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The Sacred Gaze Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice

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Introduction In a modern guidebook on living and dying, the Tibetan Buddhist master Sogyal Rinpoche identifies three methods of meditation that he has combined into a single practice for bringing body, speech, and mind into alignment in meditation: use of an object such as an image, reciting a mantra, and concentration on breathing, called ching the ..ERR, COD:1..
momentarily ming the eddies that disturb the surface of the mind, displacing the distractions with a single object of attention. If the mind takes the shape that occupies its elastic space, an image of someone whom we respect or cherish will exert a salutary effect on the mind and the body. This is the regenerative benefit of relaxation. Perhaps this helps explain why people cherish photographs of loved ones and friends and devote themselves to amassing and organizing photo albums or domestic displays of their pictures. It may also help us understand the allure of art and history museums and the use of icons and statuary in churches and temples. And it may provide a clue to the comfort of television, that glowing electronic hearth whose sounds and flashing images readily become a soothing presence in the home. In every case, viewers experience an absorption in an image. They cultivate a variety of visual practices that engage them in this absorption. Whether the absorption is contemplative, bringing the mind into a deeper experience of itself, or is a mind-numbing distraction that passes time (which can have its own regenerative effect), seeing is the medium that occupies the viewer in some manner of attention. Even if the hypnotic trance of channel surfing, the flea-hopping subsides and a certain form of rest ensues. The Sacred Gaze Seeing is helpfully understood as a great variety of visual practices, forms of engagement with oneself, with others, with the past, with the
as culture, as the tools, artifacts, assumptions, learned behaviors, and unconscious promptings that are exerted in images. But seeing is about more than its product. The argument of this book is that seeing is an operation that relies on an apparatus of assumptions and inclinations, habits and routines, historical associations and cultural practices. Sacred gaze is a term that designates the particular configuration of ideas, attitudes, and customs that informs a religious act of seeing as it occurs within a given cultural and historical setting. A sacred gaze is the manner in which a way of seeing invests an image, a viewer, or an act of viewing with spiritual significance. The study of religious visual culture is therefore the study of images, but also the practices and habits that rely on images as well as the attitudes and preconceptions that inform vision as a cultural act. I use the term gaze with a certain caution. Like many scholars of visual culture today, I am drawn to the concept of the gaze because the term signals that the entire visual field that constitutes seeing is the framework of analysis, not just the image itself. Yet with this advantage comes the challenge of a passel of meanings and conceptual entanglements associated with the term. The word has been broadly used in the last three decades and often within a thicket of theoretical interpretations that make one wary of the usefulness of the word. Some of these interpretations reduce the gaze to a narrow meaning. For instance, for many writers the gaze has meant something almost singularly negative power of the voyeur, the coercive power of the privileged classes, or the totalitarian authority of surveillance. While these kinds of meaning certainly pertain to the controlling use of visual fields, the idea of the gaze should not limited to these ocular forms of manipulation. I understand the concept of gaze to mean the visual network that constitutes a social act of looking. A gaze consists of several parts: a viewer, fellow viewers, the subject of their viewing, the context or setting of the subject, and the rules that govern the particular relationship between viewers and subject. These rules, implicit in a given genre of imagery and the occasion on which an image is viewed, stipulate conditions such as the subject knowledge of being seen, what the viewer can expect from the act of seeing, whether the viewer can be seen ...ERR, COD:1..
introduction looking at the subject, and whether other viewers can see the subject with themselves. Protocols also urge appropriate demeanor, gesture, and response among viewers. For instance, on certain occasions one should yell or made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
Belief, in other words, does not exist in an abstract, discursive space, in an empyrean realm of pure proclamation, believe... lived practice. First, that belief does not happen without a body. Even when it happens in the discursive form of a proposition, it must be uttered by one person to another, by someone in the presence of a company of people, or argued, circulated, collected, studied, and taught in print. The material culture of religion is the physical domain of belief, the lived practices that constitute so
introduction defined historically and culturally. This stream of alliterations may help readers bear in mind the range of visual operations designated by this bookse of the term gaze. To understand the structure and operation of vision as a religious act, to see seeing, as it were, we must look for its visibility in a made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
..ERR, COD:1.. affirmation is. Ask most Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, or Sikhs about their religion, and it is quite likely that you will receive a combination of the following in reply: an account of certain essential teachings; particular stories of the believer.

4. 

...seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed. (Luke 1:1...

5. 

...Reni, which hung in the nave of the church at Nekemte: this is not what Jesus looked like. When you compare [it] with the Bible, Isaiah 53:2, he does not have a beautiful face. Jesus looks like heeing satisfied ..ERR, COD:1..
introduction difference it makes to believe what they do. For it is almost certainly true that most people spend far more time each day being religious than they do merely reciting creedal propositions. Belief happens in what people say, but also in what they do. It is embodied in various practices and actions, in the stories and testaments people tell, in their uses of buildings, pictures, in the taste of food and the smell of fragrances, in the way people treat realm of pure proclamation, elieve.>Belief happens in and through things and what people do with them. Theistic belief is grounded in the assumption that Belief, in other words, does not exist in an abstract, discursive space, in an empyrean realm of pure proclamation, elieve.. lived practice. First, that belief does not happen without a body. Even when it happens in the discursive form of a proposition, it must be uttered by one person to another, by someone in the presence of a company of people, or argued, circulated, collected, studied, and taught in print. The material culture of religion is the physical domain of belief, the lived practices that constitute so
introduction 9 much of the ritual, ceremonial, and daily behavior of belief. Ignoring this wealth of evidence means ignoring most of what people do and how what they do shapes what religion does and means for them. Second, it follows that, rather than being a private or purely subjective matter, belief happens between and among people. Belief is shared in imagery and visual practice, which commonly act as a fulcrum for such rudimentary forms of association and social organization as family, clan, ethnic and racial affiliations, and the elective associations of religious belief in modern societies. Visual culture can be a powerful part of the shared apparatus of memory, national citizenship, and the socialization of the young and of converts. Religions and their visual cultures configure social relations, over time and space and between one life-world and another. The media scholar James Carey once suggested that communication consists of two rudimentary aspects that remain in tension with one another: the transmission of information and the ritualistic joining of communion. Both draw, he noted, from religious contexts.12 Certain versions of Protestant Christianity stress the role of conveying information, construing ife assent to doctrines or official teachings, and therefore lay greater emphasis on creed or content as definitive of belief. By contrast, other religious traditions lean more heavily on rituals of communion as definitive of religious identity and as the authoritative source for teaching, socialization, and moral conduct. Of course, orthodoxy (creedalism) and orthopraxy (ritualism) should not be strictly polarized, because belief always engages both sensibilities, though in different preponderances. Moreover, not only do these categories fail to apply helpfully to many religions, they don't always perform well even among those traditions of belief from which they draw their formulationistianity and Judaism. But we may wish to complicate creedalism rather than simply dismiss it. Doing so will allow a recentering of its function and will suggest a deeper purpose among practitioners, one that turns out to have a good deal to do with images and the hostility toward them. The creedalist notion of belief argues that speaking is more powerful as an expression of faith than seeing. Creedalists of one sort or another insist that speech is the medium of the divine creation of the universe and the revelation of holy writ. Divinity reveals itself in what is heard (the spoken word, speech), according to Paul (Romans 10:17). Believers living in modern, literate societies quickly assume that speech also, or even primarily, means what is written. I do not propose a stark pitting
introduction of hearing against seeing, word against image. To do so merely plays into the hands of religious apologists for the word. More interesting, it seems to me, is to recognize the slippage from spoken to written word and to scrutinize what it means for the experience of visual as well as print media in religious belief. But it is not so simple as regarding the Protestant Reformation as a decisive turn from orality to print culture. Speech and imagery both persist. Charisma and aura find new ways to infuse themselves into mass-culture artifacts. The iconicity of printed texts is a category of experience that Protestants relish. Regarded in this manner, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims rely, in my hunch, on a number of devices to experience the iconicity of their holy texts, which they all consider to have been inspired by God as his definitive self-revelation. Sortilege, the practice of randomly selecting a passage from the sacred text (Torah, Qur or Bible) as a special message to the seeker, is one such practice. Creating amulets with scripture inscriptions, such as the hamsa, used by both Jews and Muslims (see fig. 15 on p. 66), or similar devices, such as the mezuzah on the doorposts of Jewish homes, is another. English-speaking Protestants are often deeply attached to the King James Version of the Bible and have long displayed their Bibles in ornate bindings, enthroned in parlors. And the use of the red-letter, or rubricated, Christian Bible, which marks the spoken words of Jesus in red type, is a noteworthy instance of the way some modern Protestants experience the iconicity of the biblical text. They read the red portions of the Gospels with a special sense of being close to Jesus, reinfusing the written word with the status of utterance, the phonic presence of the speaker. Signaled visually, the red-letter text urges devout readers to hear the sound of their voice reading Christords as the sound of his voice. In this cooperation of several media, the graphic signifier promotes the iconicity of the written word qua spoken word. Rubricated text is text made especially transparent or iconic to the divine reality expressed by the words. The public recitation of scriptures in churches, mosques, and synagogues likewise resonates with the sound of the divine, animating the letter with vocal presence. Sikhs sing their scriptures in worship, Buddhists chant sutras, Hindus chant the Vedas. Sound is a powerful nen it turns into the very thing it represents: the voice of the divine. Whether spoken, sung, heard, or seen, sacred forms of representation are performances that transform sounds and images into the things they signify. This metamorphosis is why the search for the e imageevails in many religious traditions. And it is one reason why debates over the
introduction 11 canon or the henticxts of scripture are so important. The conflict between word and image is made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
of the sacred text in which spirit and word are bound to one another he endorsed understands the Holy Spirit to have imprinted (mpedb>itself in the words of scripture, committed itself to them in a unique, authoritative, and self-confirming unity. Readers, therefore, are not free to sever the spirit from the biblical text, but can only find the two corroborating one another. This cooperation is revelation for faith. Calvinermeneutic conflates the Holy Spirit with the spirit or gist or divine intention of the biblical text. In this shift from speech to writing as the medium of revelation, breath becomes essence or meaning. Charisma is constrained by textuality, and text is animated by deeper meaning as discerned by the eyes of faith. For by a kind of mutual bond the Lord has joined together the certainty of his Word and of his Spirit so that the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit, who causes us to contemplate God, shines; and that we recognize him in his own image, namely, in the Word.20 Understood in the context of Reformed Protestantism to avoid the excess of ritualism and sacerdotalism, on the one hand, and the
introduction 13 libertine extremes of charisma and spiritual antinomianism, on the other, Calvinermeneutic marked a substantive direction for the future. In order to make the move from orality to textuality, Calvin advanced a notion of text that sublimated the performative aspect of spirit-as-breath and rejected image as dissimulation. His position is, of course, quite tendentious. Is holy writ really free of the cultural interests of its plethora of individual authors and redactors? How can the rit of the text distinguished from rit stamped in the textthout the use ..ERR, COD:1..
introduction figure 1. Muslim pilgrims encircle the Ka and seek to touch it. Mecca, Saudi Arabia, 1965. Photo: Keystone Features/ Getty Images. distributed among pilgrims and selected individuals and organizations, disseminating the barakah of Islam's holiest site. 25 A Buddhist narrative describes a dragon that changed itself into the appearance of Buddha in order to reveal the authentic likeness of the Blessed One. After the dragon reverted to its original form, the holy men who had witnessed the apparition described it to artists, who created a wax form that was invested in metal. Several sculptures located in Thailand today are thought by local adherents to be the statue. 26 Other stories tell of images that perform miracles, such as transporting themselves across the sea or appearing in trees, where they are found and then worshipped. In Byzantium and early medieval Rome, icons of Christ and of the Madonna and Child,
introduction 15 believed to have been miraculously wrought or produced by humans with divine help, were displayed on city walls and in processions to protect Constantinople and Rome against invading armies and pestilence. Images that display such origins and power are naturally authorized as special forms of revelation and enjoy unique and enduring claims to credibility. Seeing Vision Seeing images like these is the believeray of learning how to see revelation happen. By carefully scrutinizing such images and the history of their use, scholars of religious visual culture can show how vision takes place; they can study vision as a historical and cultural formation. An example from the history of Christian art will help explain what I mean, especially since it inverts Calvinierarchy by making a biblical author also a painter. Since the seventh and eighth centuries, Orthodox Christians have told the story that St. Luke painted the Madonna and Christ Child as well as wrote the New Testament Gospel that carries his name. The pose of Mother and Child that was thought by early medieval Christians to be the one that Luke portrayed first appears in the seventh century, and images of Luke himself painting Mother and Child appear somewhat later. It has been suggested that the legend of Luke the painter was invented by iconophiles, the defenders of images against those in Eastern Christendom who maintained that icons were nothing more than idols and therefore unsuitable in Christian worship. But if icons shared the historical origin and authorship of the Gospels, who could deny their authority and central place in liturgy and devotion? St. Luke offered the most detailed account of the birth narrative and early childhood of Jesus. If anyone was to know the saviorappearance, it was this ancient authority, whose primary informant had been the apostle Paul. Surviving Byzantine portrayals of St. Luke painting the Virgin and Child often show Luke seated before an easel, painting his subject as a portrait icon unmistakable attempt to endorse icons and their veneration. In the later Middle Ages, depictions of St. Luke drawing the portrait appeared in stained glass, manuscript illuminations, and altar paintings with increasing frequency, in step with the rapidly growing cult of the Madonna. Not only seeing Mary herself but also seeing her seen, as the subject of a devoted gaze, became important to medieval
introduction 17 But the issue of what Luke is supposed to have seen is a problem. By his own admission, Luke never laid eyes on Jesus. For that matter, neither had Paul.31 Luke opens his version of the Gospel with the frank statement to his addressee, one Theophilus (literally: lover of god), that he had culled his narrative from diverse accounts then in circulation: Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely the things of which you have been informed. (Luke 1:1Revised Standard Version) Luke based his synthesis on the accounts reported by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, conceding in effect that he had not seen first-hand what he was able only to report and edit as a single narrative. Text served piration the text, because the text was understood as a record of personal testaments culled and edited by the author, presumed by tradition to be Luke. Lukeniting marks his absence of having seen what happened but seeks to compensate by replacing that absence with the presence of those who did see. Lukeext may even trump his sources by crafting an overview, a synthesis of different views that harmonizes them into a single narrative. Upon examination it is clear that Gossaert does not claim that Luke saw the Virgin and Child. Instead of gazing upon the vision before him, Luke appears to be looking at his drawing or, at most, caught in the moment of looking from the Virgin to his own image of her, or rather the image that the angel beside him draws by guiding his hand. Luke gestures ambivalently with his left hand: is he responding to the apparition before him or the image taking shape on paper? In either case, the position of the hand says the same: Behold, the Mother of God and her Offspring. That Luke does not gaze at the vision and is assisted by an angel suggests that his gesture replies to the drawing, which, of course, the entire image assures us, is imbued with the glory of its original. In fact, the original was believed to have survived, reported by Eastern sources to exist in Constantinople in the ninth century, and later in
impossibility of Lukeaving seen the Madonna and Child. In the case of Gossaertpicture, the divine intercession tradition, however, may tacitly accommodate the impossibility of Lukeaving seen the Madonna and Child. In the case of Gossaertb>picture, the divine intercession of the angel both compensates for Luke.. is now the instrument of visual revelation. One is further inclined to interpret the picture as an authorization of image-as-revelation because Luke has removed his shoes and kneels beneath a towering sculptural configuration of Moses. This would make the Virgin and Child a New Testament counterpart to the Burning Bush, an ancient, desert revelation of Yahweh to an errant Moses (Exodus 3). As the bush burned but was not consumed, a similar miracle held with Mary: although the Mother of God, she did not conceive the Son of God in a sexual act. Luke the artist is a new Moses, ..ERR, COD:1.. consider the epiphany of clouds circumscribing the apparition. The clouds suggest perhaps that Mary and Jesus are not really, physically there. They appear as a kind of revelation. But why show them if the angel is there, directing the hand of
..ERR, COD:1..  a -are-thereelusion, an optical record of what actually happened as if it were glimpsed from a few feet away. That meant acknowledging the other than optical source of Lukemage. It also meant finding a way to situate the painter.." 20.

###page_start##21###page_end##                         ###start##a single moment of revelation, of vision-constructing visual piety, an encompassing sacred gaze. Perhaps this brief discussion of a painting that seeks to challenge the hierarchy of the wordabsolute superiority to the image in matters of faith will serve to  ..ERR, COD:1..
chapter 1 Defining Visual Culture Whatever else they are good at, academics are inexhaustible generators of nomenclature. Perhaps this is because scholars live in worlds of discourse. They operate within literatures, historiographies, traditions of thought about the subjects they study. And they forge new terms and conceptual schemes to interpret and reinterpret those long, meandering histories of thought about thought. Visual culture is yet another, recently devised term. Whether it will enjoy enduring usage remains to be seen. Whether it deserves a try, however, is something worth immediate consideration. In a characteristically oracular passage that has been quoted so often it has become a sort of truism, Wallace Stevens wrote that humans do not live in a place but in the description of one.

Not only scholars but everyone. Perhaps the major claim represented by the term visual culture as it is used by many scholars today is that this description is not only linguistic or textual but also visual. Human beings, in other words, create their worlds by visual means, in and by virtue of the pictures they fashion, revere, display, purchase, or exchange. Put succinctly, the study of visual culture consists of asking how images as well as the rituals, epistemologies, tastes, sensibilities, and cognitive frameworks that inform visual experience help construct the worlds people live in and care about. The Place of Theory Moving beyond images themselves to examine visual practice and the cognitive and perceptual structures that shape our experience of images
questions and definitions means decentering because they want to link their research to the investigations carried out in fields
defining visual culture of study that they find intriguing because of the promise of new ways of thinking about images. The point of this book is not to formulate the latest critical theory of images or to advance art historical discourse. Instead, I wish to show how visual studies can contribute to the scholarly understanding of religion. The value of theoretical reflection should be measured, finally, by the contribution it makes to illuminating the actual object of study: the visuality of religion. This chapter, therefore, sketches the terrain of current thought in order to clarify what we may meaningfully intend by the new nomenclature. Visual Culture and Art History Recent reflections on visual culture have considered whether this rubric should signify a field of study and what relation the study of visual culture bears to other disciplines, most important in North America, to art history.4 For instance, does visual culture refer collectively to what scholars studytings, photographs, posters, film, television should it designate a new discipline or subdiscipline, that is, a distinct field of research and teaching with its own methodologies, subject matter, academic departments, and pedagogies, constituting a relatively distinct scholarly discourse?5 I propose a definition of visual culture that stops short of according it disciplinary status but desires considerably more from the term than a handy reference to a broad range of artifacts. I argue that as a subject matter, visual culture refers to the images and objects that deploy particular ways of seeing and therefore contribute to the social, intellectual, and perceptual construction of reality; as a professional practice of study, visual culture is that form of inquiry undertaken within a number of humanistic and social scientific disciplines whose object is the conceptual frameworks, social practices, and the artifacts of seeing. Rather than a discrete field or discipline, the study of visual culture is the investigation of the constructive operations of visuality in any scholarly study of representation, art historical or otherwise.6 But since art history is the discipline most consistently engaged in the study of images and visual forms, art history receives the greatest scrutiny here. Not, I hasten to point out, because visual culture is a subfield of art history or because this book is an art historical project. In fact, little if anything I have to say will strike art historians as particularly new. The debate over visual culture among art historians is
questions and definitions largely over. My remarks, it is important to say, are directed not to art historians in the first instance but to scholars and students in other disciplines who may wish to know how the study of images and visual practices can contribute to their particular investigation of religion. For generations, art history as a discipline was dominated by the study of iconography and style. In fact, these still serve as fundamental frameworks for the study of art in undergraduate survey textbooks and in the organization and presentation of art exhibitions in many museums. Yet much art historical work today has moved far beyond a focus on style and subject matter. Certainly these considerations remain highly useful as methods of scrutinizing the content and appearance of images. But they do not exhaust the meaning of images. Nor does iconology, that higher tier of signification, according to Erwin Panofsky, who regarded work of art as a symptom of something else, which expresses itself in a countless variety of other symptoms. Iconology studies just this content of the work of art, that is, its invocation of a cultural or ideological values. Iconological interpretation seeks to discern in the work of art the subtle signification of this something else, which is recognizable in the work of art, according to Panofsky, as a visual instance of the same tal...
defining visual culture 29 feminism, queer theory) all have challenged the traditional object of knowledge and the favored questions that art historians were trained to ask of their objects. Yet a great deal of this work, however sophisticated its theoretical underpinning, is often still quite traditional, inasmuch as it uses critical theory to uncover overlooked iconographies or to engage in a new kind of formal or stylistic analysis or to identify new works or artists to be placed in the canon of fine art or grafted onto the avant-garde. For instance, many art historians using the term visual culture to describe their work favor an avant-gardism that limits the meaning of visual culture. Several anthologies and recent works reinscribe avant-gardism and even postmodernism in the study of visual culture. Their analyses stress the disruptive, politically radical, morally transgressive values once hailed as the character and aim of avant-garde art.10 This conflictual model favored by many critics and visual analysts today can boast the virtue of recognizing the social function of images and the need for their social analysis. Yet this often comes at the price of understanding everyday life and the quotidian visual practices of domestic life, commerce, sport, and religion. The study of visual culture concentrates on the cultural work that images do in constructing and maintaining (as well as challenging, destroying, and replacing) a sense of order in a particular place and time. One definition of visual culture shared by many writers on the subject is that visual culture is only contemporary. Visuality today, the argument goes, is the result of modern technology and its transformation of the made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions ong to radically different collectives and cultural mobilizations within the arena of contemporary feminist, multicultural and critically/theoretically informed culture. Her repeated use of we and our in describing what she considers visual culture as a theoretical intervention into the battleground of society suggests that she is speaking to a relatively discrete audience about interpretations of texts and images that concern like-minded people. In fact, to judge from the intertextuality of the overwhelming majority of studies in visual culture or visual studies or visual culture studies, the field may be accurately described as the project of a few dozen scholars. James Elkins has helpfully enumerated most of them, their canon of founding authors (Benjamin, Barthes, Foucault, and Lacan), and their preferred topics in his own introduction are less presumptuous than they might seem, actually reflecting a specific discourse and a defined group of cultural interpreters. For whatever reason, almost none of the scholarship cited by Elkins addresses religious visual culture. Perhaps the avant-gardist disposition among many of these writers inclines them to assume that religion is reactionary and therefore uninteresting. In any event, scholars of religion will find a range of useful ideas in the leading scholarship on visual culture but very little application to religious topics of study.14 If the established art historical approach concentrates on determining why images appear as they do, seeking to do so by investigating style, iconography, and patronage, and the newer art history focuses on re-contextualizing images in theoretical discourses, the visual culture approach taken here pursues another tack. It attends to the social functions and effects of the image. The underlying question for scholars of visual culture is: how do images participate in the social construction of reality?15 Accordingly, scholars of visual culture will be interested in potentially any visual medium as well as a variety of methodologies for interpreting different forms of visual evidence. Moreover, the study of visual culture will regard the image as part of a cultural system of production and reception, in which original intention does not eclipse the use to which images are put by those who are not their makers. Scholars will therefore investigate not only the image itself but also its role in narrative, perception, scientific and intellectual classification, and all manner of ritual practices, such as ceremonies, gift-giving, commerce, memorialization, migration, and displayreby understanding the image as part of the social construction of reality.16
one another. The study of visual culture is not the sole province of a single discipline but happens when either a visual scholar asks socially or culturally minded questions or when a social or cultural analyst investigates visual artifacts or ways of seeing. But why privilege the sociocultural aspect of images and vision in the definition of visual culture? After all, cognitive psychology, epistemology, and taste each contribute to understanding the production and reception of images, since conceptual and affective dispositions shape the ways in which people see. By stressing the role of social and cultural construction in the definition of visual culture, I intend to underscore the importance of shared practices, ideas, institutions, feelings, and values as constitutive of human vision, in particular, of the sacred gaze. I do not wish to exclude or marginalize the personal or individual construction of meaning, such as artistic intentionality, but to place it within its social and cultural context. The accomplishment of a Michelangelo is not undermined by examining the constituents of his acts of seeing conceptual schemata he presupposed, those he forged, the reception of his work, and the cultural uses to which it was put, his hopes and intentions notwithstanding. But what is threatened is the traditional emphasis in training students and generating scholarship: the focus on style, connoisseurship, iconography, and the canon of great art by artistic geniuses. It is the traditional discourse of art history that is called into question or at least decentered. And if Michelangelo’s mastery is not denied in visual culture studies, neither may it receive the attention it once did. But scholarly fashion is probably no more restless
questions and definitions than the history of taste. There was a time, after all, when artists such as Rembrandt or Grald were ignored or even forgotten. The term visual culture marks a fundamental shift in the study of imagesm an stop with its determination as the limit of an artworkb>meaning. Many forms of critical theory, the social history of art, the sociology of art, and the study of reception move beyond the object or artist as the primary locus or source of meaning. The object is not eclipsed, is not rendered irrelevant, but neither is it understood as an autonomous expression of genius or artistic intentionality or aesthetic experience. Its production entails an institutional history, a social embeddedness, and its reception endows it with significance that may have nothing to do with its makerntent. If iconographical and stylistic analysisither informed by the latest critical theory or notcentrates on the object itself, that is, the material artifact of culture, a visual culture approach wishes to scrutinize the social apparatus that creates and deploys the object, the gaze that apprehends the image in the social operation of seeing. By ial construction of realitydo not have in mind a dissolution of human agency, human intentionality, the work of art, or artistic skill or accomplishment. People and objects exist as material realities that may not be reduced to social circumstances. But neither does their significance emanate from within them as from an essence. To investigate an image as a social reality means to regard its significance as the result of both its original production and its ongoing history of reception. When does art historical inquiry become the study of visual culture? Whenever the task is no longer one of explaining a work of fine art per se but rather the social and cultural construction of seeing that is embodied in an image of any kind, fine art or not. Yet visual culture, in my view, should operate in a parasitical relationship with visually oriented disciplines such as art history, architectural history and theory, design history, media studies, visual communication, film studies, or visual anthropology. Of these, art history, film studies, and visual communication are perhaps the most frequent and the most established sites on the academic map of American higher education that consistently and self-consciously sponsor the study of images as the aim of historical and critical understanding.18 These disciplines teach students how to study visual evidence with great care, and they ought to be very interested in what scholars of visual culture have to offer in their research.
defining visual culture 33 Art history, film studies, and visual communication regard images as the visual ordering and articulation of experience. W. J. T. Mitchell has rightly stressed the importance of studying vision and visual experience as a fundamental human activity and not as something reducible to language or texts.19 This does not entail a purist enterprise of opposing images to language but seeks to give vision its due in the social construction of reality.20 Seeing is a biological function, just as tasting, touching, hearing, and moving are bodily operations. The study of visual culture, therefore, should be dedicated to studying the image as historical evidence of seeing and to studying seeing as a form of thought and action, an array of social practices that have everything to do with the social construction of reality. In other words, for the student of visual culture, pictures are not merely illustrations of nonvisual events, such as ideas, personalities, or nations, but one powerful way in which ideas, personalities, and nations happen. Defining Visual Culture and Its Study

The claims advanced here may be condensed into two assertions: . Visual culture is what images, acts of seeing, and attendant intellectual, emotional, and perceptual sensibilities do to build, maintain, or transform the worlds in which people live. . The study of visual culture is the analysis and interpretation of images and the ways of seeing (or gazes) that configure the agents, practices, conceptualities, and institutions that put images to work.21 Accordingly, the study of visual culture should be characterized by several concerns. First, scholars of visual culture need to examine any and all imageryh and low, art and nonart.22 They must not restrict themselves to objects of a particular beauty or aesthetic value. Indeed, any kind of imagery may be found to offer up evidence of the visual construction of reality. At the same time, although not limiting themselves to fine art, neither should these scholars ignore it. It is just that their aim is not to praise, appreciate, or document fine art. Second, the study of visual culture must scrutinize visual practice as much as images themselves, asking what images do when they are put to use. If scholars engaged in this enterprise inquire what makes an image beautiful or why this image or that constitutes a masterpiece or a
questions and definitions work of genius, they should do so with the purpose of investigating an artist’s contribution to the experience of beauty, taste, value, or genius. No amount of social analysis can account fully for the existence of Michelangelo or Leonardo. They were unique creators of images that changed the way their contemporaries thought and felt and have continued to shape the history of art, artists, museums, feeling, and aesthetic value. But study of the critical, artistic, and popular reception of works by such artists as Michelangelo and Leonardo can shed important light on the meaning of these artists and their works for many different people. And the history of meaning-making has a great deal to do with how scholars as well as lay audiences today understand these artists and their achievements.

