheless, intensive togetherness can also offer them the support and cover of other bodies.

Sin and Grace – Embodied Practices and Experiences of (Not) Belonging

In Laestadianism belonging and not belonging, inclusion and exclusion, are both performed and experienced bodily. This becomes particularly apparent in the interplay of *sin* and *grace*, which in the novel strongly structures the Rovaniemi family's life. Even the title of the novel, *We Sinners*, highlights the centrality of sin. Sin is most explicitly present in questions of sex and sexuality in the novel. As Andrew Yip and Peter Nynäs (2012, 6) argue, 'gender and sexuality are not only about personal identity, embodied subjectivities and bodily performances; they are also about social organisations, structures and relationships'. Social groups, not least religious groups, prescribe what is normative in terms of sexuality to establish order within the group (see e.g. Turner 1984). Stephen Hunt and Andrew Yip (2012, 3–4) maintain that all religions try to some extent to structure sexual behaviour through frameworks of divine morality, and that perhaps no other area is subjected to control and restrictions as extensively as sexuality. In Laestadianism sex and sexuality are regulated strictly and anything deviating from the norm is labelled sinful. Sex has a clearly defined place in the movement: it belongs to heterosexual marriage, typically formed inside the church, and its primary function is reproduction (see e.g. Hintsala 2012; Nykänen 2013, 157–8; see also LLC 2016).

The link between sex and sin is apparent in the book, but in the experiences and actions of the characters this interconnectedness is more complex. Sex and sexuality are focal contexts of defining, testing, and contesting the boundaries of belonging, and thus have the potential to politicise it. Many

characters in the novel act rebelliously towards the rules and norms regulating sex and sexuality. Some of the daughters of the Rovaniemi family have premarital sex in secret, while belonging to a church that strictly forbids it. This is described as nothing out of the ordinary in the novel: Tiina, the second eldest daughter, has a boyfriend outside the church; Leena, the third youngest of the siblings, is suddenly pregnant; and the youngest daughter, Uppu, a model daughter in many ways, has sex in a car with her partner.

Of the nine Rovaniemi siblings, Tiina, Uppu, Julia, and Simon eventually leave the Laestadian movement. For an unmarried woman – or man – leaving the movement means liberation from the bans concerning sex. However, leaving does not free the Rovaniemi siblings from the thought patterns and norms they have learned from childhood. Sex never seems uncomplicated for them, and the women especially are not portrayed as particularly enjoying sex or their sexual freedom.

From the secularist perspective, religion is often seen as representing traditionalism and authoritarianism; it is considered a constraining and a restrictive force, which polices gendered and sexual subjectivities and practices. Yip and Nynäs (2012, 9) observe that this viewpoint has been proven, on numerous occasions, to be too limiting and biased, as it fails to capture 'the multi-faceted and nuanced nature of how religion, gender and sexuality are lived in everyday life'. In the novel the sexual agency of religious actors, as well as their creativity and resistance on the personal and social levels, is recognised and present. However, the relationship between religion and sexuality is still fraught with tension and conflict (cf. Yip & Nynäs 2012, 9-10; see also Hunt & Yip 2012).

Not all sex and sexuality is judged equally, nor do all forms test the boundaries of the Laestadian community as potently. The novel's most powerful transgression is the homosexuality of Simon, the youngest Rovaniemi son. Gay men do not fit Laestadianism's traditional heteronormative conception of gender roles. Homosexuality is discouraged and homosexual acts forbidden, as they disrupt the gender and sexual order (Hintsala 2012, 29–30; Kejonen & Hintsala 2013; Yip & Nynäs 2012, 6; see also Butler 1990).[7] The mother of the Rovaniemi family, Pirjo, discovers that teenaged Simon is going out with another boy. She is torn by feelings of love and care to-

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7   The LLC (2016) website states, in LLC Position Statement, the movement's stance on homosexuality as follows: '(1) The Bible teaches that homosexual behavior is immoral and a sin, (2) arguments based on God's creation and genetics, even if they can be identified, do not justify homosexual relations, and (3) the increase of homosexuality is a sign of broad moral decline in a society.'

wards her child on the one hand and the strong conviction that he has done something very wrong on the other:

> [S]he half wanted to hug him, to carry him as if he were not sixteen but two or three […] and at the same time she wanted to shake him, to slap him. She felt slapped, she felt rejected, she felt like he had looked at the life she had made for him and he had spit on it. […]

> At church they said that gayness was a trial, like any other trial, any other temptation, and anyway all sin was the same in the eyes of God. But not in the eyes of man—that, that Pirjo had always known. (Pylväinen 2012, 62.)

Simon's homosexuality is a sin that clearly draws a line where being able to belong is concerned. 'What if I don't want to go, what if I want to stay?', Simon asks his mother, and she thinks to herself: 'It is an impossible life.' (Pylväinen 2012, 61) Homosexuality is a sin that distances a person from the church, despite his or her personal depth of conviction or willingness to belong to the community. It is almost as if homosexuality negates belonging.

Laestadians believe that what is forgiven by another Laestadian and the community is also forgiven in the eyes of God (e.g. Nykänen 2013; see also Hepokoski 2002). Thus, the community has the power to determine the gravity of a sin. Crucial to this power is the Laestadian conception and practice of 'binding sins'. A person can be bound to sins: who and what the community deems sinful – what it does not forgive – God will not forgive either. This bond lasts until the sinner repents, and even then the community has the power to determine the manner and adequacy of any repentance (see also Hurtig 2013; Linjakumpu 2012). This practice makes homosexuality particularly tragic in Laestadianism. In the eyes of the community, as the above excerpt indicates, the sin of homosexuality, especially having homosexual relations, is unforgivable (cf. Kejonen & Hintsala 2013).

Countering this condemnatory power of the community is the potential of grace and forgiveness. Sin and grace are intricately intertwined.[8] 'Believe all of your sins forgiven in Jesus's name and precious blood' (Pylväinen 2012, 44), the Laestadians say to each other. It is a repetitive practice in Laestadianism and one of the most important daily religious rituals (Nykänen

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8   The LLC (2016) website defines sin as 'one of the principal concepts of the Bible'; 'sin is the falling away of the heart from God', while repentance is 'a change of heart'; 'it includes penitence and distress on account of sin, but at the same time believing the gospel or the absolution of sin', as 'the essence of the gospel is the forgiveness of sins'.

2012, 113): when asked, another believer can forgive you your sins and you receive the grace of repentance. Every night the Rovaniemi children ask each other for forgiveness, and in church they raise their hands in front of the congregation to receive absolution.

McGuire (2008, 100–1) describes these kinds of religious ritual as chains of embodied practices with a potential to awaken strong emotions, senses of social connectedness, and religious meanings: through embodied practices rituals produce real effects for the individual and the religious group practising them. To Leena, the Laestadian practice of forgiving sins is a precious one. She sees the positive, even emancipatory, potential of loosing each other's sins in a process that counters the binding of sins.

> Most of all Leena loved 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'—sins being loosed and let go and gone, all of them keepers and loosers of another's sins. (Pylväinen 2012, 44.)

The forgiving of sins, the words and phrases, can be seen as performative speech acts (e.g. Butler 1990) that produce a certain state of affairs: redemption. Performing forgiveness in Laestadianism is a practice which is repeated in church, in every home, and between friends; it validates and reinforces one's identity as a believer and as part of the community (see also Hurtig 2013, 29). Asking for and giving forgiveness is an act which constructs, renews, and actualises belonging. As an emotional experience, the grace received from forgiveness strengthens Laestadian togetherness.

Performative speech acts have the power to forgive sins – and the power to mark one's detachment from Laestadianism. 'Forgiving sins', Tiina tells her boyfriend, is an example of performative speech: what is said is done at the same time. Like the phrase 'leaving the church', he continues (Pylväinen 2012, 91–2). These are performatives of belonging and not-belonging which are not unconnected to or disjointed from bodies; they have bodily consequences. Bodies can also challenge the constitutive power of speech acts. This is illustrated in the novel repeatedly in the various experiences of the Rovaniemi siblings who leave Laestadianism: although they perform the speech act of renouncing their faith and hence stop being Laestadians in the eyes of the community, they still carry Laestadianism within themselves as patterns of thought, emotion, and habit (see also Pelkonen 2013).

When Tiina, some years after leaving the church, is unfaithful to her boyfriend for the first time, she ponders sinning and the possibilities of forgiveness:

The night she cheated on Matthew she had been an unbeliever for almost two years. When the new man rolled from her […] she only wanted him to leave […]

[S]he had the concrete thought that she had become officially a sinner—she was no good in both the church's world and in the world she had chosen; to all eyes she had sinned. [...] It wasn't about the sinning at all, it was what you did about the sinning, and she had no means of forgiveness about her. (Pylväinen 2012, 102–3.)

Tiina feels that she is a sinner, but this feeling is not new to her: she felt like a sinner when she belonged to the church. Even though sin distances the sinner from the community, sinning is actually something shared among Laestadians: it brings them closer together through forgiveness. As Tiina is no longer a part of the community, she is left with sin, but the possibility of forgiveness has been taken from her. In the novel the lack of forgiveness is the most powerful and devastating experience of exclusion.

Conclusions

In this article we have analysed the practices of inclusion and exclusion in a religious community, Laestadianism, from the perspective of the body and as a question of belonging. As McGuire (1997, 206–9) has observed, particularistic religious groups are highly concerned with following the 'right' faith, and are intolerant of deviance. We have approached the tension between doing right or wrong as the politics of belonging, and used the novel *We Sinners* as an illustration and materialisation of this struggle.

The novel is a depiction of relationships between individuals and the Laestadian community that poignantly raises questions of belonging and exclusion. Using fiction as research material is, however, not unproblematic. Sofia Sjö and Andreas Häger (2015, 40–1) have especially criticised the depiction of Laestadianism in Scandinavian cinema, maintaining that Laestadianism is represented from a secular point of view: 'Negative stereotypes still prevail, and filmmakers continue to represent those who choose a more traditional religious worldview as Other.' According to Sjö and Häger, Laestadians in these representations are focused on their community and guided by its norms, which is seen as problematic from the prevailing secular perspective, wherein individuals should come first and religious communities should not restrict them (Sjö & Häger 2015, 38–9). *We Sinners* is indeed

a portrayal of individuals' journeys of self-discovery and finding their way, whether in the Laestadian community or out of it. The community is often depicted as controlling, even abusive at times, which may be claimed to be a stereotype, but the novel's characters are not only 'beaten and subjugated' (cf. Sjö & Häger 2015, 39), but also intricately human in their wants of and needs towards themselves, each other, and the community.

To understand both religion in general, and specific religious groups in particular, fictive material, as one manifestation of representations of religion and religious difference, should be taken seriously in research (see also Sjö & Häger 2015, 41). Mihai Rusu claims that literary fiction and academic discussion are in a dialectical relationship, interfering with each other in creative ways: 'Just like social sciences, literary fiction strives to make sense of and to give meaning to human experiences', he notes (Rusu 2014, 133–6). Fiction can also inspire a theorising of social reality: literature contains ideas and foreshadowed concepts that can be worked out into further conceptualisations by the social sciences (Rusu 2014, 133, 147–9). In this article we have taken the novel's depictions of everyday life and struggles between individuals, their family, and the Laestadian community, and used them to conceptualise an *embodied politics of belonging*.

Although many Christian groups, Laestadianism included, are uncomfortable dealing with human embodiment (see McGuire 2008, 102), we claim that the body is inescapable in the analysis of religious practices and the boundary-making they entail. Laestadian bodies are both symbols and concrete locations where the lines between the acceptable and unacceptable are drawn (see also Utriainen 2006). The politics of religious belonging are inseparable from corporeality; belonging is affirmed, negotiated, challenged, and concretely lived in bodies and bodily practices. The body should thus be placed at the core of the theory and analysis of religious belonging.

The 'dirty work of boundary maintenance' (Favell 1999; Yuval-Davis 2011, 20) in Laestadianism – what is involved in being a member of the community of belonging and who is a member – focuses essentially on the control of bodies. The boundaries of belonging are constructed in and on individual bodies, and through their regulation. Control over clothing, behaviour, sexuality, movement, and being-in-common produces and governs an embodied Laestadian subjectivity, as well as the community's reaction towards its members and the ways in which, and the sites at which, belonging is shared. The question is how and what a suitable body in Laestadianism in particular is, and (also) in conservative religiousness in general: what kind of body can belong?

In the novel the interplay of the religious inclusions and exclusions of Laestadianism is situated on *gendered* and *sexualised* bodies. There are both gender-specific practices of belonging and acts of transgression. The body of a woman materialises the continuity of Laestadianism's social and religious order and is therefore focal in constructing belonging. The female body is sacred as it gives and carries life and affirms belonging through motherhood and care. Bodies are, however, prone to the worldly: sexuality outside the field of reproduction and marriage – male homosexuality in particular – is a transgression against the social and religious order, and as such problematizes and politicises belonging.

A reading of the novel reveals how sin and grace are ever present and at the centre of the struggle for religious belonging. The embodied experience and mechanics of sin may distance the sinner from the community, but sins also connect Laestadians, and through forgiveness, bring them together. Consequently, forgiving affirms belonging; there is belonging in forgiveness. On balance, the politics of belonging in Laestadianism appear perhaps most crucially to be a struggle for the possibility of forgiveness.

Personal belonging is always relative to others and to the community of belonging; (not) belonging bodies are in a constantly changing and potentially political relationship with each other. The struggle of belonging reverts to the fundamental questions the novel's characters have to consider: do we believe for ourselves or for each other; and do we belong for ourselves or for each other? In the fluctuating project of affirming and contesting religious belonging bodies have a key role: docile bodies make the community but, inescapably, bodies also have an inherent transgressive potential.

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Understanding the multiple voices of Islamic modernities: The case of Jihad[1]

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Abstract

In making a contribution to the debate on multiple modernities, this article addresses the growing fragmentation of contemporary interpretations of Islamic religious traditions. It argues that the polysemic nature of these interpretations mirrors to a certain extent the increasing functional differentiation of modern society. To substantiate this argument, the paper will first present a theoretical framework of global modernity that selectively draws on theories of multiple modernities, Modern Systems Theory, and of (post-)structuralist thinking. The empirical part of the paper takes the case of the Islamic institution of Jihad as its illustrative example. From a genealogical perspective, it analyses a number of steps of the (re-)interpretation of Islamic religious traditions from the classical period of pre-modern Islamic empires, via the Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century, to the multiple voices of Islamic modernities in contemporary times.

Keywords: *Multiple Modernities, Islamic Modernity, Islamic Reform, Jihad*

In the introduction to a companion to contemporary Islamic thought the editor emphasised the increasing plurality in the interpretation of Islamic religious traditions with which we have been confronted in the intellectual production of Muslim thinkers since the nineteenth century (Abu-Rabi' 2006). In particular, the dissemination of modern print technologies and the spread of mass education has facilitated a significant break with the authoritative interpretation of Islamic sources by the religious learned (*ulama*), leading to a fragmentation of religious authority through new forms of social, religious, and political activism (Eickelman1992; Robinson

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1993). Although there has never been a single, decisive religious authority in Islamic history, the modern situation is especially characterised by the degree and scope in which the very meaning and purposes of Islamic religious traditions have been contested (Mandaville 2007). These multiple voices of Islamic modernities have been documented and critically discussed in a burgeoning number of academic books that have also informed current public debates about the 'true nature of Islam' (Behloul, Leuenberger, and Tunger-Zanetti 2013; Cook and Lawrence 2005; Euben and Zaman 2009; Hunter 2009; Kamrava 2007; Kurzman 1998 and 2002).

Historically well-established schools of religious knowledge such as the famous al-Azhar in Egypt have been engaged in an uphill struggle with various kinds of modern Islamic activists and their polysemic interpretations of Islamic religious sources. While in the language of these activists general references to Islam appear almost obligatory, the ways in which Muslim thinkers, Islamist ideologues, Islamic civil society groups, politicians, and self-fashioned internet-Imams make these references to religion seem to be the result of free and sometimes methodologically unconsidered interpretation. In short, Muslim modernities have been characterised by a remarkable revival of references to Islam; however, these voices of Islam appear no longer to share common roots in the authoritative methods of interpretation of Islamic religious sources. How is this rise of multiple voices of Islamic modernities to be understood?

It is the purpose of this article to give a tentative answer to this question in three respects. In theoretical terms it will first sketch out a heuristic framework which is able to conceptually grasp the intrinsic relationship between unity and difference in modernity. In selectively drawing on elements of theories of multiple modernities, Modern Systems Theory, and elements of (post-)structuralist thinking, this theoretical framework aims at combining a generic theory of modernity with the empirical observation of its multiple forms. In this way the article aims to contribute to the ongoing debate about multiple modernities and the question of the relationship of this plurality with modernity as a generic concept. I argue that the polysemic nature of Islamic deliberations about modernity mirrors to a certain extent the increasing functional differentiation of modern society, in which social actors combine religious discourse freely with discursive elements from other spheres of society such as law, economics, politics, and education. What appears on the systemic level to be distinct discursive forms – that is to say, particular economic, political, religious, or legal communication – becomes a blurred patchwork of idiosyncratically constructed semantics at the level of social agency.

Second, this article traces the historical origin of the currently observable fragmentation of the interpretation of Islamic traditions to the second half of the nineteenth century. In this period Islamic reformers established a discourse of modernity in which the linkage to Islam granted authenticity to new norms and institutions. They advocated the independent interpretation of the canonical sources of Islam, the Quran, and the prophetical traditions (*sunna*) as a means for the modernisation of Muslim societies and their liberation from the yoke of European colonialism. In doing so, the nineteenth century reform movement disembedded religious and juridical Islamic concepts from their traditional scholarly context, and assigned to them new and modern meanings (Aziz al-Azmeh 1996, 106–10). Certainly, the Islamic reform movement was not the only Muslim response to modernity. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries varieties of universalistic or nationalist ideas such as Turkism, Egyptianism, and Arab Nationalism competed with this religious imaginary of a specifically Islamic modernity. It was only in the course of the twentieth century that Islamic forms of modernity were able to assume a relative hegemony in the Muslim world.[2]

The Egyptian Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) was a paradigmatic figure in initiating this process of constructing specifically Islamic modernities. Abduh, himself a representative of the *ulama* and later Mufti of the Egyptian realm, propagated the right to independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) against the principle of the 'blind' imitation of a school of law (*taqlid*). With his polemic against *taqlid* Abduh aimed at liberating *ijtihad* from being the exclusive right of religious scholars who were following the established methods of religious interpretation of one of the four Sunni schools of law. Although independent religious reasoning had taken place throughout Islamic history (cf. Hallaq 1984), it became formally embedded in the methodological and interpretative traditions of specific schools of law. In their anti-clerically motivated critique of *taqlid* Abduh and his fellow reformers advocated a liberation of *ijtihad* from the confines of previous scholarly doctrines, and eventually paved the way for a development that facilitated the rise of the polysemic Islamic voices we can observe today (Jung 2011, 235–45).

Third, I choose the case of the Islamic institution of Jihad as a means of illustrating the theoretical and historical arguments mentioned above. In a dispute among Orientalist scholars during the First World War some of

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2 As a result of continuing migration and digital technologies, the notion of the Muslim world has lost its territorial demarcation, while at the same time representing a transnational space of world society.

the founding fathers of modern Islamic studies considered Jihad to be 'an atavist mediaeval Islamic doctrine', poised to disappear in modern times (Jung 2014, 5–7). In sharp contrast to this scholarly opinion, however, in the course of the twentieth century the Islamic institution of Jihad experienced not only an unexpected revival, but also a continuing extension of its meanings. With the rise in Islamist militancy these meanings of Jihad are now widely discussed. Jihad therefore represents an ideal case of general interest for illustrating the social process behind the modern fragmentation of the interpretation of Islamic religious concepts.[3]

The essay opens with a brief sketch of my heuristic framework of global modernity. In this first section I provide the reader with the theoretical perspective and the analytical tools that have guided my historical reconstruction in the article's subsequent sections of the rise of the multiple voices of Islamic modernities. This reconstruction, then, starts with a closer examination of the concept of Jihad in classical Islam and its formal legal institutionalisation in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In this reconstruction the term 'classical Islam' refers to the long period of territorial expansion of premodern Islamic empires that accompanied the establishment of the four Sunni schools of law, roughly comprising the periods of Umayyad and Abbasid rule (661–1258). Against this historical background the third section addresses the transformation of Islamic concepts and institutions by the Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century. As in the section on classical Islam, this third section also deals only with the mainstream in Sunni Islam, epitomised by paradigmatic historical reform figures such as Muhammad Abdu, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–97), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935). The article continues with a selective analysis of the various ways in which the concept of Jihad finds its application in the evolving polysemic environment of Islamic deliberations on modernity during the twentieth century. The focus in this section is on the adaption and reinterpretation of Jihad by Sunni Islamism as represented by enormously influential Islamist ideologues such as Hasan al-Banna (1906–49) and Sayyid Qutb (1906–66). I will end with brief conclusions regarding the possible consequences of these developments, and their significance for the debate about multiple modernities.

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3   In choosing Jihad as an example, my aim is not to provide new knowledge about the conceptual history of this concept or the concept itself. Consequently, this article does not claim to make a new contribution to research on Jihad.

Global modernity and multiple modernities

The theoretical hype of postmodernity has been replaced by a proliferating strand of literature on so-called multiple modernities. Originally, the late Shmuel Eisenstadt coined the concept of multiple modernities within the framework of civilisational theory. For him, modernity represented a distinct, cultural, political, and institutional programme that expanded throughout most of the world. The responses to the expansion of this programme of modernity have been manifested in the changing patterns of culturally and institutionally different forms of modernity (2001, 321–2). These multiple responses to modernity have been partly moulded by the legacy of the religious and/or imperial traditions of premodern civilisations (Arnason 2003). Taking their inspiration from Carl Jaspers' Axial Age Thesis (Jaspers 1956), Eisenstadt's and Arnason's theory of multiple modernities reintroduced religion to the scholarly discourse on modernity. They explained the rise of historically different forms of modernity with the impact of the cultural legacies of civilisational complexes such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam.

Being largely detached from Eisenstadt's and Arnason's theoretical premises of civilisational theory, the term 'multiple modernities' often merely serves as an expression for cultural diversity (Thomassen 2010, 338). The remaining common denominator of current proponents of modernities in the plural is their opposition to the previously hegemonic position of classical theories of modernisation from the 1950s and 1960s. In their efforts to bestow sociology with a scientific aura equal to the natural sciences (Eisenstadt 1991, 421), these theories perceived modernisation as a more or less linear historical process of the convergence of societies towards a single institutional, organisational, and cultural model. These probably overly simplistic academic representations of modernity have been deconstructed by postcolonial, postmodern, and poststructuralist theories. Yet modernity as a dominant category in the mind of academics and society at large has not disappeared. On the contrary, modernity has returned in multiple forms. By putting modernity into the plural, these new approaches express a mutual desire to overcome the notions of linearity, irreversibility, universalism, and Westernisation that characterises the classical modernisation theories (Lee 2013, 419). Yet the question remains as to whether there is any kind of generic concept left to which this conceptual multiplicity refers.

In tentatively answering this question, I take theories of social emergence as my point of departure (cf. Sawyer 2001, 2005). I suggest that global modernity should be understood as the emergence of two different levels of

social reality. In sharp contradistinction to classical modernisation theories, this concept of modernisation is not defined by beginnings, nor does it imply the linearity of historical processes. Global modernity, instead, refers to an emerging level of social reality with new 'modern' properties. This approach liberates theories of modernity from the narrow and mechanical conceptualisation of post-Second World War sociology, without abandoning an understanding of modernisation in terms of sociocultural evolution.[4] This is particularly important for the application of those concepts of classical sociology that represent the disciplinary tradition of understanding modernisation as social differentiation. In the work of classical sociologists, the rise of modern society was often defined by the increasing differentiation in functionally separate realms of social structures and social action. They identified modernisation with the emergence of relatively autonomous social institutions and practices such as the national state, capitalist economy, formal bodies of law, secular education, and formalised systems of scientific enquiry.

Modern Systems Theory has further stressed this emphasis of classical sociology on both functional differentiation as a core feature of modernity and its emerging character. In this strand of theory modernisation represents a form of sociocultural evolution in which functional differentiation replaces the primacy of segmentation and stratification in the social organisation of premodern orders (Luhmann 1981). At a highly abstract level Niklas Luhmann distinguished modern from premodern forms of social order on the basis of their dominant mode of social differentiation. Accordingly, he defined modernity in principle as an all-encompassing global system of communication based on functional differentiation. In Luhmann's theoretical perspective modern society is 'world society', and it is internally subdivided into relatively autonomous functional systems of communication such as economy, law, politics, science, and religion. In Luhmann's theoretical design these subsystems operate according to their own distinctive and self-referential communicative codes.[5]

While Luhmann defined modernity in its purely abstract dimension on the macro-level, the historically concrete institutional manifestations of the process of increasing functional differentiation and its reflection

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4 To clarify: the kind of theory of sociocultural evolution I advocate here is not an evolutionist theory, according to which there is an unfolding logic or telos at work in human history.

5 Luhmann first presented this comprehensive sociological theory in *Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie* (1987).

in social agency have followed a multiplicity of varying social practices. Consequently, we must perceive modernisation as the advancement of functional differentiation enacted through the social practices of different 'cultural programmes'. To understand these cultural programmes, however, we have to shift our attention from the macro-level of Modern Systems Theory to a semantic level of reality, which 'comprises the intentionality of individual actors, their conscious beliefs and desires' (Viskovatoff 1999, 498). Thus, the simultaneity of unity and diversity of global modernity can be conceptualised through two different levels of reality: the systemic level of functional differentiation and the semantic level of human agency as a carrier of meaning. Applying the vocabulary of linguistics, Viskovatoff has suggested designating these levels as syntactic and semantic levels of reality which interpenetrate each other. Whereas the first level provides the rules and regularities of communication, the second attaches specific meanings to them (Viskovatoff 1999, 506–8).

Modern Systems Theory only articulates the syntactic level of reality, whereas civilisational theories suggest addressing the specific semantics of modernity by taking into account the cultural and institutional legacies of premodern civilisations, and therewith religions. On the surface we observe these combinations of two distinct levels of modernity as the puzzling and contradicting features of a globalisation process characterised by both homogenisation and fragmentation. Analytically, however, we can relate homogeneity and fragmentation to different levels of reality. Applying Eisenstadt's concept of multiple modernities, we can observe at the semantic level intertwined discourses of American, European, Islamic, and Asian modernities. However, in framing multiple modernities as the responses of different civilisational complexes to the challenges of modernity, Eisenstadt's approach is ill-suited to address the discursive variations within the civilisational complexes we can observe in the rise of the polysemic voices of Islamic modernities. How is this semantic complexity to be tackled?

An answer to this question may be found in the factual interpenetration of the syntactic and semantic levels. For analytical purposes, it makes sense to clearly distinguish these two levels of global modernity. On the one hand, there is the syntactic level of a 'cognitive deep structure' that provides fundamental rules and concepts as well as generating general themes of modernity. On the other, there is the level of culturally diverse semantics and social interactions through which social actors attach meaning to these general concepts and themes of modernity. Although empirically connected with each other, these two levels of social reality can be operationalised as

two distinct levels of analysis. They do not, however, relate to each other hierarchically. Rather, they represent two different heuristic perspectives that make sense of a contradictory empirical whole. According to Michel Foucault's concept of *epistemé* (Foucault 1994), I define the syntactic level as the cognitive deep structure of modernity. I understand this 'archaeological' level as the 'unconscious' foundations of global bodies of knowledge (Foucault 1989). At this level we can observe the formative rules and discursive regularities of modernity which enable the mutual intelligibility of various modern semantics. This modern *epistemé* represents the most general form of our modern 'background knowledge' (Taylor 1991, 37), reflecting the functionally differentiated macro-structures of world society.

The syntactic level of global modernity provides common points of reference for the identification of objects of communication, such as state, economy, law, and religion. Moreover, at this level we can observe the generation of basic themes that take issue with the social transformations caused by the systemic imperatives of modern society. With regard to the role of religion, for instance, various semantic discourses about secularisation articulate general questions on issues such as the complex relationship between state and religion, the competition between revealed and scientific knowledge, the roles of individuals and communities, and the progressive separation of moralities from formal norms and laws. At the semantic level, then, we can observe a puzzling variety of modern vernaculars in which these typically modern questions become subjects of contentious societal negotiation. While the first level represents modernity in a generic sense, the second is the arena for the heterogeneous and often contradicting voices of multiple modernities. Here, social actors translate structural similarities into cultural diversity and establish relatively hegemonic cultural narratives by means of power. At this semantic level we find the historically and culturally varying voices of modernity characterised by a great variety of expressive, normative, and constitutive meanings. Here, social actors negotiate the aforementioned general themes in the shifting linguistic, symbolic, narrative, and moral contexts of their respective lifeworlds. It is at this level that we can discern the contestation among the different and often competing projects of modernity. These contestations, however, comprise variations between and within civilisational complexes. At this level civilisational traditions become subject to diverging discursive interpretations and cross-civilisational entanglements. Here, we can identify the ways in which discursive practices are accompanied and modified by direct personal encounters and the individual interpretations of historical events.

In summary, my concept of global modernity has the quality of both an emerging social reality and an analytical device. On the one hand, global modernity represents the evolution of two distinct levels of the social with their own properties, while on the other, I employ these two levels as heuristic instruments in the observation of social processes. The analytical distinction between the syntactic and semantic levels of modernity allows me to conceive of the simultaneity of cultural homogenisation and fragmentation processes by associating these apparently contradictory processes of the global social reality with two different levels of analysis. In addition, this differentiation between two distinct levels of analysis enables a simultaneous application of structural theory and agency. It offers a combination of macro-sociological analyses with a micro-sociological focus on the social practices of particular collective and individual actors.

The concept of Jihad in the premodern Islamic legal tradition

In the classical period of the Islamic empires Jihad was first and foremost known as an institution of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). A good example is afforded by *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, a legal handbook by the jurist and philosopher Ibn Rushd. Better known in Europe by his Latin name, Averroes, Ibn Rushd adhered to the Malikite school of law and lived in Andalusia (1126–98). One chapter of the first volume of his handbook is dedicated to the concept of Jihad. This chapter represents a juridical corpus on the justification, conditions, forms, and aims of warfare in Islamic law. Ibn Rushd discussed various opinions of the four Sunni schools of law (*madhahib*) about the legitimate use of physical force by Islamic rulers. In accordance with these schools, he defined Jihad as the collective responsibility to defend and/or extend the realm of Islamic rule. The political and religious authorities were allowed to proclaim Jihad as long as the conduct of war was subordinated to the jurisdiction of Islamic jurists (*fuqaha*) with respect to the adversaries as well as the means and forms of war's conduct. Generally speaking, Jihad was directed against non-Muslims; only those Muslims who were in open rebellion against legitimate Islamic rulers could become the target of Jihad (Ibn Rushd 1966, 390–418; see also: Peters 1977, 9–25). Consequently, in Islamic jurisprudence Jihad was a clearly and restrictively defined institution of 'justified war', closely knitted into the stratified authority structures of the classical Islamic empires.

From the theoretical perspective of Eisenstadt and Arnason, the above juridical concept of Jihad represents a historically specific combination of

religious and imperial traditions that have characterised Islam as a premod-ern civilisational complex. This concept was the result of many centuries of intellectual deliberation among the religious learned and rulers. First, these deliberations took account of the fact that the Quran does not contain a clear doctrine of Jihad (Bonner 2006, 20). There is no doubt that the Quran has much to say about war, religious struggle, and military campaigns. However, this multiplicity of narratives related to violent strife is of a rather unsystematic character, and leaves us with a very inconsistent notion of Jihad (Firestone 1999, 47). These inconsistencies regarding Jihad are linked in part to the broad range of semantic meanings from which the concept evolved. The verbal root *jahada* has many derivatives, by no means all of which have a religious connotation and only a few of which imply war or physical force. Generally speaking, the semantic field of the root *jahada* refers to meanings such as to take pains, to endeavour, to exert, to drudge, or to struggle. The most com-mon denominator of these multiple meanings is a personal endeavour for a not precisely circumscribed purpose (Wehr 1985, 209). Second, the debates among religious specialists about the meaning of Jihad were also an expression of the historical contexts in which they emerged. This becomes particularly apparent in the sources of these deliberations, which predominantly refer to the large corpus of Islamic traditions, the so-called *sunna* of the Prophet, rather than to the Quran itself. This corpus of prophetic traditions evolved together with the expansion of the early Islamic empires during the first centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Together with the Quran, many of these traditions subsequently achieved the status of authoritative sources for Islamic jurisprudents. Ibn Rushd, for instance, based his elaborations on these sources and on the canon of syllogistic conclusions by previous scholars of religious law.

The discursive development of the concept of Jihad was further condi-tioned by particular historical circumstances. A good example is the differ-ences between the conceptual meanings of Jihad according to the geographic location of their origins. In the frontier areas of the Islamic empires waging war to defend and extend territories apparently impacted the prevalent meaning of Jihad much more clearly than was the case in the pacified core territories of these empires. This emphasis on the military dimension of Jihad in frontier areas is documented in a specific corpus of traditions according to which the Prophet declared the defence of borders to be specifically re-warding in religious terms (Noth 1966, 66–87). In conclusion, the concept of Jihad evolved through centuries of methodologically guided delibera-tions among Islamic jurists. In Islamic jurisprudence Jihad predominantly

represents a category defining the legitimate form of military campaigns in defence of and for the expansion of Islam; the concept revolves around 'the rules of killing at war' (El Fadl 1999).

However, this formal doctrine of Jihad by Islamic jurists certainly does not reflect all the social and religious practices amongst Muslims. Albrecht Noth points to this difference between formal legal doctrines and religious practices regarding Jihad in using the conceptual dichotomy of 'holy war' and 'holy struggle'. According to Noth, in early Islamic history we can already find personal forms of Jihad distinct from the juridical dogmas and authorised forms of warfare. This personal holy struggle could comprise both the military engagement of individual believers and the moral battle of pious Muslims with respect to religious virtues such as charity, fasting, and prayers (Noth 1966, 50). In reference to this dichotomy in meaning, Reuven Firestone argued against a quasi-evolutionary development of the concept of Jihad from a category of spiritual struggle for Islam to one of justified war. Instead, he suggested that in Islamic history a constant dualism of these meanings has been at work, a dualism Firestone assumed had its roots in the early Muslim community (Firestone 2006, 64).

Looking more closely at the intellectual history of Islam, we also find an influential concept of Jihad in Sufism, the 'mystical branch' of Islam, which is almost completely detached from the military connotations of the concept in *fiqh*. In Sufi reasoning Jihad is predominantly directed against human desires, and plays an important role in the justification of mystical practices (Noth 1960, 59; Sedgwick 2000, 18). Scholars have identified the period of the evolution of this spiritual concept of Jihad as being in the ninth century, which then in the twelfth century found its doctrinal manifestation in the teachings about the 'greater Jihad' by the jurist and theologian al-Ghazali (1058–111). According to al-Ghazali, the greater Jihad is a struggle concerning the moral self and the public good, whereas the 'little Jihad' refers to the military defence of Islam (Cook 2005, 35–7). However, these spiritual and moral forms of Jihad did not play a significant role in the Islamic legal tradition until the modern Islamic reform movement reinvented them in the nineteenth century.

Modernity, authenticity, and Islamic traditions: Jihad in the thought of Islamic reform

During the nineteenth century the Muslim world experienced a rise in Islamic reform movements that created an increasingly pervasive discourse

of Islamic modernism. Three of the most prominent thinkers among these reformists were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida, who became known in Western scholarship as the modernist Salafiyya movement (Hourani 1962). In the Ottoman Empire Namik Kemal (1840–88) and Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) represent two leading reformist intellectuals, while in South Asia Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–98) and Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) were influential figures. In spite of regional and cultural differences, these modern Islamic thinkers shared a critical attitude towards the established class of the religious learned and their traditional dogmas. In order to liberate their countries from colonial rule, an important group of Muslim intellectuals called for a unity of religious and social reform. They publicly articulated the generic themes of modernity, such as the relationship between religion and science, the institution of the national state and the Islamic community (*umma*), secular and religious forms of education, and religious and legislative bodies of law. These Islamic reformers developed particular semantics of Islamic modernities based on the syntax of modernity. In the political context of colonial domination late nineteenth-century Islamic reformers interpreted Islamic traditions anew in light of the above-mentioned general modern discursive themes, and with implicit reference to the advancement of functional differentiation (Jung 2011, 2015–248).

From the outset many of these nineteenth-century Muslim intellectuals aimed at becoming part of a universal civilisation as the European Enlightenment tradition had imagined it. Moreover, they appropriated elements of nineteenth-century scientific theory, such as historicism, evolutionism, and the philosophies of religious rationalisation. In Muhammad Abduh's thought, for instance, this appropriation of nineteenth-century discourse can be seen in *Risalat al-Tawhid.* This book compiles lectures which Abduh gave at the Sultaniyya in Beirut, a modern school founded in 1883 that emphasised the teachings of both religion and the modern sciences (cf. Sedgwick 2010). In these lectures Abduh adopted an evolutionary perspective of theories of religious rationalisation, describing the Quran as the first holy book in which 'revelation and reason merge through the voice of the messenger of God' (Abduh 1965, 8).

As Cemil Aydin has shown in his comparative study of the Middle East and Japan, it was only towards the beginning of the twentieth century that Muslim and Japanese thinkers gradually replaced this universalistic frame of reference with the concepts of distinct Islamic and Japanese civilisations that, at least in moral terms, were supposedly superior to the materialistic culture of the West. Aydin explains this shift from universalism to Islamic

and Japanese particularism with reference to the asymmetric power relations of the international system as a consequence of the exclusionary politics of European colonialism and the rising nationalist ideologies in the formation of modern national states. In the context of international politics the previously cherished universalistic concept of civilisation gradually came to be associated with the colonial politics of Westernisation (Aydin 2007).

Taking their point of departure in the religious concept of the unity of God (*tawhid)*, Islamic reformers now began to reconstruct Islam as a holistic civilisation, a form of cultural unity that represented the ideal of the totality of Islamic institutions and walks of life. The confusion of religious reform with international politics and modern state formation resulted in the idea of a specifically Islamic form of modernity, with its normative foundation in the revealed sources of the *sharia*. In this process the *sharia*, as revealed in the Quran and *sunna*, was gradually transformed into the central symbolic reference for the achievement of moral integrity, cultural authenticity, and national self-determination (cf. Dallal 2000, 347; Krämer 2010, 114). At the same time this *sharia* discourse was fused with modern legal communication and its foundation in the principle of positive law.

The nineteenth-century Islamic reformers proclaimed a return to the original sources of the revelation, without solely relying on the comprehensive interpretations in the huge legal corpuses of Islamic jurisprudence. One of their core arguments was that only independent reasoning with reference to pristine Islamic principles could provide an authentic platform for the building of a just and legitimate modern order. Consequently, the Islamic reform movement made the liberation of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) from the institutional control of the *ulama* a core issue of religious reform. It was not the firmly established methods of *fiqh*, but a fresh reading of the Holy Scriptures with which they wanted to answer the social, political, and moral questions of modern times.

In the coercive straightjacket of imperialist power relations the religious language of Islam facilitated the propagation of modern ideas and institutions, without renouncing the specifically modern claim to authenticity. The discourse of Islamic reform constituted a fusion of Islamic religious concepts and narratives with the functionally differentiated conceptual language of modern economic, educational, legal, and political communication. In this way the discourse of Islamic modernity combined the syntactic rules of modernity with the cultural programme of the Islamic civilisational complex. It narrated the fundamental social transformation towards an increasingly functionally differentiated social life in an Islamic idiom. This

specifically Islamic discourse of modernity generated a conceptual source for reflexive semantics, from which subsequent Muslim thinkers have selectively drawn. The conceptualisation of *sharia* in terms of positive law, the reinterpretation of *shura* as a form of representative government, the definition of *zakat* as an Islamic form of taxation, and the association of *riba* with capitalist interest-taking present but a few significant examples. With strong reference to the specifically modern mode of social differentiation, that is to say distinct realms of functionally differentiated communication, the Islamic reform movement bestowed new meanings on religious concepts. In this way modern Islamic reformers laid the foundations for the rise of the fragmented and polysemic nature of Islamic discourse that we see today.

In this process the institution of Jihad also attained new meanings. In his revolutionary efforts Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, for instance, applied the term to the mobilisation of Muslims against colonial rule. The Egyptian reformer Muhammad Abduh, who underpinned his call for reform with theological terminology, defined Jihad as the religiously motivated effort to work hard in everyday life for the revival of Muslim society (Ibrahim 1999, 71). For both Afghani and Abduh, Islam was synonymous with social activism, which they understood as a form of Jihad. They employed the premodern notion of 'holy struggle' as a new means of mobilising the population for their modernising projects. Taking up al-Ghazali's distinction, late nineteenth-century reformers interpreted the greater Jihad as a form of collective and individual striving for social reform, while assigning to the concept of the little Jihad a key role in the resistance against colonialism. Premodern anti-colonial movements in British India, North Africa, and the Sudan already perceived themselves as being in a Jihad against the colonial powers. However, their worldview had yet to encounter the nationalist impact that dominated the meaning of Jihad in the fight for independence later in the nineteenth century (Peters 1979). Together with the semantic variations of its linguistic roots, the semantic dualism in the meaning of Jihad provided the Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century with religious templates for conceptual innovations, most significantly with templates for the justification of various forms of modern social activism in the fields of politics, economics, and education.

The ideologisation of Islam and the polysemic nature of Jihad

In November 1914 Sultan Mehmet V proclaimed the last 'official' Jihad in Islamic history. Based on a juridical opinion (*fatwa*) of the Sheikh al-Islam, the

highest religious institution of the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan-Caliph called upon every Muslim to defend Islam against its enemies. These enemies of Islam were represented by the three European great powers: France, Great Britain, and Russia. In formal terms the proclamation of Jihad followed the rules of Islamic law. In content, however, it was a remarkable deviation, as this defence of Islam took place in the form of an alliance of the Ottoman Empire with the non-Muslim Empires of Germany and Austria. Even more striking, the initiative for this Jihad did not come from the Sublime Porte, but was a strategic move developed by the German foreign office in Berlin. Briefly, this Ottoman-German Jihad failed in every respect. Muslims under imperial control did not rally behind the cause of the Axis powers. On the contrary, the First World War saw many Muslims fighting against the Ottoman Empire under the flags of their respective colonial masters. The last officially declared Jihad ended in the defeat of the Ottoman Empire together with Germany and Austria, leading to the abolition of both the Sultanate (1922) and the Caliphate (1924) by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Since then the formal legal institutional framework for the proclamation of Jihad has not existed (Jung 2014, 5–8).

The abolition of the Caliphate, however, did not mean an end to the proclamation of Jihad. On the contrary, stripped of its institutional and interpretative constraints, the door was open for the flourishing of new applications of the term in a multiplicity of ways. The foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood by Hasan al-Banna in 1928 was a decisive turning point for this decoupling of Jihad from its institutional and interpretative rules. Generally speaking, Hasan al-Banna translated the Islamic discourse of modernity from elitist language into the vernacular of a religio-political movement. The Muslim Brotherhood was crucial in initiating a still ongoing process of the 'centrifugal ideologisation' of Islam. According to the sociologist Sinisa Malesevic, this process is 'a mass phenomenon that historically spreads from the centre of social organisations (or social movements, or both) to gradually encompass an ever wider population' (Malesevic 2010, 10). In so doing, the ideological activities of the elite and the broader masses of the population mutually reinforce each other, binding the ideological narrative at the macro-level to individual forms of solidarity at the micro-level (2010, 11).

This popularisation, societal dissemination, and trivialisation of the Islamic reform discourse by the Muslim Brotherhood movement was foundational in the evolution of the polysemic voices of Islam at the semantic level. The ideology of the Brotherhood was predicated on the idea of an

Islamisation of modernity. In this process Jihad became a metaphor for social engagement fused with the organisational logic of a modern mass movement. In Banna's usage the term 'Jihad' represented an entire range of meanings, from militant resistance against British domination to the striving for social reform and the struggle for the moral betterment of individual Muslims. However, in contradistinction to the reformers of the late nineteenth century Banna placed new emphasis on the military character of Jihad. He firmly associated the little Jihad with notions such as violent struggle, death, and martyrdom (Mitchell 1969, 207). Hasan al-Banna further radicalised the idea of authenticity in his application of Islamic concepts, now aiming at the establishment of an authentic Islamic order without any borrowing from the normative and institutional achievements of Europe. At the same time the regulative claims of the Brotherhood were gradually expanded towards the imagination of a reorganisation of the functionally differentiating realms of economics, politics, law, education, arts, and religious practice under a form of Islamic governance (Commins 2005). From this paper's theoretical perspective, the idea of Islamic governance attained the role of giving the all-encompassing answer to the complexity of modern problems generated by increasing functional differentiation. The imposition of Islamic government on the diverging logics of different realms of society was thus translated into various forms of Jihad. In a process of centrifugal ideologisation the Islamisation of modern social realms such as education, economics, law, politics, and science became synonymous with a programme for the societal integration of an increasingly differentiated population.

In political terms Islamist ideologists further radicalised the notion of the little Jihad throughout the twentieth century. In particular, the work of Sayyid Qutb was instrumental in making it the core concept for revolutionary Islamist groups. Qutb, a member of the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, fundamentally revised three concepts of the Islamic tradition: justice (*adala*); the 'authority/sovereignty' of God (*hakimiyya*); and the pre-Islamic period of 'ignorance' (*jahiliyya*). In this revision the Islamic concept of *adala* was fused with the modern call to revolutionary social reforms in which an Islamic order represents a kind of third way between capitalism and socialism. Qutb linked this social dynamism to a political authority structure in which the absolute sovereignty of God, *hakimiyya*, was combined with a diagnosis of living in times of ignorance, *jahiliyya*. Qutb identified the increasing ethical differentiation of social realms with the polytheist *jahiliyya*, a modern form of ignorance, in which people have lost the one and only path of God. Qutb called for an existentialist Jihad

against this modern *jahiliyya*, which he justified through the exemplary narratives about the life and struggles of the Prophet. His combination of *adala*, *hakimiyya*, *jahiliyya,* and *jihad* achieved a foundational role in the justification for a call to Islamist revolution. Numerous Islamist groups employed this thoroughly revised concept of the little Jihad in their militarisation of Qutb's existentialist political ideology. In declaring the modern world to be in a state of ignorance, Qutb's ideology justifies, in principle, a ubiquitous application of Jihad against everybody, circumventing all the institutional and normative constraints that once characterised Jihad in the legal tradition of Islamic jurisprudence.[6]

This autonomous logic of Jihad is at the heart of the thinking of militant Islamists such as Abdallah Azzam, who recruited Arab volunteers for the war in Afghanistan. Azzam vehemently turned against apologetic attempts to downplay the military dimension of Jihad. Moreover, he considered Jihad to be the individual duty of every Muslim, not a collective duty for the defence of Islam. According to Azzam, all Muslims were individually obliged to wage Jihad as long as there was any Islamic territory under siege (McGregor 2003; Hegghammer 2010/11, 74–7). Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida further radicalised this position. In their theory of global Jihad the obligation to wage war was stripped of its territorial confines. In the world-view of contemporary jihadist organisations Muslims have to constantly defend Islam against internal and external enemies across all boundaries. In this almost apocalyptic character of Jihad references to Islamic religious traditions have meanwhile become a means of legitimising all kinds of militant fantasies.

Parallel to this unleashing of the little Jihad from all its institutional and normative constraints, we can observe the relatively arbitrary application of the concept of greater Jihad for individual and collective struggles in every walk of life. The Malay author Azly Rahman, for instance, has lamented a culture of public discourse in his country in which people are 'urging this or that kind of jihad at times for reasons unknown' (Rahman 2015, 33). Lara Deeb described forms of public piety and community work among her female interlocutors in the Shiite quarter of al-Dahiyya in Beirut as a specific kind of women's Jihad (Deeb 2006). In fighting their Jihad, these women were 'engaged in defining, reinforcing, and prioritizing certain religious discourses and practices over others, constantly distancing themselves from those considered traditional' (2006, 128). In an anthology concerned with

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6 The Islamist ideology of Sayyid Qutb has been the topic of numerous studies; in this part I refer to the works of Shepard (1996), Musallam (2005), and Khatab (2006).

non-violent movements of civil unrest in the Middle East Maria Stephan has placed various forms of civic striving under the rubric of a 'civilian jihad', a term that she derives from the Iraqi intellectual Khalid Kishtainy (Stephan 2009). Meanwhile, Tariq Ramadan calls European Muslims to fight a Jihad for trust. According to Ramadan, this 'genuine' Jihad for trust aims at achieving 'self-respect and respect for others: for everyone, Muslim and non-Muslims' (Ramadan 2010, 114). In a very recent scholarly article, to name a final example, the author aims to explicate 'the possibility of retrieving at the very least the spirit, if not the term, of jihad for the purposes of peacebuilding' (Sheikh 2015, 289). In an apologetic vein Muslims redefine Jihad in multiple ways 'to reclaim the concept of "Jihad" and to invest it with other meanings different to those imposed by the Mullahs and militants' (Noor 2001).

These examples show the various ways in which contemporary Muslim thinkers fuse religious discourse freely with elements of political, economic, scientific, educational, or artistic communication. They refer to Islamic religious sources in order to construct the various semantics of 'authentic' Islamic modernities. However, in this process the interpretation of the Islamic religious tradition has not only lost its authoritative methodological foundations, but increasingly represents a field of highly contested meanings. The concrete meanings of Islamic concepts, norms, and institutions, and with them their role as signifiers for specific forms of Islamic modernities, have become polysemic.