Third, scholars studying visual culture might properly focus their interpretative work on lifeworlds by examining images, practices, visual technologies, taste, and artistic style as constitutive of social relations. The task is to understand how artifacts contribute to the construction of a world.23 Important methodological implications follow: ethnography and reception studies become productive forms of gathering information, since these move beyond the image as a closed and fixed meaning-event.24 Fourth, scholars may learn a great deal when they scrutinize the constituents of vision, that is, the structures of perception as a physiological process as well as the epistemological frameworks informing a system of visual representation. Vision is a socially and a biologically constructed operation, depending on the design of the human body and how it engages the interpretive devices developed by a culture in order to see intelligibly.25 Seeing, as I will explore in chapter 3, operates on the foundation of covenants with images that establish the conditions for meaningful visual experience. Finally, the scholar of visual culture seeks to regard images as evidence for explanation, not as epiphenomena. Images should therefore be regarded as visual evidence and should be interrogated to determine what they can tell us about acts of seeing as well as the relationship between visual representation and ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and believing, not to mention eating, dressing, fighting, and loving. When visual culture is constitutive of religion in some way, we may speak of the lar dimension religion as a subject matter in its own right, that is, as a peculiar form of evidence. Understanding how images operate expands the range of evidence and the interpretive tools available to the scholar.
defining visual culture 35 figure 3. Fu, Lu, Shou (Blessing, Wealth, Longevity), modern glazed porcelain, each Lu, Shou (Blessing, Wealth, Longevity), modern glazed porcelain, each approximately 83/4 inches high. Purchased in Chinatown, Chicago, 1999. Photo: Author. Images and Argumentation If we have some idea now about what visual culture is and why scholars study it, we may turn to examine the uses scholars make of images in their arguments. Why, to ask what may seem an obvious question, do scholars reproduce images in their published research or in public presentations, such as the illustrated talk?26 The most apparent reason is that the image offers evidence for a claim they wish to advance. A set of objects such as those in figure 3, Fu, Lu, Shou, may carry within it a corroboration of the scholar's assertion, say, that Chinese folk deities are commonly portrayed in the anachronistic costume of a past aristocracy.27 To show these figurines is to support the claim with a concrete instance. The image, in other words, provides visual (as opposed to textual, statistical, or some other manner of artifactual) documentation for the claim, not as a purely unique phenomenon, but as the concrete
questions and definitions example of an entire class of phenomena. Were the statuary of Fu, Lu, and Shou the single instance of folk deities dressed as aristocrats, the scholar could not use the image to bolster the general claim. The assertion that folk deities dress as anachronistic aristocrats would then require another kind of evidential support, such as a literary passage containing a description. Images, in this sense, conform to the rules of evidence that govern the use of evidence in argumentation. Another obvious reason to include an illustration of an image with a scholarly argument is to show an image that is itself the subject of investigation. In the example at hand, one may wish to know who these three figures are and what they mean. Of course, a scholar might wish only to describe the image rather than go to the expense and bother of reproducing it. But that would likely prove unsatisfactory. An image is an object to be interpreted every description of one is a form of interpretation. If I were to describe these porcelain pieces as three bearded male figures dressed in elaborate costumes and holding objects, I would focus the reader’s imagination on certain features as particularly salient, ignoring all others. That act of narrowing the focus shapes the horizon of interpretation by calling attention to a particular set of features. But if the point of a genuinely scholarly argument is to invite my peers to weigh all available evidence against my interpretation in order to see if they concur with my conclusions, the availability of the image as a preeminent form of evidence seems quite necessary. In the case of figure 3, failing to describe the precise shape of the figures, their manner of coloration and manufacture, their size, and the visual formulas of their decoration, all of which can be the reader of clues to the nature of these particular objects how expensive they are, where they can be acquired, who buys them, and how they are used. If they tend to be purchased in variety stores by middle-class consumers as gifts for family members or friends, costing a few dollars because they are small objects made from common ceramic material, that is important for the reader to know. Showing the objects may confirm that aspect of them. Moreover, reproduction of objects in scholarly presentations allows readers to examine the objects for further evidence or counterevidence in the objects themselves or to compare them with other images they have seen. Generally speaking, exemplification and demonstration are the dominant reasons that scholars reproduce images in their publications or public presentations. In the first case, visual reproductions exemplify
painting looks the way it does, we must see it. No other form of
evidence, such as description or comparison, will substitute fully for
the image itself, though reproductions themselves can be ambiguous and
limited. Exemplification is a form of evidence that is of great use to
scholars whose interest is not in individual works of art. To return to
Fu, Lu, Shou, one might reproduce this set of the three figures if the
aim is to study the group of people who characteristically own this
particular kind of set (there are many different kinds, ranging from the
common, small, and very inexpensive to the large, rare, and quite
costly). Or a scholar may wish to understand a low-market circulation of
these objects in relation to high-priced versions of the three figures.
In either case, what one is explaining is not what anyone did with the
actual images reproduced but what groups of people do with images like
them. Even if I were to reproduce an image of a particular informant
venerating the images in his home, as a piece of evidence the
illustration would remain an example of a larger pattern of practice.
Demonstration, or the showing of a discrete artifact, is a primary
instance of the evidential status of images when the point is to
interpret not a class of artifacts but a single image. Accordingly, art
historians tend to make far more use of ostensive evidence than other
sorts of scholars investigating visual culture. Since the understanding
of the uniqueness of an image is the aim, access to the image is
essential. Its appearance is . . . ERR, COD: 3.
questions and definitions unique object imbued with its makeray of seeing and thinking clearly predisposes the art historian to treat ostensive evidence as paramount. Although many art historians have called that definition of fine art into question and proceeded to investigate art for many other reasons, the tendency to explain individual works of art remains the most characteristic feature of the discipline of European and American art history. A final mode of visual evidence, comparison, is commonly used when scholars explain individual images or generalize from particulars. If I wish to know who the three men are in figure 3 and what they mean, I can do one of two things. I might compare them with other images like them and infer from the identity of these others what the objects before me must be; or I may look to other, nonvisual forms of evidence that identify them, such as narratives or ethnographic accounts. The first procedure is a matter of morphology. The analyst places the image at hand within a taxonomy of images much as a botanist or a paleontologist might classify a species of plant or animal life. The argument flows directly from the concrete evidence of the form of the image and is therefore a purely morphological one. The second approach seeks documentation beyond the object itself. An appropriately placed informant is the source of information, such as a poet or scribe who composed a text describing the significance of the three figures at one moment in history or a contemporary of the analyst, such as a Chinese American consumer who bought the three figures and gave them to his grandmother as a gift with hopes for a long, happy, and abundant life. The scholar seeks some kind of insiders report to decode the image meaning. When these two forms of comparison are combined, they constitute the method of iconographical analysis. The iconographer identifies an image by locating it within a class of visual motifs or formulas and then links it to a particular time and place by providing (typically) literary evidence that interprets the image meaning in a given moment. Iconographical analysis inserts an image under study within a visual discourse of images. Images are compared with other images, made to talk with one another, as it were, in the language of their visible shape. And then they are compared with the language of written or spoken discourse in order to ascribe a particular meaning to them. Exemplification, demonstration, and comparison are the forms of evidence that images take in scholarly argument. But they are not the only reasons that images are used in scholarship. In addition to persuading one audience by evidence and the rules of syllogistic reasoning, scholars make use of images as more subtle, rhetorical means
defining visual culture of persuasion. These means are not to be confused with evidence and logical argument. They are, in fact, tactics of persuasion that rely on the human disposition toward things seen. I have in mind here the rhetorical ectat images can have on human observers. Trial lawyers and prosecutors are very familiar with the impact of images on jurors. People tend to believe what they see, probably because the human neurological system is partial to visual stimuli. As a species, humans rely disproportionately on visual information because their neural network is preponderantly dedicated to processing visual stimuli. Much of the physical world takes the shape of optical data in human beings in the way the world appears as odors to dogs or vibrations to subterranean animals such as moles. Images get our attention and maintain a larger portion of it because our memories and feelings are intermingled with the brainensation of sensory stimuli. The defense lawyer and the prosecutor know the power of the minds of jurors to associate their response to an image with a partyuilt or innocence. A defendant shrewdly prepared by counsel will appear in court looking respectable. The prosecutor may display graphic images of violence in court in order to associate the defendant with the violence of the crime and therefore predispose the jury against him or her. Association and suggestion are uses to which scholars might put images, particularly if they wish to give an upscale appearance to their publications. Illustrations certainly help sell books, as booksellers have long observed. Perhaps that is because images attract attention and are amusing. They invite interpretive responses from even the most casual viewer. By providing unique, exotic, humorous, or enthralling images, a book lures the reader into paying closer attention. Concrete images can be memorable and may make a book stand out in recollection. Although none of this may count as evidence in any hardheaded account of scholarship, images, like poems and other evocative forms of representation, can work very productively by stimulating the imagination and opening the way to new ways of thinking. More than one art historian has discovered a good idea for research by using a spin-off from a colleagueue of an image in his or her work. Genres of Evidence With a few definitions in place, a brief case study of visual culture may help clarify the matter of evidence. What kinds of evidence are there for
notes to pages 192 291 4. See Walter Licht, Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 27. 5. Frank, Life with Father, 5. 6. The Sunday at Home was published by the Religious Tract Society, London, from 1854 to 1894 as a weekly magazine for family reading on the Sabbath. Publications by the Religious Tract Society were widely used by such American antebellum organizations as the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union. 7. See the illustration and caption in othy Instructed in the Scriptures by Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice, erican Tract Magazine, March 1830, 1. 8. If the gender politics of the British image were too ironic for some American Protestants, this would perhaps explain why the image of Eunice and Lois was eliminated in a reproduction of the image on the cover of the Congregationalist Massachusetts Sabbath School newspaper, Well-Spring 18, June 7, 1861. 9. On class formation among middle-class women active in benevolent work, see Lori D. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); and David Morgan, Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production (New York: Oxford University First Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 17900 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1909), p. 103. Photo: Author. scholars to use in assembling their arguments? Suppose one wishes to determine why and how images were used in the socialization of youth by American Protestants in the early nineteenth century. The historian proceeds to gather information on demographics, on the initiatives and activities of Protestants during this period, and on the images they produced, circulated, and used. Figures 4, 5, and 6 represent evidence from these three domains of inquiry: statistical, textual, and visual data. Figure 4 is taken from a survey by the U.S. Bureau of the Census of population growth over 110 years. The data are drawn from the first twelve censuses in the United States from 1790 to 1900, showing the number of white citizens in two broad age groups as well as the ratio of white adults of self-supporting age (twenty years and older) to white children (sixteen years and younger). This statistical information offers a form of documentation that is quite useful to a number of different types of social and historical analysis: the relative aging of the population over time as well as twelve snapshots of the configuration of both age groups over a span of 110 years. The second example of historical evidence is textual: a printed message to parents from the superintendents of the Sunday School New-York Union (fig. 5). The message invited parents to send their chil-
American Sunday School Teacher magazine as a device to promote participation in religious classes. The census information (fig. 4) indicates that in the decade before the appearance of the 1824 advertisement in the American Sunday School Teacher magazine (figs. 5 and 6).
questions and definitions figure 6. Sabbath school meeting card, recto. From rovements in Sunday Schools, American Sunday School Teacher magazine 1, no. 8, July 1824, p. 257. Photo: Author. Protestants for the first time produced publications such as the American Sunday School Teacher magazine and developed new devices for attracting youth and their parents to Sunday school instruction. We should not be surprised to learn that Protestant initiatives in religious education only increased as the century passed, even developing graded curricula. As Americans lived longer and had fewer children, they invested more resources in the education of children and protracted forms of socialization over greater periods of young peoples. There were also more adults living longer to teach fewer young people. The text of figure 5 indicates that in the early 1820s American Protestants were actively organizing institutions that would inculcate Christian ideals and that they appealed to parents to send their children to
immediately below: old he prayeth.e seemingly cozy interior of his
bedroom envelops the boy in what ante-bellum Protestants called
religion of the closet,>that is, private, daily, prayerful devotion.
Darkness surrounds him, though his act of prayer is swathed in a soft
illumination that may suggest the spiritual warmth and intimacy he
enjoys in his nightly converse with the Almighty. The scriptural
quotation beneath the image is at first glance a curious appropriation
of a biblical text. Acts 9:10 describes a crucial moment in the life of
St. Paul in his conversion from an enemy of Christ into an apostolic
servant. A disciple in Damascus is told by the Lord in a vision that he
will find a man named Saul of Tarsus at a certain house in that city in
the act of prayer (Acts 9:11). The disciple is instructed to bless Saul,
who had recently been knocked from his horse and blinded by a flash of
light. Upon being blessed by the disciple, Saul (or Paul) was made
miraculously to see again and thereafter commenced his Christian
ministry. The image of the card and the invitation to send children to
religious instruction promoted the message that children were to undergo
their own conversion and discernment of a calling. In an article that
accompanied the reproduction of the card, religious instruction was
praised for us[ing] ...a devotional sympathy into [childrenminds.e
article quoted a contemporary writer who claimed that otional feelings
should ..ERR, COD:1.. The seemingly cozy interior of his bedroom
envelops the boy in what ante-bellum Protestants called religion of
the closet,>that is, private, daily, prayerful devotion. Darkness
surrounds him, though his act of prayer is swathed in a soft
illumination that
questions and definitions Antebellum American Protestants responded to the large number of children in their society by seeking to socialize them with religious instruction and by regarding their spiritual birth and enlistment as a conversion akin to Paul transformation from an enemy of the church into one of its greatest servants. The large number of American youth documented by the census information suggests that early-nineteenth-century American parents and Sunday school teachers had their hands full. To this population statistic we might add further demographic information regarding class, gender, ethnicity, or race to generate additional questions to ask when examining the evidence of figures 4, 5, and 6. How did the rise of immigrants contribute to the Protestant initiative to evangelize children? And were attempts to catechize free black children or the children of slaves as systematic as the enterprise to reach white children? If we were to add statistical information about mortality rates for children in the 1820s to the consideration of the visual and textual information provided by the card, the appeal to the spiritual preparation of children in light of ly deathght add yet another layer of meaning to the artifact. And examination of the role of images in public or common school might illuminate the use of images among Protestants. Was there a reason for portraying a boy rather than a girl in the image? Was his a piety reserved for or pitched especially to boys? Another image from the contemporary evangelical world of New York suggests that this was probably not the case. The same intimacy, grounded in the domestic interior, is visualized for girls by figure 7. Illustrating a British tract reprinted by the American Tract Society (ATS) in 1825, the imaged by the American engraver Alexander Anderson for the ATStrays an evangelical paradigm of ly piety,ss Dinah Doudney, who prays in her bedroom, hands resting on a Bible. As in figure 6, the pious soul is illumined by a light that has no natural source, entering from above rather than through the window before her. In the accompanying story, the young woman is praised for conducting prayer with younger siblings, teaching them the domestic piety and prayer of the closetnsidered an essential ingredient in evangelical faith. Comparing the two images is prudent, since both belonged to an iconography of domestic piety among northeastern evangelicals in the mid-1820s. Doing so indicates no gross gender coding regarding domestic private prayer. The closed eyes of the young woman contrast with the open eyes of the boy, but this may not be meaningful, since in other contemporary examples of praying
defining visual culture 45 figure 7. Alexander Anderson (engraver), Dinah Doudney at prayer. From Rev. John Griffin, Early Piety; or The History of Miss Dinah Doudney, Portsea, England (New York: American Tract Society, 1825). Photo: Author. youth the opposite is the case (see fig. 18, p. 70). As a form of communication, images tend to operate in a system of signification within a given community of image-users. Although deviation from such a system is always possible and frequently occurs, scholars must made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions not. Images possessed a rhetorical power, not so much a content, but an effect greater than mere words, according to Protestant pedagogues. What does this brief treatment of different forms of evidence tell us about the use of visual culture in historical explanation? In regard to the question that authorized the interrogation of three genres of evidence (why and how were images used in the socialization of youth by American Protestants in the early nineteenth century?), we should consider at least a couple of useful conclusions about the nature and use of visual evidence. The explanatory account developed above paired the image with texts of many kindster poetry, scripture, prose, or the verbal discourse that engaged teachers and students in schools. The task was not to convert the image into a text but to discern how it was interwoven with the intellectual and social practices that composed the world of antebellum American Protestants. As an integral aspect of the education of the young, images were part of domestic and family life as well as the public religious practices of Protestants. Visual evidence and textual and statistical evidence are interdependent. Forms of evidence, in other words, were made to interrogate one another. The image was not only the object of explanation but also the evidential means of explanation. In the constructivist approach Itaken to define the study of visual culture, the point is not finally to explain a picture but to explain what the picture does, that is, to explain how it operates in visual practice and what is the function of the practice that puts the image to work. At the same time, there is something peculiar about the image in figure 6, something that resists reduction to textuality. Among those who used it, the card maintained a presence of its own, inasmuch as images were understood to exercise a special attraction to children and were therefore integrated into teaching and other forms of socialization. Among their Protestant viewers, images possessed a power that was intrinsic to them, in this case, their capacity to appeal to children in visual terms, specifically, in terms other than printed or spoken words. Protestant parents and teachers did not believe illustrations were icons or magical talismans of any sort, but they knew that kids liked pictures, and that is why they used them. Moreover, we observed when examining figure 6 that the image conveyed meaning on its own, visual terms. The illumination of the boy.. visual medium contributed substantively, irreducibly to the meaning of the advertisement, adding
defining visual culture to and interpreting the significance of the textual message. How? By telling us about the feeling or experience of the boycott of prayer. The result is a configuration of meaning in which text and image shape the viewer-reader interpretation of each signifier into a single signification. In the terminology set out above, exemplification, demonstration, and comparison image contributed to the inquiry by exemplifying an entire class of behaviors and attitudes in antebellum America. The image was an example and therefore visual evidence of the sort of images that were used in the way that the accompanying texts documented. If we were to possess a signed card like the one shown in figures 5 and 6, a card bearing the name of a particular child, we might use it as demonstrative evidence in an argument about who used such cards—ages, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location. Material conditions of the card, such as wear or mode of display (was it framed, hand-colored, carefully preserved or dilapidated from use, collected among dozens of other cards or tucked away in a family Bible?), might also throw light on the use and meaning of the artifact. Finally, by comparing figure 6 to figure 7, we learned something about the iconography of light and that private prayer and domestic piety were promoted among both boys and girls. Further such comparisons might multiply insights by revealing visual codes in the iconography of bedroom prayer. By conducting each form of analysis, the scholar of visual culture is able both to treat the relationship of imagery to other forms of evidence and to extract from images and visual practice the evidential import they offer historical explanation.
chapter 2 Visual Practice and the Function of Images Seeing is a sacred practice in many different religions. More than a merely passive means of receiving sensory impressions of the physical world, seeing is a selective and constructive activity, a way of making order, of remembering, and of engaging people and the material world in relationships. In Hinduism, for example, darshan is the ritual act of seeing and being seen by the deity, an encounter that occurs within the gaze of a statue or image in the temple or at a shrine. But Hinduism, like all religions, is complex and varied. In fact, a range of attitudes toward images is discernible in Hindu thought and practice. For many Hindus, the temple image of the deity to whom one is devoted contains the very deity, who is invited there by rituals of consecration conducted by priests. In the case of images of Shiva, whose principal form is the lingam, the devout see only a ritually prepared mask or covering, since the lingam itself is considered by many to be strong for mortals and must be shielded. The devout see the deity through its mask. Visibility is often a kind of condescension of the transcendent to the threshold of human experience. The image mediates the viewer and the unseen, both revealing and concealing. Other Hindus, particularly educated and urban Indians and transnationals, often speak of images as symbolic devices that act as instruments to assist contemplation or prayer. Visualization is part of meditation, not an end in itself. Images serve to focus thoughts on the divinity and, through it, the single God of all Hinduism. These Hindus are always careful to stress the monotheism of the tradition and to
the function of images 49 figure 8. Temporary altar table with images of Krishna and his wife, Rada. Indian American Cultural Center, Merrillville, Indiana, 2003. Photo: Author. regard the pantheon of deities as only aspects of a single God. The importance of imagery such as that shown in figure 8, occupying the central table (a temporary altar) in a northwestern Indiana worship space, is that it orients the devout to the mental and physical space of worship but does so without being anything more than a bol, one member called the images. When I asked her about darshan and the sculpted figures, she pointed out that seeing divinity happens anywhere, with anything, with other people, but not with the statuary shown here. The imagery on the table was there to focus thought and to direct prayer.2 The polychromed marble figures of Krishna and his wife, Rada, preside while incense burns before them, perfuming the room and cleansing it of foul odors. The bells ward off evil when they are sounded to commence worship, and ghee lamps are burned at the close of worship when the faithful approach the imagery for final thoughts and prayers. To the right in figure 8 is a portrait of the teacher who founded the community; on the left is a devotional image of the ubiquitous figure Ganesha, who, in addition to being the remover of obstacles and the deity of auspicious beginnings, is also the Lord of
questions and definitions figure 9. Mandala of Hevajra, central Tibet, eighteenth century, ground mineral pigment on cotton. Collection of the Rubin Museum of Art, New York. Knowledge and is invoked by those who attend services in order to study the Hindu scriptures. Optical vision can be used to embolden and intensify inner or imaginative vision. Images can serve as a kind of external scaffolding for concentrated interior experience, such as meditation. To this end, esoteric or Tantric forms of Buddhism make important use of mandalas, intricately designed diagrams that model the construction of vast universes of mental vision. These allow the practitioner to the Buddha tutelary god in a celestial palace where he or she resides. For example, the mandala in figure 9 shows Hevajra, who is one of many meditational deities of importance among Himalayan Buddhists,
the function of images serving as a yidam, or divine guardian, who may be chosen by a practitioner or selected for one by a lama, or teacher. The practitioner engages in highly detailed visualization of the deity in order to become identified with it. In the mandala Hevajra is embracing his female counterpart, or Shakti, called No Soul. A host of divine figures and lamas are pictured around the outer circle, which contains a pictorial narrative of teachings that circumscribe the central, symmetrical feature of the mandala, inside which are located the deity and his consort. Devotees prepare for meditation by careful study of the image, learning the procedure and meaning of its stages and undergoing an initiation rite to prepare them for union with the god, whose sexual union with emptiness, or no soul, signifies the goal of the meditator. Careful study of the mandala, as one study put it, helps devotees visualize themselves within the realm of the deity. Once inside the perfected universe of the deity, the practitioner can move a step closer towards spiritual enlightenment.ion with the tutelary deity in Tantric Buddhism means assuming the shape of the Buddha's celestial form. This body corresponds to the written text of his sutras and the corporeal body of his relics enshrined in stupas. Some Japanese Tantric mandalas, or meditation diagrams, even replace the image of the Buddha with text, suggesting an interchangeability of word, image, and wisdom. Seeing the Buddha is a complex act that cuts across the cerebral map of the mandala, the written dharma, and the material traces (hair, tooth, bone) of Siddhartha Gautama's earthly life. In addition to its use of the marvelously dense mandalas, Zen Buddhism locates the practitioner in carefully manicured gardens or before paintings of landscapes or still lifes in order to deepen and guide meditation. In various strands of the Christian tradition, icon veneration, devotional prayer before an image, and the contemplation of imagined scenes of Christ's passion, as in the spiritual exercises created by Ignatius of Loyola, all constitute forms of visual piety. In every case and many more, seeing is a primary medium of belief, a practice that brings viewers into focused consciousness of a reality that underpins their existence. The acts of looking at images and evoking imagery within the imagination are ritual practices that would not work as they do without imagery. Contemplation and devotion are only two of many different visual practices. Spectacle, display, procession, teaching, and commemoration also serve religious ends. In order to understand the visual nature of religious experience and the cultural work it performs, we must recognize how seeing is intermingled with other forms of activity,
questions and definitions such as reading, meditating, suffering, eating, dreaming, singing, and praying. Images shape religious meaning by working in tandem with other artifacts, documents, and forms of representation, such as texts, buildings, clothing, food, and all manner of ritual. Seeing is not an isolated or eological or cultural activity. It is part of the entire human sensorium, interwoven with all manner of behaviors and cultural routines. But vision is such a prominent and pervasive human sensation that careful scrutiny of its many forms and effects is well worth the scholarpecial attention. The study of visual culture, to repeat the thesis of the previous chapter, is a study not only of images but also of visual practice, imagination, perception, and the cognitive apparatus of any particular epoch or culture that shapes vision. This approach is well suited to the study of religion because the visual medium of belief is not just images but also everything believers do with them. In order for us to understand what this means, it will be helpful to do two things: first, to put in place a definition of religion, and second, to enumerate and exemplify the particular functions of religious images. A Working Definition of Religion Debate over the definition of religion is larger, much older, and far more contentious than debates regarding the definition of visual culture. Although the point of this book is the study of images in religious practice, the underlying definition of religion has portentous implications for how images are to be understood. By religion, I understand to powers that assist humans in organizing their collective and individual lives. These ersy be supernatural or entirely circumscribed within the domain of natural phenomena. In either case, religion is a way of controlling events or experience for the purpose of living better, longer, more meaningfully, or with less hazard. There are, of course, many ways of organizing social life that need not be religious. Such cultural schemes include nationhood, kingship, marriage, gender roles, and hierarchies of ethnicity, race, and class. Each of these forms of order provides boundaries and enclosures, social structures that bestow shape and character on human communities and individuals. These and other activities become religious under one of two circumstances: either when their ritualistic deployment is regarded as necessary in and of itself in order to ensure order, or when believers appeal to powers
the function of images beyond the sphere of human agency and the
conventional laws of the material world. Powers in the second
circumstance may involve ancestors, sacred tradition, or impersonal
forces such as barakah, destiny, fate, karma, or progress. The powers
may also involve demons, spirits, or deities. Power in the first
instance is often expressed as way things have always been done
simply s is what we do. either case, the practice of religion is a way
of authorizing order, charging it with a compelling and enduring power.
Catherine Albanese has provided a very useful working definition of
religion, from which my formulation draws: system of symbols (creed,
code, cultus) by means of which people (a community) orient themselves
in the world with reference to both ordinary and extraordinary powers,
meanings, and values. er distinction of ordinary. strengths that bear
special relevance for the study of religious visual culture. First, I
prefer the way in which she engages both ordinary and extraordinary in
her definition, since defining religion absolutely with or without
extraordinary powers is not practical. There are, of course, religions
in which the appeal to deities or supernatural powers is quite minimal.
One might, for instance, practice yoga or meditation without contact
with or regard for any such reality. Buddhism and Confucianism are
widely understood to be nontheistic religions. And there is at least one
reasoned account of an African religion in which supernatural realities
do not appear to play a major role. Yet for every such assertion one can
cite exceptions within the same religious tradition. Thus, scholars have
pointed out in recent years that popular as well as elite forms of
Buddhism have almost always been rife with gods and demons and spirits
as well as relics, devotion to imagery, and practices of acquiring merit
from Buddha and the bodhisattvas. While Confucianism operates without a
god, it does rely on the veneration of ancestors. And although in his
study of the Kuria, an East African people, the anthropologist Malcolm
Ruel argued that their religion does not depend primarily on
supernatural realities, the Kuria do recognize the existence of a solar
deity, ancestor spirits, sprites,
virtue of made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the function of images 55 Religious Visual Culture: A Typology of Functions With a working definition in place that underscores the importance of practices and rituals of belief, we may proceed to asking what religious images and visual practices do. Perhaps the best or at least the most practical way to answer this question is to assemble a list of relatively discrete functions. Such a list ought to signal the particular capacities of images and visual practices to structure relations among human beings, the physical world, and superhuman or immaterial worlds. What makes an image religious, of relations among a particular group of humans and the forces that help to organize their world. The medium of belief is belief in the relational sense of a covenant and not merely assent to a proposition not only an image but also everything that a person or community does with and by means of an image. What do religious images and visual practice do? They accomplish any of the following aims for those who cherish and use them: order space and time, imagine community, communicate with the divine or transcendent, embody forms of communion with the divine, collaborate with other forms of representation, influence thought and behavior by persuasion or magic, displace rival images and ideologies. Of course, not only religious images but all manner of images perform many of these functions. Indeed, if one were to replace divine in the third and fourth listings with tradition or civilization or nation or the past, there would be no difference between the range of functions ascribed to religious images and those ascribed to a great variety of nonreligious images. This accounts for the often striking similarities between religious and secular governments, religious and political icons, religious rites and secular ceremonies, religious and nonreligious memory and narrative; religious bigotry and ethnic strife. In the final chapter I examine the case of civil religion, which maps religion over
questions and definitions national life, often refusing in patriotic and nationalistic moments and symbols to distinguish made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
Illustrations 1. Muslim pilgrims encircle the Ka and seek to touch it, Mecca, Saudi Arabia, 1965 14 2. Jan Gossaert, St. Luke Drawing the Virgin, ca. 1520 16 3. Fu, Lu, Shou (Blessing, Wealth, Longevity), purchased in Chinatown, Chicago, 1999 35 4. Ratio of White Adults of Self-Supporting Age to White Children: 1790 to 1900, from U.S. Bureau of the Census, A Century of Population Growth, 1909 40 5. Sabbath school meeting card, verso, from American Sunday School Teacher magazine, 1824 41 6. Sabbath school meeting card, recto, from American Sunday School Teacher magazine, 1824 42 7. Alexander Anderson (engraver), Dinah Doudney at prayer, from Rev. John Griffin, Early Piety; or The History of Miss Dinah Doudney, Portsea, England, 1825 45 8. Temporary altar table with images of Krishna and his wife, Granth Saheb, private home, Valparaiso, Indiana, 2002. Photo: Author. Word.Guru is the Punjabi word for teacher but also for God. Thus, one Sikh told me that the book is the y of God. E ten historical gurus were understood to be in union with the divine. The book, which six of them contributed to, is the written revelation of God. So the Sikh reverence for the book is also reverence for the historical gurus, their wisdom and teaching, and for the deity, all of which are joined in the book. Each day the book is ritually transported from its private chamber (where it rests on a bed each night) to the gurdwaraaised platform, where it is installed beneath a canopy and adorned with veils. Worshippers arrive at services and prostrate themselves before the enthroned book and take turns attending to the book as if it were a living guru by passing a fly whisk back and forth over it. Pious Sikhs also erect throne-beds in their homes for their own copies of the Guru Granth Saheb (fig. 10). The care and attention that the faithful devote to the book privately and in the presence of one another during worship at the gurdwara serves to materialize divine revelation in the historical gurus (most important, Guru Nanak, the first Guru), who,
questions and definitions figure 11. Joseph No Heart, pictograph of a Sun Dance, Teton Dakota, Standing Rock Agency, 1900, pigments on muslin, 29 69 inches. Collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, 10460. Because they were united with God, are alone able to lead the devout to union with God. Time is also shaped by images into a sacred enclosure when the image, as in the case of an Orthodox icon, is part of the liturgical structuring of temporality in worship. Perhaps the most common shaping of time in religious life occurs in the creation and maintenance of memories as powerful indicators of identity. Sacred marriage certificates or other artifacts received as part of religious rites, such as a bar or bat mitzvah or a Christian confirmation, are frequently displayed in homes in order to remind their owners and families about (and to proclaim to visitors) the heritage and confession of the owner. Other imagery, such as Lakota artist Joseph No Heartictograph of a Sun Dance (fig. 11), depicts and remembers a crucial turning point in the lives of a group this case, a nation of Native Americans on the western Plains. Created in 1900, the image shows the Lakota after conquest by the American military. Three American flags fly in the right half of the image, in the midst of village life. But on the left side, the outlawed Sun Dance is celebrated. The visual rhythm from right to left of tall and short flags is punctuated by the height of the center pole used in the Sun Dance. The stable uniformity of the line of tipis moving across the top of the image, combined with the ubiquity of the red streamers affixed to the horses of braves and seen atop the Sun Dance pole itself, may suggest an underlying unity in Lakota life. But the stark contrast of the flags and the center pole bespeaks an act of cultural resistance
the function of images 59 dedicated to keeping alive the religious rite banned by the occupying military force. Joseph No Heartmage seeks to recall the sacred practice in the traditional vernacular of pictographic symbols for the benefit of those who had been cut off from the ceremony. Though the ceremony was still clandestinely observed, as the image suggests, its primary existence, particularly for the young and the generations to come, was in memory, which images such as figure 11 helped make possible. imagining community At the same time as Joseph No Heartmage remembers the ritual of the Sun Dance, it enables Lakota to imagine their communal identity, their being as a people. Communal existence is something both concretely experienced and shared at a distance and over time. Like other forms of imagined community, such as nationhood, members of the community need symbolic forms such as songs, dance, images, and food to allow them to participate in something that is larger both spatially and temporally than their immediate environment. Community must be envisioned in the things believers do (see, for instance, fig. 1) in order for them to realize in a concrete, corporeal way that they belong to this world or clan or tradition and that doing so ensures them of the benefits of membership, such as an enduring identity and sense of purpose. In chapter 7 I examine the role of the American flag as an icon of national identity that demarcates for many new and older Americans what it means to be American, that is, a member of that imagined national community. communicating with the divine or transcendent Images have long been used by religious peoples around the world to communicate with the unseen, mysterious, and potentially uncontrollable forces that are understood to govern life. Sacrificial offerings before (and often to) images are the material form of an economy of exchange that allows believers to enter into a relationship with deities, which is intended to result in mutual satisfaction. Images make the god or saint or spirit available for petition, praise, offering, and negotiation. Promises are solemnly made during visits or pilgrimages to cult images and recalled by means of images carried about on one person or installed at home or work. Publicly displayed imagery makes vows more meaningful and the hope for deliverance more promising. While in Thailand, I watched Buddhist pilgrims visiting shrines near the
questions and definitions figure 12. Buddhist performing pid thong at Wat Prathadpanomvora Mahaviharn, Northeast Thailand, 2002. Photo: Siriwan Santisakultarm. Royal Palace at Bangkok. The pilgrims performed pid thong, applying layers of gold leaf to statues of Buddha (fig. 12). The Royal Palace includes the famous prototypes of countless copies, such as the Emerald Buddha and many others made of gold, precious stones, and other costly materials. Inexpensive copies are available for 52 questions and definitions such as reading, meditating, suffering, eating, dreaming, singing, and praying. Images shape religious meaning by working in tandem with other artifacts, documents, and forms of representation, such as texts, buildings, clothing, food, and all manner of ritual. Seeing is not an isolated or eological or cultural activity. It is part of the entire human sensorium, interwoven with all manner of behaviors and cultural routines. But vision is such a prominent and pervasive human sensation that careful scrutiny of its many forms and effects is well worth the scholar special attention. The study of visual culture, to repeat the thesis of the previous chapter, is a study not only of images but also of visual practice, imagination, perception, and the cognitive apparatus of any particular epoch or culture that shapes vision. This approach is well suited to the study of religion because the visual medium of belief is not just images but also everything believers do with them. In order for us to understand what this means, it will be helpful to do two things: first, to put in place a definition of religion, and second, to enumerate and exemplify the particular functions of religious images. A Working Definition of Religion Debate over the definition of religion is larger, much older, and far more contentious than debates regarding the definition of visual culture. Although the point of this book is the study of images in religious practice, the underlying definition of religion has portentous implications for how images are to be understood. 7 By religion, I understand configurations of social relatedness and cultural ordering that appeal to powers that assist humans in organizing their collective and individual lives. These ersy be supernatural or entirely circumscribed within the domain of natural phenomena. In either case, religion is a way of controlling events or experience for the purpose of living better, longer, more meaningfully, or with less hazard. There are, of course, many ways of organizing social life that need not be religious. Such cultural schemes include nationhood, kingship, marriage, gender roles, and hierarchies of ethnicity, race, and class. Each of these forms of order provides boundaries and enclosures, social structures that bestow shape and character on human communities and individuals. These and other activities become religious under one of two circumstances: either when their ritualistic deployment is regarded as necessary in and of itself in order to ensure order, or when believers appeal to powers...
the function of images 61 of respect and devotion. (The expression lang phra is used in Thai society to describe those who do something good without expecting acknowledgment for it.)18 The image of the Buddha serves as the site at which the exchange of devotion for blessing is negotiated. The act is part of a larger practice of preparing oneself for the journey to the temple, the public act of devotion, and the subsequent waiting for blessing (if it is meant to occur in the present lifetime and not in rebirth). Not only do images of Buddha allow communication with him and the transfer of merit by appeal to his infinite compassion and reservoir of merit, but also making images of Buddha and ritually washing them promise higher rebirth.19 Images facilitate communication in another manner that merits our attention. Not only are they the receptacle of human petitions, they also serve as the means by which seekers can learn divine will or find answers about their future or problems they face. This oracular function of imagery is pervasive in African practices of divination.20 But it is also evident in first-world societies in the pervasive use of tarot cards. Displayed in configurations of images that produce a successive, cumulative reading, tarot cards move from the general to the increasingly specific, triggering associations and interpretations along the way until, in the hands of a skilled reader, the client has assembled a personal narrative. This narrative is tailored to the client and addresses anxieties, hopes, frustrations, and possibilities. Oracular forms of communication range from the shape of a saint in a tree or oil stain to the use of sortilege to locate revelatory passages in a scripture. In whatever case, the power of oracularity is the suggestive ambivalence of the signifier that inaugurates and continues to propel a narrative told by an individual or shared by a group. The open-ended symbolism of the tarot card, the splotch of oil, the pattern of soot from incense, or the trail of tears down the surface of an icon beckons the deciphering of a message for oneself or one community. Someone is speaking in this marvelous incursion into the world, and believers strain to discern the material language of the sacred. Communing with the divine Images of many different kinds often yield an experience of divine presence. Icons in the Eastern Orthodox rite serve as a channel of grace that visualizes the holy figure, who directs grace to the believer. In his classic defense of holy images, John of Damascus quoted a passage from
in the image the lifetime of the religion. Buddha has many bodies, many material manifestations. Bringing them together is the task of the consecration of images of the Buddha. This process invests the visual form with the presence and authority of the historical Buddha (nirmanakaya), his relics (enclosed in stupas), his teachings (dharma), and the ideal form of his glorified body (sambhogakaya). All merge in the visual practice of venerating the image, which is varied—secrating an image, bathing it, applying gold leaf to its surface, or contemplating it in meditation. One ancient Chinese writer put the matter regarding Buddha-bodied presence succinctly: though the Great Teacher is extinguished, his image is still present. One should venerate it with an elevated mind as if the Buddha were still here. Some may place incense and flowers [before the image] every day, enabling them to produce a pure heart. Others may constantly perform the bathing ritual, completely cleansing their tenebrous karma. Communication and communication of benefits are inseparable in these visual practices, since devotion to a shrine, image, or object produces an absorbing effect on human consciousness that both focuses thought and diminishes awareness of oneself as a distraction. Modern Tibetan Buddhists urge the use of shrines and images for devotion in the face of death for the benefits they render the dying. In this visual piety of devotion the presence and the blessing of the Buddha are indistinguishable. Other images manifest the supernatural by replacing the identity of the ritual participant with the person of a departed ancestor or spirit. Masks like the one shown in figure 13 have been widely used in West.
and definitions the masks, the Mende women in the Sande society serve to transform the powers of the bush so that they may be directed toward the maintenance of social order and the inculcation and enforcement of rules of social intercourse...." 59.