Conclusions

This article has sketched a theoretical framework for understanding the multiple voices of Islamic modernities as a plurality of modern Islamic semantics, based on a general syntax of modernity. In taking the case of Jihad as its example, the article has attempted to demonstrate how the interpretation of Islamic religious institutions has developed in a highly contested field of social negotiations, making it subject to continuous processes of reconstruction and reinterpretation. Certainly, the meaning of religious traditions was also contingent on non-religious influences in premodern times. The inconsistencies of the Quran and the semantic breadth of some of its terms have continuously invoked the necessity of interpretation. However, this article has argued that, beginning with the modern Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century, this interpretation of Islamic religious traditions has increasingly liberated itself from the relative hermeneutic monopolies of the

religious learned. The increasingly functional differentiation of the social has not only undermined premodern structures of interpretative authority, but has also provided a radically new and openly accessible syntax for a more independent and thus free interpretation of Islamic religious sources.

Analysing contemporary discourses of Islamic modernities at the semantic level, we can observe competing structures of meaning within Islam and in the interaction of Muslims with the non-Islamic world. It is on this semantic level of reality that the polysemic and fragmented readings of Islamic texts take place. To understand the evolution and inner logic of these conflicts about meaning, however, it is important to take into account the syntactic level of the cognitive deep structure of modernity. Here, the article suggests that a generic concept of modernity based on theories of functional differentiation can help us to understand the evolution of the cultural idiosyncrasies that we observe at the semantic level. Therefore, in combining perspectives from different strands of social theory, the two-level model of an emerging global modernity proposed here can help make sense of the polysemic readings of Islamic and other traditions as we experience them today.

In light of the theoretical approach presented here, modernisation appears as the conflict-prone reorganisation of social life under the 'specific systemic modern property' of functional differentiation. In the Islamic discourse of modernity this reorganisation has been articulated and justified through the discursive integration of the logics of politics, economics, law, and science in the conceptual language of Islam. This process is intrinsic to the evolution of global modernity as it finds its historical expression in the intellectual shift towards an Islamisation of the social. In this article I have chosen the case of Jihad as an illustration of this process; Islamic concepts such as *adala, sharia, umma,* and *tawhid* would provide other examples for this modern combination of religious with other forms of communication. In the course of the twentieth century this way of constructing 'authentic' forms of modernity with strong references to Islam has attained relative hegemony in the Muslim world. This hegemony of references to religion in the construction of Muslim modernities is characterised by the multiplicity of ways in which Muslims read the canonical texts of Islam. Islamic traditions are not applied as an undisputed and coherent cultural programme, as Eisenstadt's theory might suggest. Rather, the religious and imperial traditions of the civilisational complex of Islam serve as a reservoir of more or less authoritative concepts, symbols, and practices in a competitive process of the formation of modern social imaginaries among Muslim thinkers and

activists. The distinction between syntactic and semantic levels of modernity provides an analytical prism for an understanding of the multiple ways in which these social actors combine generic elements of modernity with culturally particular forms in constructing multiple modernities within a civilisational complex.

In the absence of mutually accepted authoritative institutions of religious interpretation the only common point of reference in these hermeneutical processes is the mere idea of the necessity to bestow the legitimacy of Islamic authenticity on the competing forms of modernity. Since its invention in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Muslim intellectuals, social movements, and state authorities have spread this discourse of an authentic-cum-Islamic modernity throughout the twentieth century. As long as this idea of modern Islamic authenticity exerts relative discursive hegemony over Muslim deliberations of modernity, this kind of Islamisation of the Muslim world will continue. However, infusing religious concepts continuously with elements of the logic of economic, educational, legal, or political communication eventually carries the risk of depriving them of their religious content.

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On the Buddhist roots of contemporary non-religious mindfulness practice: Moving beyond sectarian and essentialist approaches [1]

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Abstract

Mindfulness-based practice methods are entering the Western cultural mainstream as institutionalised approaches in healthcare, education, and other public spheres. The Buddhist roots of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and comparable mindfulness-based programmes are widely acknowledged, together with the view of their religious and ideological neutrality. However, the cultural and historical roots of these contemporary approaches have received relatively little attention in the study of religion, and the discussion has been centred on Theravāda Buddhist viewpoints or essentialist presentations of 'classical Buddhism'. In the light of historical and textual analysis it seems unfounded to hold Theravāda tradition as the original context or as some authoritative expression of Buddhist mindfulness, and there are no grounds for holding it as the exclusive Buddhist source of the MBSR programme either. Rather, one-sided Theravāda-based presentations give a limited and oversimplified picture of Buddhist doctrine and practice, and also distort comparisons with contemporary non-religious forms of mindfulness practice. To move beyond the sectarian and essentialist approaches closely related to the 'world religions paradigm' in the study of religion, the discussion would benefit from a lineage-based approach, where possible historical continuities and phenomenological similarities between Buddhist mindfulness and contemporary non-religious approaches are examined at the level of particular relevant Buddhist teachers and their lineages of doctrine and practice.

Keywords: *Buddhism, mindfulness, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, meditation, world religions paradigm*

The current use of non-religious mindfulness practices for practical health benefits dates to 1979, when Jon Kabat-Zinn introduced Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) as a treatment method for chronic pain and stress

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patients at the *University of Massachusetts Medical Center* (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 286; Samuelson et al. 2007, 255). After this pioneering work a wide variety of mindfulness-based interventions have emerged,[2] and the effects of these approaches have been analysed in a burgeoning number of academic publications (Eklöf 2014, 33–4; Lazar 2005; Mindful Nation UK 2015, 6; Wilson 2014, 2). With the support of scientific research, mindfulness-based practice methods are entering the Western cultural mainstream and becoming institutionalised approaches in public healthcare and education (Frisk 2011; Hornborg 2012a; 2012b; 2014; Plank 2010; 2011; 2014a; 2014b; Wilson 2014). In the United States mindfulness-based approaches are already widely accepted as 'mainstream', with applications in hospitals, prisons, therapy, primary schools, higher education, business, and military training (Wilson 2014), and in the United Kingdom an all-party parliamentary group has recently given several recommendations for the nationwide incorporation of mindfulness practice in public healthcare, education, the workplace, and the criminal justice system (Mindful Nation UK, 2015). In Swedish healthcare the *Karolinska Institutet* has offered MBSR courses to its employees since 2007, psychiatric wards use MBSR or other mindfulness-based therapies, and mindfulness approaches are widely popular among cognitive therapists (Karolinska Institutet 2015; Plank 2010, 50). In the Finnish educational sector *Folkhälsan* and *the University of Helsinki* are coordinating a largescale research project in which the effects of mindfulness training[3] are being studied among 2400 pupils in 50 public schools (Folkhälsan 2015). Apart from the emerging institutional contexts and clinical settings, MBSR and other mindfulness-related methods are also widely popular as private tools for health and well-being, and are offered to a large constituency in the form of training courses, books, mobile applications, and other commercial products (see Wilson 2014; Plank 2011; 2014a; 2014b).

In the foreword to *Mindful Nation UK* Kabat-Zinn describes the historical roots of mindfulness: 'While the most systematic and comprehensive articulation of mindfulness and its related attributes stems from the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is not a catechism, an ideology, a belief system, a technique or set of techniques, a religion, or a philosophy. It is best described as "a way of being".' (Mindful Nation UK 2015, 9) This argument has been characteristic of Kabat-Zinn's approach to meditation since his first academic publication

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2   Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) are the most prominent programmes (Germer 2005, 11).
3   The Stop and Breathe (.b) programme, which is based on MBSR and MBCT, but modified for school contexts (Folkhälsan 2015; Mindfulness in Schools Project 2015).

in 1982, in which he explains how 'mindfulness meditation' has roots in the *vipassan*ā practice of Theravāda Buddhism, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, in Sōtō Zen Practice, and in particular yogic traditions, but asserts that 'all mediation practices used in the SR&RP[4] were taught independent of the religious and cultural beliefs associated with them in their countries and traditions of origin' (Kabat-Zinn 1982, 33). The institutionalisation and application of mindfulness approaches in religiously and ideologically neutral public spheres may be seen as a sign of the widespread acceptance and *de facto* validation of this claim.

While research on mindfulness is abundant[5] and the effects of mindfulness-based practice methods have been analysed in a vast number of publications, historical and cultural study of the subject has received less attention. Furthermore, many of these studies are marked by critical differences in both approaches and interpretations. Some scholars treat therapeutic mindfulness-based methods as essentially contemporary Western forms of Buddhism and as a new phase in the long history of the Buddhist tradition (Wilson 2014). Others emphasise the differences between MBSR and Buddhist mindfulness, suggesting that there is a hollow cultural appropriation – and even colonisation – of Buddhist concepts and practice to support individualistic and economic aims and values (Plank 2011; 2014a; 2014b). Buddhist conceptions of mindfulness have also been analysed for their possible relevance in therapeutic work (Germer 2005; Gilpin 2008; Siegel et. al 2009; Olendzki 2005; 2009; Rapgay & Bystrinsky 2009), and to examine historical processes of conceptual recontextualisation (Sun 2014). In all these research approaches there is a need to address the question of which 'Buddhism' is being discussed. Because of the multitude of sub-branches within the Buddhist tradition and its ca. 2500 years of history and expansion to all five continents, capturing the characteristic features of the Buddhist concept of mindfulness (Pāli *sati*, Sanskrit *smṛti*, Tibetan *dran pa*, Chinese *nian*)[6] is challenging, to say the least. The abstract and multi-layered nature of the concept itself does not make the task any easier, and if this challenge is to be tackled, one needs to anchor the perspective to (a) particular viewpoint(s) within Buddhist tradition. However, because of Buddhism's doctrinal and practical plurality, the selected viewpoint may radically limit or distort the picture of 'Buddhist mindfulness' if its relevance for the particular research question is not well grounded.

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4 The original name of the MBSR programme.

5 It is estimated that there are around 500 hundred peer-reviewed publications a year (Eklöf 2014; Wilson 2014; Mindful Nation UK 2015).

6 Later, Romanised Pāli is used for specific Buddhist terms, if not otherwise indicated.

In this article I first observe presentations of Buddhist mindfulness in the academic discussion on the Buddhist roots of contemporary non-religious mindfulness practice, and, based on various perspectives of the history of Buddhist doctrine and practice, I argue that most of these presentations seem to be inadequately one-sided simplifications and generalisations. I continue by locating influential Buddhist teachers and texts in the life of Jon Kabat-Zinn and in the development of the MBSR programme, and, based on my analysis, I argue that in addition to the well-known Theravāda influences there is a wide variety of influential texts and teachers from the other main branches of Buddhism, and especially from the Zen tradition.[7] In the final part of the article I examine some doctrinal differences, together with their practical and conceptual implications, as found among influential modern Theravāda and Zen teachers, and conclude by arguing that the plurality of Buddhist tradition and the variety of different doctrinal positions should be taken into account in the academic discussion on contemporary mindfulness approaches, because different interpretative frames and doctrinal views are inseparable from the objectives of Buddhist meditation practice and conceptions of mindfulness.

Previous research: A bias in favour of Theravāda Buddhism

A common or even dominant argument presents Theravāda Buddhism as the original context and an authoritative representation of the Buddhist concept and practice of mindfulness, or as the main source of Buddhist influences in the development of MBSR and related mindfulness-based methods. The argument about Theravāda origins is explicitly made by Katarina Plank (Plank 2011, 186–7; 2014a, 43; 2014b, 73–4), who grounds it in her fieldwork within the *vipassanā* movement of S.N Goenka and with reference to an article by Andrew Olendzki – in spite of the fact that Olendzki neither uses the word Theravāda nor makes any explicit claims concerning Theravāda origins in his study (Olendzki 2005).[8] Instead, Olendzki represents another common approach in which Buddhist mindfulness is presented through notions of 'classical Buddhism' or 'classical mindfulness training', without any reference to particular sub-traditions, but with exclusive use of text sources from

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7   The Japanese term *Zen* is used in a general sense to include the Chinese *Ch'an*, Korean *Seo*n, and Vietnamese *Thien* traditions.
8   Without any academic discussion of the topic or explication of her line of reasoning, Plank seems to present her position rather as a matter of fact, with no further problematisation of the subject.

the Pāli canon and later Theravāda commentaries (Bodhi & Nāṇamoli 1995; Bodhi 2000a; Olendzki 2005; 2009).[9] Others may refrain from making claims of originality or references to 'classical' Buddhism, but present Theravāda as the major Buddhist influence in MBSR and MBCT, and consequently use only Theravāda sources in their historical analysis (Gethin 2011).[10] In many studies Mahāyāna interpretations may also be recognised to a degree, but 'traditional Asian' or 'classical' Buddhism is still defined and analysed through the Pāli canon and Theravāda sources (Germer 2005; Gilpin 2008; Olendzki 2014; Rapgay & Bystrinsky 2009; Sun 2014; Väänänen 2014). In addition to research articles, a variation of this approach is found in *Mindful America*, the first book-length study of the contemporary mindfulness movement, whose main argument presents 'traditional monastic Buddhist' mindfulness and 'premodern Asian Buddhism' with exclusive reference to the Pāli canon and Theravāda authorities (Wilson 2014, 21–2, 48–54, 107–19).

Based on canonical Theravāda texts[11] and the views of contemporary Theravāda teachers, these studies arrive at various Theravāda-based characterisations of mindfulness. In her texts Plank describes Buddhist mindfulness as an analytical awareness enabling the deconstruction of sense experiences into increasingly subtle elements, and as an integral part of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice[12], which is equated with *vipassanā* meditation (Plank 2011, 188–96; 2014a, 43). The application of mindfulness in *vipassanā* practice leads to experience-based wisdom and final liberation (*nibbāna*) through the observation of *dhamma*s, the smallest basic elements of the psychophysical body, and through the realisation of impermanence (*anicca*), non-satisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and impersonality (*anattā*) as the characteristic marks of existence (Plank 2011, 190–3, 196). Furthermore, mindfulness must be accompanied by a 'clear awareness of all bodily activities' (*sampajañña*),[13] as well as 'diligence' *(ātāpi),* if it is to be Buddhist 'right mindfulness' (*sammāsati*) (Plank 2011, 195–6). Although arguable, as later analysis will show, and mainly an expression of a specific

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9   For similar approaches see also Malinen 2014; Siegel et al. 2009.

10   However, in his recent article Gethin makes a valuable contribution to the discussion by also analysing the conceptualisations of mindfulness in Buddhism through Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna sources, and recognising these as possibly relevant for contemporary non-religious approaches (Gethin 2015).

11   Mainly *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, and *Abhidhamma* commentaries.

12   See pages 96–7.

13   Among modern Theravāda teachers the concept of *sampajañña* can also mean 'reflexive cognition of mental events', which matures into insights and wisdom (Bodhi 2011, 33–35), or an active manifestation of 'right mindfulness' in all skilful mental and physical activities that accord with the teaching of Buddha (*Dharma*) (Nyanaponika 1962, 45–56).

interpretation of Buddhist mindfulness, *satipaṭṭhāna* and *vipassanā* practice, which can be associated with a particular Burmese tradition of meditation,[14] Plank's characterisations have been influential in many Nordic studies of the topic (see Frisk 2011; Gottfredsen 2014; Hornborg 2012b; 2014; Jääskel-äinen 2013). For example, Anne-Christine Hornborg cites Plank in equating Buddhist mindfulness (*sati*) with *vipassanā* meditation to contrast 'Western' health-seeking practice with the transcendent goals of Buddhist practice, and to present contemporary non-Buddhist forms of mindfulness as 'white American middle-class' interpretations (Hornborg 2012b, 44).

In his articles Olendzki refers to mindfulness as 'simple presence of mind upon currently arising phenomena' (Olendzki 2005, 258), or as 'a quality of attention that is at once confident, benevolent, generous, and equanimous'. Based on Theravāda *Abhidhamma*, he emphasises that mindfulness is present 'at any time one has a wholesome thought, performs a wholesome action, or speaks a wholesome word', and is always accompanied by other beneficial mental qualities (Olendzki 2009, 42; 2011, 61; see also Plank 2011, 196–7). Olendzki's presentation of 'classical mindfulness training' is a summary of the 'four contemplations' found in *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, again interpreted exclusively as *vipassanā* practice (Olendzki 2005, 254–9), and mindfulness is depicted essentially as 'a tool to be used for gaining wisdom, which consists of the direct, experiential understanding of the impermanence, selflessness, unsatisfactoriness, and interdependence of all phenomena' (Olendzki 2009, 43–4). According to Olendzki, mindfulness meditation is specifically *a particular type of meditative practice* in which the concentrated mind 'is directed to a moving target—the flowing stream of consciousness', differing essentially form meditations aiming at one-pointed concentration. (Olendzki 2009, 41–4. Emphasis by the author.)

In *Mindful America* Wilson gives no explicit definition of mindfulness as a concept, yet comparisons between 'traditional Buddhist' mindfulness practice and contemporary manifestations are important for his overall arguments concerning historical change within Buddhism. For Wilson, 'traditional' mindfulness is 'an early *type of meditation* that likely traces back to the historical Buddha himself.' (Wilson 2014, 21. Emphasis by the author.) It includes *both* the deep one-pointed concentration of jhāna states *and* awareness of body and mind as described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, but it differs essentially from visualisations and other forms of meditation (Wilson 2014, 21–2). This premodern Buddhist mindfulness is also 'clearly associated with traditional

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14 Plank's description fits well with the tradition of Burmese *vipassanā* meditation she is studying, which can be traced from S.N. Goenka, to the lay teacher U BA Khin, and to the Theravāda monk Ledi Sayadaw (Braun 2013; Houtman 1990; Plank 2011).

transcendent monastic concerns (nirvana)', and 'a part of a celibate, renunciatory, home-leaving monastic Buddhist path' (Wilson 2014, 109, 119). According to Wilson, in the framing 'that mindfulness techniques receive in the traditional commentaries of Buddhist lineages over nearly the entire sweep of Asian Buddhist history, regardless of lineage or location' (Wilson 2014, 21),

> [m]indfulness is presented as a strenuous, lifelong task, one that occurs within a framework of renunciation and detachment: the practitioner seeks to acquire eventually the bliss enjoyed in peaceful meditation, rather than to enjoy the activities of daily life via mindful attitudes … [I]n this traditional framework, mindfulness operates as something that puts distance between oneself and one's experience, so that one ceases to be troubled by it. (Wilson 2014, 21–2.)

Within the research discussion there are also various comparisons between Buddhist mindfulness and contemporary non-religious practice. Plank states that contemporary non-religious forms of mindfulness are 'wrong mindfulness' (*miccha sati*)[15] from a Buddhist point of view, because they advocate mindful appreciation of 'worldly' sensual experiences. To support the claim that Buddhist mindfulness cannot contain any sense-based enjoyment or contentment, she cites the modern Theravāda teachers, Bhikkhu Thanissaro and Bhante Henepola Gunaratana (Plank 2011, 215–6; 2014a, 51). Plank also quotes Thanissaro to emphasise that the mere acceptance of different mental states is not enough in Buddhist mindfulness practice:

> [In] establishing mindfulness you stay with unpleasant things not just to accept them but to watch and understand them. Once you've clearly seen that a particular quality like aversion or lust is harmful for the mind, you can't stay patient or equanimous about it. You have to make whatever effort is needed to get rid of it and to nourish skillful qualities in its place by bringing in other factors of the path: right resolve and right effort. (Thanissaro Bhikkhu 2010, cited from Plank 2011, 197.)

In other comparisons Rapgay & Bystrinsky state that for modern therapeutic proponents 'mindfulness is a practice without goals—a state of non-striving

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15 This concept is found in early Buddhist text sources as the opposite of 'right mindfulness', but without further explanation (Kuan 2008, 1–2). Thich Nhat Hanh uses it in a very different sense than Plank and translates it as 'forgetfulness'. For Hanh, it refers to a psychological defence mechanism that represses mental contents and emotions beneath the conscious mind (Hanh 2006, 104).

without any specific objective', whereas 'classical mindfulness' has specific goals associated with every phase of the practice (Rapgay & Bystrinsky 2009, 158), and Bhikkhu Bodhi summarises the difference between 'a traditional Buddhist' and 'a contemporary westerner who takes up meditation against the background of a holistic secular perspective' by quoting Gil Fronsdal:

> Rather than stressing world-renunciation, they [Western lay teachers] stress engagement with, and freedom within the world. Rather than rejecting the body, these Western teachers embrace the body as part of the wholistic [sic] field of practice. Rather than stressing ultimate spiritual goals such as full enlightenment, ending the cycles of rebirth, or attaining the various stages of sainthood, many Western teachers tend to stress the immediate benefits of mindfulness and untroubled, equanimous presence in the midst of life's vicissitudes. (Bodhi 2011, 31; Fronsdal 1995.)[16]

These Theravāda-based presentations and comparisons would be quite legitimate if Theravāda tradition[17] could be held as the original historical context of mindfulness practice, as an authoritative representation of Buddhist tradition, or if contemporary non-religious mindfulness methods were based solely or mainly on Theravāda sources. However, none of these assumptions seems valid in the light of historical research. In addition, many of these characterisations lack sensitivity to the differences between modern and premodern interpretations of Buddhist practice (see Braun 2013; McMahan 2008; Sharf 1995a) and also to the plurality within Theravāda interpretations of mindfulness and meditation.

The early Buddhist roots of mindfulness practice

The English word 'mindfulness' is an established translation of a Pāli term 'sati' (and its counterparts in other Buddhist canons), first introduced by

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16 However, it is notable that in the context of the original article Fronsdal did not mean this description to be a comparison between traditional Buddhist and contemporary 'secular' practitioners of meditation, as Bodhi uses it. Instead, he wanted to highlight the differences between monastic Asian and Western lay teachers of *Buddhist vipassanā* meditation, and argued quite convincingly for the impact of American culture on the 'world-affirming' attitude of Western lay Buddhist practitioners (Fronsdal 1995).

17 The whole notion of a clearly identifiable 'Theravāda tradition' in the precolonial history of Asian Buddhism can be contested, and seen partly as a later projection of Western scholarship (see Skilling 2009; Skilling et al. 2012). However, with sensitivity to its limitations, the concept of 'Theravāda Buddhism' is widely accepted as a useful heuristic device in historical research for capturing particular developments within the history of Buddhist thought and practice.

T.S. Rhys Davids in 1881. The choice of expression was not obvious, for the Buddhist technical term refers to a doctrinal concept, which differs from mere 'remembering' or 'recollection' as the basic meanings of the word's root (Gethin 2011, 263–6). In her study of Buddhist meditation Sarah Shaw captures this difference, while pointing to the importance of the concept in Buddhist tradition as a whole:

> The word derives from the root for 'memory' (Skst *smṛti*) though this does not quite accommodate all its shades of meaning, which is more an 'attentiveness directed towards the present'. Mindfulness is that quality that characterizes the mind that is alert, awake and free from befuddlement. Rightly applied it becomes a path factor, the first of the factors of enlightenment, considered to be the basis of all Buddhist meditation teaching. (Shaw 2006, 76.)

Even if the English word 'mindfulness', with its particular Western connotations (see Gethin 2011; Sun 2014), was first introduced as a translation of a Pāli term from the Theravāda canon, the concept signified by the term goes back to the early days of Buddhism, and it is essential to all the later main branches of Buddhism: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.[18]

As a historical concept, early Buddhism can be used specifically to designate a relatively unified canonical period before the rule of King Asoka (ca. 270–230 BCE) and the division of the early Buddhist community (*saṅgha*) into different schools with their particular doctrinal and practical positions (Collins 1990, 89; Kuan 2008, 2–3; Lamotte 1988, 517–21).[19] In his doctoral thesis Tse-fu Kuan has reconstructed and analysed the doctrinal concept of mindfulness (P. *sati*, S. *smṛti*) in early Buddhist texts through a comparative and critical analysis of particular Pāli *Nikāyas* of the Theravāda canon, together with their Sanskrit and Chinese counterparts from comparable early schools, which are 'just as important as the Pāli *Nikāyas* in understanding early Buddhism' (Kuan 2008, 3–4).

In the early text formulas or 'pericopes' the faculty of mindfulness (*satindrya*) and the right mindfulness of the eightfold path (*sammā sati*) can be defined as the accurate function of memory:

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18 Within these main Buddhist traditions a multitude of heterogeneous sub-traditions is to be found, divided on doctrinal, practical, historical, and geographical grounds (Samuels 1993; Skilling et al. 2012; Williams 2009), and in critical research differences are also found between teachers and students in direct teacher lineages (see e.g. Braun 2013; Bodhi 2011).

19 The chronology of early Indian Buddhism, and the possibility of making solid arguments about the characteristic doctrinal or practical positions of 'pre-Aśokan' Buddhism, is a much debated topic among scholars. For discussion and different viewpoints on these contested issues, see Cousins 1996; Gombrich 1996; Ruegg & Schmithausen 1990, 1–56; Williams 2009, 7–20.

And monks, what is the faculty of *sati*? Here, monks, a noble disciple is possessed of *sati*, endowed with supreme "mindfulness and discrimination" (*satinepakka*), is one who remembers, who recollects what was done and said long ago. (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* V 198, cited from Kuan 2008, 15.)