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##start##iwan (vault) of the Madar-i Shah Madrasa, Isfahan, Iran, Safavid dynasty, 17005. Photo: SEF/Art Resource, New York. important to recognize that the study of religious material and visual culture should avoid compressing religious experience into the standard rubrics of text, image, ..ERR, COD:1..
the function of images 65 figure 14. Main iwan (vault) of the Madar-i Shah Madrasa, Isfahan, Iran, Safavid dynasty, 17005. Photo: SEF/Art Resource, New York. important to recognize that the study of religious material and visual culture should avoid compressing religious experience into the standard rubrics of text, image, music, or architecture. The testimony of figure 15, which shows a display of objects in a midwestern Jewish home, urges that we approach Jewish artifacts of this sort as getexts, presentations that are neither image nor text alone, but a synthesis that needs to be classified separately because it is experienced neither as merely text nor as merely image.31 These items, forming what their owner called her aic Wall, termingle symbol, word, and image to create discrete objects that are more than the sum of their parts. The calligraphy of Hebrew text is also a highly decorated image, the stylized image of the hand, or hamsa (eingers), serves as a surface for
questions and definitions figure 15. Judaic Wall, home of Jane and George Zucker, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 2002. Photo: Sheri Huber-Otting. the display of text. Image and text combine in the case of the hamsa in a very traditional device of popular Jewish culture. The hamsa is an amulet displayed in the home, on one person, or in synagogues on such liturgical objects as lamps to guard against spells and the Evil Eye. Inscriptions on the metal surface of the hand amulet form consist of the many names of God and quotations from scripture that are invested with mystical and symbolic significance. Whether composed entirely of text or portrayed in highly simplified form, these hybrids of text and image avoid the injunction against the use of figural images, yet visualize sacred text in a manner that allows its display as an object for the purpose of aesthetic contemplation as well as veneration. Displayed in the homes of modern Jews, the objects acquire another layer of meaning as artifacts from the history of the Jewish people that can be separated from the original magical, mystical, or theological meanings and seen as crafts that affirm the ethnic identity of their owners. Even in this case, however, the value of the imagetext persists, since avoidance of highly pictorial imagery remains for many Jews, secular or pious, a touchstone of Jewish tradition.
the function of images 67 figure 16. Serigne Gueye, son of More Gueye, reverse-glass calligram of Amadou Bamba, glass, pigment, cardboard, and tape, 124/5 × 91/2 inches. UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History. Photo: Don Cole. The imagetext can be found in several religious traditions. A good example occurs among Sufi (Mouride) followers of Sheik Amadou Bamba in Senegal, whose body is transfigured into Arabic script (fig. 16). The text consists of praises to Allah, thus transforming what one sees into a devotional reading, implying, perhaps, that the body of the saint is the Word of God as well as a kind of visual presence, since the devout viewer of the image is also the reader of the text and worshipper of God. The two orders of representation and text juxtaposed but are also made to metamorphose into one another. Although the devout Mouride cannot see and read simultaneously the markings are either word or image, but not both at the same time; the proximity of form and content, word and image, Word and body, that the imagetext enables, suggesting inimitably the proximity of the saint and his living praise of Allah. The intermingling of the sheikorm and the Arabic text suggests that his
veneration of him are conjoint acts of veneration of Allah. Serving as instruments of influence, images can be laden with information, densely encoded with ideas, values, or feelings that certain viewers are able to discern. Images can also be interpreted in ways their makers or original users did not intend, serving to corroborate beliefs or desires important to a viewer or a group of viewers. In either case, an image is a visual medium that can act as an instrument of influence. The influence that images exert may take two different forms. We speak of efficacious influence when describing the power of an image and its ritualistic use to achieve a desired effect. Images appear to act as discrete sources of power that affect events or people as a force or agent of change that requires nothing more to achieve its aim than the originary, authorizing act of its maker and patron. Examples include the use of images to enhance fertility, to attain success in the hunt, to heal wounds or illness caused by a harmful agent such as a spirit or evil spell, to protect someone against a rival, or to harm an enemy. The image does whatever it is charged to do by converting the desire of a petitioner into an agency that does the work. Figure 17 shows an almost unnoticeable instance of this in a storefront window in Chicago Chinatown. The small round mirror poised between two items for sale serves the storeowner as a talismanic device. Commonly placed above doors or in the windows of Chinese American restaurants and stores, mirrors like this one reflect malignant spirits and harmful forces before they can enter the place of business and hinder commerce. The presence of these protective objects also reassures customers, hence the visible placement near points of entry (which is, of course, in the logic of spiritual matters, where malignance also seeks to gain entrance). The capacity of images to influence events also very commonly takes the form of action affecting the viewer's perspective. This mode of visual influence treats the image as an encoded message and operates by training the viewer's attention upon an intended content, such as exhorting viewers to display proper conduct, demeanor, or the reverence due respected persons. It is no mistake, for instance, that Buddhism thrived as it spread across Asia by enjoying royal patronage of temples, sculptures, and paintings. Monarch and religious monuments bestowed prestige and status upon one another. Another obvious
the function of images 69 figure 17. Apotropaic reflective device, restaurant front window, Chinatown, Chicago, 2000. Photo: Author. Example of visual influence is the instructional use of illustrations in religious publications such as Protestant tracts, as in figure 18. Intended as a piece of advice for Christian parents, this tract and its illustration detailed the proper domain of influence enjoyed by the parent, especially the mother. Indeed, the image does not include the father, because its chief concern was to target mothers and delineate their influence on children in domestic formation as their preeminent responsibility. This sort of image is clearly propagandistic, a description with a very negative connotation, since propaganda operates by subordinating individual liberty to the good of a larger interest. Defined as association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice, however, propaganda is not simply partisan brainwashing. In many cases it may be little more than that, but every society, and every group in every society, engages in practices of spreading its claims and the principles upon which it makes its claims. Even (or especially) in a democracy, a group using propaganda may consider the menace of group disunity a significantly greater danger than individual freedom of conscience we shall see in the final chapter. Such a group may, therefore, prefer conformity achieved by propagandistic indoctrination to the fractious
questions and definitions figure 18. Artist unknown, mother praying with children. From The Shepherd and His Flock, No. 12 (Philadelphia: Baptist General Tract Society, 1824). Courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia. energies of reasoned dissent. As forms of visual information, religious propaganda exhorts certain attitudes and behavior as desirable and vilifies certain groups, individuals, or traits as unacceptable. The message of figure 18, which I discuss in much greater historical detail in chapter 6, is that the family depends fundamentally on the faithful observation of domestic duties by mothers and that fathers are enjoined to support this duty by the salary they earn. Mothers are to be at home, with their children, while fathers are supposed to be earning the daily
the function of images 71 bread and enabling the comfortable middle-class existence that allows mothers to preside over the domestic court. With this in mind, it seems clear that an image such as figure 18 (as well as the Sande mask [fig. 13]) is invested with important aspects of the worldview of those who circulate and value it. This sort of image can be interpreted as a social document that endorses such forms of social structure as gender roles, economic status, racial or ethnic identity, systems of kinship, or social associations. Images that are designed to exert influence as visual forms of persuasion or instruction can be very rich sources of information for the scholar who wishes to understand them as instruments in service to particular interests.

displacing rival images and ideologies The final operation of images that I want to outline here consists of the fear or resentment of them in all religions, which often leads to the damage, destruction, or removal of rival images. Iconoclasm, as I explore at much greater length in chapter 4, involves more than mere destruction. Abuse or elimination of images is typically part of a larger task of displacing or discrediting a rival. Images readily become the site of conflicting ideologies or identities. An example from made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions figure 19. Hamsaloo Megistu, Crucifixion, 1984, oil on canvas, 61/2  5 made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the function of images 73 the seventeenth-century Italian artist Guido Reni, which hung in the nave of the He is drawn as a fat person. did not offer a counterversion of Christ appearance. The Christ of faith does not have a look. Evangelical faith is faith in what the Bible says. For this Ethiopian Protestant, who had been shaped by a polemical inter-Christian rivalry in a nation dominated by Coptic Orthodoxy, which was largely absent in the provinces, images signified the wrong allegiance. Removing or ignoring them was a strategy of purified thinking and ideological opposition. This list of visual operations begs for articulation and expansion. In fact, each of the chapters that follow will do just that within the context of particular cultures and historical moments. My immediate purpose, however, has been to outline a general range of the various functions of images and visual practices in many different religions. Having done so, I feel it is important to acknowledge, as anyone who has studied the use of images in religious practices will immediately recognize, that none of these functions is entirely discrete. Most images combine two or more purposes. For instance, the image to which someone addresses a petition for deliverance from affliction also delineates a sacred space, and it may influence the petition behavior, offer protection or remedy, enforce gender or class differences, and embody a presence for the sake of divine communion. Images do what their users require of them, which may involve many things at once. The point of the typology I have outlined is, first, to enumerate the different but often interwoven functions of visual practices and, second, to suggest how much the meaning of an image depends on the ritual or practice that employs it in the temple, home, or community. Moreover, the typology is inductive, the result of a historiography of images, not a philosophical deduction from first principles. It follows, therefore, that the list is incomplete and will need to expand as evidence requires. A final note. By stressing function, I am aware that my approach to the study of visual culture runs the risk of marginalizing the material characteristics of the image. This is a risk that must be minimized by making a point to attend to the image qua object, since it is often the case that the use of the image and the interpretation given it by those who use it are keyed to the image's particular physical features. I want to emphasize, accordingly, that the study of visual culture should attempt
questions and definitions to balance reception with production. To this must be added an acknowledgment of the important influence that the physical features and appearance of an image exert on its reception. Yet what believers see is the image as an engaged signifier, not the aesthetic object or curiosity that the connoisseur, art collector, or tourist may see. Vision is a complex assemblage of seeing what is there, seeing by virtue of habit what one expects to see there, seeing what one desires to be there, and seeing what one is told to see there. Parsing these intermingled motives and discerning the cultural work they perform as intermingled is the task of critical scholarship. Understanding how these motives make belief happen in visual media is the subject of the next chapter.
chapter 3 The Covenant with Images In the art romance The Marble Faun, Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays American Protestant art pilgrims in nineteenth-century Rome, the narrator articulates a made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
defining visual culture 37 evidence for an assertion, thereby corroborating a scholar's claim by offering an example of an entire class. In the case of demonstration, or showing the object one intends to interpret, images are reproduced when they are the object of investigation, that is, juridically speaking, when they are to be made to testify on their own behalf, and the scholar-jurist will bring to them the corroborative evidence of exemplification. An art historian, therefore, will reproduce a painting by an artist when the point is to investigate that image. There is a certain object whose singular history and appearance is the object of explanation. The art historian may make use of exemplification by enumerating several instances of a type of image (e.g., images that share the subject matter, technique, patronage, or authorship of the image under question), but if we are to understand why this painting looks the way it does, we must see it. No other form of evidence, such as description or comparison, will substitute fully for the image itself, though reproductions themselves can be ambiguous and limited. Exemplification is a form of evidence that is of works of art. Hawthorneo-romantic cult of Womanhood aside, his moral criticism of art offers an insight into the hermeneutics of viewing images. There is a kind of sympathy at work in the way one sees images. Another, less romantic way of thinking about this relation is to say that viewer and image agree to a particular range of possibilities and codes of interpretation before the viewer is able to see what the image may reveal.3 To push beyond that limit requires the negotiation of a new contract. There is a tacit agreement, a compact or a covenant, that a viewer observes when viewing an image in order to be engaged by it, in order to believe what the image reveals or says or means or makes one feel, in order to believe there is something to believe, some legitimate claim to truth to be affirmed. The miracle of seeing what the image envisions does not happen without this covenant. Even as they operate in the practices examined in the last chapter, images enter into this contractual relation with viewers. What is it that images do to make belief or trust or agreement or the visual experience of truth possible? What role do they play in creating the medium that joins viewers with what they see? This chapter argues that while looking at an image, a viewer makes certain tacit assumptions that provide a necessary condition for affirming what the image delivers. In other words, the covenant struck between viewer and image has portentous significance in determining what the image is seen to show. A particular covenant stipulates the terms of the gaze that joins viewer and image in a social relation. Covenants are necessary whenever people must operate on trust, which holds true in virtually every department of life. Covenants do not pertain only to religious or legal affairs, but even to quotidian aspects of perception and knowledge. Human consciousness may be characterized as a tissue of beliefs, expectations, assumptions, and trusts, a shifting array of covenants drawn up between individuals and the groups to which they belong. Seeing cannot escape the practicality of such covenants, and one enters into them in every moment of life in maintaining the cultural relations in which one exists. These covenants
or compacts take several different forms depending on the society and situation in question. But the following list may capture the majority of conditions under which a representation such as an image is regarded as compelling. Cultures may define the nature of the covenant differently, thus rendering th
the covenant with images 77 idity viction stFor purposes of discussion, I use the appropriately ambivalent term true, whose meanings range from dible,accurate,drect thful. as the proactive contribution of the of faith. One may accept an image as true because it bears the will of oneommmunity. 2. One may accept an image as true on the authority of someone who is believed to know. 3. One may accept an image as true because it appears to satisfy certain established criteria such as conformity to previous experience or corroboration by other representations. 4. One may accept an image as true because it represents an ideal or desirable state of affairs. This list suggests how pervasive and fundamental covenants of representation are in human experience.5 The Presumption of Seeing As innocent as seeing may seem when we think of the world pouring into an eye, vision is far less passive than it appears. One must presume much in order to see something as meaningful. A photograph of the inside of an atom, the caption st Look at the Inside of an Atom,>makes starkly visible the sheer presumption of seeing. And a small photolithograph of this newspaper clipping by the German artist Gerhard Richter compounds the sense that visibility is what we commonly demand of the world if it is to be intelligible.6 The photograph that Richter reproduced purports to show what the interior of an atom looks like, in the same way that a newspaper photograph offers the likeness of the winning goal in a football game or the unhappy expression of a politician at an inopportune moment. Something rare, unexpected, and quite fleeting: a snapshot of a telling instant that one would not ordinarily see. The covenantal agreement one strikes with such images is that seeing something proves its existence. But the photograph that Richter reproduced consists only of a gray, blotchy haze with no discernible forms. One sees literally
Seen in this light, Richtermage actually subverts perception by technological assistance, laying bare the conviction that photography captures the elusive reality of things. Reality does not exist as a static essence to be beheld. What shows itself in this st look the fact that there is not exactly anything to see. Nebulous blobs, indefinable shapes that donook like anything, that arenven fully there. The atom, one might say, has no likeness. Its very image subverts the covenant of seeing. And yet the idea that a blurry, indeterminate snapshot captures something as infinitesimally small but absolutely universal is bracing. What if that is what atoms look like? Is this, then, an icon of the foundation of matter as we know it? Does this picture bring viewers to the mysterious threshold of the structure of existence, of the entire cosmos? Some viewers may wonder if there is hovering somewhere within the gray haze the primordial substrate of being. With that query the epistemological covenant begins to merge with a metaphysical covenant: this st look glimpse into a domain of mystery is alluring because it promises an even more encompassing knowledge. At least, this is how some viewers might regard the imaget as some peer into the astronomical depths of outer space in hope of discerning divine finger-prints. The willingness with which such viewers might submit themselves to Richtermage (or some distant nebula) as telling the truth about something far beyond their capacity to see is itself a leap of faith, an act of seeing that is an act of belief. Whether or not gazing at the picture of an atomnside is religious,
expecting that language can help us recognize what we are missing. We also presume that the image can be inserted into a discourse, a conversation or an interchange structured as a set of terms and ideas. Our confidence, however, is presumptuous, because the image may not be a representation of anything; it may declare nothing. What happens to representation when the covenant underlying it is called into question? This question is implicit in the reflections above on the photograph of an atomterior and Richterhotolitho-graph of the newspaper photo. It is .ERR, COD:1. That is the normal expectation of photo-journalism, whose prevailing covenant with the viewer is to issue accurate but trueotographs. There is an operation of assent, not the same as an act of religious faith, but a kind of compact one
questions and definitions figure 20. Gerhard Richter, Eight Student Nurses, 1966, oil on canvas, each 363/8 279/16 inches. Used with permission of the artist. Courtesy of Hans and Brigitte Wyss Collection, Zurich, Switzerland. on the element of artifice in such prosaic images. The individuals are anonymous (though their names were listed in newspapers). Moreover, seen in full, the eight images lined up bear clear similarities in coiffure, format, expression, and presentation of the self as though to observe a ceremonial occasion such as high school graduation. The genre diminishes peculiarities, and Richteranner of execution only accents that transformation of individuals into types. Yet characteristic features remain. Each face belongs to a discrete person, and one has no difficulty imagining that each registers an individualersonality. The fact that each woman was brutally executed by a maniac heightens the viewerror and desire to see their individual features. Looking at them, however, we have an inescapable sense of the burden of type, its preponderance in every case. If these individuals have made choices about hairstyle and fashion, they have been choices circumscribed by a narrow range of options shared by a large number of people. The uniformity of presentation is clearly echoed in the uniforms they each wear. In other words, these ritualized documents of identity argue that
one you heard so much about! The advertising image proclaims: `s is what you need to be happy, to be complete, to be wanted or needed. Each case viewers behold the image, having already accepted as true, as their very compact with it, what it asserts about itself to them. The burden of contradiction rests on the viewer. The covenant frames a way of seeing or a gaze by establishing the epistemological and even moral conditions under which viewers encounter an image. With the compact in place, viewers are prepared to hear the image speak to and act upon them. If for some reason the image fails to live up to the covenant, the viewer reacts by denying its claim to truth and so falls out of trust with the image. This could lead to violence toward the image but most often results in a renegotiation of the contract under which one views it. Thus the disturbing quality of Richter painting of student nurses: the looming anonymity of each person is exacerbated by the large and uniform size, the tonal palette, and the blurring of the images, all of which refuse to deliver the concrete persons who lost their lives. The images themselves cannot tell viewers who the people are, and, worst of all, the visual rhetoric of the photographs suggests that their identity is irretrievable. Perhaps this infuses them with an elegiac character, underscoring their loss. Grimly, this may have been on the artist's mind. When asked in an interview in 1966 if working from photographs.. ERR, COD:1.
..ERR, COD:1.. 82 questions and definitions conflicted with the need as a portrait painter to know the sitter, Richter replied: I don't think the painter need either see or know his sitter. A portrait must not express anything of the sitter.."