Nevertheless, the definition referring to the 'four establishments of mindfulness' (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is more common, and it can be held as the paradigmatic definition of mindfulness in the early texts:[20]

The four establishments of mindfulness. What four? Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body as a body[21] […] contemplating feelings as feelings […] contemplating mind as mind […] He dwells contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas*, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, in order to remove[22] covetousness and dejection concerning the world. (*Majjhima Nikāya* I 56; *Dīgha Nikāya* II 290, cited from Kuan 2008, 112.)

Satipaṭṭhāna refers to a comprehensive method of Buddhist practice, both in meditation and in daily life, in which all the physical and mental experiences of an individual are observed and reflected in the light of Buddha's teaching (*Dharma*) (Kuan 2008, 13–16, 104–138). The contemplation of impermanence (*anicca*) is especially emphasised (Kuan 2008, 119). The detailed instructions are mainly articulated in the different versions of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, where it is described as the comprehensive, direct, or only (*ekāyana*) path 'for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of suffering and dejection, for the attainment of the method', and 'for the realization of *Nibbāna*' (*Majjhima Nikāya* I 55-56; *Dīgha Nikāya* II 290, cited from Kuan 2008, 128).[23] *Satipaṭṭhāna* can sometimes be presented exclusively as a description of *vipassanā*

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20 See Kuan 2008, 140; Bodhi 2011, 23–7.

21 Possible translations also include 'the body in the body' (see Kuan 2008, 113; Hanh 2006, 10).

22 Also translated as 'having removed…' (Bodhi & Nāṇamoli 1995). Bhikkhu Sujato accredits both translations, and presents them as different stages of the practice (Sujato 2012).

23 However, it should be kept in mind that the relevance or widespread use of *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* as a 'practical guide' to meditation in premodern Asia can be questioned. According to Sharf, prior to the late 19th century and the work of Phra Acharn Mun (1870–1949) in Thailand, Dharmapaila (1864–1933) in Sri Lanka, and U Narada (1868–1955) and Ledi Sayadaw (1846-1923) in Burma this text was used more for the accumulation of merit through devotional recitation than for practical instructions for meditation in South Asian monastic settings (Sharf 1995a, 242). The discussion around *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* gives valuable insights into the continuities and discontinuities between early texts, canonical commentaries, and practical interpretations of modern Buddhist teachers in the postcolonial era.

meditation, in the manner of Plank and Olendzki, but several scholars and Theravāda authorities argue that this is mainly a modern interpretation[24] and *satipaṭṭhāna* should rather be seen as a set of comprehensive instructions for Buddhist practice, which covers both the deep meditative absorptions (*jhāna*) induced by 'one-pointed concentration' in serenity meditation (*samatha)* and the development of insight (*vipassanā*) in both meditation and daily life (Bodhi 2000b; 1515; Gethin 2015, 15–7; Nyanaponika 1962, 104; Kuan 2008, 104–31; Sujato 2012, 317–36).[25]

As the early canonical definition of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice implies, mindfulness holds a central place in the soteriological scheme of early Buddhist texts. According to Kuan, it 'serves as a general guideline or a fundamental principle that is to be applied to various practices, including *samatha* and *vipassana* meditation as well as daily activities' (Kuan 2008, 139), and it works through different functions of simple awareness, protective awareness, introspective awareness, and deliberately forming conceptions[26] (Kuan 2008, 41–56). In all these functions mindfulness conducts the cognitive processes of identification, recognition, conception, and memory in a 'wholesome' way in line with Buddhist ideals, and protects the practitioner from harmful mental states, habitual reactive tendencies, and subjective misconceptions based on the 'unwholesome' tendencies of desire, ill-will, and ignorance. Thus, with mindful awareness 'one can properly identify reality, abandon wrong views and maintain emotional equanimity, *upekkhā*' (Kuan 2008, 139). Through these cognitive and emotional transformations, achieved mainly through a combination of *samath*a and *vipassanā* practice,[27] it is possible to attain freedom from greed, hatred, and ignorance and to gain insight into the three characteristics of existence, i.e. impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and lack of self (*anattā*). In a fully developed form this process leads to the realisation of Nibbāna and the final liberation from the wheel of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) (Gethin 1998, 198–201; Gombrich 1996, 96–133; Kuan 2008, 13–40, 57–80, 139).

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24 Sujato connects it specifically to a particular modern sub-school called 'vipassana-doctrine' (*vipassanāvādā*) within the modern Theravāda tradition (Sujato 2012).

25 This is also the view expressed by Buddhaghosa in canonical Theravāda commentaries from 300–400 C.E. (Gethin 2015, 16).

26 By aiding the formation of beneficial conceptions and mental images, mindfulness also has a key role in loving-kindness (*mettā*) meditation, recollection of Buddha (*buddhānussati*), and different types of visualisation (Kuan 2008, 52–6).

27 The exact relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* practice in early Buddhism is a debated topic among scholars: for a discussion, see Bronkhorst 1993; Gethin 1998, 198–201; Gombrich 1996; King 1992.

Buddhist mindfulness: A general importance and a variety of interpretations

Theravāda tradition is based on one of the many early schools of Buddhism that developed after the pre-sectarian canonical period, when the Buddhist community (*saṅgha*) broke into various sub-schools because of differences concerning doctrine and the monastic code. The teachings of other early schools were not lost, but many positions were developed further within Mahāyāna and the later Vajrayāna traditions (Gethin 2015, 25–9; Williams 2009, 1–44). Although it is the oldest surviving Buddhist sub-school, Theravāda cannot be *equated* with early Buddhism or considered a shared root of later Buddhism. Similarly, while the Pāli canon of Theravāda is the oldest complete collection of canonical texts, it is not an unaltered representation of early Buddhism. Besides the inevitable errors of oral transmission, it contains editorial modifications to support particular doctrinal positions, and these have also affected the texts of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*[28] (Gethin 2001, 16–25; Gombrich 1996, 8–12; Kuan 2008, 3–8, 83–97, 105–12; Sujato 2012, 317–36). While the Pāli canon is an essential source of Buddhist thought, it would be highly misleading to claim uncritically that 'all Buddhists uphold the presentation of mindfulness in Pali, the oldest language extant that documents the original teachings of the Buddha' (Rapgay & Bystrinsky 2009, 152), or to use only Pāli texts as the source for an understanding of 'original' Buddhist mindfulness. For example, where Theravāda *Abhidhamma* classifies mindfulness as a universal wholesome factor which is only present in wholesome mental states and always connected to other beneficial qualities, canonical *Sarvastivāda* sources present it as a general mental quality that is always present in both skilful and unskilful states of mind. Yet another later school, *Yogācāra*, holds it as a feature of only some particular states of mind, both skilful and unskilful. Not surprisingly, these influential schools also differ in their precise definitions of mindfulness and in the possible range of its objects (Gethin 2015, 21–3).

    Instead of being an essentially Theravāda concept, mindfulness (with its closely associated attributes of awareness, wakefulness, clear view, equanimity, and concentration) is valued within all the 'main branches' of Buddhism: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna (Berzin 2002; Nagarjuna & Gyatso 1975; Gethin 1998, 161–201; Gethin 2015; Nyanaponika 1962, 194–204). In

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28 Among the influential contemporary Buddhist teachers, e.g. Thich Nhat Hanh uses both Pāli (Theravāda) and Chinese (Sarvastivāda/Mahāyāna) translations of *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in his treatise on mindfulness practice, and explicitly draws out the differences between them (Hanh 2006).

the long history of Buddhist thought and practice it has repeatedly been used to capture relevant mental functions and qualities in the various forms of Buddhist meditation. Besides Theravāda-based *vipassanā* and *samatha* practice, including loving-kindness meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*) and recollection practices (*anussati*), mindfulness is also an integral constituent in descriptions of Chinese Ch'an meditations and the visualisation of the early *Fa-hsiang* tradition, or the Tibetan *Dzogch'en* and *Mahāmudrā* practices, to name just some examples[29] Gethin 2015, 25–30; Harvey 2013, 318–75; Sharf 2014, 938–40; Shaw 2006, 109–67; 2009, 188–90; Sponberg 1986, 25–30). As a common characteristic within the diversity of practice methods, 'mindfulness seems always to be understood as holding of attention on something; in some practices this involves holding the attention on the breath or the emotion of friendliness; in others, the emphasis is on holding attention on the way mind works, that is, on the process of attention itself' (Gethin 2015, 31). Besides meditation, it can be seen as a crucial ingredient in devotional activities[30] and everyday life, 'whether one is chanting, studying, meditating, debating, or engaging in daily affairs' (Olendzki 2014, 68). Because of its general importance, mindfulness is sometimes presented as a distinct characteristic of the Buddhist tradition as a whole (Conze 1962, 51), and the significance of mindfulness in the Buddhist path is captured in many widely shared core doctrines as the seventh factor of the 'noble eightfold path',[31] the first 'factor of enlightenment' (*bojjhaṅga*), and one of the five 'spiritual faculties' *(indriya)* and 'spiritual powers' (*bala*) (Berzin 2002; Bodhi 2011, 24; Gethin 1998, 59–84; Harvey 2013, 321–324, 50–87; Nyanaponika 1962, 28–29).

While the general importance of mindfulness in Buddhist tradition seems undeniable, its conceptualisations and practical implications may still vary considerably between premodern and contemporary interpretations, between particular lineages and branches of Buddhism, and between teachers within particular lineages (See Bodhi 2011; Gethin 2015). Even if one were to describe solely canonical Theravāda notions, this diversity of interpretations must be acknowledged, as Bodhi emphasises:

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29 At the same time, some *particular* definitions of mindfulness may be criticised on doctrinal or practical grounds in certain approaches (Sharf 2014).

30 In many cases separating Buddhist 'meditation' from 'devotional practice' may prove difficult (see Sponberg 1986, 15–21).

31 The 'noble eightfold path' includes 'right' view, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. It leads 'to the cessation of the painful', as described in four 'Noble Truths' (*ariya-sacca*) (see e.g. Harvey 2013, 50–87).

> In certain types of mindfulness practice, conceptualization and discursive thought may be suspended in favour of non-conceptual observation, but there is little evidence in the Pāli Canon and its commentaries that mindfulness by its very nature is devoid of conceptualization. In some types of mindfulness practice emphasis falls on simple observation of what is occurring in the present, in others less so […] Mindfulness may be focused on a single point of observation, as in mindfulness of breathing, especially when developed for the purpose of attaining concentration (samādhi). But mindfulness may also be open and undirected, accessing whatever phenomena appear, especially when applied for the purpose of developing insight (vipassanā). Still other types of mindfulness practice make extensive use of conceptualization and discursive thought, but apply them in a different way than in ordinary thinking. (Bodhi 2011, 28.)

Beyond the context of meditation Bodhi describes 'right mindfulness' as the 'guarantor of the correct practice of all the other path factors', which helps to 'distinguish wholesome qualities from unwholesome ones, good deeds from bad deeds, beneficial states of mind from harmful states' (Bodhi 2011, 26). These descriptions clearly show the danger of overly narrow definitions and characterisations of mindfulness, and its importance in Buddhist life beyond the practice of meditation.

While simple uniform presentations may accurately describe *a type of Buddhist mindfulness in a particular historical lineage of practice*, they do not do justice to the variety of functions and qualities associated with mindfulness in the complexity of Buddhist thought and practice. When this plural and multifaceted nature of Buddhist tradition is acknowledged, there are concrete implications for the discussion concerning the Buddhist roots of contemporary non-religious mindfulness practice. Instead of Theravāda-based presentations or abstract notions of 'classical Buddhism', the discussion would benefit from a lineage-based approach, where particular Buddhist teachers influential in the development of a certain contemporary mindfulness approach are first located, and all historical or phenomenological analyses are based on their practical and doctrinal interpretations of mindfulness and meditation practice. This lineage-based approach avoids the one-sided simplicity of sectarian views, the abstract generalisations of essentialist interpretations, and the randomness of selective 'cherry-picking',[32] i.e. choosing suitable Buddhist quotations to support particular

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32 An expression used by Wilson in his critique of Walpola Rahula's eclectic presentation of Buddhism as essentially rational and humanistic religion (Wilson 2014, 26–7).

arguments or agendas. In the study of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction as the pioneering and most influential contemporary mindfulness-based approach, arguments should be based on the explicitly Buddhist sources in the life and work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, the developer of the MBSR method.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: Channels of Buddhist influence in the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn

Buddhist teachings reached Kabat-Zinn via various routes, including the Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna interpretations. He first studied Theravāda-based *vipassanā* meditation with Robert Hover and later with Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, and other teachers in the American Insight Meditation Society (IMS) (Gilpin 2008, 238; Kabat-Zinn 2005, xxi; Kabat-Zinn 2011, 287–9). Through direct teacher-student lineages, essential in the traditional transmission of Buddhist practice, the lines of practice taught by Hover, Kornfield, and Goldstein can be traced to the Burmese monk Mahasi Sayadaw, the Burmese lay-teacher U Ba Khin, and to Ajahn Chah, a monk from the forest tradition of Thailand.[33] Robert Hover studied with U Ba Khin and his student S.N. Goenka, Joseph Goldstein with Mahasi Saydaw and his students and also with U Ba Khin's student S.N. Goenka, and Jack Kornfield was a student of both Mahasi Sayadaw and Ajahn Chah (Braun 2013, 160–3; Fronsdal 1998, 166–7; Gilpin 2008, 238; Plank 2011, 94–8).[34] U Ba Khin's lineage can be traced further back to the Burmese Theravāda monk Ledi Sayadaw (Braun 2013, 156–9), Mahasi belongs to another Burmese tradition connected to the teachings of Mingun Jetawun Sayadaw (Houtman 1990, 198–201; Mahasi 1965, 34), and Ajahn Chah was influenced by Ajahn Mun, a respected teacher in the history of modern Thai Buddhism (Chah 2011, iii–iv; Sharf 1995a, 254). Besides learning from direct teacher-student relationships with Hover and IMS teachers, Kabat-Zinn was also inspired and informed by texts from the Pāli canon and contemporary Theravāda teachers. In his writings he refers to the canonical texts *Ānāpānasati Sutta* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 146), and identifies Nyanaponika Thera's

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33   All these teachers of meditation are important figures in the development of the modern postcolonial Theravāda tradition, and in the revival of *vipassanā* practice as a popular lay movement that started in Burma in the early 20th century and spread rapidly in South East Asia. While many practitioners emphasise the ancient roots and unbroken teacher-lineages of each practice method as the original teaching of Buddha, this view has been severely questioned by many scholars of Buddhism (see Braun 2013; Sharf 1995a).

34   S.N. Goenka does not consider his *vipassanā* practice as explicitly 'Buddhist' (Braun 2013, 159–160: Plank 2011, 96–105).

book *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (1962), together with Goldstein's *The Experience of Insight* (1976), as central sources in the development of MBSR and in his 'appreciation of the dharma' (Kabat-Zinn et al. 1985, 165; Kabat-Zinn 2011, 290; see also Gilpin 2008, 238).

Kabat-Zinn's affiliation to the Zen traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism is also based both on direct teacher-student relations and on written sources. He was a student and 'a Dharma teacher in training' under the Korean master Seung Sahn, and worked for a time as the director of the *Cambridge Zen Center* (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 286–7). Besides Sahn, Kabat-Zinn points to Philip Kapleau as influential, because of his participation in Kapleau's meditation retreats while studying in MIT, and he also names Suzuki Roshi and Thich Nhat Hanh as Mahāyāna teachers to whom he is 'greatly indebted' (Kabat-Zinn 2005, xxi). Among canonical Mahāyāna texts *Heart Sutra* (*Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*) is clearly studied in detail, and its central teachings on 'emptiness' (S. *śūnyatā*) are applied to the MBSR programme:

> [T]here was from the very beginning of MBSR an emphasis on non-duality and the non-instrumental dimension of practice, and thus, on non-doing, non-striving, not-knowing, non-attachment to outcomes, even to positive health outcomes, and on investigating beneath name and form and the world of appearances, as per the teachings of the Heart Sutra, which highlight the intrinsically empty nature of even the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and liberation itself. (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 292.)[35]

Among the texts of contemporary Mahāyāna teachers Kabat-Zinn presents Shunryū Suzuki's (Suzuki Roshi) book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1970) as one of the main written sources in the development of MBSR, and Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (1976) as another significant early influence (Kabat-Zinn 1982, 34; 1985, 165; 2011, 289–90). He also cites Seung Sahn's *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha* (1976) and Kapleau's *Three Pillars of Zen* (1965) (Kabat-Zinn 1982, 34). Through these teachers Kabat-Zinn was influenced by various Zen traditions within Mahāyāna Buddhism; Seung Sahn was ordained in the Korean *Chogye* school, a branch of Korean *Seon* rooted in Chinese Ch'an traditions, and later founded his own international *Kwan Um School of Zen* (Harvey 2013, 224–5, 435; Sahn 1997, xvii, 279); Shunryū Suzuki

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35   The principle or attitude of practising without any expectation of attainments or goals is also expressed in the texts of the influential modern Zen teachers (Sahn 1997, 136, 226–7; 2006, 17–9; Suzuki 1970, 49, 59–61; Hanh 2006, 122–3), and also by the Thai Theravāda master Ajahn Chah (Chah 2011, 33).

represents the Sōtō school of Japanese Zen (Suzuki 1970); Kapleau belongs to the Japanese *Sanbōkyōdan* tradition, which is a mixture of Zen teachings from the *Sōtō* and *Rinzai* schools (Kapleau 1967; Sharf 1995b, 417–26); Thich Nhat Hanh is affiliated with the Vietnamese *Thien* schools *Lieu Quan* and *Lam Te*, which both are descended from the *Lin-Chi* school[36] of the Chinese Ch'an tradition, and in 1966 founded his own school *Thiep Hien* (The Order of Interbeing) (Harvey 2013, 411–2; Hunt-Perry & Fine 2000, 36–40).

The Vajrayāna influences of Tibetan Buddhism are less articulated in Kabat-Zinn's work, but he names Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's *Meditation in Action* (1969) as an influential book at the time he developed MBSR (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 289–90), and mentions his practice with Tibetan *Dzogch'en*[37] teachers in more recent years (Gilpin 2008, 238). Trungpa is affiliated with both the *Kagyu* and *Nyingma* schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and *Dzogch'en* meditation is especially connected with the *Nyingma* school (Harvey 2013, 144, 437; Trungpa 1969).

This short review of the known Buddhist influences in Kabat-Zinn's life and work demonstrates his study of a broad spectrum of Buddhist thought and practice, and that his knowledge is *both theoretical and embodied* through the study of canonical and contemporary Buddhist texts and years of personal meditation practice with Buddhist teachers. Kabat-Zinn describes his own practice as 'a mix of Zen and vipassana elements, now leavened by Dzogchen', and the MBSR method as *vipassanā* practice 'with a Zen attitude' (Gilpin 2008, 238). In his inclusive view of Buddhism all three major traditions may provide useful insights for teaching mindfulness in the MBSR method, for 'we cannot follow a strict Theravadan approach, nor a strict Mahayana approach, nor a strict Vajrayana approach, although elements of all these great traditions and the sub-lineages within them are relevant and might inform how we, as a unique person with a unique dharma history, approach specific teaching moments' (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 299). This same inclusive approach is evident in his wider conceptualisation of mindfulness, rarely mentioned in any research:

> Naming what we were doing in the clinic mindfulness-based stress reduction raises a number of questions. One is the wisdom of using the word mindfulness intentionally as an umbrella term to describe our work and to link it explicitly with what I have always considered to be a universal dharma

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36 Also the origin of the Japanese *Rinzai* school (Harvey 2013, 231).
37 *Dzogch'en* is a meditation practice which emphasises 'pure awareness' and the inherent Buddha-nature within all beings (Harvey 2013, 359–61).

that is co-extensive, if not identical, with the teachings of the Buddha, the Buddhadharma. By 'umbrella term' I mean that it is used in certain contexts as a place-holder for the entire dharma, that it is meant to carry multiple meanings and traditions simultaneously, not in the service of finessing and confounding real differences, but as a potentially skillful means for bringing the streams of alive, embodied dharma understanding and of clinical medicine together. (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 290.)

In conclusion, there seems to be little justification for basing arguments about the Buddhist roots of MBSR and contemporary non-religious mindfulness solely on Theravāda doctrine and canonical Pāli sources. On the contrary, the reference to 'Heart Sūtra' or a past teacher position in the Zen centre shows a deep familiarity with Mahāyāna doctrine and its principles of practice. In addition, it is worth noting that a large part of Kabat-Zinn's Buddhist influences comes directly from contemporary teachers, who represent 'Buddhist modernism', referring to postcolonial 20th century interpretations of Buddhist practice which have been shaped in many ways through cultural contact and dialogue with Western values and worldviews (Braun 2013; McMahan 2008; Sharf 1995a).

Mindfulness and the doctrinal frames of meditation practice

Space does not allow a detailed analysis of the Buddhist influences on Kabat-Zinn's work and the MBSR method within this article. Instead, I will proceed by drawing attention to the connections between particular doctrinal positions, the objectives of meditation practice, and the interpretations of mindfulness to show some significant variations in thought and practice among the above-mentioned Buddhist teachers, and to highlight the fact that particular interpretations of Buddhist mindfulness are closely intertwined with specific doctrinal positions and practical approaches. [38]

While different Buddhist approaches share the aim of 'seeing things as they are', there are significant differences in their underlying assumptions concerning 'liberative insights' and the ultimate nature of reality. These assumptions, expressed in doctrinal positions, affect the conceptions of Buddhist mindfulness and objectives of meditation, as they '[put] into practice the Buddhist understanding of the world' (Gregory 1986, 6). The doctrinal

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38 This analysis is grounded in the views of particular teachers with self-proclaimed Theravāda or Mahāyāna affiliations. The aim is not to compare or to make claims about the Theravāda or Mahāyāna traditions as unitary entities or substantial categories.

foundations of both modern and premodern Theravāda practice are based on interpretations of the Pāli canon and later *Abhidhamma* commentaries, and the essential liberative insights uniformly emphasised by the influential modern Theravāda teachers Mahasi Saydaw, U Ba Khin, Ajahn Chah, and Nyanaponika Thera are realisations of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering or non-satisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and the lack of soul or permanent self (*anattā*) (Chah 2011, 252–3, 459; Nyanaponika 1962, 36, 43–4; Mahasi 1965, I, 9; 1971, 18–23, 31; Ba Khin 2012, 12–22). These 'characteristics of existence' are perceived through *vipassanā* practice, or the combination of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation, and especially in the Burmese approaches the progressive path to liberation is seen to follow the stages of 'purification' described in Buddhaghosa's canonical commentary *Visuddhimagga* (5th century C.E.) (Mahasi 1965, 1–26; Ba Khin 1961). In the approaches of Mahasi Saydaw and U Ba Khin the 'deconstructive' side of mindful observation and meditation is central, as liberative insights and the attainment of 'stream-entry' (understood as the direct experience of Nibbāna) follow directly from the deconstruction of sense experiences into their fundamental constituents (Sayadaw 1965, 20–1; 1971, 27–33; U Ba Khin 1991, 26–7). In the deep states of *vipassanā* meditation this process is described as reaching levels in which one 'comes to know even the momentary sub-consciousness in-between the processes of cognition' (Sayadaw 1971, 24), or where one can vividly see the body as a continual flux of 'sub-atomic particles' (*kalāpas*)[39] (Ba Khin 1991, 26; 2012, 15).

Among all the studied Theravāda teachers the frame of meditation practice is strongly marked by a worldview in which suffering is an inherent part of reality, and the ultimate goal is to find a 'supramundane' escape from the worldly existence, as summarised by U Ba Khin:

 [T]he disciple […] focuses his attention into his own self and, by introspective meditation, makes an analytical study of the nature […] He feels—and at times he also sees—the kalāpas in their true state. He begins to realize

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39 'A corporeal unit of matter in the *Abhidhamma* system, often equated to a subatomic particle in contemporary literature, primarily comprised of the four primary elements (*dhātus*)' (Braun 2013; 173). The direct observation of *kalāpas* is strongly emphasised in U Ba Khin's (and S.N. Goenka's) *vipassanā* method, but this objective is rarely found among other contemporary Theravāda teachers, and it can also be seen as a simplification of Ledi Saydaw's method (Braun 2013: 157–8).

that both rūpa[40] and nāma[41] are in constant change—impermanent and fleeting. As his power of concentration increases, the nature of the forces in him becomes more and more vivid. He can no longer get out of the impression that the pañca-kkhandhā, or five aggregates, are suffering, within the Law of Cause and Effect. He is now convinced that, in reality, all is suffering within and without, and there is no such thing as an ego. He longs for a state beyond suffering. So eventually going beyond the bounds of suffering, he moves from the mundane to the supramundane state and enters the stream of sotāpanna, the first of the four stages of the ariyas (Noble Ones). (Ba Khin 1991, 26–27.)

This view exhibits a sharp qualitative differentiation between immanent reality and transcendent 'supramundane' states (culminating in the experience of Nibbāna) in which mundane worldly existence is seen as highly unsatisfactory. This same dualism is also vividly expressed in Nyanaponika Thera's description of mundane existence as 'a revolting Wheel of Life and Suffering to which, like to an instrument of torture, beings are bound, and on which they are broken again and again' (Nyanaponika 1962, 51).

Doctrinal developments in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and especially in the *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* traditions, question these dualistic views of reality by emphasising the interconnected nature of all phenomena, and their fundamental 'emptiness' (S. *śūnyatā*) of independent or separate existence. According to these 'philosophical schools', all dualistic conceptual distinctions, including those between the phenomenal world (*saṃsāra*) and the unconditioned *Nibbāna*, can be seen as misleading or only 'conventionally' true in the light of 'absolute' understanding (Williams 2009, 63–102). This doctrine of emptiness, together with the '*tathāgatagarbha* tradition' of Mahāyāna thought, was adapted and developed further by the early traditions of Chinese Buddhism that gave rise to Ch'an (J. Zen) practice. In interpretations of '*tathāgatagarbha*' doctrine the empty nature of absolute reality can be understood as a pure, radiant, and beginningless 'inherent Buddha nature' of all existence, and, in distinction from the 'limited and partial' Theravāda and *Hīnayāna*[42] conceptions, all forms of existence can now be seen as manifestations of an intrinsically pure absolute nature (Gregory 1986,

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40 'Form, meaning physicality or materiality' (Braun 2013, 175). Footnote added by the author.
41 'Literally, name, meaning mind or mentality' (Braun 2013, 174). Footnote added by the author.
42 A pejorative name for those 'mainstream' Buddhist schools that did not accept the authority of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* (Harvey 2013, 112–113; Williams 2009, 268).

6–8). Consequently, the phenomenal world of mundane everyday experience could be revalidated and the beauty of the natural world appreciated in Chinese Ch'an forms of Buddhist thought and practice (Gregory 1986; Harvey 2013, 138–49; Stevensson 1986, 65–83; Williams 2009, 103–48).

Zen views on mindfulness and meditation: Thich Nhat Hanh, Seung Sahn, and Shunryū Suzuki

These different doctrinal emphases within the Mahāyāna tradition are clearly visible in the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, Seung Sahn, and Shunryū Suzuki, whose lineages go back to Chinese Ch'an Buddhism and its sub-schools.[43] In Hanh's interpretation of *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* the doctrine of interdependence and emptiness is essential, as 'a student of Buddhism who doesn't practice the mindful observation of interdependence[44] hasn't yet arrived at the quintessence of the Buddhist path' (Hanh 2006, 99):

> There is no dharma[45] which can exist apart from other dharmas, and that is why we say that the real nature of dharmas is emptiness […] With insight into emptiness, we'll go beyond concepts of 'it is' and 'it is not,' birth and death, one and many, coming and going, and we'll transcend the fear of birth and death. (Hanh 2006, 96–7.)

This non-dualistic metaphysical view and interpretative frame of experience is embodied and validated in the practice of meditation, which 'doesn't lead us to feel aversion for life´, but 'helps us see the preciousness of all that lives' (Hanh 2006, 56). For Hanh, the main emphasis in meditation is on 'the mindful observation of the interdependent and empty nature of things' (Hanh 2006, 98):

> Sit in the full or half lotus. Begin to regulate your breath. Contemplate the nature of emptiness in the assembly of the five aggregates: bodily form,

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43 For the traditions and sub-schools of Ch'an Buddhism, see Dumoulin 2005.

44 This is not only 'a Zen perspective', as is also reflected by Nyanaponika Thera's influential view that mindful observation 'is of importance not only for the analytic, i.e. dissecting and discriminating function of mind by which the elements of the object's make-up are revealed. It is also of great assistance to the equally important synthesis, i.e. for finding out the object's connections with, and relations to other things, its interaction with them, its conditioned and conditioning nature.' (Nyanaponika 1962, 35)

45 For Hanh, 'the objects of mind' and 'all that can be conceived of as existing'' comprised of 'the six sense organs, the six sense objects, and the six sense consciousnesses' (Hanh 2006, 94).

feeling, perception, mind functionings, and consciousness […] See that all transform, are impermanent and without self. The assembly of the five aggregates is like the assembly of all phenomena: all obey the law of inter-dependence […] See clearly that the five aggregates are without self and are empty, but that they are also wondrous, wondrous as is each phenomenon in the universe, wondrous as the life which is present everywhere […] Try to see by this contemplation that impermanence is a concept, nonself is a concept, emptiness is a concept […] You will see that emptiness is also empty, and that the ultimate reality of emptiness is no different from the ultimate reality of the five aggregates. (Hanh 1987, 92–93.)

Doctrinal views have a direct effect on the objectives of meditative practice, and they also affect the interpretations of mindfulness as a central concept frequently related to meditation. This becomes evident in Hanh's emphasis of non-duality as a characteristic of mindful observation:

Mindfulness is the observing mind, but it does not stand outside of the object of observation. It goes right into the object and becomes one with it. (Hanh 2006, 121.)

While we are fully aware of and observing deeply an object, the boundary between the subject who observes and the object being observed gradually dissolves, and the subject and object become one. […] That's why the Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness reminds us to be aware of the body in the body, the feelings in the feelings, the mind in the mind, and the objects of mind in the objects of mind. (Hanh 2006, 10.)[46]

These notions of the non-dual unity of sense-objects and the observing mind become understandable in the light of the underlying *Yogācāra* teachings concerning the nature of reality, consciousness, and 'emptiness', in which all phenomenal objects can be seen fundamentally as mental projections and cognitive constructions (Hanh 2006, 119–21; Harvey 2013, 127–38; Williams 2009, 84–102). As a quality of awareness and observation, mindfulness can also be closely associated with the radiance and purity of an awakened 'true mind', which is the inherent ultimate nature of every being in the light of the *Yogācāra* and *tathāgatagarbha* interpretations:

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46 Hanh's interpretation shows how details of translation can reflect doctrinal positions and vice versa. In this case both 'body as the body' and 'body in the body' are possible translations, as the original Pāli text includes both these connotations (see Kuan 2008, 113).

> Mindful observation brings out the light which exists in true mind, so that life can be revealed in its reality. In that light, confusion becomes understanding, wrong views become right views, mirages become reality, and deluded mind becomes true mind. (Hanh 2006, 122.)

In the texts of Shunryū Suzuki and Seung Sahn the presentations of reality also reflect the Mahāyāna emphases on non-duality and emptiness, and in Suzuki's texts especially the doctrine of the 'inherent Buddha-nature' is emphasised (Suzuki 1970; Sahn 1976; 1997; 2006). In Sahn's Seon approach these doctrinal views are realised mainly through *koan* practice[47] (Sahn 2006, 36–41), and in Suzuki's Sōtō Zen practice they are manifested in *zazen*, which includes both sitting meditation and everyday activities (Suzuki 1970, 118–24):

> In zazen practice we say your mind should be concentrated on your breathing, but the way to keep your mind on your breathing is to forget all about yourself and just to sit and feel your breathing […] If you continue this practice, eventually you will experience the true existence which comes from emptiness. (Suzuki 1970, 113.)

> When we ask what Buddha nature is, it vanishes; but when we just practice zazen, we have full understanding of it. The only way to understand Buddha nature is just to practice zazen, just to be here as we are. (Suzuki 1970, 131.)

For Suzuki, the most important thing is for a Zen student 'not to be dualistic' (Suzuki 1970, 21). This means that all analytical dichotomies creating separation from the oneness of reality, such as 'you and I', 'good and bad', or 'practice and enlightenment', should be avoided, as 'it is impossible to divide one whole existence into parts' (Suzuki 1970, 103, 114–21). This view also has implications for the definition of mindfulness. If Theravāda *Abhidhamma* interpretations can be more inclined towards an analytical formality in which 'a crossing of technical terms' should not exist in Buddhist terminology (Bodhi 2011, 27), Suzuki instead avoids dualistic distinctions and uses overlapping terms:

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47   A form of meditation practice that aims at non-dualistic and non-conceptual insights into the nature of absolute reality through the use of (often paradoxical) questions and symbolic narratives (see Sahn 2006, 36; Harvey 2013, 366–9).

We should accept things as they are without difficulty. Our mind should be soft and open enough to understand things as they are. When our thinking is soft, it is called imperturbable thinking. … This kind of thinking is always stable. It is called mindfulness. Thinking which is divided in many ways is not true thinking. Concentration should be present in our thinking. This is mindfulness… Your thinking should not be one-sided. We just think with our whole mind, and see things as they are without any effort. Just to see, and to be ready to see things with our whole mind, is zazen practice. If we are prepared for thinking, there is no need to make an effort to think. This is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is, at the same time, wisdom. By wisdom we do not mean some particular faculty or philosophy. It is the readiness of the mind that is wisdom […] So the point is to be ready for observing things, and to be ready for thinking. This is called emptiness of your mind. Emptiness is nothing but the practice of zazen. (Suzuki 1970, 115.)

Here again, the characteristics of mindfulness as a certain quality of thinking and observation are closely intertwined with the doctrine of emptiness and its realisation in *zazen* practice. In accordance with the emphasis on non-dualism, mindfulness is also characterised by an attitude of perfect acceptance of things 'as they are without difficulty', for 'this is the true understanding transmitted from Buddha to us' (Suzuki 1970, 120–1).

The question of the acceptance of every kind of mental state, including 'unwholesome' or 'unskilful' ones such as anger, without discrimination is complex, and there is variation in the different approaches to Buddhist practice. Whereas Suzuki's view can be seen as representing one end of the continuum, Bhikkhu Thanissaro's view, as cited by Plank,[48] represents the other. Nevertheless, there are many modern Buddhist teachers, affiliated to both Theravāda and Mahāyāna, who see patient acceptance and sheer mindful observation of unwholesome mental states such as anger and greed as a way to transform or extinguish these (see Hanh 2006, 81–3, 108; Mahasi 1971, 22–3, 27–8; Nyanaponika 1962, 42).

'World-affirming' interpretations of Buddhist thought and practice

Thich Nhat Hanh explicitly criticises the objective of a transcendent 'escape' from the cycle of rebirth, because there is no need ´to run away from our

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48   See page 93.

body or from the world' (Hanh 2006, 56–61; 122–4).[49] As part of this world-affirming orientation, it is possible to appreciate aesthetic experiences and sense-based pleasures as positive forces on the Buddhist path, when enjoyed without attachment:

> Everything is impermanent. Everything is in a temporary form. Nevertheless, there are many wondrous phenomena in nature that can refresh and heal us. If we can be in contact with them, we will receive their healing benefits. If peace and joy are in our hearts, we will gradually bring more peace and joy to the world […] The blue sky, the white clouds, the gentle breezes […] free speech, good schools for children, beautiful flowers, and good health – these are the positive ingredients of peace and happiness. (Hahn 2006, 115.)

Similarly, Suzuki states that it is not a Buddhist view 'to expect something outside this world' (Suzuki 1970, 103), and he describes 'enlightenment' as the strength and deep meaningfulness in life arising from the realisation that 'everything is just a flashing into the vast universe' (Suzuki 1970, 107). The goal of practice does not lie in extraordinary states or experiences, but 'when your practice is calm and ordinary, everyday life itself is enlightenment' (Suzuki 1970, 59). For Suzuki, a certain kind of attachment to beauty can even be presented as a manifestation of the Buddha nature in human beings:

> Dogen-zenji said, 'Although everything has Buddha nature, we love flow-ers, and we do not care for weeds.' This is true of human nature. But that we are attached to some beauty is itself Buddha's activity. That we do not care for weeds is also Buddha's activity. We should know that. If you know that, it is all right to attach to something. If it is Buddha's attachment, that is non-attachment. (Suzuki 1970, 119.)

These 'world-affirming' interpretations of Buddhist teachings affect the conceptualisations of mindfulness, because the unattached appreciation and enjoyment of sense experiences, the physical body, and worldly joy may now be considered as essential elements of the 'right mindfulness' contributing to individual and collective happiness:

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49 These views can be seen as a reflection of Hanh's commitment to socially 'engaged Bud-dhism', but at the same time the whole idea of 'engaged Buddhism' can be seen as a logical outcome of doctrinal interpretations, where 'individual' suffering or unhappiness cannot be separated from the suffering of 'others' at both the social and environmental levels (see Queen, 2000).

> To be able to breathe can be a great source of real happiness […] To be able
> to see beautiful colors and forms is happiness […] Having sound and healthy
> limbs to be able to run and jump, living in an atmosphere of freedom, not
> being separated from our family – all these things and thousands more can
> be elements of happiness […] Awareness of these precious elements of hap-
> piness is itself the practice of Right Mindfulness. (Hanh 2006, 70.)

These views of the explicit appreciation of worldly life and sense-based
enjoyment seem to stand in sharp contrast with some conceptions found in
the early Buddhist texts, in which 'whatever in the world has an agreeable
and pleasing nature is called a thorn in the Noble One's Discipline' (*Saṃyutta
Nikāya* IV 189, cited from Kuan 2008), or with modern Theravāda teachers
such as Bhikkhu Thanissaro[50] and Mahasi Sayadaw, who may present any
'sensual delight' as a distraction and hindrance to Buddhist practice (Mahasi
1965, 7). Nevertheless, they are authentic expressions of Buddhist thought,
based on the Mahāyāna Sūtras[51] and long traditions of doctrine and prac-
tice, displaying the wide variety of orientations and interpretations found
within 'Buddhism' as a whole.

A remark on the relationship of soteriological goals and practical benefits in Buddhist practice

While the fundamental frames of meditation practice are tied to various
soteriological goals and doctrinal ideals, the judging of practical worldly
benefits, and especially of psychological well-being, as 'extra-Buddhist
goals' (McMahan 2008, 57; Plank 2011, 187; 2014a, 46–7) is not necessarily
entirely justified. Buddhism has always spread to new geographical and
cultural areas through its ability to provide practical benefits at both societal
and individual levels (Reader & Tanabe 1998; Wilson 2014, 4–6, 142), and
the modern history of Buddhist meditation is no exception (Braun 2013,
165; Sharf 1995a, 258–9; Wilson 2014, 24–9, 76–8, 109–12). Among modern
Theravāda teachers the practical everyday benefits of mindfulness and
meditation practice are usually seen as auxiliary gains on the way to the
ultimate goal, as presented by Nyanaponika Thera (Nyanaponika 1962, 7,
49–50), Ajahn Chah (Chah 2011, 219), and U Ba Khin (for whom the un-

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50 See page 93.
51 Such as *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (Hanh 1990, 94–6,
120–30; Suzuki 1970, 38, 48, 113).

limited healing potential of meditation still includes even the eradication of radioactive poisons) (Ba Khin 1991, 85–6). But for Thich Nhat Hanh, the practical benefits of health and well-being have a central role instead. Here, soteriological liberation and the psychological healing of anxiety, guilt, childhood traumas, and past mistreatments are two sides of the same process, because different psychological conditions are manifestations of karmic attachments and internal mental formations (S. *saṃyojana*) which can be brought to awareness and transformed through the practice of meditation and mindfulness (Hanh 2006, 99–112). For Hanh, worldly benefits are not merely the auxiliary by-products of Buddhist practice, but the essential ingredients and manifestations of liberation, as the title of his commentary on *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Transformation & Healing* implies (Hanh 2006, 112–7).

Summary and conclusions

In the light of historical and textual research it seems unfounded to hold the Theravāda tradition as the original historical context of mindfulness practice or as an authoritative form of Buddhism. Nor, based on the analysis of diverse Buddhist influences in the life and work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, should it be presented as the exclusive Buddhist source of the MBSR programme. When presentations of Buddhist mindfulness are based solely on Theravāda sources, whether explicitly or by reference to 'classical Buddhism', they give a limited and oversimplified picture of Buddhist doctrine and practice, and distort all further comparisons between Buddhist mindfulness and contemporary forms of non-religious mindfulness practice. Consequently, most of the characterisations of Buddhist mindfulness and their claimed key differences from contemporary Western or non-religious forms of mindfulness as presented in a number of previous studies on the subject seem valid only from particular Theravāda perspectives, or if the concept of 'traditional' or 'classical' Buddhism is used as a synonym for the Theravāda tradition.

Plank's emphasis on the deconstructive aspects of mindfulness awareness, her interpretation of related key concepts, and the equation of mindfulness (and *satipaṭṭhāna* practice) with *vipassanā* meditation by both Plank and Olendzki constitute an accurate presentation of a particular interpretative tradition of mindfulness and meditation practice associated especially with certain modern Burmese Theravāda teachers. However, historical examination shows that this description should not be taken as a standard or 'original' model of Buddhist mindfulness. Rather, it may be seen as specific or idiosyncratic even within the Theravāda canon. Similarly, the claim of the

inseparable connection between mindfulness and other 'wholesome' and beneficial mental states is based solely on Theravāda *Abhidhamma*, and it does not do justice to the formulations of the *Sarvastivāda* or *Yogācāra* schools which serve as the canonical basis for many Mahāyāna interpretations.

Both Olendzki and Wilson seem to over-emphasise mindfulness practice as *a type of meditation – vipassanā* with a 'moving concentration', according to Olendzki, and a combination of both *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation (but excluding visualisations), according to Wilson. However, the historical presentations of mindfulness seem to be more indicative of a general principle or mental function relevant in a range of Buddhist meditative practices, and also in devotional activities and daily practice. The concept of mindfulness seems to be closely linked to the ability to keep in mind the teachings and viewpoints of a particular Buddhist tradition, to reflect all subjective experiences and specific situations through these teachings, and to act on the basis of these reflections, which form the basis for the Buddhist identity and way of life[52]. This general relevance of mindfulness inevitably challenges Wilson's idealisation of premodern Asian Buddhist mindfulness practice as 'clearly associated with monastic concerns' and essentially 'a part of a celibate, renunciatory, home-leaving monastic path'.

Even if we focus only on the specific functions of mindfulness in meditation, it should not be associated exclusively with a particular type of concentration or practice method. Instead, it can be seen more as a quality of introspective or metacognitive awareness of the present moment experience which 'guards the mind' from distractions, however these are interpreted in a particular approach. This characteristic functioning of mindfulness in meditation comes close to the root meaning of *sati* as 'remembering', because the practitioner must remember to keep in mind the object of meditation again and again (Gethin 2011, 270). Through these aspects mindfulness is an elementary part of all attention-regulation and the purposeful development of any type of sustained concentration, explaining its significance in a wide variety of meditative practices in the history of Buddhism.

This brief examination of the doctrinal views of the various Buddhist teachers who have influenced Jon Kabat-Zinn and the development of the MBSR method shows how different the underlying views of reality and 'liberation' can be within Buddhism, and how these ultimate frames of interpretation have a significant impact on the aims of meditative practice and the particular conceptualisation of mindfulness. Based on the analysis

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52   See also Gethin 2011, 270–1.

I have presented, I am led to conclude that aiming for the practical benefits of psychological well-being, enjoying sense experiences and the physical body with appreciation, accepting difficult mental states as they are (without acting on them), and the practice of meditation with the attitude of 'non-striving' can all be elements of Buddhist mindfulness and meditative practice as presented in the texts of modern Buddhist teachers. Thus, they cannot be held as definitive criteria for contrasting contemporary non-religious mindfulness approaches to Buddhist practice in any generally obvious sense.[53] Recognising various 'world-affirming' traditions and viewpoints in the history of Buddhist thought and practice and among influential modern teachers is important because it questions all simple characterisations of Buddhist meditation as invariably 'other-worldly' oriented, or categorically denying the possibility for appreciation of worldly life and sensual experiences. The 'Americanisation' of Buddhist practice, adaptations to the Western individualistic ethos, and features of the 'Buddhist modernism' already found in postcolonial Asia have certainly played a significant part in the 'world-affirming' views of many contemporary teachers and practitioners of meditation (both Buddhist and non-Buddhist) (Braun 2013; Fronsdal 1998; McMahan 2008; Wilson 2014). Still, these orientations can be seen as already having roots in the doctrinal changes of the early Mahāyāna tradition and their practical implications, especially in the Chinese Ch'an lineages of Buddhist practice (Gregory 1986; Harvey 2013, 138–149; Williams 2009).

Discussion

According to some historians of religion, the pluralism within Buddhism is so rich 'that it seems better to regard the term 'Buddhism' as describing a family of religions, each with its own integrity, much as 'monotheism' covers a family of religions that are related but so inherently different that they cannot be reduced to a common core' (Robinson et al. 2005, xxi).[54] While separating Buddhist tradition into three different religions may go too far in 'downplaying the continuities and the many connections in the vast network

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53 However, this does not mean that there are no significant differences between Buddhist practice and contemporary therapeutic mindfulness approaches, but only that the issue is more complex than often presented.

54 Robinson et al. delineate three separate Buddhist religions in the living traditions of Buddhism in the modern world: the Theravāda tradition centred on the Pāli canon; the East Asian tradition centred on the Chinese canon; and the Tibetan tradition centred on the Tibetan canon (Robinson et al. 2005, xxi).

of Buddhism' (Harvey 2013, 5), it shows the problems inherent in presenting Buddhism as a unitary phenomenon, or giving an authoritative position to some particular sub-tradition as 'the Buddhist view' on doctrinal or practical issues. In previous studies on the historical Buddhist roots of contemporary non-religious mindfulness practice explicit Theravāda-based presentations of Buddhist mindfulness may be seen as exemplifying 'sectarian' approaches which present the formulations of one Buddhist sub-tradition as the relevant, authentic, or authoritative Buddhist position. In turn, the presentations of 'classical Buddhism' and 'classical mindfulness training' fall prey to the fallacy of essentialism, which occurs 'when we take a single name or a naming expression and assume that it must refer to one unified phenomenon', instead of looking behind linguistic unities and seeing them as 'simply constructions' (Williams 2009, 2–3).

Besides being relevant for historical research on Buddhism, the critique of essentialism is also emphasised in contemporary discussion concerning the 'world religions paradigm' within the study of religion (see Fitzgerald 1999; King 1999; Masuzawa 2005; Smith 1982; Owen 2011; Taira 2013). Here, it is directed towards presentations of religion that are 'subjective (biased) and unempirical (based on essentialisms rather than ethnographic and historical data)' (Owen 2011, 253–4), and part of a model which 'conceptualises religious ideas and practice as being configured by a series of major religious systems that can be clearly identified as having discrete characteristics' (Suthren Hirst and Zavos 2005, 5, cited from Owen 2011, 254). Because of the long history of textual bias in academic research, the 'true' form of religions is often idealised as abstractions to be found in authoritative texts, instead of being presented as the living expressions of actual people.[55] As a result, the model of world religions often 'hierarchizes the diverse traditions within each broadly defined religion […], and marginalizes localized expressions' (Owen 2011, 255). In the case of Buddhism 'authentic' tradition often becomes located in canonical texts, not in the lives or actions of living Buddhist people (King 1999, 150), and 'usually the earliest form, such as the Buddhism of the Pāli texts, is presented as the norm, while later forms, such as Mahāyāna Buddhism, may be excluded altogether or only given a brief overview' (Owen 2011, 255). The idea that Theravāda Buddhism is closer to the Buddha's original teaching and a purer form of Buddhism, which already has a long history in academic research, persists even today, at the expense of other Buddhist traditions (King 1999, 159).

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55 This observation is highly relevant in discussion concerning the 'true' objectives of Buddhist meditation.

The essentialist presentations of 'classical' Buddhism, with their emphasis on Theravāda sources and canonical Pāli texts, and the sectarian views of Theravāda as the original religious context of mindfulness practice, seem to follow these questionable historical patterns of academic research quite closely. As it is, there are grounds for some intriguing historical comparisons, based on King's description of 'Orientalist' ideological agendas in the early academic 'discovery of Buddhism':

> Locating the essence of 'Buddhism' in certain 'canonical' texts, of course, allows the Orientalist to maintain the authority to speak about the 'true' nature of Buddhism, abstractly conceived. Such ahistorical constructs can then be contrasted with the corrupt and decadent practices of contemporary Asian Buddhists by a normative appeal to the purity of the 'original texts'. (King 1999, 146.)

It seems that a similar approach may be found in contemporary discussion when one-sided presentations of 'original' or 'traditional' Buddhism serve to highlight critical differences or sharp contrasts between Buddhist practice and contemporary non-religious mindfulness,[56] and between 'traditional Asian' and contemporary Western forms of practice. Abstract generalisations may also help to present complicated historical processes in a simplified unilinear way. Taken together, these different forms of one-sidedness, whether based on a lack of sensitivity towards the plural and multifaceted nature of Buddhist tradition or on the practical challenges of writing from multifocal viewpoints, contribute to an oversimplified picture of the Buddhist concept and practice of mindfulness. To balance this bias in research growing sensitivity to the richness of variation within the family of traditions knowns as 'Buddhism' and to the significant role of individual Buddhist 'tradition-bearers' is needed, as Paul Williams emphasises:

> There is a Tibetan saying that just as every valley has its own language so every teacher has his own doctrine. This is an exaggeration on both counts, but it does indicate the diversity to be found within Buddhism and the important role of a teacher in mediating a received tradition and adapting it to the needs, the personal transformation, of the pupil. This diversity prevents, or strongly hinders, generalizations about Buddhism as a whole. (Williams 2009, 1.)