33.  ##page_start##87##page_end##  ##start##the terms with the images, making a kind of puzzle out of the grids. Or one might ask if there is a subliminal association between the existing correspondences, such as the femininity of la lune and the ladyigh-heeled shoe; the ..ERR, COD:1..
the covenant with images 83 viewer to show the very features of showing, to see vision happening. This is a compact that requires the dismantling of such covenants as likeness. If it is true that viewers enter into a relation of trust with an image, what does this imply about the operation of explicitly religious imagery? Word and Image and the Compact of Communicability Published by the American Sunday School Union in 1909, the lesson made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
Union, 1909). Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum, Wheaton, Illinois. sound of the alphabet and the writing it composes were supposed to bear an analogous relation to the things it designates, which are mediated by imagery. The idea is that writing, speech, and images are links in a single semiotic chain that terminates in material reality. Images in this chain are a kind of half-condensed language, pictographs on the way to being script. Magritte’s painting challenges the integrity of this chain. The terms in the painting seem largely to cohere as a set of references to natural elements—la neige, la lune, l’orage, le désert, and l’acacia—ERR, COD:1.
the covenant with images 85 figure 22. Renagritte, La Clef des songes (The Interpretation of Dreams), 1930, oil on canvas, 81 60 inches. Photo: Erich Lessing/ Art Resource, New York. 04 C. Herscovici, Brussels/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. seems more or less to cohere as a class of ordinary household items. They are just the sort of thing one would see in a primer. Looking at the painting, viewers must decide how to proceed by examining the compact with the image they will presume. Will they insist that the image makes sense, which simply eludes them? Or will they conclude that the disjunction of word and image casts doubt
questions and definitions figure 23. Alphabet page, The New England Primer, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1782. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society. on the reliability of the instrument? If the latter, a natural reaction is to imagine a mistake in the printing of the image, a faulty registration that has resulted in a misplacement of word or image. If, however, viewers hold to the original covenant governing instructional imagery notion of a one-to-one correspondence between word and image they will proceed by attempting to discern a level of meaning that may not be immediately apparent. Accordingly, one strains to resolve the disjunction of abutted signs, because the rhetoric of the grid prompts the viewer, long accustomed to the graphic logic of order, to believe that there is good reason to expect it.
indeed, viewers intolerant of the lack or discontinuity of meaning may go to absurd lengths to make sense of Magritte. They might strain to discern hermetic associations. The images on the left side of the painting are smooth and round; those on the right, pointed, hot, or heavy, suggesting a violence or capacity for pain. One might seek to realign the terms with the images, making a kind of puzzle out of the grids. Or one might ask if there is a subliminal association between the existing correspondences, such as the femininity of la lune and the ladyb>high-heeled shoe; the organic nature of the egg and the acacia tree; the severity of the desert and the blunt the covenant with images 87 Indeed, viewers intolerant of the lack or discontinuity of meaning may go to absurd lengths to make sense of Magritte. enforce the covenant that expects a systemic, overarching rationale or program of meaning in the image. But then the link of candle and ceiling (le plafond) stubbornly resists explanation. Perhaps that single cell is mistaken? Or perhaps ceilingfers to cloud cover, if we strain a bit to link the term to natural phenomena? The impulse to find meaning is driven by the compact one forces on the image or wants to enforce with the imageooperation. Magritte delighted in complicating this very presumption. The Sunday school lesson card (fig. 21) verifies and quickly responds to this predisposition for rationality. Consulting James 3:1promptly solves the mystery. But in the meantime, the brightly colored card has caught onettention, and that was certainly its purpose. The small details juxtaposed to one another form a visual riddle that the caption only deepens. Is there anything tonguelike in a gurgling spring, a sailboat, a passel of vines, and a horseead? Did Magritte design Sunday school literature before he became a well-known Surrealist painter? But, as I said, the biblical passage makes everything clear. The preliminary confusion tactically caused by the imagery on the card vanishes when one reads verses 3, 4, 11, and 12, which identify the iconography. The third chapter of the book of James addresses the trouble caused among communities of faith by the offenses of speech. TongueGreek (glossa) as in Latin (lingua), the word for both lan-guage and the physiological organ that helps produce speechves in the English of the King James Version (quoted on the verso of the card) as a metonym of the human inclination to evil: tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 8). Later the text uses another favorite poetic representation of the human will to
questions and definitions evil: ye have bitter envingy and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 14). The tongue and the heart both ground evil in the in the mouths, allowing the rider to n about their whole body. 3)? Are not great ships maneuvered by a small helm (v. 4)? The tongue is small but ileth the whole body. 6). And how is it, the writer asks, that of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. 10)? This contradicts the lesson seen in nature: h a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?v. 11. The visual puzzle of the lesson card invites scrutiny, because placing images together prompts the viewer accustomed to instructional literature to look for a mechanism of reference in which each image designates some idea and for a possibly allegorical configuration of meaning in the relationship of the four images to one another. In either case, it is essentially impossible to look at the card and not attempt to discern a rationale at work in the selection and arrangement of the four images. The difference between Magritteainting, titled La Clef des songes in French, and the card is that no key (cléf) exists in the first case. There may be a distorting dream logic at work, but there does not appear to be a secret message that, once determined, resolves any tension or contradiction in the configuration of word and image on the paintinsurface. In the case of the lesson card, by contrast, no irresolution remains after the Bible is consulted. The imagessistance to meaning is supposed to dissolve once the biblical words are established as the referent of the images. The hierarchy in Protestant pedagogy generally ranks words above images for several reasons, the most important of which is the metaphysical nature of divine revelation in the biblical word. As I suggested in the introduction, Calvin conflated speech and writing in order, like the Sunday school card, to tame the effervescence of the tongue as the register of the Holy Spirit (glossolaliaaiking in tongues one unruly manifestation of the Spirit that did not suit the mainstream Protestant framework of dogmatics, confession, and theological disputation). In addition to endorsing an orthodox Protestant preference for the systematic, intertextual nature of scripture, of theology as the science of theo-logos (God-speech), linking words with images offers other advantages. Words interact with images in a way that allows them the
the covenant with images advantage of both appealing to children and
delivering highly defined content. For conservative Protestants, belief
is often inseparable from its articulation. As pointed out in the
introduction, believing is preeminently the practice of proposing what
one believes. Children must recite by memory (or read aloud) long,
carefully composed creedal statements. Speech in these instances
substitutes for text. Conviction and assertion (replacing utterance) are
inseparable. Even personal testimonies, cited, edited, rewritten,
compared with other texts, and taught. Modern forms of knowledge and
institutions associated with teaching, learning, and study are
inconceivable without printed texts. Most forms of authority are based
on a form of textual expertise. The very concept of liclies on
textuality as an established, accessible, shared code, such as a
constitution. All of these features can be traced more or less to the
invention of movable type, which was exploited by the Protestant
Reformation definition of authority as the individual appeal to God.ord.
This Word, perhaps more accurately called Script, made available in
mass-produced, vernacular publication of the Bible (Bookwas believed
to assure the liberty of every human being and could not be contravened
by any human institution. Textuality is thus important for its
construction of modern society and the individual. What it really is at
heart, though, is a fundamental conviction about the structure of
reality, which consists of a clear constellation of four elements:
reader, text, referent, and writer. Textuality is the intelligibility,
or legibility, of these four fitting together in a coherent order.
Textuality is about message-sending and about the correct decoding of
the message. Accuracy, credibility, and authority are among the cultural
preoccupations of textuality.
book declaring Godlory. And God himself is the Word Incarnate. Conservative Protestants understand biblical revelation as a direct configuration of writer/referent, text, and reader. They become especially disturbed when this simplicity is threatened by the complications of textual analysis or historical scrutiny. Images appear most often anchored to texts, which use pictures or diagrams as forms of reference to themselves. A caption frames how one should view an image, foreclosing certain possibilities and narrowing interpretation as much as possible.17 Word and image are placed in tandem, typically with the image subservient to the text as a form of advertisement or illustration, ancillary and unnecessary as far as the text's capacity to bear its essential significance is concerned. Even when words are literally absent in Protestant imagery, textuality is not. The interdependence of word and image and the importance of this relationship for conservative Christians becomes clear in a painting called Godwo Books (1968; fig. 24), by the twentieth-century Protestant illustrator and religious artist Harry Anderson. Congealing within a dense wall of foliage, the head of Jesus hovers as a looming sculptural presence before a seated woman, who rests one hand on an open Bible beside her. The arboreal visage appears more substantial than ephemeral and transforms nature into a clearer sign of divine authorship, not a sign at all but the personal presence of Christ himself or perhaps his portrait-icon. Scripture and nature appear to mirror one another, each underscoring and bearing witness to the other. The difference between images by Magritte and Anderson is that the American Protestant painter strictly controls ambivalence in his painting. In Anderson's picture Jesus is meant to be seen as really there, his being exists in minimal ambivalent relation to the foliage. Magritte, in
the covenant with images 91 figure 24. Harry Anderson, Godwo Books, 1968, oil on canvas. View and Herald Publishing made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions humanity was no longer the measure but only fatefully in possession of made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
What shall we say this picture means? Viewed from the perspective of pious images, it would seem to corroborate nature and scripture as Godwine books, the two forms of Godwesmen's means of self-revelation. If this is so, it may be that the image subordinates nature to scripture as nature is like the Bible, but the Bible is not like nature. After all, natureaws are being contravened in order to conform to the textuality of scripture. The woman, in other words, has stirred from an afternoon of meditation to recognize the divine authorship of nature. But is the image ambivalent? Viewed from the perspective of Magritte, one wonders if Christ may be the product of her imaginative projection onto a suggestive configuration of leaves. Although we might not expect it in the work of a devout artist who provided to his art director whatever he made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions undomesticated a polarized pairing with its opposite. His picture mediates the opposition. The two terms of the polar scheme are distinguished by the division of the visual field into two zones: the top belonging to Jesus; the bottom to the woman, whose head just touches but does not penetrate into the upper register. It is as if this female Moses drew nigh to the sacred epiphany of the burning bush but stopped short, as piety would demand. Nature and culture construct one another in a tame matching and wedding of word and image, male and female. Although the woman returns the gaze of the monumental Logos, the focus of his gaze is obscured: he appears to take in all time, to oversee the landscape of all creation. The woman sits quite passively in the domestic space of her backyard, a feminine place nestled within the masculine domain of Jesus, the creator-god of all nature. Nature is not a place manner of religious tracts with an image that threatens confusion but provides deliverance. Comparison of the tract illustration with Escherrint reveals important differences. The tract
the covenant with images 95 figure 25. Tract cover illustration, re Are You Going?. multiplex gallery below, has not some transcendent sense of the situation. At least, this is the assumption one wants to make. Stare at the image long enough, and one can experience a kind of existential claustrophobia. The dronelike figures march mindlessly to and fro, never arriving and not knowing whence they come. They appear blithely unaware of their precarious
After several minutes of this, one is drawn to interpret the leaning figureuriosity as a single transcendent ego. One finds such perches now and then in daily life, on a park bench, at a baseball stadium, from the observation deck of a tall building, when the faceless busyness of our fellow humans resembles the antlike but pointless industry of Escheriny figures. What does it all mean? one asks with a certain degree of desperation. Escher ventures no answer, content to offer only a poignant evocation of the experience. Not so the tract illustration. Driven by the evangelical motive of the American Bible Society, the tractroducer, the image addresses the viewer directly the manner of religious tracts with an image that threatens confusion but provides deliverance. Comparison of the tract illustration with Escherrint reveals important differences.
The text puts matters plainly: it is important is the path you take in life. Jesus tells us that there are only two paths to choose from. The tract illustration rejects the possibility of multiple legitimate paths that Escher visualizes among his figures. The tract underpinnings of the notion of representation at work in Anderson’s picture and the American Bible Society tract illustration affirmation of God’s the reality it represents. Viewers take pictures seriously because they consider these pictures to share some aspect of the reality portrayed. To have this relation called into question, as Magrittepicture.
questions and definitions figure 27. Renagritte, La Condition humaine (The Human Condition), 1933, oil on canvas, 393/8 × 317/8 inches. Gift of the Collectors Committee, Image 03 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington. 04 C. Herscovici, Brussels/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. does so delightfully, Rights Society (ARS), New York. does so delightfully, is to be made abruptly aware of the presumptuousness of representation and our expectations about its authority. Magritte not only undermines the authority of pictures; he suggests far more radically that our notions of nature and reality itself may be in doubt. Which is more real picture or the world that a viewer believes it represents? The seamless relation of sign and referent revealed in The Human Condition does not authorize the image so much as raze its foundation, which is urself. Sign and referent may be of a
the covenant with images 99 figure 28. Renagritte, Loir rapide (Swift Hope), 1928, oil on canvas 191/2 × 251/2 inches. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York. 04 C. Herscovici, Brussels/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. piece, but suddenly that is nothing to be reassured about, for the bottom has fallen out of our presumptuous and complacent confidence in the fidelity of representation. Magritte did not stop with the artifice of images and nature. He took the even more disturbing measure of implicating the arbitrary relationship of language to both image and nature. Swift Hope (1927; fig. 28) assembles the commonplace features of conventional landscape painting but regards them as dark blobs suspended in an indeterminate space, where they are recognized not by shape or feature but by labeling each object in its placement relative to the others. The words designate the objects by referring to the conventions of landscape painting and linear perspective. The relation between words and things is arbitrary. Indeed, the testament of Swift Hope seems to be that words reveal nothing about things. The objects beside which they float remain ineffable, completely unresponsive to the semiotic operation of their labels, although the term chaussée plomb pursues the humorous absurdity of
questions and definitions the painting by describing the dark blob as a road of lead. The object lies diagonally as a road might recede perspectively into a landscape, but Magritte playfully labels the blob itself as a piece of lead called a road. So language is not entirely detached from the things it designates, though one senses the artist's playfulness in this risible concession to realism. made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the covenant with images 101 figure 29. Rev. Robert F. Y. Pierce, Quarterly Lesson Review, alkalboard drawing. From Pictured Truth: A Hand-Book of Blackboard and Object Lessons (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895). Photo: Author. symbolic seeding of the world with religious meaning. The image delivers a world of faith. An inscribed passage of words along the winding path affirms a neat fit between language and what it describes. Signifiers and things enjoy a reliable, stable relationship. As a didactic device, the window vouches for transparency and clarity of vision. Its panes demarcate a modular lesson plan that constitutes a whole and organized theological act of seeing that promises spiritual deliverance. The illustration refers to the march of Sunday school lessons over the course of the year toward a comprehensive study of scripture. The parsing of scripture adds up to a complete picture. Seeing is deployed as a reliable metaphor for grasping salvation. To behold is to hold firmly in one and what the scriptures promise. Seeing and saying are mutually interchangeable, enjoying a correspondence that assures their reliability.
questions and definitions It is just this parity of word and image, signifier and referent, that popular religious culture wishes to affirm. The need for a semantic stability goes to the heart of piety grounded in a common understanding of the Bible as the literal revelation of God and to cultures that insist on the Bible. But it is not just the ability to read God's Word that has motivated Protestants. What they teach their children about the world and human knowledge of it is ultimately no less important than reading the Bible. Indeed, their epistemology must precede their biblical interpretation, because their hermeneutic draws from their prior understanding of the nature of reading and understanding. In other words, teaching children to read has often amounted in significant ways among Protestants to teaching them how both to read the Bible and to see the world as an intelligible and therefore legible text. An example of this is found in the illustrated pages of The New England Primer, first published in 1699 and used throughout the eighteenth century in colonial northeastern America, even enjoying use in classrooms well into the next century. As I have discussed elsewhere, the alphabet page of the primer aligned letter, image, and phrase in order to assist memorization (see fig. 23). But the additional lesson, though tacit, was no less important. Textual, verbal, and visual signifiers were presented as enjoying a natural alliance. The letter helped compose the utterance and sentence, which rhymed and corresponded to the illustrated world of scripture and human experience. This imbrication of word, sound, thought, and image encouraged the idea of an integrated configuration of all aspects of a sign into a reliable representation of a stable world. Such lessons affirmed a close fit between language and experience and stressed the linguistic character of images: they speak, tell, describe, confirm as representations. And they work in tandem with language. Animating each image is a declaration, a predication that can be succinctly expressed in a caption. And the rhyme scheme assisted children in remembering the associations and discerning that English and its proper acquisition consist of a certain music. Part of the truth of representation is its intrinsic coherence rhyme and rhythm. Absorbing all of these connections is the overarching lesson of print culture, a lesson about the textuality of images and the senses and the world to which they correspond that is both physical and moral in character. It is a clear articulation of the covenant with images as they are textualized among Protestants as well as many other modern people, religious or not.
One of the important consequences of the acquisition of language and its corresponding form notion of reality. This understanding of experience and representation maintains that the world is apprehensible through language: that language is a commonly shared, universal system that mirrors the stability and order of nature. Among believers, language triangulates humanity, divinity, and nature. Embedded in this configuration is the epistemological structure of communication, which forms the foundation or covenant that members of the culture enjoy with communication media such as images. One of the most effective ways of accepting or coming to believe in the covenant of transparency that informs this commonsense constellation of word and image is, ironically, the distortion of it. Young language users find it most helpful and enjoyable (or helpful because enjoyable) to learn the maleration of language by seeing it stretched or subverted. The flirtation with ambivalence can engage attention and facilitate memory. The enduring appeal of nursery rhymes owes a great deal to the amusing effect of bending language into nonsense through rhyme and a mesmerizing cadence: Hey diddle diddle! The cat and the fiddle, The cow jumped over the moon; The little dog laughed To see such sport, And the dish ran away with the spoon. Today educators who encourage the use of nursery rhymes in early childhood education (years two through six) cite several advantages in doing so. First, classic nursery rhymes such as Cat and the Fiddle enriching vocabulary. Hearing this classic rhyme may be the first occasion that a young child encounters the word fiddle. One educator noted that a selection of thirty nursery rhymes included as many as one-third of the number of words composing a young childorking vocabulary. Third, nursery rhymes improve language decoding skills and memory and teach children essential features of language, such as alliteration, rhyme, syntax, and grammar. The simple
questions and definitions rhythms and rhyme schemes of nursery rhymes also encourage the generative use of language: children find it quite natural to replicate the rhythms and rhythms in creating rhymes of their own. The music of the language is easily and happily absorbed, which several enthusiasts for example, opens with the repetition of an unusual word, diddle, a verb that means waste time it also move quickly back and forth, at is, the motion of playing a fiddle, producing a playful song with no other purpose than the enjoyment of playing it. Diddle is not a word children would know or use, nor would many adult speakers of English, for that matter. Its formal role in the rhyme is its metrical scan and its relationship to fiddle. As the rhyme unfolds, the sentence structure becomes quite orthodox: subject, verb, and object are entirely straightforward. The content and action described, of course, are anything but nonsensical. ws do not jump over the moon, little dogs do not laugh, and dishes do not run away with spoons. But it is the musical expression of nonsense in perfectly sensible grammar that provides the rhymelight. One hears the parent or teacher chortling with the young child about the silliness of the scene. It is the very deviation from the everyday character of language as a conveyer of information and description of plain facts that makes the nursery rhyme enjoyable. One might also say that this deviation reinforces the capacity of language to describe and inform, to grasp and construe the ordinary. As long as the language of the nursery rhyme is circumscribed by the protocol of play
the covenant with images 105 or make-believe, it is enjoyed as willful
deviation from normal discourse and thereby, ultimately, as its
affirmation. A similar operation appears at work in Andersonainting
(see fig. 24): the menace of ambivalence in the emergent face made his
view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that
single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
questions and definitions conditions under which viewers take an image to be true. We may now enflesh that list with greater specificity, articulating and adding to it. Two groups of covenants are arranged according to their common features. The first group pertains to criteria entirely external to the image itself; the second group describes the imitative or mimetic nature of representation and those forms of representation that renegotiate it or subvert it altogether. Group I 1. The communal compact assures viewers that what they see is what the group or community holds as true. 2. The orthodox covenant assures viewers that what they see will be ideologically correct and suitable for consumption. 3. The authoritarian covenant assures viewers that what they see is valid or trustworthy because it bears the approval of an acknowledged authority. 4. The open contract assures the viewer that no conditions dictate the viewer interpretation of the image, but it vouches that a meaningful engagement with the image will be repaid in some manner. Group II 5. The mimetic compact or covenant assures viewers that what they see is a reliable portrayal because it conforms to what they already know something looks like. 6. The allegorical covenant assures viewers that what they see is a symbolic representation, not a depiction, but a visual code that must be deciphered. 7. The exemplary compact assures viewers that an image presents to them the ideal, typical, or formulaic appearance of a subject. 8. The expressivist compact assures viewers that what they see is the essence or spirit of a subject, not its accidental appearances. 9. The deconstructive covenant assures viewers that the image they see self-critically questions the motives of vision, the conventions of image-making, and the relationship of images to any other form of representation. These covenants operate as guarantees (rather like the content rating that films receive in the United States) but also as something like a key or legend on a map: images will generate widely varying interpretations
the covenant with images 107 and responses depending on the contractual conditions under which they are viewed. Invoking a new covenant can quickly and dramatically modify the meanings ascribed to an image. Renegotiating the prevailing covenant can be an activity of creative, critical, and even revolutionary significance in the history of visual production and reception. And any image might combine several covenants in its viewing and visual consumption. Indeed, the more contractual relations in place, the more secure the meaning ascribed to the image and the more confident the gaze that apprehends the image. Providing visual examples of each covenant may clarify the gnomic definitions above. Regarding the alphabet page from The New England Primer (fig. 23) in the way that schoolchildren conventionally did when learning to read is a fine example of the communal compact at work: children accepted as authoritative the network of letters, images, and sentences, not simply because the teacher or parent told them to do so (invoking the authoritarian covenant), but because they saw the rules exemplified in the primerages at work in the discourse of their homes and churches and in the public world around them. The chalk talk image prescribing the path to salvation (fig. 29) presupposed an orthodox compact with viewers. Parents and teachers using it to convey the truths of Protestant Christianity to their wards invited them to expect they would see nothing in the diagram that delivered anything other than dogmatically pure Protestant teachings. As with the previous instance, it is generally the case that the terms of an orthodox contract are combined with an authoritarian covenant, since authority, community, and orthodoxy reinforce one another in constructing a bulwark of consensus. A political propaganda poster is an image that relies on a compact of authority: one believes it because the government says so. The open contract is the one that readers of novels form with their authors, viewers of abstract paintings draw up with their makers, or clients of tarot readers agree to in their search for meaning. The open contract invites chance into the construction of meaning and avoids excessive restraints on the open-ended gamble that creative seeing or reading exploits. It is not that all restraint is eliminated; rather, it is developed over the course of rumination. One agrees to arrive at an eventual meaning and even then to allow for a final lack of closure. This relation may enable a viewing of Wassily Kandinsky painting Improvisation 30 (1913; fig. 30), which refuses to assign the image an explicit or final meaning. The mimetic compact is one that, at first sight, seems perfectly ordinary: the agreement that guarantees a viewer that an image will yield a

straightforward representation of something. The viewer will see a landscape or a portrait as an accurate, reliable reflection of the stable physical world that all viewers inhabit. As such, however, the mimetic contract is no less presumptuous than any other, since any representation as well as the world it purports to envision relies on conventions, assumptions, and interventions to make it recognizable. Even a photograph, in one regard undeniably a trace of the very thing it images, is inextricably bound up in the viewer's contributions to its intelligibility. Because it is a frozen instant in the flow of time, John Berger has written, seeing a photograph as meaningful requires placing it within a narrative. 