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56 This approach also represents the 'official' strategy of S.N. Goenka's *vipassanā* movement, as posited by its representatives within academic research (Plank 2011, 229–30).

As a way to move beyond the fallacies of various sectarian and essential-ist approaches, academic research on the Buddhist roots of the MBSR programme and other forms of contemporary non-religious mindfulness practice would benefit from a lineage-based approach, where possible his-torical continuities and phenomenological similarities are examined at the level of particular relevant teachers and their lineages of doctrine and prac-tice. Similarly, the particular approach among various mindfulness-based therapeutic interventions, such as MBCT or DBT, should also always be explicitly articulated, as they each vary in their methods, aims, vocabularies, and backgrounds in terms of possible Buddhist influences (see Gilpin 2008; Plank 2011). With a lineage-based approach, future research can accurately localise the Buddhist influences of each method or programme, and make solid arguments on possible historical continuities and phenomenological similarities. Without this clear articulation and localisation of research ob-jects, attempts to present 'critical differences between classical and modern versions of mindfulness' (Rapgay & Bystrinsky 2009) or 'how mindfulness may be understood and developed in the traditional context of classical Buddhist practice' (Olendzki 2005) are bound to give abstract, arbitrary, and simplified views on the subject matter.

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Temenos Lecture 2015

Death, the Gothic, and popular music: Some reflections on why popular music matters

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In my recent book, *Music and Mortality* (2015), I began with the following quotation from a *memento mori* plaque in Ely Cathedral, England. They are the words of a dead person, a skeleton, addressing visitors to the cathedral:

> All you that do this place pass bye,
> Remember death for you will dye.
> As you are now even so was I,
> And as I am so shall you be.

I pointed out that in previous centuries *memento mori* exhortations, while popular, were hardly necessary. One's mortality was all too obvious. However, things are rather different in modern Western societies. Modernity has made the Grim Reaper *persona non grata*. Death and decay are sequestered in hospitals, hospices, mortuaries, and cemeteries, and much cultural energy is expended developing strategies to obscure and to sanitise the brutal facts of mortality. But still, we are, of course, haunted by the inevitability of death. How could we not be?

I

Researching the issues discussed in *Music and Mortality*, some of which I am going to address in this lecture, has led to me thinking quite differently about my life, about my family, and about my work—about what matters and also about what really doesn't matter. Certainly, as I get older and as I reflect on the fact that most of my life is behind me and less than I like to think is probably in front of me, certain things come into focus and others drop out of focus. Again, as I mentioned in the Introduction to *Music and Mortality*, music has been very important to me in this respect. For example, the title of George Harrison's album *All Things Must Pass* (1970) is increas-

ingly a *memento mori* challenge to me. While the words themselves struck me as profound when I first bought the album in the mid-1970s, now the music itself immediately draws me into reflection on the passing of days and the fact that 'there'll come a time when all of us must leave here.' ('Art of Dying', 1970) Of course, it's not the only album that has had this effect on me and you will also, no doubt, be able to think of music that has a particular meaning for you—a particular existential impact. Numerous albums, songs, melodies, and even musical phrases transport us to significant moments in our past and, as such, to reflection on the passing of time.

While reflection on death is, of course, of ultimate significance to us as mortals, as beings who will have to experience it at some point in our lives, only the unwell and the foolish will spend much time thinking about the temporary nature of personal existence and the short time we have to experience life. Indeed, the contemplation of one's own impermanence is probably not possible for extended periods of time without becoming un-healthily morbid. As the psychiatrist Robert Wilkins has commented, 'the only reason that we are able to lead productive lives is because most of us, for most of the time, ward off such anxieties by marshalling our defence mechanisms. Psychodynamic forces such as denial and repression push down the disturbing reality of our own mortality into the eddying nether regions of our subconscious minds' (1990, 13). This, of course, is an important point. While we quite naturally avoid serious reflection on the extinction of the self, nevertheless, its inevitability haunts us and fascinates us. We cannot but think of the terminus towards which we are progressing and which others have reached. As such, it needs to be dealt with. We do this in a number of ways that surface in social institutions and culture. As Zygmunt Bauman has argued, 'culture is the sediment of the ongoing attempt *to make living with the awareness of mortality liveable*' (quoted in Jacobsen 2011, 382). That is to say, much of the cultural work we do as humans and the value we place on that work relate to our awareness that life is short. Because we haven't got much time, the time we have is precious and what we do in it is significant. There is, moreover, a niggling need to address the suspicion that existence is absurd. There is, as Albert Camus discussed (1975), a legitimate and necessary question as to whether life has meaning. In short, mortality raises a number of important issues, which are routinely addressed in hu-man culture, particularly in religion. This lecture is simply intended to be a look at mortality through the lens of popular music culture.

While the same ideas are articulated in more or less profound ways throughout the arts, my argument is that because of its peculiar ability

to create 'affective space' and, as such, to function as a 'soundtrack to our lives', popular music is a particularly powerful medium for drawing us into reflection on mortality. That is to say, it is often, whether we realise it or not, more than simply 'entertainment'. For many people, popular music is central to the construction of their identities, central to their sense of self, central to their wellbeing, and therefore central to their social relations. Consequently, it has become a key feature of the everyday personal lives of most people (see Hesmondhalgh 2013). As such, it constitutes one of the principal ways in which we make living with the awareness of mortality bearable.

Moreover, because popular music is typically rooted within the liminal cultures of youth, within which death tends to be viewed at a distance, it often confronts the taboos of mortality with an uncompromising explicitness censured elsewhere in Western societies. Indeed, to a large extent, I want to suggest that it is helpful to understand popular music's treatment of mortality in terms of the Gothic, in that terror is viewed at a remove. More particularly, there is something of Edmund Burke's notion of the sublime here, in that death is viewed at a distance and, as such, it engenders a frisson of dread without immediate risk. From a position of safety the listener can emotionally 'delight' in the excitement of contemplating the terror of death. For Burke, of course, 'terror is the ruling principle of the sublime' (1998, 54). However, in Burkean aesthetics terror and the sublime are not synonymous. That is to say, if we are actually threatened by that which is terrifying, we are unable to appreciate it aesthetically. Actual terror simply overwhelms our judgement and, as such, it is 'incapable of giving any delight whatsoever', it being 'simply terrible'. This is the position of the individual threatened with immediate annihilation. However, and this is key, 'at certain distances, and with certain modifications', terrifying events and objects 'are delightful' (Burke 1998, 86). Indeed, 'delightful horror' is, he suggests, 'the most genuine effect and truest test of the sublime' (Burke 1998, 24). For Burke, 'delight' is not 'pleasure' as such, but rather it is the experience of being removed from the awfulness of the 'terror'. This brings us close to Julia Kristeva's notion of 'abjection', in that there is something both alluring and repellent about death and decay—but the allure can only be fully experienced at a distance. The point here is that this obsession with mortal vulnerability, which is central to the Gothic imagination, is comparable to the youthful treatment of mortality in popular music. As such, while many of the discourses of depression, decay, and death in popular music might (often with good reason) worry those of us who are older and concerned about the wellbeing of our children and the cultures shaping their minds,

they remain basic to the human condition. They can, therefore, function as healthy *memento mori* in societies that taboo the fundamental fact of existence that 'all things must pass'. In other words, as with eighteenth century English Graveyard poetry (see Parisot 2013) or cultural events and celebrations focused on death, such as the Day of the Dead in Mexico, popular music can provide a space within which we are able to reflect on mortality and, as such, come to terms with the inevitability of death and its implications. Indeed, because popular music is so entwined with the subjective lives of listeners, it is able to create spaces in everyday life within which they can express and think about what matters most to them. From reflection on oppression and aggression within hip hop, extreme metal, and hardcore to meditations on depression and suicide within black metal, darkwave, and Goth music, spaces are created within which the often disturbing facts of mortality can be thought about and come to terms with. Again, this is important cultural work.

II

No tradition or sensibility has done more to inspire popular reflection on mortality than the Gothic. From Horace Walpole's 1764 novelette *The Castle of Otranto* through to Gothic rock and the perennial interest in vampirism, imaginations have been drawn to boundary-crossing themes, ambivalent discourses, perverse religion, occult knowledge, hauntings, revenants, dark secrets, profane sex, death, decay, and Romantic constructions of the past. Peering through the cracks of the everyday into the dark recesses of human experience, Gothic occulture is rooted in liminality, transgression, and the impure sacred. 'Gothic reveals the shadow within, the skull beneath the skin.' (Mintz 2012, 1) From its inception the Gothic has, as Patrick McGrath comments, 'disturbed and subverted all that is certain, singular, rational, balanced, established. Its *raison d'être* is transgression. It identifies limits so as to assault them.' (1997, 157-158) As such, it is hardly surprising to find it flourishing in the liminal spaces of popular music culture, encouraging reflection on death and decay. Of course, as I've already suggested, this is typically done at a distance. Articulated within postsecular youth cultures, it offers a safe approach to the sublime ideas and experiences that disturb us. As such, it can be understood in terms of a largely modern strategy for dealing with mortality. Drawing on religious strategies that have lost much of their theological cogency and cultural weight, it suggests that death is not final. Death is a permeable boundary, a state from which one can re-

turn. It is not the terminus of the self. Within much 'Gothic popular music', therefore, the graveyard, the funereal, and decay are treated as fashionable interests for the acquisition of subcultural capital by those who give themselves, if only sartorially, to darkness: 'The bats have left the bell tower/ The victims have been bled/ Red velvet lines the black box/ Bela Lugosi's dead/ Undead, Undead, Undead.' While Bauhaus's 1979 genre-defining classic, 'Bela Lugosi's Dead', is typical of a fashionable, 'Goth' sensibility in its construction of immortality, we should not think that it is, therefore, trivial or wholly detached from the brutal reality of death and decay. It is not. However, because it is an approach that is allied to religious strategies for denying the finality of death and coping with mortality, it can be framed theoretically in terms of the postsecular.

Now, while this lecture is organised around 'the Gothic', my interests are rather broader than 'Goth' music and subcultures. That is to say, I am concerned *both* with the Romantic articulation of death and decay in popular music *and also*, perhaps more significantly, with the way music *per se* is able to recover the past, to haunt the present, to summon revenants, and to awaken the undead in our memories. Of course, within music much of this framing is done using the standard genre conventions with which academics and fans are frequently preoccupied: graveyards, Victoriana, haunted houses, vampires, moonlight, mist, gloom, the flamboyant funereal, neo-medievalism, and the antique futurism of steampunk. However, the point to keep in mind—as far as this lecture is concerned— is that the Gothic is a lens through which to look at the way popular music is able to create 'affective spaces' within which memories are evoked and we are drawn into reflecting on mortality in a way that conflates loss and longing, life and death, mortality and immortality. As Isabella van Elferen puts it, 'Gothic forces its readers, viewers, and listeners to identify the ghosts that haunt them…' (2012, 15). This is essentially what I mean when I refer to 'popular music Gothic' (as opposed to 'Gothic popular music'/ 'Goth music'). Although I want to explore a number of ideas, particularly 'the uncanny', I want to argue that popular music Gothic is able to function as a *memento mori*. It coerces us, as listeners, in gentle and brutal ways, to reflect on the passing of time and on the inevitability of personal extinction—although, again, it does this in a way that protects us from the full impact of the awareness of death.

III

So, what do I mean by 'the uncanny'? To return to Bauman's helpful analysis of mortality, 'culture is precisely about *transcendence*, about *going beyond* what is given and found before the creative imagination of culture set to work; culture is after that permanence and durability which life, by itself, so sorely misses. But death (more exactly, the awareness of mortality) is the ultimate condition of cultural creativity as such. It makes permanence into a task, into an urgent task, into a paramount task…' (1992, 4) The Gothic use of the uncanny can be understood as an attempt at this task. It is a cultural strategy for dealing with our impermanence, for transgressing the inevitability of that final boundary between being and nothingness. As with religion, it introduces us to intimations of transcendence and the beyond. If death is, to quote Bauman again, 'a *ghost* haunting the *totality* of life' (quoted in Jacobsen 2011, 386), then Gothic exorcises or, at least, tames that ghost with intimations of the self's permanence. It is this, I want to suggest, that helps us to understand the social and cultural significance of the uncanny, which has become a useful and popular lens through which to read the Gothic (see Punter 2007, 129-36) and which is so powerfully evoked by sound.

Drawing on Freud's well-known 1919 essay, 'The Uncanny' (2003, 121-62), the concept has become a broad, flexible, and increasingly popular one in contemporary cultural theory (see ffytche 2012, 63-81). There is no doubt, says Freud, that the uncanny (*das unheimliche*—'unhomely') 'belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread' (2003, 123). These feelings are unnerving because they emerge from a confluence of the familiar and unfamiliar. More specifically, we experience the uncanny when that which is familiar suddenly becomes unfamiliar. 'The uncanny is ghostly', says Nicholas Royle. 'It is concerned with the strange, weird and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural. The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced... The uncanny is a crisis of the proper…' (Royle 2003, 1). Such notions, of course, are those of enchanted worlds. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Freud understood this common feeling of the uncanny in terms of 'infantile complexes which have been repressed, or when primitive beliefs are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed' (Freud 2003, 149). That is to say, the uncanny identifies dark and primal fears that lie not far below the surface, those insecurities regarding the impermanence of the self. As such, we are encouraged to move in the direction of discourses that address that

impermanence—discourses of the supernatural. The uncanny tends to concern, says Freud, 'anything to do with death, dead bodies, revenants, spirits and ghosts', for 'in hardly any other sphere has our thinking and feeling changed so little since primitive times or the old been so well preserved, under a thin veneer, as in our relation to death' (2003, 148).

The uncanny is primarily used in Gothic discourse as a strategy of defamiliarization through the creation of disturbing affective spaces. Imagine, for example, that you are lying in bed at night, relaxing in the darkness, thinking about the day and surrounded by everything that is homely and familiar to you. Gradually, the silence is disturbed by the faint sound of steady breathing. Barely audible though the sound is, it seems to fill the room. A familiar space has been defamiliarized, the everyday is haunted, the homely is made *unheimlich*. Again, my point is simply that the use of the uncanny, while frightening, also functions as a life strategy for dealing with mortality; the Gothic re-enchants death and the dead through its use of the uncanny. Death cannot be the end of the self, because selves from the past are revealed in the present. The whisper of air, the creak on the stair, the metronomic tick of a clock marking the passing of time, the barely heard voices, both defamiliarize and also enchant. As such, the boundary between the known and the unknown is eroded. Hence, on the one hand, the Gothic evocation of the uncanny functions very directly as a *memento mori*, in that it exposes the fear of death, which is a more or less repressed part of our mental furniture. That which is hidden away in our culture, locked deep in our unconscious, is exposed. We are brought face to face with mortality: the bleak graveyard, the cemetery statues of mourning angels, the house haunted with memories of the departed. On the other hand, peering through the cracks of the everyday into unfamiliar haunted spaces, the Gothic introduces us to the possibility of immortality. The very revenant itself, that which frightens and disturbs, also meets our fear of mortality with the suggestion of immortality. It is that intimation of the permanence of the self in Gothic that functions so effectively as a modern strategy for dealing with the self's impermanence.

IV

With all that in mind, I want us to think more closely about music as an invisible, spectral manipulator of emotion, which resurrects memories and creates mood. As van Elferen says, music's 'capacity to stretch time and space and to dissolve subjectivity ties in with Gothic's distortions of reality

and the self, and music-inducted transgression is an important factor in the genre's performativity'. In particular, she says, 'the immersion in Gothic music can move listeners into the liminal spaces of Gothic, between past and present, between God and the devil… Gothic music is a journey into the uncanny.' (2012, 8, 10) But, what does that mean? What does it mean for an individual to 'journey into the uncanny'?

In order to understand the dynamics and the significance of 'popular music Gothic' in this respect, I want to briefly introduce a few points that I have developed elsewhere regarding music's unique power to construct 'affective space' (see Partridge 2014, 37-59). This term is important, because it refers to music's prosthetic ability to manipulate emotion and, thereby, to create internal worlds within which meaning is constructed. This is the key to the power of the sonic uncanny. Music is able to unhinge and to disturb because, firstly, it has a fundamental relationship with emotion and, secondly, human emotionality is directly related to meaning-making and to the individual's 'lifeworld'—the latent, taken-for-granted core values, beliefs, and understandings about who we are, how we relate to others, what the world is like, and how we fit into it (see Habermas 1987, 113-98).

But how does music create meaningful affective spaces? Like all such technologies, music is often affectively linked, as Tia DeNora has shown, 'through convention, to social scenarios, often according to the social uses for which it was initially produced—waltz music for dancing, march music for marching and so on' (2000, 11). In other words, music often contextualises and gives meaning to situations because of what might be thought of as its 'intertextual' relationship to compositional conventions. That is to say, it creates affective spaces shaped by feelings, which have been evoked by memories of previous times when the music has been heard. Of course, certain melodies, rhythms, beats, and so on are composed with particular activities in mind, so that, even if we have not heard the music before, we know how to respond emotionally. While this raises a number of issues, it is important to note that our emotional investment in a piece of music is directly related to its meaningfulness.

In referring to intertextuality, I am thinking, in general terms, of the ways in which 'a text', as a signifying practice, to quote Kristeva, 'presupposes the existence of other discourses… This is to say that every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it.' (quoted in Culler 2001, 116; see also Kristeva 1980) Thinking of music as 'text'—a coherent set of signs, which can be read for meaning—it is clear that it is influenced by other texts, discourses, and affectively sig-

nificant moments. For example, one person I spoke to during my research related to me a sense of the uncanny occasioned by Gregorian chant. She had travelled to an old theological seminary to run an art workshop. She arrived the previous evening and although it was twilight, prior to settling down for the evening, she decided to walk around the cloisters. As she did so, she heard a faint chanting through the silence, which she described as both beautiful and 'eerie'. When I asked why she thought it was 'eerie', she immediately replied that it reminded her of Jean-Jacques Annaud's film *The Name of the Rose*, which, based on the book by Umberto Eco, is set in a shadowy Benedictine monastery in Northern Italy in 1327 and relates the story of an investigation by a Franciscan friar into a series of mysterious deaths. This memory of unease, which she related to the Gregorian chant in the soundtrack to the film, shifted her into an uncomfortable affective space. It was, she recalled, 'creepy'; it 'made my heart race'. Tranquillity was transformed into unease. Music that is regularly used to relax and evoke contemplation now provoked a sense of the uncanny. The intertextual relationship between the music, the cloistered setting, and the monks was, to paraphrase Kristeva, subjected to the jurisdiction of another discourse (*The Name of the Rose*), which imposed a universe upon it. The result was an affective space defined by the eerie and the creepy.

It's worth noting, of course, that, although used for relaxation and spiritual contemplation, the relationship between Gregorian chant, haunted space, and the Gothic runs deep within Western occulture. This makes it very useful for those musicians wanting to evoke the medieval uncanny. As the central tradition of Western plainchant, it is culturally associated with a particular form of devotion and a particular ecclesiastical setting. As such, it is difficult to detach it from that context when we hear it. We therefore respond accordingly, in that, again, because it is a gentle form of music associated with the sacred, the affective space it creates is, for many people, calming and 'spiritual'. This is evident in, for example, many of the chant-based pop releases by Gregorian (Frank Peterson). However, more is, of course, usually conveyed than simply relaxation and spirituality. Readings of Gregorian chant will typically include feelings of reverence, informed by, perhaps, Gothic notions of medieval ecclesiastical life and processions of chanting, cowled monks. This, of course, is why some contemporary esoteric groups make liberal use of cowls and liturgical chant in seeking to construct affective spaces conducive to the perception of sacred gravitas. For example, the soundtrack to a video of a ceremony of the esoteric Order of the Solar Temple, seized by police in Quebec following a mass suicide, included

Gregorian chant and showed members performing their rituals in cowls (see Palmer 2006, 48; Hall & Schuyler 2006, 67). Similarly, in popular culture the gravity of occult ritual is often conveyed visually with cowls and candles and aurally with liturgical chant. Indeed, it is because of these affordances that it is used to great effect in films such as Roman Polanski's *The Ninth Gate* (1999) and Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). The soundtrack to the latter, for example, includes Jocelyn Pook's haunting 'Masked Ball' (1999), for which Romanian liturgical chant was sampled and played backwards. Again, just as cowls and candles are used in music videos by bands wanting to evoke a sense of Gothic gravity, so Gregorian chant is employed for similar reasons. Of course, again, intertextuality is key here. That cowls and chant are used in film, that they articulate a Gothic sensibility, and that they are linked to esoteric ritual is highly significant, in that musicians are now able to use them in the knowledge that their meanings are relatively stable.

Music also has a conspicuous intertextual relationship to sonic structures evident in the natural and social worlds. For example, echo can give the impression of space, as in Bauhaus's 'Bela Lugosi's Dead', and lightly playing the keys of a glockenspiel or brushing crotales can communicate the impression of a stream, a gentle breeze, or, depending on the other musical and cultural texts involved, the ghostly. Apparitions, hauntings, and intimations of the occult are, for a number of cultural reasons, often evoked through the use of recordings of creaks, howling wind, thunder, rain, or a tolling church bell. For example, such effects are carefully used on Black Sabbath's 'Black Sabbath' (1970), inspired by the novels of Dennis Wheatley. I remember first hearing this song in the 1970s. Before placing the needle on that initial track, the construction of affective space within which I would hear the record had already begun. The sacred-profane ambiguity of the name 'Black Sabbath' and the cover of the album—an eerie photograph of an old mill, haunted by a strangely profane figure dressed in black—indicated very clearly the occult context within which this album should be interpreted. I still remember my heightened feelings about that album, which, fetishized, translated into a perception of it as being *more than* just a record. As the first song begins, almost immediately a very particular affective space is created: the sound of torrential rain, a rumble of thunder, and the tolling of a church bell. The use of the church bell as a signifier of religion and the Gothic takes the imagination to the graveyard, the funereal, and, therefore, to Christian doctrines of the afterlife, all of which challenge the final termination of the self and provide the raw material for inversion into explicitly profane spiritual discourses. Hence, not only does the album immediately draw the

listener into a particular affective space oriented around mortality, but the intertextual affordances are all profane. The spectral figure on the cover, the church bells, the thunder, the rain are joined by the opening slow, dissonant heavy riff, which serves to confirm the uncanny, ghostly, and occult nature of the album. This is what I mean by music's ability to evoke quite complex affective spaces, emotional environments, which then provide a framework for meaning-making. The evocation of Gothic affective space in popular music, as on the track 'Black Sabbath', is significant precisely because it evokes the uncanny and deconstructs mortality. Moreover, the opening chord confirms the presence of the profane. Oriented around the dissonance of the 'Devils interval' (see Scott 2003, 130), the riff gradually softens and the thoughts of a clearly disturbed and anxious mind, evocatively articulated by the young Ozzy Osbourne, make clear the *unheimlich* nature of the space into which we have been invited: 'What is this that stands before me?/ Figure in black which points at me… Satan's sitting there, he's smiling… Oh no, no, please God help me.' Of course, one may conclude that this is all juvenile and trivial, but it is classic Gothic. As such, an affective space is evoked, which both evokes fear relating to the vulnerability of mortality and reinforces discourses of immortality.

V

With that in mind, I now want to shift the focus and look at the implications of a growing body of research examining the relationship between memory and music. As David Hesmondhalgh has discussed, it is indisputable to most of us that music is 'powerfully linked to memory... It allows us to remember things that happened, how we felt, and what it is like to move, dance, and feel to a certain set of sounds, rhythms, and textures.' It has, in short, a peculiar ability 'to get stuck in our minds' (2013, 53). Hence, it is unsurprising that the vast majority of us can provide our own examples of music's exceptional power to evoke memories and instantaneously to place us at some point in our past. There is even evidence to suggest that musical intervention has a positive effect on the autobiographical memory of dementia patients (e.g. Vasionytė & Madison 2013, 1203-1216). Again, as Michael Thaut discusses, 'musical memories often appear to stay more intact and accessible to recall than nonmusical memories in disorders affecting memory functions' (2005, 76). While there are a number of reasons this might be the case, it is likely, says Thaut, that 'the affective context in which most musical materials are learned may… contribute to more resilient memory functions, since emotional

context enhances learning and recall' (2005, 76). Unsurprisingly, therefore, as John Sloboda's psychological research demonstrates, 'music is used to trigger emotionally laden memories of past events as sources of reflection on life' (Sloboda & Juslin 2010, 88-89). Although Matthew Schulkind (2009) shows that, as we get older, memory struggles with the particular details of popular music (such as lyrics and song titles), this doesn't undermine the point I am seeking to establish here. It matters little whether we can remember all the words or titles of songs, because music has an ability to create similar affective spaces to those created when it was first heard and, consequently, it is able to resurrect similar meanings and emotions.