instant photographed can only acquire meaning insofar as the viewer can read
the covenant with images 109 into it a duration extending beyond itself. When we find a photograph meaningful, we are lending it a past and a future. The beholder hare in visual meaning-making reduces an ambiguity. But images and covenants make different use of ambiguity. Some strictly limit ambiguity; others seek a high level of ambivalence. As the child of nursery rhymes endorses the default, or mal, de of language, so do certain forms of pictures presuppose a norm from which Godwo Books (fig. 24) may invite the reader to view it in the terms of a covenant that allows for something other than strictly lism, nce gods do not peek through trees in ordinary experience. The unusual appearance is meant to be seen allegorically, meaning other than but expressed in the refiguration of the ordinary. An instance of this is the manner in which the pious viewer was meant to regard figure 21, whose mimetic depictions of objects failed to deliver the Christian meaning until they were seen through the allegorical filter of the biblical text. Or, in a very different instance, one might view Kandinskyainting (fig. 30) as bearing secret or arcane meanings embedded in his treatment of forms and colors. The exemplary compact holds most commonly in visual advertise-ments or in fairy tales or soap operas: any formulaic image that portrays an idealized appearance. This genre of compact assures viewers that the deviation from ordinary appearances in the image (the girl next He defined this creative impulse as the force that moved him to create images instead of submitting himself to reproducing an object-physcial appearance. Rather than respond to what he might see before him, the artist responds to a feeling, intuition, or sensibility that he has fostered within himself. What he sees before him is then freely, improvisationally transformed in the creative act. Figure 30 still bears the recognizable traces of subject matter-ups of figures, hills and mountains, buildings, and, in the lower right, two
questions and definitions cannons firing into the center of the image. In the year that he painted the image (1913), Kandinsky acknowledged this subject and its temporal relevance: presence of the cannons in the picture could probably be explained by the constant talk [of war] that has been going on throughout the year. The expressivist contract assures the viewer that the image is not a faithful reproduction of an object as the visual equivalent of malose but an interpretation of an object driven by an artist’s consideration of its essential or salient features, though perhaps without the brief that an open contract would authorize. The final covenant is the deconstructive, which conditioned my readings of images by Richter and Magritte. To operate as their makers intended them, figures 20, 22, 27, and 28 must be viewed as edgy provocations, as deliberate attempts at dismantling cherished assumptions about the reliability or trustworthiness of images. This subversive or revolutionary purpose project or construct a system of signifiers. re is no spoon, the young mystic informed Neo in The Matrix. There is only the mind bending itself into the shape of a spoon. I borrow the term stipulation from the philosopher Nelson Goodman, whose constructivist accounts of representation push far beyond the mimetic and expressivist covenants and accord well with image-making paradigms pursued by modern artists such as Magritte. Each of these paradigms tends to serve a different epistemology. For example, the mimetic assumes a correspondence theory of truth in which words or pictures conform to the realities they represent. The expressivist compact shifts from a fixed relation of imitation to a form of representation in which the signifier does not seek to describe a static, given reality but puts in its place a metaphor or a performance of visual elements that interprets the subject. The deconstructive covenant doubts or even rejects the possibility of a preexisting, static world to copy or a spiritual essence to intuit and express metaphorically. Regarding such a transcendent reality as God to be beyond knowledge, the
the covenant with images 111 deconstructive trust may proceed in the belief that the divine is a mystery discernible in the subversion of the systems of reference that an image-maker, and by extension a culture, stipulates or constructs. The covenant in each case consists of a compact that the viewer presumes in apprehending and trusting the image.31 But as I have said, most images are viewed and used and interpreted with more than one covenant in force. Moreover, each covenant offers important advantages within the life of what we might call a single community of interpretation. Assisted by authoritarian, communal, and orthodox contracts, the mimetic made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
chapter 4 The Violence of Seeing Idolatry and Iconoclasm

When an idol falls, its place does not long remain vacant. A rival is often quickly erected. Or as Stanislaw Lec more poignantly advised aspiring iconoclasts: in smashing monuments, save the pedestals always come in handy. The history of religion is in no small way a history of cultural rivalries. Religious belief has a powerful way of becoming the preeminent banner or symbol in whose name people organize themselves are defined and maintained. In the history of Western civilization, this inner and outer have often been configured as attitudes toward images, pivoting on ages and its our proper avoidance of images and their surfeit of idols. This distinction has often been marked in ritualized acts of violence, generally called iconoclasm, or the destruction of images. Idolatry and iconoclasm have much to do with the understanding of religion as a historical phenomenon, because this ideological pairing has played a major role in the history of cultural conflicts along religious lines. Think only of the familiar manifestations of this pairing: ancient Judaism versus Egyptian and then Canaanite polytheism, Islam versus Arabian polytheism, Judaism versus Christianity, Islam versus Christianity, Christianity versus all forms of polytheism (Greco-Roman, northern European, Asian, Aboriginal), Byzantine Iconoclastic party versus Orthodox iconodules, Protestantism versus Catholicism, and secular Enlightenment versus religious orthodoxy. In every case, one group (often one version of
images between cultures monotheism) has defined itself in terms of its opposition to a rival of religious images, even in the case of the European Enlightenment of reason as the Supreme Being. And in every instance, without exception, a variety of forms of violence have been applied to enforce the distinction, whether that has meant breaking images; destroying temples; proscribing worship; persecuting, imprisoning, exiling, or executing rival groups and individuals; or making outright war. Whether to bolster the sacred gaze or to break it, violence has always been closely associated, symbolically or literally, with seeing (or not seeing) religious images. This chapter seeks to outline a number of important themes regarding the twin concepts of idolatry and iconoclasm. Something of what religious believers see when they look at the world around them, at themselves, and at images is not goodness and light, not heady aesthetic contemplation, but the occasion for violence and scorn. This chapter aims both to discern how idolatry and iconoclasm form two sides of a single coin in the history of religious visual culture and to highlight several promising themes under which scholars and students might proceed to study the violence of seeing. Work in recent years on the history of iconoclasm has made several important contributions to the understanding of images and the meaning of their destruction or proscription in several world religions. First, scholars have linked iconoclasm to the polemical construction of idolatry and rigorously historicized both concept and practice as polemical formations embedded in social conflict. Second, recent scholarship has integrated the study of the destruction of images into larger, encompassing narratives regarding the social and cultural functions of imagery and its destruction, seeing the image as a locus or crossroads, a site in which long narratives of cultural history take shape. Third, scholars have scrutinized fine art and its history of destruction and veneration since the eighteenth century as both sides of the same coin. These writers have called attention to the modern Western ideology of Enlightenment, which has sought to secularize culture but also to sacralize art and artists and thereby has inevitably authorized certain forms of iconoclasm and image veneration. Finally, important scholarship has identified the magic, allure, and power of images as potent reasons for their very destruction in deeply symbolic acts. This work has situated image veneration and image destruction within interpretive accounts that look far beyond both religious orthodoxy and artistic taste in order to explain a broad range of human responses to images.
the violence of seeing Iconoclasm and Its Other Iconoclasm presupposes idolatry. By definition, iconoclasm cannot be conceived or practiced without the requisite other seeks to rout out of human behavior. But this does not mean that iconoclasts are reacting to anything real. In fact, they often imagine the offense they seek to reprove. They need the other to destroy in order to construct a new tradition in which to exist. And they often proceed by substituting one mode of imagery for another. Iconoclasm, in other words, is not a purging of images tout ait but a strategy of replacement. Yet this fact is easy to overlook, since religious scholarship has widely assumed that entire religions such as Judaism and Islam are aniconic, natively disposed to operate without images and therefore inclined to reject them wherever or whenever they are introduced. In a major study of 1989, art historian David Freedberg called this assumption the assumption of aniconism dismissed it as lly untenable. In the case of Islam, for example, depending where and at what period one looks, images of various kinds are found in manuscripts, architecture, tapestries, homes, mosques, and personal devotional items. The same holds for Judaism. Those Protestants, Jews, and Muslims, for example, who express disdain for visual imagery in religious practice and seek to proscribe its use as latrousically put in its place alternative forms of material culture that provide a different form of iconicity. As observed in the introduction, Protestants cherish their Bibles; some Jews affix parchments of scripture in mezuzahs at their doors; Muslims forbid an item with Qurc text written on it to touch the floor. In each case, the text is a material expression of revealed truth that requires reverence as a physical presence of the holy, inasmuch as inappropriate treatment of the text is nothing less than disrespect for its author. This bears at least some similarity to what Byzantine iconodules said of the icon: veneration (or dishonor) of the saintmage passes directly to the prototype. If scholars should approach with skepticism any culturelaim to do without images, despite whatever its members may say, they must adopt a corresponding sobriety toward the use of iconoclasmther. Idol is not a neutral term but one embedded in the history of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thought and practice. The definition of ls, e urgency to destroy them, and the characterization of later fools duped by ignorance or their own vanity form an ancient discourse. Its formation owes much to ancient Israelxexperience as a nation
Judah and Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 34:3) Longing to reestablish Judah and Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 34:3) Longing to reestablish Judah and Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 34:3) Longing to reestablish the united kingdom and political strength of David. Josiah looked to the cult of Yahweh rather than the many rival forms of religion active in Judah, the southern kingdom, and in Jerusalem (even practiced in the temple itself) in order to cultivate divine patronage. The violent destruction of sacred sites and pagan cult images (Asherim is the plural of the name Asherah, who was the Canaanite mother goddess, regarded by some contemporary Jews as the wife of Yahweh), even the violation of the bodies and graves of those who had worshipped other deities, were among the dramatic means of Josiah’s reform. Hosea who characterized Israel as a prostitute who was unfaithful to her husband, Yahweh. Two centuries later, along the shores of Babylon, after the conquest of Judah by the Babylonian army, the prophet Ezekiel raged against a captive Israel for having deserted her husband and Lord like an unfaithful wife. Ezekiel 16:30.3 From the midst of Babylonian exile, an unknown sixth-century prophet, referred to by scholars as Second Isaiah, insisted categorically for the first time that all other gods were lifeless idols that corresponded to nothing but human delusion (Isaiah 44:20). The god of Israel emerged as the only god (ides me there is no god,>Isaiah 44:6). The discourse of ..ERR, COD:1.. ..ERR, COD:3..
the violence of seeing Jewish monotheism as it was set down in prophetic books and extensive redaction of the older books of the Bible. Idolatry as a polemical discourse (laid Hawting conducts an extensive review of the historiography of the origins of Islamic monotheism in order to demonstrate that there is no compelling proof
especially with regard to notions of idolatry and iconoclasm? If pagan Mecca wasn't so pagan, what might have been the Christian and Jewish contributions to the formation of Islam? Is the jahiliyya a concealment of sources? The study of the history of iconoclasm in Christianity has benefited from solid historical investigations of the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy (726 and 815 CE) and the destruction and proscription of church art in Protestant Europe and America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is, however, a much more exhaustive history of iconoclasm and iconophobia in Christianity. For example, Spanish religious authorities in midcolonial Andean Peru found it necessary to seek out and destroy the shrines of Andean belief. The official documents generated by Inquisitional investigations of idolatry and magic as practiced by healers and adepts among the Andean people between 1640 and 1750 shed valuable light on popular practices as well as on the personalities, conceptualities, and ambitions of church officials in Lima and the central coastal region of modern
the violence of seeing Peru. Historian Kenneth Mills has examined the material culture and practices of Andean religion in order to understand how indigenous religion conflicted with and suffered under Spanish rule and the Inquisition but also survived over time by intermingling with Christian belief and practice. The story that Mills tells is not one of sheer oppression but explores where the evidence allows an element of Andean resistance, the made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
images between cultures Andean. In a multilayered account of the annual performance, arguing that the same ritual was experienced very differently by Spanish authorities, Inca nobility, and ethnic Andean groups who had been subject to the Incas during preconquest days.12 Deancrutiny of contemporary imagery associated with Corpus Christi complements Millsinvestigation of idolatry ..ERR, COD:1.. of colonial Cuzcocelebration of Corpus Christi, art historian Carolyn Dean constructs a multilayered account of the annual performance, arguing that the same ritual was experienced very differently by Spanish authorities, Inca nobility, and ethnic Andean groups who had been subject
the violence made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the story of idol worship is a history of the moral descent and degradation of the race. . . . Astray from his God [humankind] seems to gravitate with resistless force downward. The claim assumes a cultural superiority and historical progression toward monotheism. Polytheism, the article confidently preached, the religion of the world in its night time. The religion of the Bible, by . . . or the forceful upending of a huaca and its removal or defacement publicly established and enforced the church authority and that of the Spanish state that stood beside it. Violence was a theatrical performance of change (Millserm is theatrical coercion),
the violence of seeing 125 peoples: each was considered the analogue of the other. They were both seen as simple, unformed, precivilized creatures in need of the disciplines that religious indoctrination would provide. This analogy accounts for the frequent portrayal of indigenous peoples in nineteenth-century Sunday school literature and childrean and instructional materials among American Protestants and Catholics. The indigenous were versions of the children who gazed wide-eyed at their visual representations: their degradation was the state that children were being prepared to overcome. Likewise in paternalist colonial policy, the indigenous were seen as mere children, unintelligent, unsophisticated, and requiring intrusive custodial care. A corresponding parallel between Western children and indigenous peoples appears in the role of violence in the formation of each group. Violence and the evocation of fear figure prominently in religious instructional materials. The idols of the pagan must be smashed in order to demonstrate their inefficacy and emptiness. Accounts in childreniterature of the routing of idolatry serve up violent iconoclasm as a signal part of rites of passage that convert the pagan to Christianity and vicariously usher the American child into the disciplines of maturation. Idolatry and iconoclasm go hand in hand in the disciplining of children and indigenous peoples: the conviction of idolatry is driven home by the destruction of the offending gods, whose power restrains the civilization of the subject until it is broken. Idolatry represents the blindness, resistance, and ignorance of the nonbeliever or child. Iconoclasm enacts his or her liberation. This parallel of American child and colonial pagan is apparent in the passage of one bit of material culture from the history of the Inquisition to modern school life. Mills describes the ritual of humiliation and punishment (the notorious auto-da-f those convicted of idolatry by the Inquisition were punished by being paraded in public to their flogging. They wore the pointed hat that later became the humiliating sign of the schoolroom misfit who sat in front of class wearing the ceat. The Social Life of Images If the Abrahamic religions have relied on the category of idolatry to fuel their respective missionary outreach and zealous policing of religious purity, the many-layered histories of Hindu images show that idolatry and iconoclasm are strategies of appropriating or denying the
images between cultures lives of images. In fact, religion scholar Richard Davis argues that violence against images adds new chapters to their long lives. Idolatry is a ego of discourseat has n used in a polemical and pejorative manner as a way of classifying and censuring the presumed beliefs and practices of others. Idolatry in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian discourse centers on what Davis calls profound denial of livelihood to the images of others. At the same time, it dialectically affirms a community of faith that is distinct from and superior to those it classifies as idolaters. A powerful logic is perhaps at work when Muslims or Christians have destroyed the images of Hindu (or Andean) subalterns: although the victors denounce images as vain, false gods, mere inanimate objects, these images are not dead or empty to those whose gods they embody (nor even to those who destroy the images, as has been argued of Puritan iconoclasts). Iconoclasts attempt a kind of deicide in the service of their conquest. Radical monotheism cannot tolerate other gods because it is premised on the exclusive power and existence of one god. The life of another deity falsifies the monotheistic god, hence Yahweh and Allah in enforcing the first and second commandments in the highly charged destruction of religious images. Idols are an affront to the true deity because they are a denial of its very existence as the only god. Yet iconoclasm often did not spell the end to a Hindu godocal cult image and the god within but added yet another chapter to its life. Davis contends, and does so with richly detailed and convincing evidence, that the temple imagery of Hinduism possesses a historical life that is much larger than iconoclasm, of which iconoclasm is but a part. In Lives of Indian Images he writes the biographies of many images and the gods they portray, suggesting that the twoage and deityuld not be separated but seen as a single form of life with a history full of meandering turns. Davis regards Indian images fundamentally social beings whose identities are not fixed once and for all at the moment of fabrication, but are repeatedly made and remade through interactions with humans. Assuming that the life of an image resides in no single narrative perspective, is controlled by no single storyteller, Davis documents the ongoing biography of an image/god as it moves from one historical or cultural context to another. The local peasant devotee of Vishnu has a claim to the ning a newly excavated statue that is no less real than the claim of the colonial authority, the local municipality, the museum director, or the art historian. Indisputably some form of life is in the imageit the life of the
the violence of seeing 127 god (and which godva, Brahma, Vishnu?)? The life of a religious culture? The life of a nation? The life of a conquered, colonized, benighted people? The life of the universal human spirit? The life of artistic genius? The claims are many. Each claimant constructs a particular cultural frame about the image to explain what it means, and each brings it to life within an interpretive community for whose members the image is a material deposit of meaning. When art historians, historians of religion, and others of us who concern ourselves with Indian religious objects regard an image ..., we focus our attention most often on the aesthetic elegance of its form, on the religious meaning of its iconographic composition, or on the social and political context within which it was fabricated. In these matters, we often think, lies the essential significance of the object, as if meaning were fixed once and for all at the moment of creation. But the later lives of Indian religious images and the ways in which these images come to be relocated and revalorized, I argue, also become intrinsic to their significance. Captured by new proprietors and relocated in new surroundings, their identities shifted significantly from what they had been.23 Davis offers a thick historical description that involves more than the single, original culture that fashioned the image. Such description includes the worlds of the invader, colonizer, religious and political rivals, the collector, and the scholar. The identity of an image is not fixed but contingent, unstable, and pluralistic. The past not exist as such. Rather, it exists only as it is incarnated and reincarnated in memories, texts, objects, and our ongoing collective activity of reconstruction. Nor is the past that is embodied in an object a fixed quality. It comes to be transformed as its audience and the circumstances in which it is encountered are themselves transformed. The historical significance of an object may itself be reconstituted historically.24 Yet the image does not dissolve into a postmodern play of power relations. Davis stitches the many historical episodes of reception together into a biography that is endlessly fascinating and deeply mindful of the conflicting claims to cultural property. In this historiography, images may be the only material reality there is. They are the anchor around which human interests swirl, to which people pin their hopes and desires in the mad and whimsical march of the ages, drawing up covenant after covenant with the same image, which outlasts the time-bound compacts of meaning that endure no longer than those who see the image in those particular ways.
images between cultures. By insisting that we speak of the entity.
legal status and cultural identity of artifacts. Missionaries,
collectors, and early archaeologists helped redefine the lives of Hindu
images. In his 1806 study of Hinduism, *A View of the History,
Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*, Baptist missionary William
Ward combined visual documentation of Hindu deities with literary
descriptions of rituals, theology, and history to provide readers in
England and elsewhere with a detailed introduction to a culture they
knew little if anything about. The three chief deities of Hindu belief
are presented as idols in figure 31a1 statues that at least dimly echo
the Christian trinity in their triadic arrangement. This very
association adds yet another layer of meaning to the lives of these
images. Yet the degree of detail in the illustrated figures surely
registers their ethnological value. There is little distortion or
caricature and the suggestion of a straightforward description. The
viewer is invited to return the gaze of the three figures and regard
them as curious artifacts of another world. The London Missionary
Society collected stone, bronze, and clay deities and sacred objects,
which it proudly placed on display in its Missionary Museum in
nineteenth-century London as is given up by their former worshippers
from a full conviction of the folly and sin of idolatry. These objects
were presented as a new form of spectacle: not as aesthetic objects for
visual delectation, but as trophies of the church triumphant. They were
testaments of success and were therefore of greater value intact,
undamaged, as indices of evangelical efficacy, than destroyed in the
mission field. This amounts to what might be called a
138 images between cultures religious one (the ambassador cited the
council's solutions not to destroy the sacred images of Afghanistan's
population). Western outrage overlooks the degree to which the West was
complicit in contributing to Afghanistan's situation. The U.S. withdrawal from
the nation after the USSR ceased supporting a puppet regime there
thwarted the opportunity to assist in the creation of a government and
social infrastructure that might have restored civil order. The
consequence was anarchy and a power vacuum, which was filled by
warlords, tribalism, the drug trade, al-Qaeda, and, eventually, the
Taliban. The mullahs composing the Council of Scholars reversed their
previous judgment not to harm the buddha figures. According to the
ambassador, Afghanistan's rulers determined to destroy the figures as a
political act that targeted what the regime viewed as an icon of the
West... to mounting American truculence in the search for terrorists,
including Osama bin Laden, who had been targeted in 1998 with
seventy-five cruise missiles in Afghanistan. The power of images in this
instance of iconoclasm consists of the power of the destructive act to
offend the West and to strengthen the otherwise largely impotent
Taliban. Indeed, according to a French commentator, the mullahs ordered
the destruction of the buddhas in order to signal to all Moslems who had
preceded them in Afghanistan, who had respected the statues, were not
real Moslems. The Taliban sought to bolster its standing within the
nation no less than without by a ritual of image destruction. Although
the deed was pitiful, it was not an act of mindless religious fear. The
destruction of art is a political act by virtue of the very terms one
applies to interpreting it. In a major study of the modern history of
the destruction of art, art historian Dario Gamboni wisely rejects the
search for an objective nomenclature, preferring instead to ask under
what circumstances an act is labeled vandalism. This allows him to
complicate the idea of iconoclasm by exploring the great diversity of
ways in which images, objects, and monuments are replaced, relocated,
renamed, placed in storage (see, for instance, fig. 19 here), modified,
updated, destroyed, defaced, banned, confiscated, stolen acts of what
might be called, in one way or another, iconoclasm. 38 Challenging visual
analysts in the academy and the museum to face up to their insistent
failure to take images and the responses they elicit seriously, David
Freedberg provided an insightful survey of the history of iconoclasm.
Gamboni is able to focus with much greater detail on the last two
centuries of
the violence of seeing 133 Boime reasons that this secularization or iconoclastic operation took place because the art gallery was a place in which one could experience any sudden patriotic flush or feel inclined to salute. Effect, he states, image of the flag was completely divorced from those sites in which the ritual of respect or decorum was normally played out. He, almost certainly is not, the putative iconoclasm was enacted not on the objects themselves but in their location in an art gallery. But even this notion ignores the fact that galleries and museums of modern art have been associated again and again with the sacred spaces of chapels and shrines. Johnslag paintings were married in parades or patriotic processions, but they were installed in sequestered spaces for the sake of reverent contemplation as sacrosanct objects. It is more made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and

order to affix to them their claims for legitimacy and its benefits. The Lincoln Memorial and surrounding space became important for this purpose even before African Americans and nonblack supporters of civil rights rallied there in 1963, when Martin Luther King Jr. delivered one of his most celebrated oratories. On Easter Sunday in 1939, African American singer Marian Anderson held a concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to rent Constitution Hall for the occasion.35 The Lincoln Memorial is a place to pronounce and consecrate alternative covenants with the nation that challenge the hypocrisy or failure of a regnant order. But excessively rationalist models of Enlightenment are inclined to overlook or repress the affection and fervor with which patriotic citizens regard their collective symbols. Is it ever possible in the experience of nationhood to transcend religious symbolism in the life of patriotism? As secular as one may wish to be, patriotism is more than a strictly rational dedication to a reasoned, collectively held ideal. The object of patriotic commitment is something to which one relates through
the violence of seeing feelings and rituals that encourage a practice of looking that binds one to a nation and its founding principles through the symbol. One may argue about the iconicity of the symbol reification or material evocation of the reality to which it refers. But there is almost inevitably something igious at least totemic about the supra-rational operation of patriotic symbols. Yet it should be carefully distinguished from nationalism, which intensifies what might be called the patriotic gaze such that the dialectical relation between symbol and reality is collapsed into a kind of identity. The flag, for instance, becomes fetishized: it is the thing one adores, worships, dies for, kills for. Boime does well to deconstruct the symbology of nationalism. That is an idol worthy of iconoclastic toppling. But can one dismantle what might be called the strong totemic operation of patriotism without destroying the symbolic structure of common national life? Are national forms of association able to occur in complete absence of some manner of collective civil religious ties? And if robustly conceived, if civil religion is able to interrogate pride with humility, national triumph with prophetic injunction, might that religion have something constructive to contribute to national life? Contrary to its easy dismissal as a desperate act of philistinism, iconoclasm is a complex social phenomenon. The history of the destruction of art over the last two centuries is no exception to this generalization. Iconoclasm is a term loaded with diverse meanings, reflecting both the judgments of those who abhor the destruction of art and the motives professed by and ascribed to those who have broken, defaced, dismantled, or proscribed objects of art in western Europe since the French Revolution. For some critics, all iconoclasm is vandalism, a willful destruction of cultural property with no other motive than philistinism, ignorance, or violent anarchy. Each of these valuations says much about the social location of those who repudiate the destruction of art in a given instance. The charge of philistinism indicates a judgment of taste with its corresponding distinctions in social class. Ascribing iconoclastic acts to ignorance is often characteristic of those who espouse a program of enlightenment and prefer to explain social pathologies as the acts of the unenlightened, which may mean anything from the uneducated to the bigoted to the unwitting pawns of oppressive ideology. And explaining the destruction of cultural objects as manifestations of anarchy implies an establishment whose interests are threatened by rejection of the regnant political, legal, and economic order. Compare, for example, the reaction of many U.S. citizens to the events associated with figures 34 and 35. When citizens of Iraq toppled
statue of former Iraqi president and Baath Party leader Ahmed Hasan al-Bakr, by antith Party protesters in Baghdad, May 18, 2003. Photo: Murad Zezer, AP/Wide World Photos. A host of bronze statuary depicting Saddam Hussein and members of his party (fig. 34) following the American invasion, many in the United States cheered the events (portrayed repeatedly and triumphally in the media) as emblematic of the removal of a dictatorial regime to make way for a pro-Western, democratic government in the country. But when Americans (and many others) saw the results of the demolition of ancient Buddha statues in Afghanistan (fig. 35) by the Taliban, they reacted with outrage. By historical standards as they were construed among Westerners, the ancient stone sculptures were far more valuable than the bronze commemorations of a brutally repressive modern government. A closer look at the situation in Afghanistan reveals that the destruction of the sculptures was a deliberately calculated political gesture. Speaking on National Public Radio in the spring of 2001, an ambassador of Afghanistanalib regime provided at least two different explanations for the act. He referred to Afghan resentment toward foreigners who, under the auspices of the United Nations, came to Bamiyan to repair the decrepit sculptures. Critics in Afghanistan objected to the expenditure of funds on ancient monuments while Afghan children in the neighborhood were starving. The nationuling Council of Scholars, the equivalent of a supreme court, considered
the violence of seeing 137 figure 35. Buddha, fifth century, 174 feet tall, eventually destroyed by the Taliban in March 2001, Bamiyan province, Afghanistan. Photo: AP/Wide World Photos. the matter in light of international sanctions against the country, which they regarded as part of the reason for the childrentarvation. The council was baffled, the ambassador reported, by the world apparently caring more about the nationast than about its present predicament. Significantly, the ambassador did not nationast than about its present predicament. Significantly, the ambassador did not object to the observation from an American interviewer that the destruction of the buddha figures was act of sheer pique . . . to thumb your nose at the world. The ambassador's acquiescence suggests that the destruction of the sculptures was in fact a very deliberate act of iconoclasm, but not a
in my mindye. ...I ought not fear any image just as I ought not honor any. But (heaven help me), my heart has been trained since my youth to give honor and respect to images and such a dreadful fear has been instilled in me of which I would gladly rid myself, but cannot. Thus I am afraid to burn a single idol. . . . Though I have Scripture (on the one hand), and know that images are incapable of anything and that they lack life, blood, or spirit, fear (on the other hand) holds me back and causes me to fear a painted devil, a shadow, and the slightest noise of a rustling leaf, and to flee that which I should seek out bravely.49 Karlstadt was attached to sacred images by virtue of a fear instilled and conditioned during his youth. He knew, at least intellectually, that images were ffe dummies, he called them, devoid of life, but he could not bring himself to destroy them. He was afraid of what they might do. Belief and knowledge conflicted to the point that he sought even to expunge images from his dye. But how does one do that? Long-suffering prayer and the disciplines of meditation, diligent forms of asceticism, or confessional engagement with a spiritual adviser were the late medieval counterparts to modern psychotherapy. For some of Karlstadt’s contemporaries and readers, however, there was another way: violent acts of iconoclasm. For those locked in an otherwise irresolvable conflict of habits of pictorial devotion and a zeal for liberation from them, the removal and destruction of images served to objectify the disposition in the form of the image and to punctuate one’s submission to the disposition in a public manner. The public nature of the act bolstered the resolve by oneharing it with others and publishing testimony. Removing and destroying images symbolized the fear of and desire for them and then ritualistically
Freedberg and others concern to articulate the range of iconoclasms. Thus, although vandalism is the recurrent explanation given to the destruction of works of art by governments, courts, police departments, and such institutions as the church, since each of these strongly prefers civil order to violent acts, Gamboni explores alternative ways of explaining destructive behavior. Vandalism as an explanation does not admit political protest, which complicates matters by introducing a contentious element of legal interpretation and the threat of extending legitimacy to a marginalized and heterogeneous group that may have targeted the very values of the establishment. Yet what is vandalism to one observer who repudiates the desecration of the national flag, for instance, will be potent political protest to the person or group destroying the flag. Throughout Gamboni’s discussion of municipal monuments, one is reminded of the complex and meandering lives of images narrated by Richard Davis. The biographical approach used by Davis to explore the cult object of temple worship lends itself to the study of civil statuary as symbols of the state or the people or socialism or democracy. Yet Gamboni is not engaged in narrating the ongoing life of a particular image, as Davis is. He tends instead to dwell on the political and social narratives in which images are invested. Boime shares this approach. For both Gamboni and Boime, power is not something that inheres in an image and threatens those who see in the image a reality they must destroy, as Freedberg explores in The Power of Images. Nor is that power something that can be turned to one’s own uses, as Davis finds again and again in the history of Hindu images. The cultural politics of Enlightenment, in which images are propagandistic instruments inscribed in a social discourse of power, has no use for the metaphysics of power. The Enlightenment shares the exclusivistic claims of radical monotheism: all other gods are false. The motive for idolatry is simply ignorance. Gamboni grounds his account of modern artistic iconoclasm in the foundational moment of the French Revolution. This event spelled the end of tyranny and championed the secular, democratic rule of the people. In this new age, art no longer properly served as the propaganda of kings or as the superstitions of the church. Artists claimed a new liberty: they now understood their task to be to direct the critical, prophetic voice of art against abuses of power and regnant conventions. Destroying idols became a favorite activity of the gressive
excuse, eedberg wrote, the historian of visual cultures to disclaim interest in the acts that destroy what is generally respected or cherished. Freedberg argued that the motivating force behind the destructive response to images is typically fear: fear of what images might do if left to themselves. Often it is fear of what they represent. Freedberg provided countless instances from the history of images and visual practices in which signifier and signified collapsed in fear and devotion. In the economy of religious visual culture, these two emotions, fear and devotion, are complementary. The anxiety underlying this apposition of opposite feelings may be that fear turns into devotion if the image/idol is not destroyed. Seen in this way, the image is a kind of threat that appears to elicit aggressive behavior. Golden calves, after all, are more than empty, inanimate images. Even Aaron thought so. When he was confronted by Moses for the idol he created, Aaron contended that he threw the gold into the fire (there came out this calf Exodus 32:24). Aaron would have Moses believe that he did not actually fashion the beast... Aaron's attempt to deflect the wrath of Moses from himself (which seems to have worked). In any case, the danger of
images between cultures idols for some in the ancient world and in the modern is not that they are vacant signifiers propped up by human vanity but that they possess an autonomy, a life of their own, a power over the human imagination. The Protestant reformers and iconoclasts of the sixteenth century were of two minds over whether the power of images had its seat in images per se or in the human heart. This can be a subtle, even slippery, distinction, and David Freedberg does well to caution scholars about missing the power of images as a fear of their power to act upon us. John Calvin It is part and parcel of human nature as he posited it in order to distinguish it in the sharpest terms from the radical alterity of God. Other reformers agreed that the human heart is disposed to substitute its desires for God which is the root definition of idolatry. But not everyone thought the problem ended there. In an early tract
in Gossaertay. Including images of Christ, such as the Veil of Veronica, these acheiropoietai were painted entirely without the use of human hands or only partially with, having been completed by divine intervention, as in the case of Lukeortrait, according to one twelfth-century treatise on a much older icon of the Virgin and Child located in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, which was believed by the Roman church to be the original work of St. Luke. The tradition, however, may tacitly accommodate the impossibility of Lukeaving seen the Madonna and Child. In the case of Gossaerticture, the divine intercession of the angel both compensates for Lukeack of economic system of remission of sins that came at the individualxpense, and it becomes even less difficult to imagine why iconoclasm appealed to some such as Karlstadt. The cultural uses of iconoclasm extended well beyond Protestant zeal during and after
the violence of seeing oversimplifiedvitably seems narrow and unadaptable. Because it is a projection of ourselves, it declares our conceit. The ancient discourse against idolatry is resurrected in full. Boorstin claims that idols induce delusion, foster vanity, represent nothing but falsehood, and are worshipped by the duped and ignorant. Moreover, they signal the infidelity of Americans to the covenant that established their national identity and account for the loss of the founding ideals that will be Americanly redemption. The overarching claim in the history of iconoclasm, the assertion made in numerous and diverse historical instances by people of very different religious and philosophical allegiances, is that images fail to tell the truth. This commences paradigmatically for Western intellectual history with Platoefusal to allow image-makers into the ideal republic and addresses the present day in the work of such writers as Daniel Boorstin and the early work of Susan Sontag in the United States or Jacques Ellul in France.54 The long history of ideas between Plato and modern critics of visualizing divinity is the subject that Alain Besan, director of studies at Lle des hautes des en sciences sociales, has undertaken to survey.55 In fact, his study is more intellectual genealogy than history, a chronicle of major thinkers from ancient Greece to modern Europe who have distrusted the image. This genealogy of the terminates in Western modernity, which Besan considers to be postreligious and secular. The bookhesis is that iconoclasm comes in many forms, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and secular it is always religious in one manner or another. That because, at base, iconoclasm is a philosophical disposition that maintains the invisibility and metaphysical otherness of what is ultimately real, whether it is Platootion of the Good, the Jewish understanding of God, the Platonist-influenced Christian view of God the Father, Kanthilosophy of the thing-in-itself, or Hegelheory of the postreligious, postartistic evolution of Mind. What is truly real cannot be made visible without forfeiting its claim to ultimacy. When there is an exception to this rule, as in the Christian idea of Incarnation, the result is a history of intense philosophical debate and political contest. This is a fascinating and insightful thesis, but Besanook suffers from its approach to the topic. As he charts the rise of philosophical aniconism from Pascal to Kant to Hegel to abstract painting, Besan ignores the concomitant rise of Marian apparitions, mass pilgrimages, mass-produced religious imagery, and the explosion of
images between cultures Protestant visual piety during the last two centuries. This comes in stark contrast to his treatment of the ancient and medieval world, where he rightly discerns the tension and ambivalence of the two sensibilities, iconic and aniconic. Why the difference? Because Besan the intellectual genealogist regards modernity as secular and modern institutional religion as essentially vestigial. Religious art in the modern period is anachronistic at best and at worst the vain attempt to revive a corpse (as Besan says of the nineteenth-century German Nazarenes and the British Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood).56 Christianity, Besan rightly points out, has maintained two minds about images. But by the time his account arrives at the modern era, Besan has eyes only for Calvin, who reasserts patristic aniconism, and subsequent philosophers from Pascal to Kant and Hegel. The German philosophers regard the image of the divine as defunct and superstitious and foster notions of sublimity that stress the inadequacy of any signifier to an invisible, infinite Other, which is the source of existence (and therefore never to be idolatrously confused with any aspect of the world of existence). Why should this be coded erudite regard the winner and visuality the loser? In the end, Besan himself is not so sure. He closes his long book by hedging his bet: pite what Hegel said on the matter, there is nothing inevitable about the death of the image. This contradicts his application of Hegelidea about the end of art to nineteenth- and twentieth-century art as a kind of predictive template. Why equivocate about the contemporary art world? Perhaps because the theory of the avant-garde has been undermined by the art market: there is no longer a leading style or artist or group of artists who dominate the cultural marketplace. Instead, the market is diverse, happy to revive any and all schools of art for the sake of entrepreneurship. The transcendence of the figural in the sublime, so beloved of modernists and culminating triumphantly and radically in abstraction, is no longer privileged. Aniconism is just one more trend to be commodified by art galleries and collectors.58 The sublime is no longer a radical transcendence of culture, a bracing purge of human falsehoods, but one style among many, one idol on the shelf in the grocery store of culture. Perhaps Bruno Latour is right: now is the time to move beyond the culture war of images. The binary opposition of idol and abstraction can be viewed for what it is an absolute expression of truth and falsehood, but an ideological construction as enduring as the interest it serves.
chapter 5 The Circulation of Images in Mission History If religious images help to organize human experience into an ordinary regime of enduring order, they can also operate to subvert the ordinary as peoples encounter one another, their visual covenants clashing as their respective constructions of time, space, and authority lock in ideological conflict. Sometimes the result is quite creative. In any case, new images and covenants are born in this time of crisis when things that seemed certain and secure come to appear less so. Catherine Albanese's notion of raordinary religion, discussed in chapter 2, applies very well to the use of images to challenge rival gods as well as to conceive of new forms of community and experience of the divine. This happens nowhere with such consequence for interreligious encounter as in the history of proselytism. The Traffic of Images When missionaries land on the shores of a world not their own in order to undertake religious proselytism, a historical process has already begun to unfold. Emissaries from a strange land, newcomers in a society they do not understand or even fully recognize as it operates all about them, missionaries grope along the fault lines separating two worlds. A common strategy is to map the terrain and locate those features on it that will favor the presentation of the missionary message. If the visitors are armed, as was the case of Pizarro in sixteenth-century
images between cultures Peru, the topography the newcomers seek will be one less given to eye-to-eye encounter than to military domination.1 But not all missionary encounters are coercive, at least in physical terms. Jesuits in Asia, for instance, far in advance of European imperialism, scouted out natural linkages, formations in the cultural landscapes of two worlds that brought Roman Catholicism close to indigenous custom.2 Whatever their efforts, the new language, culture, and history that missionaries encounter form the lens through which their hosts regard them. Subjects of wonder and resentment, they are watched and scorned, feared and laughed at. Two worlds view one another at the naked range of the sound of words, the taste of food, the touch of strange clothing. How can we study images in order to find out what they may tell us about such cultural encounters and the process of religious migration, change, and resistance that follows upon encounter? Some worlds, of course, refuse to be bridged, and sometimes media mediate nothing. Yet there are cultural syntheses and there are indigenized religions that change the original faith and create national futures that shape millions of lives. The task is to determine what religious images do when cultures encounter one another. Scholars have examined the complex of intercultural relations in the history of colonialism and missions.3 This chapter seeks to provide a brief and accessible introduction to the problem of the role of images in mission history, which can seem intimidating, given the sheer size of the scholarly literature, the diversity of languages involved, the inaccessibility of far-flung archives, and the complexity of multiple national and international histories. To begin, I propose a typology of ways of seeing that is keyed to a succession of different moments in which images perform relatively discrete functions. First, there are images and attitudes that a culture relies on to prepare for mission work. Then there are the images and attitudes that missionaries take abroad and receive from home to use in the field. Next is the indigenous visual response to mission work: the images that artists create as part of the new faith they have embraced. But there is also the rejection of the new faith that can be conducted visually in counterimages and visual practices. As the mission effort takes shape, new generations of missionaries maintain communications with their supporters back home. They send back imagery from the mission field to encourage continued support, and much of this imagery contributes to the visual lexicon of the faith in the world from which the mission originally set forth. Finally, as the faith finds a footing among a people, its administration is indigenized; its identity is
the circulation of images nationalized; and the mission phase is brought to an end. National and ethnic cultural traditions take shape, and the colonial mentality is decisively rejected. In the modern world, art participates in this process of nationalization by providing a national entity with a visual signature, lending the nation or people a visual sense of itself. All of these visual aspects (as well as any other cultural artifact, such as literature, clothing, food, music, or architecture) can be studied as media in which people form, transmit, and modify their self-understandings, and in which they encounter other groups and form, transmit, and convey (mis)understandings of them. I propose to demonstrate how this can be conceptualized and example of the similarity of Jesus and Buddha in an instance of Western syncretism. In the 1915 edition of Paul Carus. This is a non-Christian instance of how images and visual practices mediate one culture
images between cultures figure 36. Olga Kopetsky, Buddha preaching to
the five bhikkhus. From Paul Carus, The Gospel of Buddha (Chicago: Open
Court Publishing Company, 1915). Courtesy of Open Court Publishing
Company. and another and even create new cultural patterns and
practices. Exploring such visual mediations may allow scholars to study
cultural interaction as a process, as a complex, protracted, multitiered
negotiation that can rely on visuality as a key medium of interaction.
The model I like to propose roughly divides the visual culture of
Christian mission history into six interdependent moments. The point is
not to clamp a restrictive template over the messy particularity of
lived religion but to develop a model that will help scholars recognize
the circulation of images 151 and examine a considerable range of visual operations. The model does not describe a determinant process in which every type of image must occur or unfold in some sort of mechanical way. My intention is only to highlight the different moments of cultural encounter in which images may play a relatively distinct role as exercises in seeing, forms of visual thinking, which exemplify a sacred way of seeing or gaze. The six moments I identified make up an extended series of cultural interactions. For the sake of clarity, and at the risk of begetting nomenclature, six terms are introduced to designate these aspects. Missive imagery and practices are those used to mobilize and instruct domestic efforts to undertake missions. Exported imagery and practices are actually sent abroad and used by missionaries to teach and preach. Appropriated images and practices encompass the responses of indigenous believers to missionary activity as well as the ways in which imagery and its uses are adapted to local audiences. Expropriated imagery and practices signify the adaptation of imagery by nonbelievers to counter the purposes of the missionary or the application of images to religious or political ends other than those sought by the missionary. Imported imagery and practices refer to the outer migration of indigenous images, particularly to the original, missionary culture, where images may be commodified as well as adapted for religious use. Nationalized imagery consists of those images, styles, objects, and visual rituals that come to stand for the postcolonial religion and its significance for national identity. Although this deserves far more discussion than I will allow it here, most of these terms are tropes of property and economic exchange. This seems an important reference point since the history of modern Christian missions unfolded within the context of the nation-stateush for foreign markets and the resulting exchange of cultural properties. And debates between native or aboriginal populations and the nations in which they reside, such as Canada, the United States, and Australia, among others, continue to be waged legally and politically on the issue of control over and rights to cultural property. Nationalism tends to merge culture and landscape, regarding identity in terms of
images between cultures property and culture as patrimony, the material possessions that transmit and maintain a people common heritage. Nations are groupings of people that are closely invested in common places, language, assumptions, and artifacts manifestations of a more or less distinctive way of life, which is as stable as its material and social sources of practice. Losing control over these manifestations means losing one culture, that is, the matrix of identity. With this in mind, we see the stakes involved in visual transactions between peoples more clearly. As a trope, property has its own limitations. But any metaphor must. I prefer to stress the strengths of the metaphor, which consist of its historical suitability, its friendliness to the description of economic relations and national formations, and its inclination to take seriously material things such as images and other artifacts as material forms of exchange. But even outside the context of modern Christian mission history, tropes of property and exchange are quite fitting, since religions spread along trade routes. One need only think of Buddhism eastern migration toward China, along the spice route, linking the subcontinent to eastern Asia. Or Islam eastern propagation along the same lines. There are certainly other metaphors one might use. For instance, religious change often accompanies military conquest. But tropes of struggle, submission, and victory are not only grisly and quite biased; they also easily miss the subtleties of negotiation and intermingling that underlie the crude categories of winners and losers.6 I concede that the model I developed is geared largely to modern history and its experience of colonialism, international markets, property, nation-states, and nationalism. But, even if my model turns out not to apply to medieval or ancient settings, its value for the modern history of cultural relations remains. Six Moments in the Migration of Images