In short, 'sounds are', as David Toop says, 'woven with memory' (2004, 42). This is largely why music is so intimately related to the uncanny, in that it is able to transform the everyday by shifting us into affective spaces that feel both familiar and unfamiliar. Because it has a peculiar ability 'to get stuck in our minds', almost immediately on hearing a familiar piece of music we enter a very particular emotional space that often merges our past and present. In this sense, music is able to haunt us by drawing us back through our personal histories to relationships with the lost and to places long forgotten. For example, quite unexpectedly, on hearing a piece of music, we can experience those who have died returning to us in sometimes profound and disturbing ways. I was recently moved by a beautiful short documentary for which the musician Emily Levy sorted through a number of mix-tapes compiled for her by her late brother, Gus (2014). The pieces of music were discussed with close friends and clearly had the effect of evoking significant moments in their shared histories. As such, Gus was made present in the affective spaces created by the music. He was in a sense immortalised in his choices of music, through which he had shared something of who he was.

As emotional beings, the everyday and the mundane can be transformed simply by the introduction of a piece of music, which stimulates memory and draws us into particular affective spaces. More than this, not only can we think of music as a medium for 'the returned', the revenant, but, because music is able to evoke powerful emotional responses through its peculiar ability to summon the past, the affective spaces it evokes often function as reminders of mortality. Particularly as we get older, they become, in a very powerful sense, *memento mori*. In evoking memories of childhood and youth, of liminal identities we once valued, of places that have changed, and of those friends and family who are no longer with us, meaningful affective spaces are constructed within which we are drawn into reflection on the passing of time and on our own impermanence.

VI

I want now to think a little about the nature of 'sound' itself. By virtue of being 'sound', rather than simply compositions that we remember, music has the ability to evoke the uncanny and to draw us into reflection on mortality. This is essentially David Toop's thesis in his idiosyncratic book *Sinister Resonance* (2010). All sound, primarily because of its immaterial and fleeting nature, is, he says, 'a haunting, a ghost, a presence whose location in space is ambiguous and whose existence in time is transitory. The intangibility of sound is uncanny—a phenomenal presence both in the head, at its point of source and all around—so never entirely distinct from auditory hallucinations. The close listener is like a medium who draws out substance from that which is not entirely there. Listening, after all, is always a form of eavesdropping.' (2010, xv) As such, sonic environments *per se* have a peculiar ability to deconstruct dominant readings of 'reality'. This has long been recognised in the arts. As Toop comments, 'through sound, the boundaries of the physical world are questioned, even threatened or undone by instability' (2010, 24). This is why, he argues, music 'was a reminder of the transience of life in the didactic vanitas genre of seventeenth-century still life paintings' (Toop 2010, 25). Silence, of course, is also able to evoke reflection on mortality and the meaning of life. Just as sound terminates in silence, so, perhaps, being ends in nothingness. This is why sound and silence can be used to great effect in film and literature for evoking the uncanny, as, for example, has been masterfully done by authors of the classic English ghost story, such as M.R. James and, more recently, Susan Hill. Susan Hill's subtly complex story, *The Child's Hand*, is a good example:

> …[A]s I stood in the gathering stillness and soft spring dusk, something happened. I do not much care whether I am believed. That does not matter. I know. That is all…
>
> I know because if I close my eyes now I feel it happening again, the memory of it is vivid and it is a physical memory. My body feels it, this is not only something in my mind.
>
> I stood in the dim, green-lit clearing and above my head a silver paring of moon cradled the evening star. The birds had fallen silent. There was not the slightest stirring of air.
>
> And as I stood I felt a small hand creep into my right one, as if a child had come up beside me in the dimness and taken hold of it. It felt cool and its fingers curled themselves trustingly into my palm and rested there, and the small thumb and forefinger tucked my own thumb between them (Hill 2010, 6-7).

Here, the references to stillness and silence are carefully used to create an affective space within which the encounter with a transgressive presence that questions mortality and sanity is introduced. In the 'gathering stillness', in which 'the birds had fallen silent', there was not even 'the slightest stirring of air'. That silence is pregnant with the uncanny, with references to death and nothingness. Something is not quite right, unhomely, unfamiliar. To quote Colin Davis, we have been introduced to an 'essential unknowing which underlies and may undermine what we think we know' (2005, 377). Sound, silence, and the spectral are very closely related. And, as noted above, the move from sound to silence is particularly evocative of the move from being to nothingness, from activity to emptiness, from life to death.

VII

Having discussed the general notion of 'popular music Gothic' in terms of popular music's ability (like all sonic environments) to evoke the uncanny and to encourage reflection on mortality, I now want to focus more closely on 'Gothic popular music', on music that is shaped around contemporary Gothic tropes and betrays a preference for minor keys, descending melodies, and foregrounded bass. Although, because contemporary Gothic has been so ubiquitously hybridised, it is somewhat artificial to restrict it to a particular movement, subculture, or genre of music (see Spooner 2010, xi), nevertheless, it does identify a particular 'field of discourse' (see Stuckrad 2005, 7) within which there are a number of core themes and musical ideas that make the concept a useful one.

As we have seen, central to the Gothic field of discourse is reflection on the nature of mortality. As the Finnish band H.I.M. put it in their song, 'Join Me In Death', 'This world is a cruel place/ And we're here only to lose/ So before life tears us apart let/ Death bless me… This life ain't worth living… Baby join me in death/ Won't you die' (1999). Again, Gothic discourses are fundamentally transgressive, in that they can be understood as a refusal to respect the socially constructed boundaries that distinguish death and life, sickness and health, past and present, profane and sacred. 'I am so tired, please just take me away,' sing Lycia in their song 'Sorrow Is Her Name'. 'Just let me lay down here for awhile... Come to me, be with me, sink with me, die with me… I'm so alone, please won't you come and be with me… I breathe in this air, so humid and dark… Loneliness adds to our beauty and our decay' (1993). 'I'm a doomed drug addict/ And I always will be,' sing Type O Negative. 'Don't want to live atrial fib, from neurosis, cirrhosis... The

pickup's easy, but the put down's rough/ Up the nose or tap a vein… I can't believe I died last night, Oh God I'm dead again… Recently buried deep in Greenwood Cemetery…' ('Dead Again', 2007) As these lyrics indicate, Gothic functions as a useful lens through which to examine some of the most unsettling themes relating to mortality, such as depression, morbidity, abuse, and suicide. As The Smiths put it many years ago, 'I wear black on the outside/ Because black is how I feel on the inside' ('Unloveable', 1987).

What became the 'Goth subculture'—a term now frequently contested (see Elferen 2012, 128-29)—initially coalesced around the confluence of a particular music, sartorial style, and sensibility (see Hodkinson 2002). Emerging in the early 1980s, from the outset it was a development of the dark, urban, post-punk of bands such as Joy Division and Throbbing Gristle. As Dean Lockwood discusses, to a large extent the principal features of this embryonic British influence has its roots in a 'claustrophobic Northern [English] Gothic… foregrounding a diabolical, vertical inheritance of corrupting, intoxicating and maddening forces'. As such, it is, he suggests, 'an important tributary of twenty-first-century Gothic, flowing into what is an increasingly pervasive and commodified current of "extreme" culture. Both post-punk and Gothic exult in extremes, in ruination, in dislocation and disquietude.' (Lockwood 2010, 99-100) Distorted, down-tuned guitars, foregrounded basslines and earnest vocal delivery conspired to produce 'an aural melancholia that has since become central to Goth style' (Goodlad & Bibby 2007, 1-2). However, rather than trawling through the short history of Goth rock, its antecedents, its associated cultural tributaries, and the contested boundaries between the increasingly refined and esoteric subgenres, we are interested here simply in the social significance of Goth morbidity in popular music.

There are few better musical moments to focus on than the 1980 album by Joy Division, *Closer*, their most ethereal and claustrophobic work. It was described by its producer, Martin Hannett, as being 'kabbalistic', because he felt that it appeared to be 'locked in its own mysterious world' (quoted in Reynolds 2005, 187). The listener doesn't have to spend much time with the album to understand what he means. There is something troubling and uneasy about *Closer*—uncanny. From the moment of its release it was embedded within a Gothic field of discourse. Ian Curtis, the band's troubled lyricist and lead singer, hanged himself on 18 May 1980, shortly after the album was recorded and two months prior to its release on 18 July. As soon as the band's grieving and shocked fans sat down with the album, it was clear to them that they were essentially listening to a suicide note, a document detailing the thoughts of an unhappy and conflicted man. Having

said that, Joy Division fans were not unused to Curtis's morbidity. Reading through all his lyrics—which have been helpfully reprinted by his widow, Deborah Curtis, in her book *Touching From a Distance* (1995, 145-201)—it is clear that he rarely shied away from reflection on mortality. For example, 'She's Lost Control', a popular single from Joy Division's debut album, *Unknown Pleasures* (1979), draws directly on his friendship with a young epileptic girl at a rehabilitation centre in which he worked and who later died during a fit: 'And she screamed out kicking on her side and said/ I've lost control again/ And seized up on the floor, I thought she'd die/ She said I've lost control.' (see Reynolds 2005, 187) A couple of points are worth noting here. Firstly, Curtis was himself an epileptic who clearly identified with her suffering. Secondly, it is interesting that Freud described the condition as an 'uncanny disease'. It can, he reports, take the form of 'brief periods of *absence*, or rapidly passing fits of vertigo or… short spaces of time during which the patient does something out of the character, as though he were under the control of his unconscious' (quoted in Royle 2003, 151). Curtis was haunted by this condition, which denied him control over everyday life and which threatened to deny him of life altogether. It is also important to understand that epileptics were, in the early 1980s, burdened further with a level of social stigma that is not common today. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that he decided to flaunt the imperfection as a way of kicking against the pricks, so to speak. Not only did he sing about epilepsy, but his remarkable stage performance, his fit-like movements, his stare into the distance evoked precisely this sense of the uncanny. It was as though he was performing epilepsy, providing a controlled re-enactment of what, sadly, he could not control.

On *Closer*, however, his focus seems to have narrowed and, looking for inspiration, he increasingly immersed himself in literature that encouraged his morbidity. As Deborah Curtis recalls, 'it struck me that all Ian's spare time was spent reading and thinking about human suffering. I knew he was looking for inspiration for his songs, yet the whole thing was culminating in an unhealthy obsession with mental and physical pain.' (1995, 90) His morbidity on *Closer* is distilled into a particularly dark and melancholic example of 'northern Gothic': 'I fear every day, every evening… Isolation, isolation, isolation/ Mother I tried, please believe me/ I'm doing the best that I can…' ('Isolation'); 'This is the crisis I knew had to come/ Destroying the balance I'd kept/ Turning around to the next set of lives/ Wondering what will come next' ('Passover'); 'A cry for help, a hint of anesthesia/ The sound of broken homes/ We always used to meet here' ('Colony'). Although

the evocative cover artwork for *Closer* by Peter Saville and Martyn Atkins was produced before his death, it was central to the Gothic aesthetic of the album, being organised around a photograph by Bernard Pierre Wolff of the Appiani family tomb in the Staglieno Monumental Cemetery in Genoa. The tomb—which includes Demetrio Paernio's sculpture of the body of Christ surrounded by mourners (*c*. 1910)—the classical monument typeface used for the title, and the tragedy behind the voice on the record all served to fetishize the album, to transform it into a powerful *memento mori*, an important text that encouraged earnest reflection on mortality. Dave Simpson's comments on why *Closer* became so important to him are worth noting here: 'My dad had died when I was young, and I'd always been susceptible to songs with references to mortality such as Terry Jacks's "Seasons in the Sun".' However, he says, 'there was something more real and troubling about Joy Division's 'New Dawn Fades' [*Unknown Pleasures*]. What kind of 22-year old writes lyrics such as 'a loaded gun, won't set you free'? By the time their second album, *Closer*, was released only a few months later, Curtis had taken his own life. The clues were on the record in Colony's "The sound of broken homes/ We always used to meet here" and 24 Hours' "Destiny unfolded, I watched it slip away".' (2011) Although devotees may quibble over whether Joy Division are musically 'Goth' or 'proto-Goth' or nothing of the sort, the argument is that the affective space into which that album cover, that music, those lyrics, and that tragic life take us is one that it is fundamentally Gothic, bringing us face to face with mortality and the existential struggle for meaning.

Even now, as Mark Fisher argues, the music of Joy Division seems to capture 'the depressed spirit of *our* times… From the start, their work was overshadowed by a deep foreboding, a sense of a future foreclosed, all certainties dissolved, only growing gloom ahead.' (2014, 50) Popular music consistently reflects the dominant discourses and everyday feelings of the masses. And there are few of their experiences that engender reflection on mortality and the meaning of life more than the experience of being disenfranchised, abandoned at the bottom of the social food chain, patronised by successive governments, terrorised by their systems of control, and treated less as a person and more as an object, a problem requiring a solution.

Emerging out of this culture of decay, as Gothic rock began to take shape during the 1980s, it increasingly indicated a boundary crossing fascination with the dark corners of modernity, with ruin, with atrocity, with taboo, and with depression. While a funereal corner of the foppish 'new romantic' dressing up box was regularly raided in an effort to embody these ideas

sartorially, as it progressed into the 1990s, and as its discourse became increasingly influenced by themes articulated within 'industrial music', there was a heightened sense that, as Nick Cave put it, we are 'entwined together in this culture of death' ('Abattoir Blues', 2004; Cave 2007, 397), a culture of hopelessness, addiction, exploitation, and depression. While the playfulness of horror increasingly shaped identities and contributed to the commercial potential of Goth culture, the original substratum of morbidity has remained enormously important. Society was viewed in stark terms as—to quote Joy Division (following J.G. Ballard)—an 'Atrocity Exhibition' (*Closer*, 1980): 'Asylums with doors open wide… the horrors of a faraway place… mass murder on a scale you've never seen…' These ideas have become memetic, spreading throughout popular culture.

Overall, while much Gothic rock makes good use of Goth occulture (vampires, Victoriana, decadent aristocracy, profane religion, etc.), it is rooted in discourses about meaninglessness, death, and decay. This, of course, is not to say that fans of Gothic-oriented popular music are somehow, by nature, biased toward melancholia, morbidity, and transgression. That would be ridiculous. They're not a separate species with distinct genetic traits—although some might imagine themselves to be so. While, of course, some Goths may be pathologically morbid (just as any person might be), most are only culturally attracted to 'the dark side'. They have a penchant for the gloomy, which is expressed through material culture and taste, from coffin-shaped earrings to stuffed toys of the undead and from songs about vampires and faux occult rituals to music reflecting depression and suicide. This conflation of morbidity and playfulness is indicative of Goth culture. As van Elferen notes, 'Goth, like Gothic, involves dwelling in the twilight zone enabled by the transgression of binaries, and making one-sided choices would un-Goth the process. Therefore Goths are not suicidal, Satanist, or nihilist—if these widely circulating prejudices regarding Goth reveal anything, it is the fact that the anxieties and desires surrounding such extremes signal social forms of the uncanny, an *Unheimlichkeit* that Gothic addresses.' (2012, 131–2) Nevertheless, while their interests might be more or less cosmetic, they are exposing themselves to affective spaces within which issues relating to mortality can be reflected upon.

While few young people think about death from a narrowly religious perspective any more, thinking about it cannot be avoided. Postsecular popular music Gothic creates affective spaces within which to observe death and decay at a safe distance. It allows both serious reflection and play. As Allan Lloyd Smith has noted of Gothic, it parallels postmodernism, in that both

are examples of 'an aesthetics of the surface, dominated by depthless image, divorced from attendant complications of reference' (1996, 8). Focused on affect, it sanitises mortality with intimations of the supernatural, with fashionable identities formed around bereavement, with poetic articulations of the grave as an aspirational bijou residence, and with the conflation of life and death. Mortality is deconstructed. There is a sense in which, as in religion, the finality of death is subtly evaded, in that it is acknowledged as the *continuing experience* of the self.

VIII

What on earth has this rather convoluted meditation on morbidity been about? Firstly, I wanted to make the general point—which really shouldn't need making—that popular music is not trivial. It does important cultural work in the post/secular world of late modernity.

Secondly, an important aspect of this work is to open up affective spaces within which fundamental human concerns can be considered. In particular, we have seen that 'popular music Gothic', in its countercultural, liminal struggle to pull away from the mainstream, to shock, to offend, to create a culture that is Other—a culture that feeds on the forbidden, that bends the gaze of its listeners towards death, decay, and excess—challenges the hegemonic fetishization of health and happiness in Western societies. 'Death looms large', says Nick Cave, 'because it should' (quoted in Boer 2012, 44). Popular music creates affective spaces within which the awareness of this mortal vulnerability can be thought about.

Thirdly, these spaces created by popular music are relatively safe, in that reflection on mortality typically takes place at a remove. Even if the songs themselves emerge from the depths of an artist's melancholia and depression, as in the case of Joy Division's Ian Curtis, the listener is still located at a distance and thus able to process the brutal facts of mortality. Indeed, even if listeners are themselves struggling with personal vulnerabilities, the sense of a shared experience and the space to reflect on it can be meaningful. Moreover, both popular music's ability to manipulate the emotion and to play with the Gothic enable it to operate, in a similar way to religious discourses, as an immortality project. It erodes the finality of death (see, Becker 1973).

Fourthly, regardless of lyrical content and any subcultural baggage, music itself functions as a powerful *memento mori*. Any piece of music to which a person is emotionally attached has the power to engage the memory

and evoke a transcendence of the everyday. Listeners are instantaneously transported back to significant moments in their histories, to earlier affective spaces and to the meanings that were constructed within those spaces. These are often enormously significant moments, which typically engender not only strong emotional responses but also reflection on the passing of time and its brevity.

Finally, and very briefly, I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that sonic environments *per se* (as opposed to composed music) have an ability, by means of, for example, intertextual affordances to evoke the uncanny. Again, the very impermanence of sound, its passing from existence to nothingness, is evocative of mortal vulnerability and the terminus of the self.

* * *

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Obituary

Anna-Leena Siikala (1943–2016)

The distinguished Finnish Professor Emerita of Folklore at the University of Helsinki**,** Anna-Leena Siikala, passed away on 27th February 2016 at the age of 73. Arja Anna-Leena Siikala (born Aarnisalo, formerly Kuusi) was an eminent scholar, teacher, and policymaker in the study of culture, language, folklore, and religion in Finland. She was Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu) between 1988 and 1994, and at Helsinki from 1995. She also worked as Acting Professor of Folklore and Comparative Religion at the University of Turku between 1979 and 1982. For her outstanding achievements she was appointed Academy Professor between 1999 and 2004, and awarded the title of Academician by the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, in 2009. The mark of her fifty years' work in academia can best be seen not only in her outstanding scholarly books and publications but also in the contributions of her colleagues, disciples, and students and in their dedication to share and continue her intellectual heritage. In serving the scholarly community through her positions in national and international academic institutions, Professor Siikala was a formative figure in the organisation of graduate schools for doctoral training in the anthropological and ethnological sciences. She was President of the Finnish Anthropological Society between 1985 and 1991, Vice-President of the Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion between 1982 and 1994, and President of the Finnish Literature Society between 1996 and 2002. She was the editor of Folklore Fellows Communications, which is published by the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, between 2002 and 2009.

Siikala was one of the world's leading scholars of shamanism, narrative traditions, and mythic landscapes among the indigenous peoples of Northern Eurasia. From the 1960s her career charted the course opened by Professors Martti Haavio and Lauri Honko. She adopted an approach to research in which conceptual frameworks developed in the fields of folklore, comparative religion, and social and cultural anthropology, as well as the study of mentalities, merged. Her doctoral dissertation, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (1978), reflects some of the peculiarities of the Finnish school of folklore and mythology initiated by the

founding fathers of folklore studies and comparative religion in Finland, Kaarle Krohn and Uno (Holmberg-)Harva. Siikala's scope was significantly broader than her predecessors', using ethnographic accounts of shamanic séances and journeys into insights from neurophysiology, psychology, and theories of altered states of consciousness in her attempt to explain psychic mechanism in the formation of the shaman's technique of ecstasy. She departed deliberately from the Eliadean phenomenology of religion, as well as from functionalistic explanations, to lay a firm foundation for an empirically tractable and more accurate ethnographic analysis of shamanic behaviour in its own cultural setting. By paying special attention to shamans' communicative roles, Siikala developed the Nordic tradition of role theory research first proposed by Hjalmar Sundén and Lauri Honko.

Siikala always emphasised the importance of striking a balance between empirical data and theoretical reflection. In her approach to issues of vernacular religious beliefs and practices she highlighted the significance of ethnographic fieldwork in obtaining reliable first-hand data. But she also criticised disciplinary practices based too one-sidedly on a grassroots level of understanding of conventional cultural phenomena. The present author came to an understanding of her points in person. I had several discussions with Siikala from the early stage of my academic career until she became my 'Doktormutter'. After one of many discussions at the beginning of the 1980s I received a letter from her, the purpose of which was to assist me in finding a path of wisdom through the thicket of the academic forest. In this letter, written on 15th November 1983, she gave me personal guidance on making a difference in academia. I had been anxious to find 'a field' to work on. She advised me to keep in mind that 'the major fault among fieldworkers is a certain kind of ethnographic vulgarity, a lack of theoretical sophistication in which too much value is placed on "the native's point of view"'. She stressed that an emerging young scholar needed to read up on and gain an understanding of scholarly traditions within their chosen field(s) and issues of theoretical importance. A historical orientation and a comparative approach to cultural materials was a methodological necessity. Later Siikala dealt with these issues in the scholarly context in the co-authored book *Return to Culture* (2005), written with her husband, the Finnish social anthropologist Jukka Siikala. The book is based on their fieldwork in the Southern Cook Islands in the 1980s and 1990s.

Field trips to Polynesia, and later – following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 – to Russia to study Finno-Ugric ethnicities, led Siikala to an understanding of and focus on the primary role spatial memory plays

in coding genre-specific information on landscape and local topography in mythic discourse. During the 1990s and in the first decade of the 21st century she was to carry out extensive field trips to the dwelling sites of the Udmurts, Komi, and Khanty in Russia. She worked with the Russian ethnographer Oleg Ulyashev to create a joint project on the mythology, folklore, and religion of the Khanty, Komi, and Udmurt. For example, in their book *Hidden Rituals and Public Performances* (2011) Siikala and Ulyashev depict how the Khanty mark and transform their ethnic domain by marking boundaries in everyday social space. They illustrated how everyday places in social life, and especially holy places in ritual sites, are used as signs to mark domestic space for the needs of divergent social worlds. Cultic places, cemeteries, deserted houses whose inhabitants have died, trees, or even the places where the ashes from houses are discarded and which must be avoided transform the landscape into a network of meaningful sites. The dynamic spiritual forces implied in this network affect how people use their everyday environment. Landscape is outlined by sacred sites and holy places. The spirits, the invisible inhabitants of certain areas and locations, are not only integral features of local topography, but the very source of territorial separation and ritual integration between the worlds of the supernatural and gendered mundane social space. Boundaries between the two worlds can be overcome and an inevitable interaction takes place. Topography acts as a necessary connector which defines value categories and social groups.

Siikala repatriated her in-depth research into ethnomythological worlds of minority populations in Oceania and Russia to Finland and its adjacent regions in two of her recent books, *Mythic Images and Shamanism. A Perspective on Kalevala Poetry* (2002) and the award-winning *Itämerensuomalaisten mytologia* (2012; available only in Finnish). Prehistoric religious traditions were one of the major focuses of Siikala's research interests. With her wide perspective on archaeological, linguistic, folkloric, and historical data she was able to offer a comprehensive view of the poetry of the Kalevala and the multifaceted cultural layers in which 'the ancient mythological worldview' lay dormant. Siikala was convinced – based on her extensive research – that mythic discourses addressed both cultural and existential questions. Mythical narratives are elemental to social cognition in establishing a link to the immutable principal events of the past and acting as a register for notions of common origin. In this capacity myths have the power of self-definition. Research into mythical traditions is and has been, therefore, a vital element in the formation of ethnic and national identities. As such,

mythic knowledge addresses not only the other world and its invisible agents, but the visible agents of this world that make and transform history and our notions of identity. With the passing of Anna-Leena Siikala, Finnish scholarship in the area of folklore, mythology, and religion has lost one of its greatest post-World War II mythographers.

Veikko Anttonen
Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion
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Book Reviews

Henrik Bogdan and Gordan Djurdjevic (eds): *Occultism in a Global Perspective*. Durham: Acumen (now Routledge), 2013, 288pp.

Reviewing anthologies always implies a choice: should the book be addressed as a general argument or as individual contributions? Usually, one of three scenarios follows: first, a celebration of the originality or importance of the project as an intervention in or contribution to a field of inquiry, while accepting a certain unevenness to the book as a collection; second, a lamenting of a missed opportunity, while commending individual chapter authors or even the collection as a whole as noteworthy; or third, a recognition of a rare anthology which succeeds in furthering a single coherent argument, while also providing an interesting collection of voices in their own right. *Occultism in a Global Perspective* is definitely an anthology of the third type, even if it has a few rough spots. Editors Henrik Bogdan and Gordan Djurdjevic have done a great job in taking a disparate selection of contributions and weaving them into a whole with a common thread, namely the necessity of a 'global turn' in the study of esotericism, where global influences and currents provide an important context to the traditional, near-sighted studies of single authors, groups, or source material.

As the editors state in their programmatic introduction, this anthology aims to 'understand how occultism changes when it "spreads" to new environments, placing occultism in its cultural, political and social context' (p. 5). Hence, the volume seeks to address the historical, typological, and (not least) geographical preferences prevalent in studies on Western esotericism. By juxtaposing similarities and differences between the occult as a global and local phenomenon, they seek to 'acknowledge that occultism is not merely a French or British phenomenon, but rather a Western esoteric current that has travelled around the world, having been reinterpreted in a number of different ways' (p. 6). Given the status and current development of the study of Western esotericism in institutions, journals, networks, publications, conferences, and scholars both grey and green, this is a very timely and appropriate venture. Employing a wider perspective, a relatively recent timeframe, and fresh case studies not only broadens the field, it also opens it to neighbouring disciplines and new theoretical angles at an opportune moment.

Having discussed concepts such as the occult, the West, and the global in the introduction, the anthology takes an appropriately theoretical turn with Kennet Granholm's chapter on 'the Western' as a concept 'both within and beyond the study of esotericism and occultism' (p. 17). Granholm embarks on a stimulating journey through postcolonial theory

and the sociology of late modernity to undertake a discursive analysis of our conceptual blind spots, issuing a critique of the field's homogenising discourse and hegemonic assumptions. Here, 'Western' as an emic category is part of the field of study, not the framework of the discipline; it is simply too vague and dysfunctional to work in a postcolonial and postsecular context. While I support the call to focus on more 'specific localities and the connections between these' (p. 32), it seems to me that Granholm's conclusion sidesteps Wouter Hanegraaff's argument that the 'Western' in Western Esotericism is not part *of* a whole, but the field *as* a whole (see the editors on page 6). Hence, it makes sense to maintain an umbrella category precisely to facilitate complex descriptions in terms of transmission, appropriation, and the construction of a sense of identity in relation to others. 'Western' can be both an emic category to study and an etic analytical construct with which to demarcate and reflect on the field in specific and global perspectives.

The chapters that follow discuss particular cases under this umbrella. Some contributions examine specific groups or individuals in 'the West', mainly in a historical-descriptive mode; others attend to regions on the boundary (both geographically and imaginary) of 'the West', or salient themes highlighting interrelations between 'the West' and its others. Consequently, the case studies invite the global perspective outlined in the introduction in various ways, exhibiting varying degrees of specificity in time and space.

The first and largest group studies examples from Europe, South America, and Australia, all of which are influenced by, yet stand outside, the common core of French and British cases studied in previous textbooks and anthologies. Three contributors, Hans Thomas Hakl, Francesco Baroni, and Nevill Drury, offer straightforward presentations, tackling the German occult group *Fraternitas Saturni*, the Christian esotericism of the Italian Tommaso Palamidessi, and the Australian witch and trance-artist Rosaleen Norton, respectively. These chapters are interesting in their own right, yet their historical and descriptive focus comes across as somewhat narrow when viewed in the light of the broader argumentation of the anthology itself. The remaining contributions in this group, by Per Faxneld, Arthur Versluis, and PierLuigi Zoccatelli, offer more in terms of theoretical reflection and links to global processes. All three include a past and a present as well as a development outside the confines of the original group or individual under scrutiny. In Faxneld's case we move from the Danish *fin-de-siecle* Satanist Ben Kadosh to the modern Neo-Luciferian Church, with some thought-provoking discussion of the selective appropriation of the past to gain legitimacy. Versluis offers some insight into the esoteric Hitlerism of Savitri Devi and the South American 'neo-esotericism' of Chilean author Miguel Serrano. Finally, Zoccatelli's

discussion of Colombian sex gnostic Samael Aun Weor examines how the work of G. I. Gurdjieff has spread and developed throughout the new world, offering new insights on both fronts by bringing them together.

A second group of contributions focuses on occultism in regions which by their very nature shed light on 'the West', namely former Yugoslavia and Turkey. While Gordan Djurdjevic's survey of occultism in former Yugoslavia initially comes across as a bewildering collection of individuals, groups, and literary outputs, it is in fact organised around certain themes and currents prevalent in the occult milieu in this region, culminating in presentations of Z. M. Slavinski and J. Trobentar, both of whom are connected to Thelema and the OTO. It is interesting to learn how this specific current contributes to global developments, and how former Yugoslavia is in turn affected by global flows. Similarly, Thierry Zarcone's study of occultism in Turkey examines exchanges between Europe and Turkey in an Islamic context, thus highlighting not only specific organisations and spokespersons relevant to the region, but also the dangers of homogenising 'Christian Europe' and 'Islamic Turkey', as well as stereotyping 'Christian' and 'Muslim' esoteric trends. Batinism, Muslim occult sciences, and contemporary trends illustrate the harmonisation processes at work on the boundary.

The final group of chapters examines the development of occult ideas and practices in a global

perspective, centred on processes of migration and influence between geographically separate regions. Henrik Bogdan offers a fascinating exposition of the 'pizza effect' by showing how The Holy Order of Krishna first appropriate Aleister Crowley's Thelema into a Hindu context and, conversely, influence Crowley and Kenneth Grant through British occultist David Curwen and his guru Swami Pareswara Bikshu. This web of relationships, based on manuscripts, initiations, and possible meetings, complicates the traditional image of sexual magic, tantra, and carnal alchemy in the East and West by contextualising similarities. Even more intricately woven is Emily Aoife Somers's post-structural discussion of *neo-nô* stage plays in Ireland and Japan as strategic epistemologies utilising the twilight and 'in-between-ness' of folklore to re-centre and subvert political narratives of time and space. Here, the 'necromantic' performances of W. B. Yeats and Izumi Kyôka can be read as both esoteric and political interventions which, when seen together, work on the national in a transnational perspective.

As should be obvious, *Occultism in a Global Perspective* travels far and wide to substantiate its central thesis. One could argue that the strong emphasis on historical development and regional specificity obscures possible insights based on contemporary perspectives and global flows; here, general attention to theories of transnationalism and globalisation such as Thomas

Tweed's 'crossing and dwelling' or Arjun Appadurai's 'scapes' and 'flows' might counteract the temptation to fall back on traditional modes of analysis. But this only proves that there is room for another volume built on different intentions and areas of interest. By linking specific sites, by theorising on global perspectives, or simply by shedding light on neglected corners of the global 'esoscape', the editors and contributors succeed in building a case for an increased sensitivity to, and interest in, the global and the local in the study of esotericism and occultism. That is more than enough.

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Bengt-Ove Andreassen and James R. Lewis (eds): *Textbook Gods: Genre, Text and Teaching Religious Studies.* Sheffield: Equinox, 2014, 252pp.

This anthology, edited by Bengt-Ove Andreassen and James R. Lewis, offers analyses of textbooks used in religious education in various countries. It covers books used in primary, secondary, and higher education, although most of the book deals with religious education or other arrangements where religion is part of the curriculum in public education. The textbooks are studied by scholars with backgrounds in the academic study of religion or education, or both. There is a slight emphasis on Nordic countries, although materials from Japan, Australia, Switzerland, Britain, and Canada are also analysed.

Textbooks are rewarding objects of research for various reasons, and the introduction by Bengt-Ove Andreassen outlines them well. Many are connected with the power and reproduction of ideology. Textbooks must embody authority in order to be what they are, and they convey 'key knowledge' and, in effect, 'truths' about particular subjects. They are written by 'expert(s) in the field', and they emphasise the qualifications of the author(s). The choice of images combined with the text represents religions in particular ways, showing what is considered 'important'. Even maps are biased and work in favour of particular interests, as they represent certain viewpoints and define both centre and periphery. Indeed, as Jonathan Z. Smith has more generally observed concerning the metaphor of the map, researching and writing about religion is like making a map, which should not be confused with territory (p. 1–6). Religious education is, therefore, work done with maps or *constructions of religion.*

The book's title mentions 'teaching religious studies', but only a few of the chapters deal with the relationship between the academic discipline of religious studies and religious education at any length, although many reference it. Many of the authors frame their analyses with insights from religious studies. There is also, of course, a clear link between the academic study of religion and what has become the conventional textbook wisdom concerning religion. It would also be interesting to read a book-length examination of the materials (and of methods and focus areas) used in higher education.

The most detailed discussion of this relationship is to be found in Annika Hvithamar's piece, in which, as a published textbook author, she reflects on the challenges of writing religious studies-based textbooks for Danish religious education. In addition to her reflection on the student textbook, she also expands on the didactics of religion and explores how teachers, most of whom do not have a degree in religious studies, can be instructed in teaching about religion via a teacher's guide. According to Hvithamar, one of the key issues is that the field of religious studies

is unfamiliar to the public, which means that its 'neutral approach' is often interpreted as a 'lack of reflection or as an uncritical approach'. When scholars of religion focus on minorities in illustrating religious dynamics it is seen as irrelevant, and when religion is said to be comparable to a cultural phenomenon it is considered controversial, she writes. In other words, there seems to be a clash between Christian theology-based and RS-based educational interests. In my own experience similar conflicts may be observed in Finland. I agree completely with Hvithamar's assertion that religious studies scholars should participate in the writing of textbooks and in the various bodies producing executive orders and curricula.

Bengt-Ove Andreassen contributes a chapter in a similar vein, in which he analyses Norwegian textbooks intended as introductions to the didactics of religion in teacher education. He identifies several interesting discourses connected with familiar and important issues. The books present religion as a positive source for spiritual growth and human development. Andreassen argues that religions are presented – through the use of familiar but vague concepts such as 'the Holy' or 'Mystery' – as a reservoir of symbols from which the students can draw as they grow. This empathetic approach, clearly rooted in liberal theology and phenomenological perspectives, provides few tools for an analysis of the negative phenomena associated with religion. Andreassen is correct to say

that such perspectives are too normative and ideological to be useful in proper education about religion.

Most of the authors scrutinise written texts, but in their chapters Mary Hayward and Suzanne Anett Thobro examine the use of images and representations in maps. Torsten Hylén's and James R. Lewis's pieces also differ from the others. Their aims are slightly more general. Hylén examines the problem of essentialism in academia, mostly in the history of religions. Having offered critiques of Karen Armstrong, John L. Esposito, the philosopher Martha Nussbaum, and others, he proposes a *prototype*-based approach, building on Benson Saler and others, as a starting point for overcoming the problem of essentialism in teaching about religion. Lewis's chapter, in turn, presents an updated version of his earlier piece from 1990 entitled 'Images of Traditional African Religions in Surveys of World Religions'. He analyses the 'evolutionary pattern' of religions in widely used academic world religion textbooks, focusing especially on the treatment of African religions. Lewis finds that contemporary world religions textbooks are considerably better than works from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but some problematic features have survived. For example, smaller-scale traditional religions, usually from Sub-Saharan Africa, are often still portrayed as representatives of an earlier stage in the assumed evolutionary development of religions.

To illustrate a critical point concerning some of the chapters, I

will begin with two quotations. In her chapter on a Swiss textbook Katharina Frank writes: 'I will analyse the new textbook *Sachbuch Religionen* with respect to how "religion" generally and the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are represented and what images of these religions are conveyed.' (p. 63) In their chapter on the ethics and religious culture textbooks used in Quebec Sivane Hirsch and Marie McAndrew write that '[t]he study of Judaism and the portrayal of Jewish community in these textbooks will be the subject of this chapter'. They also ask: 'Can the new textbooks change perceptions of this community by making its social, cultural and religious reality more intelligible?' (p. 86–7) Barbara Wintersgill and Carole M. Cusack examine similar questions – issues of representation – in their chapters.

The evaluation of how accurately certain social phenomena are *represented* by the textbooks is a worthwhile task in the educational sense, but at a more critical-theoretical level it is my contention that the reality/representation relationship needs to be problematized. What is the reality against which the material is evaluated, and why is it usable as a reference point? Is there in any strict sense 'real' Christianity to begin with, for example, or are we comparing maps with maps, not maps with territory? Would it not have been methodologically more accurate to emphasise not the representation of 'the truth' but the construction of 'the

truth' – as described by Andreassen in the introduction?

This is not to say that there are no harmful stereotypes, misinformation concerning groups of people, or unbalanced portrayal of those groups in educational material. Indeed, many of the authors highlight these faults very well. However, a critical analysis of a textbook – especially when the introductory chapter raises issues of power and the construction of 'truths' – should perhaps not be restricted to 'fact checking' or the common stereotype vs. reality evaluation. Religion textbooks offer constructions like 'religion', 'world religions', 'Islam', 'Judaism', and so on. They are constructed for primarily pedagogical reasons, but other interests are often in play as well: the maintenance of national and cultural identity, the integration of minorities, increasing tolerance, confessional interests, and so on. It would be useful to make interests like these visible in studies of religion textbooks, and while some of the articles meet this expectation well, some fall a little short.

A good example of a properly critical examination is the piece by Jens-André P. Herbener, in which he examines the *School Bible*, a combination of Bible and religion textbook intended for Christian studies classes in Denmark's municipal primary and lower secondary schools. He offers not a few valid criticisms of the book's contents – most of which target its confessional, unhistorical, and biased nature (towards Danish Protestantism). The book is pro-

duced by a Christian organisation, and Herbener argues that it serves the interests of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.

Finally, I have two minor complaints. First, maps used in Thobro's chapter are printed in black and white, which makes them a little difficult to read. Second, some chapters use Roman numerals to divide the sections, while some use numbered or unnumbered subheadings.

Textbook Gods offers many interesting findings, relevant information on teaching materials used in various settings, and several good insights into the difficult task of writing about religion. Questions of didactics and pedagogy add further challenges, which some of the writers tackle engagingly. The volume is a valuable addition to comparative research on religious education, which often focuses on the legal arrangements in different countries instead. It also affords a good practical example of the discursive study of religion, an approach gaining scholarly attention in our field at the moment, which focuses on the constructions of the category of religion. Religious education continues to be an active topic of debate in the academic, popular, and political spheres, and a critical examination of the educational materials should be seen as essential.

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Nadia Jeldtoft and Jørgen Nielsen (eds): *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities: Visible and Invisible Muslims*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012, 242pp.

Recent decades have seen a burgeoning of research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. Very often this research has concerned Muslim minorities in a particular country, focused on Islamic organisations and their activities, or dealt with Islam in different contexts, such as migration, law, education, and politics. What thus far has been very much lacking in research on Muslims in Europe is an analysis of the different concepts, categorisations, and methods it has utilised.

Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities, edited by Nadia Jeldtoft and Jørgen Nielsen, is, therefore, a very welcome collection of articles in mapping the field for the critical discussion of research on Muslims in Europe and, especially, the constitution and use of the category of 'Muslim' itself. As the title suggests, the volume consists of thirteen articles divided into two parts, namely those of methods and contexts.

One of the most important issues for the methods of studying Muslims in Europe concerns terminology. An interesting shift in the categorisation of the people migrating to Western Europe from Muslim populated countries after the Second World War has taken place. In the 1960s and 70s they were mainly described ethnically, as Turks, Moroccans, and so on, but since the 1980s they have been increasingly perceived through a religious lens as Muslims. In their introduction Nadia Jeldtoft and Jørgen Nielsen discuss how the categorisation of Muslims as 'Muslims' has in recent decades been reified in research, in the media, and in politics. As a consequence, it is now more or less taken for granted that one can describe and count Muslims as a distinct religious minority. It is this commonsensical categorisation of Muslims as Muslims that this volume aims at problematising. The authors are very well aware that it is not only the media and the public in general that are responsible for reproducing the category of Muslims, but that research has also been involved in this reification process. Consequently, it is all the more important to analyse how and by what methods research constitutes images of Muslims, how research describes Muslims as a distinct group, and the portrayals of Muslims such research has constructed. This question can also be turned around to ask how the methods we use determine our analytical outlook.

One of the main contributions of *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* is its focus on the so-called 'invisible Muslims', i.e. Muslims who are neither activists nor organised in any way. The volume highlights the observation that research on Muslims in Europe is heavily focused on the institutional and public expressions of Islam. As Jeldtoft and Nielsen note, this approach leads to a bias, especially in

the media, where all Muslims are often grouped as activists of one sort or another. This in turn obscures the fact that a large proportion of the people we call Muslims may self-identify as Muslims in one way or another, but are not necessarily involved in the organised forms of Islam. As a consequence, the platform is often given to those who see themselves as spokespersons of Islam actively representing all Muslims, while the majority of Muslims is rendered invisible in the public eye.

The reasons research has focused on the public and organised expressions of Islam and its active representatives are obvious, as several of the articles *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* observe. It is easy enough for a researcher to study institutions such as mosque organisations and their activities, and to find willing interviewees among their leading members. The same cannot be said of the Muslims who constitute a 'silent majority'. In studying them we are faced with these questions: first, how this somewhat invisible and very heterogeneous group of people should be named; second, how data 'thick' enough for drawing some general conclusions can be collected.

Eight articles in the first part of *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* offer various answers to the question of how to study 'unorganised' Muslims in Western Europe. They suggest that research should not primarily focus

on the visible elements of Islam, such as rituals and dress, but should also focus on less visible aspects, such as spirituality, morality, and philosophy. Moreover, instead of 'institutional bias', research should direct more attention to the ways Muslims, living and functioning in different contexts, make sense of Islam personally and in their everyday life.

In the main, these studies employ different ethnographic methods among Muslims varying according to age, gender, ethnicity, religiosity, and nationality. They highlight the fact that Muslim identities are as eclectic and fluid as those of other Europeans; Islam does not encompass all aspects of an individual's life and there can be many variations in being a self-identified Muslim. They also show that it is quite impossible to draw a clear line between 'organised' and 'non-organised' Muslims, or private and collective religiosity, and that it does not automatically follow that being non-organised implies that Islam is not practised. In sum, the religiosity of European Muslims is a very multifaceted phenomenon, which the case studies in *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* open up nicely from different angles.

The second part of *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities*, which consists of four quantitative studies, differs greatly from the first in its methodology. By utilising different surveys, these articles pinpoint some crucial factors affecting the incorporation of Muslim

immigrants into Western European society, and especially the factors affecting their religiosity in their new environment. It is impossible here to go into detail concerning the discussion of the background hypothesis and process of analysis in these articles but, to list some of their findings, they show: Muslim immigrants tend to be more religious where the host society is less welcoming; there is a correlation between negative attitudes of young people towards Muslims and populist right-wing involvement in local government; the differences in democratic values among ethnic minorities of mixed religious composition are explained by ethnicity rather than religion; there is a decline of both religious and ethnic identity among second generation self-identified Muslims, and, therefore, no evidence of ethnoreligious revival among them. As such, these studies may serve as an excellent springboard for quantitative research on Muslim populations in different European countries.

At first sight, the two parts of *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* seem a little at odds with one another, but a closer examination reveals a general link between them. As noted by Philip Connor, 'a seemingly individualized behavior such as religiosity is contextually guided by society more generally' (p. 160). What seems characteristic of Western European societies is that religion does not function as a vehicle for the incorporation of immigrants in a host society, as it does in the United States.

In a secular society 'religion can be seen as more of a boundary than a bridge', hence hampering successful integration, as Maliepaard, Lubbers, and Gijsberts discuss in the final chapter about the Netherlands (p. 219). However, more research is needed on this topic.

Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities offers new and fascinating insights into Muslims in Western Europe, and especially in relation to unorganised and 'invisible' forms of religiosity. It is therefore a little surprising that the volume does not contain any articles on the 'old' Muslim minorities in Europe such as the Tatars, who are well integrated into Western society. Showing how religion and ethnicity are entangled in the lives of Tatars, and especially how the meaning of religion has changed in their lives over their hundred years of residence in Europe, would add a historical perspective to the above-mentioned qualitative and quantitative studies which focus strongly on contemporary times. After all, Islam and Muslims are not new to Western Europe.

What *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* highlights in general terms is a problem with which both research and the media tend to be riddled, namely that Muslims are often perceived through a religious lens, thus making them more religious then they actually are. In this respect the worry about the 'religionisation' of Muslims reiterates the critical discussion about the 'religious paradigm' with

regard to Western perceptions of (Muslim) women in Turkey and the Middle East that was already being conducted in the 1980s. This demonstrates that European perceptions of Islam and Muslims change very slowly and that the critique of Orientalism raised some decades ago by Edward Said and others still needs to be taken seriously. Even if *Methods and Contexts in the Study of Muslim Minorities* is not concerned with the critique of Orientalism as such, it helps us to problematise the categorisation of 'Muslims' and alert us to the fact that the terminology we employ in our research is far from innocent.

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Andrew Dawson: *Santo Daime: A New World Religion*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, viii + 226pp.

As the past century has witnessed, processes of modernisation have had a substantial impact on religion and religiosity. The changes thus effected have been the object of study particularly since the 1960s, and especially in relation to religion both in the Western world and in other parts of the globe. Andrew Dawson's book on Santo Daime provides an important contribution to this field.

Dawson, who is senior lecturer in Religious Studies at Lancaster University in the UK, has been studying Santo Daime since 2005. Santo Daime is an ayahuasca religion originating in Brazilian Amazonia in the 1920s that has spread first to urban Brazil and later to several countries around the world. Dawson's book's title is a play on words. The 'New World' in the title may be read as referring to South America as a continent. Simultaneously, however, it can be understood as pointing to the Santo Daime view of a new world order, which may be seen as either imminent or as something desired. In both cases the new order contrasts with the current conditions on planet Earth. Furthermore, when considered with the term religion, the New World in the book's title refers to the common three-part classification of religious traditions into world religions, indigenous religions, and new religious movements. In one way or another, the author states, Santo Daime is char-acterised by all three aspects: the religion was born in South America; the idea of a new world order is at the heart of Santo Daime practice; and, despite its still modest number of adherents (around 20 000), it has already spread to other continents. These three meanings embedded in the title correspond well with the contents of the book.

The book addresses three main questions: the origins and ethos of Santo Daime as a religious system; the processes of transformation related to Santo Daime's movement first beyond the Amazonian lowlands and later Brazil; and Santo Daime's relationship with the sociocultural dynamics characteristic of Western late-modernity. The book is organised around these questions: the first chapters deal with the basic principles and the formative period of Santo Daime; the later chapters concentrate on the urbanisation of Santo Daime and its interconnection with Afro-Brazilian religiosity, Western esotericism, and Western late-modern society.

The book's main contribution lies in its discussion of the relationship Santo Daime has with the sociocultural processes of what the author calls late-modern (Brazilian) society. Dawson shows how the aspects associated with modernity, e.g. individualisation, subjectivism, pluralisation, and commoditisation, have worked and are still working to transform Santo Daime. These processes tend to cause internal conflicts within the religion as its newly middle class urban practitioners have

different needs for and expectations of their religious praxis than those living in rural areas. Drawing from the scholarship of modernisation, Dawson identifies six central characteristics which work to organise the contemporary, and especially middle class, daimista repertoire. These are: 1) the 'subjectivized valorization of the individual as the ultimate arbiter of religious authority and the primary agent of spiritual self-transformation'; 2) an instrumental religiosity oriented toward self-realisation; 3) a holistic world view relativising belief-systems as expressions of universal truths; 4) an aestheticised demeanour characterised by inward self-exploration and outward self-expression; 5) a meritocratic-egalitarianism; and 6) a this-worldly ethos (p. 197).

The author presents an innovative discussion of these processes of transformation by exploring the changes taking place in spirit mediumship practices within Santo Daime. Whereas traditionally in Amazonian-based Santo Daime practices human-spirit relationships were centred on the spirit of daime or ayahuasca, restricted to certain ritual occasions and often to certain persons, and were spatially regulated, in contemporary middle class urban daimista praxis individual possession is increasingly common and accepted. The scope of spirits with which people interact has widened, interaction with them more often takes the form of possession in which the individual momentarily loses their agency in contrast to the formerly more egalitarian relations, and spirit mediumship is increasingly accepted in different ritual times and spaces. Furthermore, they can be realised by any of the practitioners.

It is, then, in relation to the spirit mediumship praxis that the processes of individualisation, subjectivisation, pluralisation, and even commoditisation of Santo Daime become most visible. The discussion on spirit mediumship and modernisation is theoretically and ethnographically the most interesting and fruitful part of Dawson's book. It is a pity that the discussion comes only in the last two chapters, and that the first three are not similarly constructed. The first three chapters are theoretically fragmentary and, while the author does refer to classics such as Bourdieu on ritual space and Berger and Luckmann on, for example, subjectivisation, in these chapters' theoretical discussions, more recent scholarship on many theoretical issues is eclipsed.

Furthermore, unlike the latter part of the book, which provides empirical material through which the reader has access to the daimistas' 'personal voices', the first chapters fail to bring the reader close to the Santo Daime community. In many ways the book succeeds in capturing its reader only in its last two chapters.

Nevertheless, as a whole the book provides an intriguing example of how the individualisation and subjectivisation of religion do not diminish the legitimacy or importance

of religious dogma and practice, as has often been argued. Rather, as the author notes, although these processes involve the 'recalibration of established modes of participation and belonging in a way which relativizes corporate dynamics through their subordination to the subjectivized needs and aspirations of the late-modern individual', they do not necessarily 'entail the end of collective forms of religious association' (p. 198). This book is important reading for anyone interested in religion in the contemporary world.

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