missive imagery and practices The image of an American missionary preaching to a group of the world inhabitants (fig. 37), displayed on the cover of the Christian Almanac for 1836, is a good example of the kind of image and accompanying text that was intended to mobilize domestic production of materials and resources for missionary enterprises. The missive note is clearly sounded in the biblical text that runs along the left edge of the image: ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every
images between cultures creatureark 16:15). Published by the American Tract Society, the largest producer and distributor of American tracts in the nineteenth century, the Almanac was full of statistics regarding the number of tracts in circulation, the number of people around the world needing evangelism, and the sorts of things readers could do to support the cause. Missive imagery such as a preaching missionary provided a powerful way of shaping the understanding of religious and racial otherness, the international stature of the United States, and the cultural burden of Christianity. Missive images are especially important as domestic representations of foreign cultures. Encoded in them is a worldview and a national mission, a vision that regards national purpose in explicitly religious terms. It is, of course, a thoroughly unilateral disposition, but like all propaganda, what it lacks in alterity and robustness it makes up for in the capacity to mobilize attitudes and resources.7 exported imagery and practices Often didactic, exported imagery and practices are used by missionaries and teachers to instruct people in the new faith, to move them toward conversion, and on many occasions to help install cultural and textual literacy. Accordingly, the images selected typically avoid iconographical or theological intricacies. Simplicity and directness are cited by missionaries as the ideal for such imagery. A European missionary in Ethiopia, for example, told me that the diagrammatic figure reproduced here as figure 38 provided an effective way of teaching new church members about the nature of church membership.8 The image portrays a robed figure of Jesus, who is the church, which St. Paul defined as the y of Christ Corinthians 12:27). Within the contours of Christody are smaller groupings of figures that depict the duties and practices of church members. The image offers the missionary and clergy a convenient means of illustrating ecclesiology, the proper relation of the individual member to the collective whole. Exported imagery may be produced in the country of origin, often without the purpose of mission work in mind. It is used in the field because it is considered helpful in conveying essential ideas about the faith. In a small collection of images published in Switzerland for use among Catholic priests and nuns engaged in African missions, textless color plates portray Western priests, nuns, and saints as well as Christ
images between cultures figure 39. Warner Sallman, Head of Christ, 1940, oil on canvas, 28 1/4 made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the circulation of images of Christ in order to enact their understanding of his person, life, and religious meaning. Appropriated imagery and practices when converted indigenous groups adapt nonnative motifs to the visual rhetoric and vocabulary of their own rather than the missionary culture, one may describe the imagery as appropriated, inculturated, or indigenized. The process can also happen from the other side of the encounter. In what became an often-cited guideline for Catholic evangelism, in the sixth century Gregory the Great advised a missionary to England as follows: It is not necessary to destroy the pagan temples, but indeed, after having removed the idols, convert them into churches by means of holy water and by depositing relics and erecting altars; because the people will yield more willingly in places that were formerly dear to them, so that [in such places] they may henceforth worship the Lord as soon as they have recognized him as the true God. One thinks of the many Catholic churches built on the former sites of indigenous temples, shrines, or sacred spaces in Latin America and elsewhere. This category consists of images and visual practices that modify and adapt either native or nonnative imagery and practice to local circumstances in the interest of rooting the Christian faith in the evangelized culture. An example is the highly stylized figure of Jesus in figure 40, which strongly resembles the image of Krishna, seen here in the conventional portrayal of the Hindu deity in Javanese shadow theater. The Indonesian Christian clergyman who created this drawing of Jesus said that he borrowed the ornate and highly traditional form of stylization in order to avoid attracting the scorn of Muslims in Java. According to the clergyman, the naturalistic depiction of Western Renaissance or Baroque art would have both diminished the stature of Christ in Muslim eyes and possibly provoked an attack on churches from Muslims antagonistic toward the use of images. It should be clear from this example that appropriated images preserve the Christian identity of the exported source while adapting its form and use to the new, local context of the faith. The indigenous culture makes the Christian symbol its own by transforming its features (often reacting to the cultural biases of the missionizing society) but affirming its Christian identity as universal. In other words, although
images between cultures figure 40. Artist unknown, Crucifixion, 1995, colored pencil on paper, Jakarta, Indonesia. Courtesy of Nelly van Doorn-Harder. the artifact exhibits the distinctive features of a particular culture, it also possesses a significant meaning that is shared property among Christians over time and around the world.14 There is often a subtle balance to be struck here. Indigenization can be allowed to go only so far before it modifies Christianity into something else. From the perspective of the missionizing culture it is important to subordinate indigenous features to what are considered
images between cultures figure 42. Amida Butsa, the Great Buddha, 1252 ce, Kotoku-in Temple, Japan, bronze, 40 feet tall. Photo: Werner Forman/Art Resource, New York. temptations and assaults from demons led by Mara, the god of illusion, before attaining enlightenment as the Buddha. The likelihood of confusion only seems greater in light of the resemblance of this image to Chinese and Japanese portrayals of the Amitabha or Amida Butsa (fig. 42), who operates in a way not entirely dissimilar to the Christian understanding of grace and salvation. Devotees of Amitabha pray for rebirth to the paradise in which he resides, and he is moved by compassion to grant rebirth to those who call upon his name. Other Christian artists and missionaries have insisted that indigenous representations are necessary for effective communication of Christianity to take place, even that such images are sure signs that the church is taking root in native cultures. An outspoken Protestant missionary from Great Britain, John Butler, who was one of the most active promoters of indigenous Christian art, stated categorically in 1956 that
the circulation of images expropriated imagery and practices. As we have seen, not all local response to missionary efforts elicits the approval of missionaries. An important category of response is non-Christian appropriation of imagery. Expropriated imagery is detached from its Christian context and meaning and redeployed in a non-Christian practice. This may include the destruction of Christian images by those who oppose the faith, or it may involve the ritual abuse of such imagery, as in the case of the fumi-e, in which Japanese Christians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were forced to choose between death or the renunciation of their Christian faith by walking on an image of Jesus. A striking example of intercultural misunderstanding mediated in visual culture is the story of the first Europeans in Cuba. When some natives took Catholic images brought to the island by Columbusen, buried them in a cultivated field and urinated on them in order to produce a rich harvest, the Spanish responded by burning the offenders to death. As Serge Gruzinski has pointed out in relating the story, the ritual performed by the Cubans bore close resemblance to the way they used their own images. Clearly, they meant no disrespect toward the newcomers. The act was an attempt to insert the new gods into their own visual practice. Engaged in the joint task of colonialization and the defense of their own faith, the Christians interpreted what the Cubans did as an assault by infidels. They responded with brutal violence that enforced colonial rule and protected the uniqueness of their visual culture. If the Cubans saw an analogy between the two visual cultures, the Europeans wished nothing of the kind. Gruzinski commented that the episode urgerates the long parade of destructions, appropriations, misappropriations, and misunderstandings weaving through the cultural history of Latin America. Expropriated imagery is withdrawn from one cultural domain and made the property of another. But the expropriation need not be purely negative or destructive. In both the original setting and the new, each culture may seek points of correspondence or analogies where one culture can be mapped over another. Images provide the way of doing so. This analogizing may be conducted as a means of protest, as a strategy of survival or resistance directed against cultural incursion. It is also useful to bear in mind, however, that in many instances the two territories coexist very happily, so that one culture need not expunge the other. While this is not the case with fundamentalist
images between cultures figure 44. Follower of Jesus of Oyingbo with illustrated pamphlet, Lagos, Nigeria, November 1, 1998. Photo: Malcolm Linton/Getty Images. subcultures in Protestantism and Islam, it is not difficult to think of instances of Sufism, Afro-Caribbean religions such as Vodou, or folk versions of Roman Catholicism where the boundaries between religious cultures are permeable and understood to be quite acceptable as such.26 This kind of imagery uses the image as a pivot or metamorphosis, as in the instance of expropriation depicted in figure 44, created by a Nigerian prophet, Jesus of Oyingbo, who preached that he was the Second Coming of Christ. A member of the religious group that gathered around the prophet is shown in figure 44 reading one of his publications, a pamphlet entitled The Redeemed Paradise. The cover of the pamphlet is a repainting of a 1950 image by Warner Sallman, called Christ Our Pilot (fig. 45). The young helmsman has been reconceived as the Nigerian prophet, wearing ethnic dress, who receives guidance and affirmation from Jesus. The motif of the sailor guided by Jesus has enjoyed far-flung circulation. Sallman himself based his painting on an anonymous U.S. war poster created in 1944 (fig. 46). This migration illustrates both the incessant recycling of imagery and the change of meaning introduced with each avatar.27 In the World War II poster, Jesus steadies the helm, endorsing the fight of the Allies against
the circulation of images 165 figure 45. Warner Sallman, Christ Our Pilot, 1950, oil on canvas, 40 30 inches. Courtesy of Warner Press. totalitarian aggression. In Sallmanmage Jesus becomes the friendly, even brotherly, helper, careful to respect the free will of the young Christian man by refraining from taking hold of the wheel, as Sallman himself pointed out. In the Nigerian iteration Jesus authorizes the mission of his namesake, Jesus of Oyingbo, pictured on the pamphletover. We witness in the move from one image to the next a shift in the meaning of the touch: from an act of divine intervention, to a gesture of benign counsel and care, to one of chiliastic blessing, a laying on of hands that bestows messianic succession.
images between cultures resigned Jesus as a resentful one, who triumphs in the end quite differently from what is described in the New Testament. With the addition of the innocent maneuver from the Chinese story, the woman at the right of Christ may appear to unknowing American Christians as the Magdalene. Moreover, Good Judge Bao discovers the injustice in contrast made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
images between cultures national imagery But the cycle is not completed until we consider what happens after the phase of foreign mission work. Indigenization establishes the faith in the new host culture in a generational pattern that makes different uses of the arts. Almost invariably the first generation that responds favorably to mission activity adopts the cultural packaging or media of the missionary message with enthusiasm. For example, this may include objecting to drums in the liturgy in preference of pianos or organs. In visual matters, the first generation may regard Africanized Christ figures as objectionable, preferring instead the European or American images of Christ. One group of Congolese protested a black Madonna by insisting, want the same Madonna as the whites have. Representing biblical figures as Africans has struck some African Christians as a form of Western condescension and others as historically inaccurate.33 First-generation converts may be strongly motivated to secure difference from their previous religious identities. Often the new faith depends on who are strong advocates of indigenization find it difficult to object to this familiar demand. John Butler, a Protestant missionary and enthusiastic promoter of indigenous Christian art and architecture, summed up this capitulation for his colleagues in an article in the Congregational Quarterly in 1956: When a convert tells us that he wants nothing about his church to remind him of the faith and ways from which he has, as he puts it, escaped, and whose pull back he feels in every aspect of life around him, it is difficult for a missionary, who by his mere good fortune is exempt from such cruel tensions of spirit, to do other than treat these scruples with respect.34 Arno Lehmann, a contemporary Lutheran advocate of indigenous Christian art, pointed out that some bers of the so-called Younger Churches . . . especially among the more elderly people . . . would not care about iгенization the arts, and they would even object to it. They would point to the danger of syncretism likely to creep through the door of art into the church. smells or smacks too much of Buddhism or Hinduism, ey would say. The following ..ERR, COD:1..
the circulation of images generation and turn it away from the preponderance of the foreign missions that appealed to the previous generation. The task now seems to be to naturalize the faith, to locate intrinsic correspondences to native rather than alien culture. The recovery of an indigenous ethos takes place in tandem with the emergence of an indigenous leadership, educated in their own national schools and seminaries, and in the context of the twentieth century, in the setting of national liberation from colonial rule and the formation of national identities. The second or third generation of Protestant Christians in many African settings has assumed control of national church bodies, replacing the prominent role of European and American missionaries to undertake the work of building consciously national cultural traditions and institutions. No longer colonial outposts of a foreign nation religion, these churches regard themselves as national or nationally ethnic expressions of the church universal. This shift is paradigmatic in significance. It is a creative moment of the rediscovery and invention of a new mythos in which Christianity intermingles with an emergent sense of nationhood. Images and other arts contribute importantly to the creative process by representing the new identity, giving shape to the new national consciousness and providing what may be ethnically diverse, tribally separate, and politically fractious groups with an overarching ethos of unity. Religion can become part of nationalism imagined community, Benedict Anderson aptly named it. Operative metaphors for describing this process are nationalistic and autochthonous. Religious art in this phase is described as igenous art that is native and permanently rooted to the soil. Artists return to the pre-Christian styles, subjects, and media of art to mine it for characteristics that will not only clothe Christianity in local garb but evoke a national consciousness, a thright that Christians share as nationals. Religious Art and Ethnic Identity The task confronting Christian artists, particularly in nations where they are a tiny minority, is to craft an organic connection between their religious identity and the nation. One missionary, Richard Taylor in India, noted in 1970 that Christian artists in that country felt themselves ecially under a burden to demonstrate their ianness. Generations subsequent to the founding conversions in a national church may
images between cultures wish, Taylor reasoned, to return to the culture that had been left behind and claim part of their heritage, in a sense, to tise. This, in my judgment, may be exactly what some of our painters like [Alfred] Thomas and [Frank] Wesley are doing. His survey of several Indian painters, both Christian and non-Christian, Taylor noted the importance and the difficulty of leaving behind European models. He insisted that we take the whole fact of Incarnation seriously then the possibility of portraying Jesus with an Indian body and style cannot by any means be ruled out. On the contrary, maybe in some sense He must become, and be seen to become, an Indian. Therefore expressed alarm at the popularity of Warner Sallman's painting of Christ.
the circulation of images 173 figure 49. Sitakarna, Gandhi, Buddha, and Christ, 1961, lithograph on plywood. V. Nantappachettiar and Sons, Salem 1. Gift of Reverend Dr. William and Mrs. Elizabeth Miller Danker. Courtesy of the Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University. to cast off the corrupt polytheism and its idolatrous practices.43 Influenced both by Islam and by Unitarian Christianity, Roy went on to found the Brahmo Samaj (Society of the Worshippers of Brahma) in Calcutta, the city that became the center for Hindu reform and national consciousness throughout the nineteenth century. The Bengali renaissance in the twentieth century, centered in Calcutta and Santiniketan and conducted in painting by Abanindranath Tagore, had its source in Royfforts and the Brahmo Samaj.44 From Roy to Paniker and other non-Christian Indians, Jesus represented not the Christian deity but the non-Hindu holy man whose ethic of love confirmed the wisdom of enduism. An emblem of brotherhood, the grouping of Jesus, Buddha, and Gandhi was intended by Paniker and the lithographic versions that followed to encourage the unity of postcolonial India. In 1952 an Indian theologian commented on the importance of Gandhi for Indian culture and the environment in which Christianity existed in the nation in a way that situates figure 49 alignment of Gandhi with Buddha and Jesus: Gandhib>teachings represent the finest product of Christian influence on non-Christian India. Remaining a Hindu in belief as well as practice, he tried to integrate with the basic teachings of Hinduism the ethical teachings of Christianity, which he learnt primarily from the liberal Christian thinkers like
images between cultures Ruskin, Tolstoy, Thoreau and others. He did not recognize any fundamental differences between the various religions. All religions stood for truth and love. He interpreted the Indian concept of ahimsa [nonviolence], a concept common to Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, as essentially the same as love in the Sermon on the Mount. By doing so he gave ahimsa a new content. His own example in suffering love showed ahimsa as a dynamic principle.45 Figure 49 portrays the three figures as revered teachers, each emitting an aura of wisdom and goodness and each presenting his teaching in symbolic devices or hand gestures. Gandhi raises one hand in blessing and holds in the other a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, the popular Hindu devotional text that Gandhi found so important that he translated it into Gujarati. Among his own interpretations of the Gita was the claim that it taught the doctrine of ahimsa.46 Like Gandhi and Jesus, Buddha is pictured in the act of preaching, his hands shown in the vitarka, or explanation mudra, a gesture associated with his discussion of the dharma, or Buddhist law, which includes the admonition not to kill or engage in violence.47 Jesus displays the Sacred Heart, emblem of his great compassion, and does so in gestures that may suggest an active discourse as in the Sermon on the Mount (among Gandhi's favorite New Testament texts), where he enjoined his listeners to turn the other cheek and to believe that the meek would inherit the earth (Matthew 5). The group argues visually that Gandhieaching of nonviolence, which he committed to the cause of a new Hindu national ideal, found all religions sympathetic to the national aim and regarded religious sectarianism as an enemy to peace and national destiny. Figure 49 represents, therefore, an instance of benign expropriation of religious iconography. Not intended to critique Christianity (though orthodox Christians might object to the imageeduction of their savior to a sadhu, or holy man), the image redeployes Jesus within a new cultural setting that ascribes new meaning to him and gives the visual motif a new currency. Taylor also praised the work of an Indian Muslim artist, S. Y. Malak. As a Muslim Indian painter of Christian themes, Malak offers another instance of how religious art could be engaged in the cultural politics of identity in postcolonial India. In his watercolor painting entitled Judas Bargains for Thirty Pieces of Silver (fig. 50), produced in the 1950s, only a few years after the establishment of Indian national independence, Malak presents a religious subject in the -Bengalese style, artistic revival undertaken by the Hindu painter Abanindranath Tagore in Bengal. The image depicts Jewish religious leaders who, the Gospels report, paid Judas to betray Jesus. But Malak represents them as three
images between cultures Hindu religious orthodoxy through the intermediary form of Christianity, a minority religion far smaller and much less controversial in his day than Islam was. Judas does not appear as a Brahman but gazes helplessly at the viewer and wears a kurta, the shirt garment largely associ-ated with North India and the Mogul period, suggesting, therefore, that Judas is Muslim.49 Wrenching the story from its biblical context and purpose, Malak expropriated a New Testament motif in order to indict what he considered Hindu orthodoxy. His Brahmanic masters recalls another painting of a New Testament subject by Malak, The Good Samaritan, in which the wounded Jewish person of the biblical story is dressed in a dhoti (the Indian garment favored by Gandhi), and the Samaritan wears the dress of a Muslim.50 In both cases, Malak appears to have intended his visual maneuver to suggest an underlying harmony between the narrative of Christexecution and the error and presumption of the religious elite. By portraying both images in the recognized style of a modern revival of Bengali painting, Malak embedded his account in a visual vocabulary that told a Christian story in a way that affirmed a progressive understanding of Indian national culture. India, Malak paintings seem to say, is more than a priestly and ritualistic conception of Hinduism. It is difficult not to regard the painting as a critique of a narrow-minded Hinduism in the wake of the bloody separation of Pakistan from India only a few years earlier. Art, Religion, and Nationhood in the Postcolonial Era The Christian art of national indigenization was vigorously promoted in the second half of the twentieth century by Christian writers, clergy, missionaries, and international church leaders and associations, who promoted a postcolonial flurry of nativizing Christianities in Japan, China, Indonesia, India, Africa, and Latin America. Arno Lehmann, a German theologian who was one of the Western champions of indigenous Christianity and art in the context of national independence in Asia and Africa, argued that indigenous Christian art should play a key role in the postcolonial age. Since 1945 many nations have struggled for and attained their political independence, and others stand in the process of extricating themselves from old circumstances. With these cataclysmic revolutions, which also stress a decisive turning away from western influence, Christians do not stand neutrally
the new art ld bring to Western art that new, constructive reinvigoration which it needs for its salvation. Attitudes toward modern art among Roman Catholic authorities in the twentieth century varied widely. The most important figure in the Catholic Church with respect to mission art was Celso Costantini, who cautioned against the exportation of modern made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
Constantinian use was to demonstrate that mission art was a way for the church to show a salutary effect on host cultures. Artistic production, he and many others, both Catholic and Protestant, believed, was a preeminent way to make the faith take root and render organic evidence that the spirit of a people was not colonized but remained true to itself after evangelization, even came into a purer, more spiritual awareness of itself. Costantini summed up this position succinctly in two of the characteristically brief assertions in his widely read book L'chren (Christian Art): The catholic character of the Holy Church demands that everything in the world that has a certain value, that all lights of beauty and truth, even the most lowly, be incorporated in its language. In this intellectual and artistic conquest, the Holy Church does not destroy and does not rank civilizations; with its powerful spirit of unity and universality she [the church] unites them without deforming them.58 ..ERR, COD:1..
the circulation of images. The archbishop and secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Catholicity viewed the quest for indigenous cultures not as a form of colonialism. Instead, Costantini and Pius XI viewed the incorporation of the indigenous into a larger spiritual regime. This universal scope, they believed, extended the circulation of images. The archbishop and secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, wrote the American journal Liturgical Art, the following formulation: The intention of the Church is evident and simple: to abstain from importing a foreign style of sacred art among the new Christians of a pagan land and to seek to adapt art to the ecclesiastical exigencies existing in each country. This represents an expression of the Church and serves to convince the people whom we wish to convert that the universal religion comes from above, not from outside. The Catholic doctrine of ptation, precisely stated here, aimed at preserving ethnic or racial identity in the arts and detaching them from political and economic conquest. For Costantini and his colleagues, beauty was both local in its response to the Gospel and universal as a manifestation of divine truth. Indigenous art was the aesthetic strategy of resisting Westernization while assimilating Christianity. As the aesthetic signature of spiritual purity, beauty allowed a clean distinction between politics and faith, forming a unity that avoided the economic interests and exploits of colonialism. By midcentury, however, the notion that the spread of the Catholic faith could occur without doing violence to native cultures was openly rejected by some, including the French Dominican artist, editor, and arbiter of progressive Catholic taste, M.-A. Couturier. Lamenting the
images between cultures hapless destruction of the art and culture of primitive races missionaries, Couturier saw the art of Africa as having ended. only fecund, vigorous African art at present was born in the slums of large American cities and Southern plantations, with no thought of ancestral Africa. The proclamation of Vatican officials notwithstanding, Couturier blamed the loss of indigenous culture on Western with no thought of ancestral Africa. The proclamation of Vatican officials notwithstanding, Couturier blamed the loss of indigenous culture on Western missionaries, who, in matters of art, he claimed, were ... colonists, the civil servants of the State. Couturier regretted the importation of Western imagery into the mission field and insisted that living Christian societies will always invent living forms through which to express themselves. he affirmed the redemptive role of the Christian West in spite of its transgressions against colonized peoples: tact with Christian realities and Western cultures will spur the invention of new forms corresponding to the genius of each race. Although it is important to remember that Couturier and other Christians applauded the influence of African and Asian art on European artists such as Matisse and Picasso, and therefore they recognized that cultural contact created cross-fertilization; nevertheless, with Christianity as the leaven of the nations, the principle of adaptation remained intact. The idea of adaptation also appealed to Protestant missionaries and mission art advocates from Europe and the United States, for whom indigenous art was often regarded as a measure of the national autonomy as well as the cultural well-being of an evangelized people. Several Protestant authors published extensively in favor of the indigenous art of Asian and African Christians. Their articles and books celebrated the native art as a sure indicator of the health and rootedness of the emerging native churches. Arno Lehmann asserted that art and the concern for it among the new churches important hints of the growth of Christian self-identity and the measure of indigenization, a yardstick for determining how far and deep a church has grown into a people and a culture. Three of the most widely circulating and often-cited books, which contain hundreds of reproductions of art by Christian artists from around the world, hailed the possibilities of indigenous art. Arno Lehmannie Kunst der Jungen Kirchen (The Art of the New Churches, 1955; 2nd ed., 1957), his Christian Art in Africa and Asia (1969), and Masao Takenakahr: Christian Art in Asia (1975) all advocated a postcolonial recognition of national churches and asserted the central importance of the visual arts in representing a thorough indigenization of Christianity in each nation. Both authors distinguished
understood basic concern of nationalism [to be] the selfhood of the people, which he defined as community of selves responsibly participating in the course of their own history. maintained that the human self was part of a continuous stream of cultural history, a creation ex nihilo. Postcolonial nationals must struggle to discern this continuity but not by a nostalgic way of returning to the past. Th Takenaka and Lehmann of Christian peoples liberated from colonialism, whom Takenaka described as people who have regained selfhood. Lehmann expressed himself in the tone of a manifesto: The Asiatics and Africans, who are right in the midst of today’s turmoil, who are imbued with an intense nationalism, and who are opposed to every form of colonialism, though this new form might be only on a spiritual and cultural level, will its other obviously Western. anything other than the cultural politics of Western Christianity, the source of forms of art, especially if they suspect this art is intended as a vehicle of communication. So art, too, in all its aspects and in the fullest sense, cannot be allowed to continue as the famous and often cited wer-pot plant."

African ecclesiastics might gather in order to redefine the church and its agenda in the postcolonial era. Asiatic art, ter all, sounded much grander and more global than onesian art. Golese art, it was the energy
images between cultures of missions to Asia and Africa, there is no such thing as o-asiatic. Every notion undermined the nationalism that Lehmann wished to affirm among his American and European readers. Yet it was no doubt a convenient canopy under which Asian and African ecclesiastics might gather in order to redefine the church and its agenda in the postcolonial era. O-asiatic art, ter all, sounded much grander and more global than onesian art golese art gali art. It was the energy of nationalist awareness that Lehmann and Takenaka considered the great engine of political economy, and therefore an undeniable condition of religious growth. Indigenization became a primary issue in the post-WWII formation of new nations. Indigenous Christian art was to serve a key purpose. No such thing as o-asiatic. Every notion undermined the nationalism that Lehmann wished to affirm among his American and European readers. Yet it was no doubt a convenient canopy under which Asian and African ecclesiastics might gather in order to redefine the church and its agenda in the postcolonial era. O-asiatic art, ter all, sounded much grander and more global than onesian art golese art. Takenaka reproduced in their volumes demonstrates that Asian and African artists had spent considerable time looking at European art. Much of the work suggests more than a passing familiarity with twentieth-century painting in France, Germany, Britain, Spain, and the United States. And there is good reason to suspect that modernist
the circulation of images aesthetics and artistic styles undergirded the nationalist imperative in art that Lehmann, Takenaka, and other Christian writers championed. Modernist art had certainly done so in Europe in the case of the truculently chauvinist Italian Futurists, and contemporary American abstract art was being sent abroad as propaganda of the cultural superiority of the West. Not only did late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century avant-garde painting and sculpture in Europe and the United States find the traditional arts of Africa and Asia welcome forms of artistic inspiration, but also, Western artists pursued a self-determination and practice of personal expression that endorsed emancipation from traditional authority and the prescription of taste and beauty. The resulting aesthetic of selfhood clearly appealed to the aesthetics of national indigenization and was explicitly championed by Lehmann and Takenaka as well as many of the artists whose work they praised. Lehmann's view in the modernist ideal of the avant-garde was sufficiently deep that he even hoped Christian artists might serve prophetically to lead theologians toward indigenization: It is not that in the providence of God the artists could in their way show the way to indigenization even of theology? Artists are said usually to be ahead of others and ahead of the present time! In the end, the balance of conservative and progressive forces in the visual culture of national indigenization of Christianity served the task of propagating the Christian Gospel. Lehmann affirmed this in urging Christian artists in Asian and African nations to learn the ivetistic languages of their respective countries. Art, insisted, not speak a foreign language.
incarnation. proceeded from the idea of the historical and personal particularity of the incarnation to argue that grace act of God to redeem humanity does not erase time and place or cultural specificities, but works through them. Grace cannot be generalized. There is no such thing as a spiritual-theological Esperanto. Grace does not destroy what we have; it completes nature. Thus art as a language by itself retains its originality. There is no uniform religious brush. The brush will remain Indian, Japanese, African. For Lehmann and other advocates of indigenization, this theological rationale accommodated the formation of the national self in the postcolonial era, which served as the fundamental political unit for Christian churches in the global setting following World War II. It was certainly expressed in the regional associations that emerged to promote the interests of under-developed, newly formed national entities in a world dominated by Eastern and Western blocs that were driven by political and economic motives that cared little for local circumstances in light of the high stakes of the Cold War. One such association was the Christian Conference of Asia, which sponsored Takenaka’s project to collect and publish Christian art in Asia. Not everyone shared the optimism found in the projects pursued by Takenaka and Lehmann or their affirmation of modernist art and aesthetics as sympathetic to the indigenous project of non-Western Christian art. In an essay published in 1964, John Butler asserted that the church’s tradition of plantation, ich he linked to Celso Costantini, had come to an end. Butler was critical of attempts in church architecture and painting that sought to indigenize Christianity,
the circulation of images deconstruction of images per se that my analysis undertakes, but rather an account of the circulation of meanings and the instability of iconography as images cross the boundaries of one culture and become the property of another, or even as images are used to construct and maintain such boundaries invested in one way of seeing or another. And to the six moments delineated here, we ought by rights to add a seventh. As the work of Richard Davis has suggested, the es of imagesclude their removal from worship settings to museums and, we should not overlook, to scholarly monographs, where yet another deposit of meaning settles over their worn surfaces, allowing new forms of veneration to begin.
chapter 6 Engendering Vision Absent Fathers and Women with Beards Seeing is not only a biological ability in human beings but also a learned and historically constructed behavior. Cultures equip their members with visual means through which and in which they may see what they take to be real. One of the most important filters through which people see themselves and others is gender, which, like vision, is both biological and cultural. This chapter demonstrates by means of a case study the way in which seeing gender in American visual culture engendered vision. In chapter 2 religion was defined as a powerful form of boundary-marking and reinforcement. Gender is perhaps one of the most prevalent forms of organizing social life and personal identity. Keying gender roles to religious authority was especially attractive to Protestant moral-ists, parents, clergy, and educators in the nineteenth-century United States. These representatives of authority and the Protestant status quo faced the menace of deep structural changes in political and economical life, which threatened to transform the ordinary order of domestic affairs and public decorum. If a gaze or way of seeing is a relatively discrete constellation of ideas, feelings, assumptions, and attitudes in certain images and practices of using them, Protestants came to believe that a way of seeing could be instrumentalized, at least in theory, as a way of disseminating particular notions of gender. Protestant Mothers in the Antebellum American Home A generation of scholarship on the social history of the white American family has developed a compelling narrative. With the rise of the
The social life of pictures. Industrial revolution in the early republic, the colonial paradigm of the patriarchal family was challenged by a new set of economic circumstances and social arrangements. Production during the colonial period had been centered in the home, with laborers and apprentices living under the same roof as the owner of the mill, farm, or shop, where the master craftsman and father-owner was the principal authority in household and workplace. With the rise of the factory and the expansion of wage-earning urban populations, the owners and managers relocated to quiet side streets and neighborhoods near the business district while the laboring classes congregated in separate neighborhoods. The paterfamilias spent more and more time away from home, working at the office or factory. Responsibility for domestic order, including religious formation, was therefore increasingly invested in the mother during the antebellum period. This account, however, should neither overlook the many activities of women outside the home nor ignore the evidence of the anxieties of middle-class fathers regarding the lives of their children and the persistent involvement of many fathers in domestic concerns. There was not, in fact, a wholesale exodus of middle-class fathers from the home. And many of the fathers who spent increasing amounts of time away from home suffered guilt and regret for doing so. Yet it remains the case that fathers in the antebellum period left the home for the workplace as American industry and finance expanded and the work force moved from country to town and city. One does well, therefore, to proceed mindful of the complexity of evidence when examining the wealth of visual materials illustrating the publications of antebellum Protestants who were concerned about the state of the American family in the period. The domestic images of mothers with children and paternal absence to be examined here may be better understood as ideological formations than as shots family arrangements. The images, in other words, were designed to foster an ideal that responded both to the actual circumstances of mothers assuming greater responsibility in home life because of increased paternal absence and to the desire of Protestant men and women to resist the movement of women into social roles beyond the home. The new economic forces of factories and the growth of urban centers provided markets for female labor that drew heavily on the (frequently immigrant) lower classes. Middle-class Protestants responded by underscoring class distinctions, clarifying the respective roles for both men and women. The proper sphere for middle-class Protestant women was the home. As Stephen Frank has
in particular, Proverb 22:6: in up a child in made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and ..ERR, COD:1.. left hangs an elaborately framed painting of an ancient scene, with a mother and grandmother instructing their son/grandson, arguing visually that the modern duty of mother teaching son was in fact an ancient one. It can be determined from another antebellum
the social life of pictures figure 51. in Up a Child in the Way He Should Go. The Sunday at Home 4, no. 185, November 12, 1857. Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum, Wheaton, Illinois. bankers, merchants, landowners, managers, and entrepreneurs of the middle and upper middle classes. These images and the literature they illustrated helped shape bourgeois self-consciousness and the emergence of a self-identifying middle class. The republican mother, in other words, was a symbol of the middle classes. In 1820 more than half of the white American population was sixteen years old or younger. Over half of these young people were single and female among urban laboring classes and constituted a
engendering vision 195 group whom Protestant educators and reformers
sought to direct to the safety and propriety of the domestic sphere.
Teaching and benevolent work were among the few acceptable public roles
for middle-class women in the national campaign to secure the Christian
Republic of the United States, as made his view of Catholicism quite
clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of
a community would so soon and
the social life of pictures figure 52. Alexander Anderson (engraver), mother with children. From Parental Duties, No. 27 (New York: American Tract Society, 1826). Photo: Author. character of children, and it was mother who was in charge. Images such as figure 52 appeared on the covers of tracts designed to instruct mothers (and fathers) in the task of instructing their children. Such tracts, books, and articles were more often aimed at mothers than at fathers, since mothers were engaged in childcare from birth. The tract Parental Duties (1826) naturalized maternal care of children: is indeed a rare thing for a woman to get her suckling child. Though the tract addressed itself to istian parents,. children occupy a tastefully appointed interior that opens onto a terrace, the mother does not wallow in luxury. Her thrift and dedication are unmistakable.
the social life of pictures figure 54. Alexander Anderson (engraver), family at worship. From Philip Doddridge, Family Worship, No. 18 (New York: American Tract Society, 1826). Photo: Author. located in front of mother (note that the Bible resting on a table faces the father, who was its reader); genders are separated on either side of the room, and what may be a female servant is confined to the back of the room, facing a door. The isolation of each person and the looming, closed doors suggest a tone of solemn privation overseen by paternal authority. The image reproduced as figure 54 reflects a mitigation of the severity of eighteenth-century patriarchalism. This illustration portrays a cozier domestic interior in which family members recite prayer from a common text (according to Doddridge's text). Their Protestant union is evident by the books they conspicuously hold before them. But there is a curious disjuncture between text and image. Doddridge spoke to the eighteenth-century paterfamilias of Great Britain in the text of the tract, addressing the reader as parent and master, the father of a family, the person who was in charge of servants as well as family members. The image, however, does not privilege the older male on the left but centers rather on the hearth,countering pater on the left with mater on the right. There is nothing to indicate that anyone is a servant (the manner of dress and placement in the room signal that rank among the younger is uniform). Mother and father are the bookends to this domestic library of worship. Thus, the American
Tract Society drew on the cultural and theological authority of a well-known preacher and avid supporter of the evangelical revival (from his pulpit in Northampton, England, where he was both an educator and a writer) but visually interpreted his message in a manner that conformed to nineteenth-century notions and practices of family life. This imagery opens a nostalgically tinted view on the past. If figure 53 is closer to the social structure advocated by Doddridge, the figures are dressed in clothing that was fashionable at the beginning of the nineteenth century as formal attire. By contrast, the elderly male figure in figure 54 is dressed in a clearly anachronistic manner, the better, perhaps, to signify his venerable stature as pater. In somewhat different ways, then, both illustrations urged Americans to practice a Christianity ascribed to their forefathers. If figure 52 more accurately represents the actual social practice of raising Christian children during the early republic, figures 53 and 54 succinctly visualize the ideology of the task. And a lithograph by Nathaniel Currier crystallizes the nostalgic function of domestic visual piety in the antebellum period. The image (fig. 55) conflates a young woman of prayer with her pious gaze of vision and memory upon the domestic prayer of mother and father, portrayed in another Currier lithograph on the wall of her parlor. An early example of duct placement,rierrint envisions the middle-class home as a sacred altar in which commercial, mass-produced imagery facilitates a visual piety of remembering parental practice and securing the way to happiness, the print is titled.17 But in its own way, figure 55 takes a step closer to the experience of many young women in the middle of the nineteenth century single working women and middle-class women who lived alone or at least without a husband.18 The Bible reader in figure 55 remembers the Bible reader of her youth, her father, whom she now replaces in her solitary search for happiness. In this instance, his absence is visualized as an act of nostalgic memory. Mother was widely addressed and depicted in antebellum Protestant literature as the childest friend, teacher, and spiritual counseloren to the point of eclipsing the paternal presence, as suggested by a tract illustration of about 1830, republished in 1842 (fig. 56), in which the father appears eclipsed or displaced by the regally gesturing mother, a kind of forgotten presence who looks on anonymously over motherhoulder. As an image illustrating a tract on early religious education, this wood engraving places the emphasis not on the
engendering vision 201 figure 56. Alexander Anderson (engraver). From Early Religious Education,. 143, in Publications of the American Tract Society (New York: American Tract Society, [1842]). Photo: Author. practice rather than on written word or spoken sermonic discourse also alerts us to the rise of a devotional piety among nineteenth-century American Protestants, who found an increasingly important place for images as suasive moral presences, which were ranked by Horace Bushnell and other advocates of nurture as superior to catechismal indoctrination, inasmuch as they exerted a special power on the unconscious, an unspoken influence on a childoral development. Christian advice literature contended that the effect mothers had on infants was unparalleled. Not only did advice authors emphasize the preeminence of the mother in the religious education of her flock at fireside; they also spoke of the mother in the home as officiating in sanctuary of religious instruction. was the mother, not the father, who to be the earnest and affectionate guide to the Saviour. She must take her little ones by the hand and lead them in the paths of piety. The formation of an infantdentity proceeded from a direct influx of maternal influence. The tract for which figure 57 served as cover illustration stated that other should be what she wishes her children to becomed urged the use of illustrated Bibles and sacred histories as particularly serviceable in the instruction of the little ones who have not yet learned to read. In the illustration the mother
the social life of pictures figure 57. Robert Roberts (engraver). From

ters on Christian Education by a Mother,>No. 197, in Publications of
Photo: Author. gazes at a bound volume, no doubt the Bible, while
tightly embracing her child. As the child reaches for the vase of
flowers, his motherembrace restrains him, and her gaze redirects his
grasp toward the holy scriptures. But there seems to be something more
at work here. The instruction practiced by this Protestant Madonna
infuses the Protestant discipline of devotional Bible reading with a
kind of Christology. One imagines that she gently whispers instruction
to her child. If so, mother, not preacher or theologian, converts the
written text of scripture with her gaze into the spoken word, as moral
counsel murmured into the childar. As such, she is the mediator of
divine and human. The Protestant mother becomes both Mary and Jesus.
Viewing the mother as Christlike was not an isolated practice. Tracts
and advice books visualized the parallel of mother and Jesus most
frequently by juxtaposing Christ blessing the children with a mother
teaching her little ones.24 In another instance, the American Tract
engendering vision 203 figure 58. Robert Roberts (engraver), Christ Blessing Little Children, frontispiece, and Eli Whitney (engraver), mother instructing children, title page. From The Tract Primer (New York: American Tract Society, 1856). Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum, Wheaton, Illinois. Societyb>Primer, first published in 1848, placed a frontispiece of Christ with children next to a title page with a mother using an illustrated primer to teach her children (fig. 58). The two facing pages modeled the modern practice of teaching children on the biblical paradigm of Christ. (but other Protestant associations, too) ennobled modern mothers as the primary source of blessing children with spiritual benevolence and knowledge. The frontispiece image stresses Christb>blessing touch and focuses tenderly on the children that the disciples whom he rebukes in the New Testament story are absent, which underscores the female gender of caretakers. Likewise, it is the modern motherenthroned centrality and her affectionate physical contact with children that the title page image endorses.
the social life of pictures. The Christology visualized and promulgated by the American Tract Society and other benevolent groups, such as the American Sunday School Union, stressed the accessibility, sympathy, and benevolence of Jesus. The author of *ters on Christian Education* instructed Christian parents to acquaint their children with Christtory, the following summary of which paints Jesus in the warm colors of the ideal of mother that enraged later made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the social life of pictures Christianity. In the absence of the earthly father, mother became like Christ, and such images as figure 59 served as the domestic equivalent of Christ blessing the children. Emerging Models of Masculine and Feminine American Protestants at midcentury were engaged in a broadening of their categories of gender, if not always in a transforming of them. The prominence of mother in popular imagery and literature contrasted, though not necessarily conflicted, with male assessments of youth culture and the perceived needs of boys and young men. Two Unitarian clergymen present the two dominant faces of American masculinity in the antebellum period and make an instructive comparison with the domestic culture of maternal influence. In an 1855 article, the North American Review, Unitarian clergyman A. A. Livermore summed up the host of causes widely identified by his contemporaries as threatening modern American well-being: In the early history of this country, the Olympic games of our people were hunting, woodcraft, and Indian, French, and Revolutionary wars. The wild forests developed the muscles of our fathers, and cottage toil strengthened noble mothers of heroes and patriots. A hardy life in rural pursuits in the open air is still the mighty rampart of our nation against an army of diseases, and the effemination of a whole race of men. But, unfortunately, as our cities grow, as civilization waxes complex and luxurious, and the classes addicted to professional, mercantile, and sedentary life are multiplied, the physical stamina are in danger of succumbing . . .27 Livermore discerned a declension of physical activity resulting from the rise of modern American society. Coupled with the growth of cities and the office culture of modern commerce, the expansion and sophistication of civilization, and the decline of warfare, inactivity had sapped Anglo peoples in North America. Livermore characterized this historical process as a national loss of masculinity. Men needed exercise in order to fight the onslaught of effeminacy. Livermore strongly urged American educators to use athletics to infuse studentsentially boys and young men the vigorous health they lacked. He looked to the history of Western civilization and found in it an abundance of physical culture abandoned by modernity. Exasperated though he was by the lid effeminacy American youth, Livermore did not despair. Protestant America had something that ancient Greece and
adornment of istian virtues never known to the Porch or the Academy.ysical culture could redeem the bodies of young Americans and therefore place the nation and its religious faith on the throne of Western civilization.28 The invigorating effects of sport among American college students, all men of course, amounted to a male counterpart to the female formation in Little Women. But another Unitarian clergyman, writing two decades earlier, had been more concerned with the autonomous self. Ralph Waldo Emerson stressed masculinity as the spiritual likeness of human and and self-denial as masculine. Susan L. Robertson has argued persuasively that character formation for Emerson meant masculinization, a triumph of the ascetic mind over the passionate body. Self-mastery emerged through the suppression of vice, indolence, lust, and appetite.29 By stressing the power of the individual to fashion and perfect himself, Emerson rejected the Calvinist notion of total depravity. He located the will to self-development within the self and considered it the image of God in human nature. As Robertson has suggested, in order to articulate this organic anthropology in which the self grew from within itself, Emerson relied on a deeply gendered polarity of self and nonself, male and female. Emerson understood his own defection from the Unitarian pulpit as liberation from external constraints and response to the individual call to self-culture. With this masculine notion of the self in mind, Little Women may be read as an implicit critique of Emersonian romantic autonomy and masculine self-formation. In his parting sermon at Boston Second Church in ..ERR, COD:1.. and divine. Emerson notion of self-culture coded self-indulgence as effeminate and self-denial as masculine. Susan L. Robertson has argued persuasively that character formation for Emerson meant masculinization, a triumph of the ascetic mind over the passionate body. Self-mastery emerged through the ..ERR, COD:1..
the social life of pictures relinquish her vanity, Alcottovel endorsed a conventional understanding of character formation and the passions, even if it did so by making greater room for female agency. And the male ideal it constructed was not macho but accommodating and self-effacing. The absent father in nineteenth-century literature and iconography generally cultivated a masculinity that stressed manliness rather than machismo. Unlike the aggressive, often jingoistic masculinity to come after the war, Christian manliness was less hostile toward women, even deferential to the preeminence of the female gender, though always in order to delineate the feminine sphere as properly domestic and non-public. Manliness was the Christian counterpart to the republican mother. The problem of agency of women and their capacity to operate without husbands occupied moralists and artists alike in midcentury Victorian culture. Nathaniel Hawthorne ventured to liberate one woman from the domestic sphere in his art romance, The Marble Faun (1860), whose heroine, Hilda, was an unmarried New England Protestant living in Rome. She resists the courtship of a fellow American artist, Kenyon, until the novel’s end in order to pursue her greater love for a feminine ideal embodied in devotion to the Virgin. The narrator pleads her case as well as all women... in her [medieval] tower... all alone, perfectly independent, under her own guardianship, unless watched over by the Virgin, whose shrine she tended; doing what she liked, without a suspicion or a shadow upon the snowy whiteness of her fame. The customs of artist life bestow such liberty upon the sex, which is elsewhere restricted within so much narrower limits; and it is perhaps an indication that, whenever we admit women to a wider scope of pursuits and professions, we must also remove the shackles of our present conventional rules, which would then become an insufferable restraint on either maid or wife. Hawthorne presents the young artist as consumed by an idealistic love of art and possessed of the warmth and richness of a womanly sympathy that propels her into spiritual communion with the masters whose works she studies in Roman galleries and churches. The empathic power to enter into the works she admires leads Hilda to set aside her artistic ambitions. Understanding the works of the great masters becomes her sole task. Embracing these wonderful men so deeply, she was too loyal, too humble, in their awful presence, to think
forefathers, d eventually submits to Kenyon persistent suit. In made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
the social life of pictures love and become a Protestant Madonna, to come n from her old tower, to be herself enshrined fireside. It is a long detour this Protestant woman makes, fueled by art and romantic adventure, but it concludes its wide course in the familiarity of the home. If Hawthorne allows his heroine to flirt with the adventure of the nineteenth-century (male) artist-ideal, famously modeled by the German Nazarenes in Rome and the British Pre-Raphaelites, who cultivated a sacred dedication to art, the romance culminates in Hilda domestic bliss. The message of the novel would seem to be that women could be allowed a Romantic wanderlust, since they would eventually find their way home. Muscular and Hypermuscular Christianity The male character Kenyon in Hawthorneovel is a patient man who worships his Virgin Hilda as a domestic saint of womanhood. Kenyon models a masculinity that subordinates his impatience to Hilda spiritual quest, resigning himself to the superiority of her feminine sensibility. Protestant moralists and clergy affirmed this repeatedly and considered the principal task of male formation to be character development. In this ideology of manhood, the young male needed to be formed by both mother and father. Yet virtuous as Kenyon may be, his life of the wayward artist was no ideal formation at midcentury. American Protestant advice writers and educators stressed the importance of association with like-minded young men of one own class. Organized athletics in college or sponsored by the Young MenChristian Association were believed capable of developing the proper virtues of manliness. The ideal of a mind in a sound bodyrved as a motto for the YMCA (the first association in the United States was formed Boston in 1851). Here sport stood as a rival to the insidious urban distractions of dancing, gambling, taverns, and circuses. Nominate forms of association that not only harmed body and soul but also led to intermingling with lower classes. The term muscular Christianity was used already in the 1860s to signify this notion of masculinity and should not therefore be understood to designate only the machismo that arose in the final decades of the century. Thomas Hughes, British author of the enormously popular novel Tom Brownshool Days (1856), spoke for many in the United
Recalling Emerson's anthropology, the body was a willful force, a base domain of passions that had to be subjected to the controlling power of the mind. The result, achieved through denial and mastery of the bodily urges, was good character. In this masculine regime, the formation of character began with mastering the unruly male body and its passions. If a maternal Christology seemed to Alcott an appropriate response to the Civil War, for many Americans the war experience helped galvanize gender relations. The effects of the war on conceptions of masculinity hearkened a decades-long shift in the popular understanding of masculinity. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, this change, which was manifold and by no means uniform, was evident in many familiar aspects of American culture that made male segregation and affiliation vital issues in the cultural and social life of the nation. Scholars of American masculinity have rightly pointed to new male roles fostered by Teddy Roosevelt, who once posed for a photographic portrait as a pioneer hunter, dressed in buckskin, evoking folkloric memories of Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone. Another important mythographer in the Gilded Age was the painter and sculptor Frederic Remington, who eulogized the heroics of Indian fighters, cowboys, and soldiers in order to assert the continental aspirations of American civilization in the face of resistance. Other manifestations of an increasingly self-conscious male culture in the later nineteenth century include the mushrooming of male-only fraternal organizations; the importance of sport among boys and men, including the organization of collegiate and professional sports teams; and a series of revivals dominated by male evangelicals such as Dwight L. Moody, who embraced the ideals of muscular Christianity as taught by the YMCA. The Civil War helped intensify consciousness about male difference in American society. In the South male honor in the cause of the Confederacy and in the North the integrity of the Union each evoked an appeal to manliness in the face of military aggression. The pivotal shift is evident in a single illustration used by a Sunday school weekly,
strength, wrote, his voice and the shag on his face, and the swing and sway of his shoulders, represent a personality in him that has some attribute of thunder. But there is no look of thunder in the woman. Shnell characterized an softness, grace, and beauty and as utterly lympic, ile Manb>looks ..ERR, COD:1.. and the swing and sway of his shoulders, represent a personality in him that has some attribute of thunder. But there is no look of thunder in the woman. Shnell characterized an softness, grace, and beauty and as utterly lympic,.

constitutional democracy without the hereditary institutions of monarchy or aristocracy prevail against the fractious energies of self-interest? Many wondered if there were sufficient virtue in the body politic and its fledgling institutions to withstand corruption. It was a risk that seemed
national icons 221 education were necessary interventions for making Christians for making faithful citizens in the new republic (in the double sense of faithful). American civil religion, especially after the Civil War, that great test ofalty versus rebellion the rhetoric of the winners, stressed the importance of ritualized formation provided by public ceremony, holiday commemoration, and the public schools as the crucial moments for the public making of a loyal citizenry. Anything less than vigilance in this matter neglected virtue and spawned vice, which inevitably produced moral degeneration followed by the decay of institutions and the rise of social disorder. The genealogy of national decline began in the heart of the faithless citizen. All manner of such rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and the national narratives that install them in the collective memory of American identity are the ways Americans have imagined their nationality. The importance of this active and ongoing practice of imagination for nationhood was the subject of Benedict Anderson’s nightfully classic study of nationalism, Imagined Communities. Flags, stories, songs, pictures, and monuments can be powerful means of imagining a common identity. Nationalism does not supersede religion, according to Anderson, but develops from it.1 Civil religion is the cult of the nation (though civil religion might also be other than strictly nationalist). In the American case, moralists, clergy, and politicians who harbored fears of dissolution looked to religion as a countervailing force and such talismans as the Bible, religious imagery, and the national flag as ways of disseminating this binding power among the people.2 The American case invites an examination of the use of both religion and its talismanic devices to promote national unity. I am especially interested in the persistent belief that democracy per se will not work and that the American republic requires a religious vigilance on the part of what amounts to a middle-class aristocracy. This middle class forms a dominant culture that has long relied on mass media to conduct a national cult and to disseminate a cultural literacy that assimilates newcomers and reinforces its conception of social order. Americans and their observers abroad have long wondered about the significance of religion in the practice and maintenance of American democracy. It seems clear that the United States has developed a religious practice and set of symbols that have shifted from organized, denominational Protestant Christianity to a civil religion that varies from an inclusive patriotism to a highly exclusive nationalism. This chapter seeks to trace the historical development of the religious visual culture of national
engendering vision 215 of the church the concept of influence as a
device of mass culture. What followed was a truculent call to dominate
the cultural means of display, a mobilization of suitably masculine
representation as the instrument of influence. Voices promoting virile
influence arose and fastened onto mass-produced images as a way of
shaping young men. In his 1917 study entitled Jesus, the Christ, in
Light of Psychology, G. Stanley Hall called on modern artists to
overwhelm viewers with portrayals of manly men. His skill in
depicting women, he wrote, modern-day art would not lose its power to
represent virile men. Its virgins should not be superior to its Christs,
nor the latter be more effeminate or bisexual in appearance than
masculine. Hall observed that modern religion was more affective because
less dogmatic, and this threatened a physical and emotional refinement
in boys that Hall found unacceptable. But the answer, according to the
liberal Hall, was not to enhance the intellectual rigor of the faith,
since Hall found the content less than persuasive, but to fix on the
appropriately inspirational symbols of belief. Thus, he derided most
nineteenth-century depictions of Christ as feminine, as evidenced by
ine features. American Protestantism. Women’s suffrage attracted
increasing attention, leading to the ratification of the Nineteenth
Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. A prominent activist in this
case, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, identified orthodox Christianity and its
Bible as part of the problem, which she attempted
the social life of pictures to correct by issuing The Womanible in 1895 (volume 1) and 1898 (volume 2). In this controversial publication Stanton challenged Holy Writ and Christian tradition for endorsing the suppression of women, which she considered nothing less than the very of women. One international evangelical operation, the Salvation Army, even adopted some obvious aspects of the militarism favored by advocates of muscular Christianity. Yet the Salvation Army distinguished itself notably by offering women a fundamental role in its enterprise. In fact, the leadership of the armymerican contingent for the first several decades was female, co-led from 1887 to 1896 by Maud and Ballington Booth, then from 1904 to 1934 by the daughter of the couple, Evangeline Booth. Whereas, made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
chapter 7 National Icons Bibles, Flags, and Jesus in American Civil Religion

Apologists of modern nationhood are often fond of regarding their nations as expressions of divine will, natural law, or the destiny of a particular people. Whatever their origin, nations are a modern form of cultural and political ordering that is widely experienced as bearing some manner of religious significance, often in the form of a civil religion. Aligning state and cult is, in fact, quite ancient. But the polity of the nation (not to be confused with the state) is probably not much older than the seventeenth century. This final chapter examines the national cultus, the religion of a national people and its expression in a set of symbols that are, in the instance of United States history, as contested as they are venerated, even adored. The bold enterprise of founding a confederation of states governed by the people involved a risk that caused many Americans great worry. Could a constitutional democracy without the hereditary institutions of monarchy or aristocracy prevail against the fractious energies of self-interest? Many wondered if there were sufficient virtue in the body politic and its fledgling institutions to withstand corruption. It was a risk that seemed worthwhile in view of the tyranny that monarchy was believed to entail and the separate set of self-interests that aristocracy ensured. Yet from the foundation of the American republic to the present, the fear that internal and external forces would result in social disintegration and disorder has persisted. The Calvinist anthropology that informed Puritanism and its legacy was stalwartly grounded in the doctrine of Original Sin, which made many American Protestants unable to trust human nature to do the right thing. Formation and
the social life of pictures vigilance. Of special interest is the emergence of national icons, flags, and pictures of Jesus that were regarded as sacred objects, totems with the power to place viewers in the mystical presence of the republic. I use the term icon not in a merely metaphorical sense but to designate the devotional image or object of civil religion. Just as icons among Eastern Orthodox Christians operate as apertures or windows to the sacred, so Bibles and flags in particular have acted as sacred evocations of the divinely ordained republic, the nation that is invested in these symbols to such a degree that the cherishing (or abuse) of them conveys the devotionseneration of the nation itself. Protestantism, Print, and National Identity

Protestantism on American soil has generally thrived when it has been fueled by a cause. Many Protestants in the United States found ample cause in the early nineteenth century, following the origin of the nation. Faced with the disestablishment of official or state-sponsored religion, the rise of mass democracy, and the arrival of increasing numbers of non-Protestant immigrants, Protestants in the Northeast during the early decades of the nineteenth century felt menaced. They responded by promoting the spread of literacy through the distribution of religious primers and instructional materials and encouraging the use of the Bible in public school rooms. The strategy was to assimilate newcomers and to socialize children into what most Protestants envisioned as a Protestant nation, the legacy of providence and millennial purpose as it came to be understood during the colonial period. Benjamin Rush, eminent physician, abolitionist, treasurer of the U.S. Mint, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, spoke for many in 1789 when he proclaimed in an address (issued posthumously as a tract by the American Tract Society in 1830; fig. 63): We profess to be Republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government; that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible. For this reason, the Bible belonged in the classroom, a matter, Rush wrote to a clergyman friend, that he considered more important in the world than keeping up a regular gospel ministry. Figure 63 portrays the Bible as a public monument, around which are arrayed the institutions and activities of daily life. The text is open to Isaiah, chapter 60, and
national icons 223 figure 63. Illustration for tract, A Defence of the marked by a slip of paper that reads ay.shb>text does not mention Isaiah, so the illustration is the Tract Societyddition to the tract, a visual prompt that serves to connect the scripture of the ancient Jewish prophet with the modern world, as the bookmark literally does by lying against the biblical page and the ground. Isaiah 60 opens with a proclamation that many Americans had long regarded as a call to their nation, the new Israel: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ...the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your risingaiah 60:1 The chapter ends with a promise that Rush and many others wanted to believe and looked to biblical instruction to secure: r people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever, the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified0:21). Rush closed his letter with a similarly millennial hope: public education conducted on the study of the Holy Bible would, he believed, the
the social life of pictures figure 64. hoctaw School.om The Baptist Mission in India (Worcester: Spooner and Howland, 1840). Courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia. course of two generations eradicate infidelity from among us, and render civil government scarcely necessary in our country. any Protestants, including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists, formed tract and mission societies to publish and distribute printed materials in order to achieve such a millennial goal, even if they found Rushream of a country freed of government unlikely. An early mass-produced visual culture contributed importantly to the formation of the ideal of a Christian America. Illustrated tracts, pamphlets, books, and certificates of membership helped attract and instruct children, illiterate adults, Native Americans, former slaves, and immigrants. Tract and Bible societies translated Bibles and instructional materials into various Indian languages for use by Protestant evangelists, who often competed with Catholic priests for the hearts of the Indians. Publishers rushed to issue schoolbooks for use among Indian groups such as the Choctaw, shown here undergoing the orderly rigor of assimilation (fig. 64). The American Tract Society established repositories for its tracts and other publications in cities throughout the Northeast, South, and West before the Civil War and operated regional printing houses in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. The items that the ATS produced were placed in cities around the country and handed out by colporteurs, door-to-door
the social life of pictures Protestants squared off with rival discourses about the religious pedigree of the nation. The visual polemics continued, as we shall see, well into the twentieth century. Many nineteenth-century American Protestants revived a theocratic vision of the New World as Godhosen instrument for the dawn of the millennium. For the American Tract Society (est. 1825) and the American Sunday School Union (ASSU; est. 1824), as well as countless other Protestant organizations such as the American Bible Society (est. 1816), this meant taking a proactive stand on the assimilation of children and the unconverted. Before America could usher in the millennium it had to evangelize its citizens as well as was echoed in the interdenominational identity of the Young Menb>Christian Association and the Sunday school movement after the war. Their collaborative efforts were seen as signs of cohesion and hope as the forces of change and disintegration mounted.

Although state legislatures eventually ratified the Bill of Rights, which established what has since been widely interpreted as the strict separation of church and state, many Protestants from the antebellum period to the present have used mass-produced images to compensate for the First Amendmentisestablishment of religionher by enhancing voluntary campaigns to disseminate Protestant influence, or by appealing to a unifying symbol to gather Christians, or even, in the case of one noteworthy image in the twentieth century (see figs. 39, 71 on p. 250, and 72 on p. 253), by infiltrating public spaces in order to laimem as evidence of a Christian nation. By compensating for disestablishment I mean compensation not for the loss of state monies or a vast membership roll but for the loss of a national mythology, a theocratic vision that placed Protestant Americans at the heart of a cosmic drama. Indeed, in the wake of disestablishment, religious donations and membership ballooned to unprecedented numbers. But the mythology enforced by state sponsorship was replaced by a democratic conception of liberty that, at least in principle, leveled the religious marketplace, requiring new strategies of influence to replace the former powers of coercion.

Mass-produced images offered one attractive means of influence. The task of influencing Americans was premised on regarding them as voluntary consumers of ideas and beliefs. American Protestantism, invoking the example of Martin Luther himself, looked to mass print as an ideal form of mass influence. Protestants aimed at arguing visually as
Harpereekly Magazine. In 1870, in the midst of a controversial court case in Cincinnati over the use of the Bible in public schools (and the same year that Pius IX proclaimed the doctrine of papal infallibility), Nast responded with an incendiary cartoon that expressed Protestant fears of Catholic influence in public education (fig. 67), stoking an old phobia of papal conspiracies to topple republican government. In view of the interests of Catholic and Jewish students and in the midst of a nationwide trend of public schools abandoning Bible reading, the Cincinnati Board of Education reversed an existing policy of requiring Bible reading and opening religious exercises each morning in the city public schools. The board resolved to eliminate any reading of scripture or religious books that promoted religious belief and any opening exercises that constituted worship or religious instruction. The resolution had followed an unsuccessful attempt by the board and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to bring the city’s Catholic schools under the jurisdiction of the public board of education. When Catholics and Protestants objected, the board responded by attempting to remove the offense of Bible reading, hoping to gain Catholic support. It was that resolution of the summer of 1869 that ignited a citywide firestorm. A group of citizens took the board of education to court. Nast’s cartoon was reproduced and circulated in Cincinnati and certainly expressed a popular sentiment, as the litigators themselves were quite aware. In one argument, a lawyer for the board of education, Stanley Matthews, asked the presiding judges to consider the reverse of the situation: what if a Catholic majority were to impose its Roman Catholic pedagogy on a Protestant minority? pose your children were brought to that school and were taught and were made, by a rule of that school, at the name of Christ, to bow the head in adoration, and to cross themselves with the sign of the cross, how would your Honors like it? The fictional scene described by Matthews was caricatured by Nastrin. The illustration shows a
national icons 229 figure 67. Thomas Nast, eshadowing of Coming Events in Our Public Schools. Harpereekly Magazine, April 16, 1870, p. 256. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society. priest sweeping away the Bible and textbooks while a student dips his hand in holy water and two others genuflect at school benches made into prie-dieux. Images of Mary (on the left, with swords plunged into her heart) and the pope have replaced the schoolroomaps and chalkboard. If Matthews sought to engage the judiciary in a mental experiment designed to demonstrate Protestant majoritarian injustice, one wonders if his rhetorical tactic didnackfire. The public opinion to which Nast appealed was shared by two of the three judges in the superior court, which decided in favor of the plaintiffs, two to one. Yet Nastropaganda failed to keep the uproar in place, partly because the process of appealing the superior court decision took three years and because board membership changed and principal
from the city public schools. From the Bible to the Flag American political life has been shaped by a history of responding to immigration. Since the Democratic Party, based in the South, relied on immigrant voters to counterbalance the entrepreneurial and industrialist power of the Republicans in the North, the Republican Party often voiced national anxieties about the threat to democracy that newcomers (typically laborers) were believed to pose. If the Protestants of Catholics had lost much of its political currency by the mid-twentieth century, concern about the need for a religiously charged national unity persisted. One way in which Americans have historically sought to counter perceived threats of national degeneration, disruption, or balkanization is by invoking a civil religion of patriotism that often shades into nationalistic sentiments. From the beginning of the New England colonies, education was an important means of civil and spiritual formation as well as a means of acquiring literacy to enable Bible and devotional reading. If people were by nature sinners, they could be taught to counter the power of sin by reading Godord, and they could become productive members of the spiritual commonweal by schooling. The belief was not lost on later Calvinists and American educators when they faced the challenge of fashioning citizens of the new republic. When growing numbers of non-Anglo and non-Protestant Europeans began to arrive in the 1840s, the national task was only intensified in the minds of Protestants. The
national icons 231 fear was clearly registered in one advocate of Christianity in made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
this end, reasoned, students] should assuredly be taught that the supreme authority is in the Creator and Governor of the world, and that earthly potentates are but his vicegerents and subject to his law. 

again, Packard can be heard speaking in two directions. To those such as Horace Mann, who would cede complete control of public schools to the state, Packard preached that the state itself depends on divine authority. To American Catholics, Packard also offered a warning: never inspires the youthful mind (and especially the American youthful mind) with deference to authority, obedience to conscience and the cultivation of a lofty principle of integrity and social obligation, is a most essential element of our daily public school instruction. The passage is a passel of code words. The horitys the republic-and indebted state, and the diences to individual conscience, not to the pontiff in Rome. The egrity question was the integration or assimilation of immigrants into the American stock. ial obligation the welfare of the nation could not be subordinated to what anti-Catholic Protestants regarded as the potentially treasonous obedience of Catholic Americans, or at least the obedience of the priesthood and religious orders, to the papacy, which Protestant nativists believed was engaged in an international conspiracy to topple republican governments. Whether it was the more recognizably Protestant sensibility of Packard or the more liberal religious views of Horace Mann, the generalized Christianity that was advocated by Protestant educational activists in the antebellum United States was a form of civil religion that served as a strategy of assimilating immigrants, the poor, and the working classes. To be a good American, one needed to be a Protestant Christian. The aim was to bind all members of the society to the good of the republic, pitting the cultivation of social virtues against the divisive powers of vice. Packardook, which appeared the year after the Civil War ended, was intended to seize an initiative for reform in the wake of the greatest threat by far to the national unity. In the new context of the costly victory of the North, the national flag acquired a special status, even a presence as the effulgent symbol of national unity. This is quite clear in Henry Ward Beecherelebrated paean to the flag. In 1861, fol-
national icons 233 lowing the outbreak of the war, Beecher assured a Union audience that the flag not a painted rag. It is a whole national history....It is the NATION. In the warftermath the memory of rebellion and its defeat combined with the persistence of immigration to occasion a renewed call for the unifying effects of civil religion fostered in the public schools. By the 1880s litigation had turned against reading the Bible in public classrooms, so Protestant advocates of a nationalist civil religion looked for a new means of imposing a civilizing piety on the impressionable minds of the nationouth to counter the perceived menace of difference and division based on religion and ethnicity. As Civil War veterans in the North aged and began to die, the practice emerged in New York City of veterans presenting their regimental banners and flags to public schools, where children, especially immigrant children, might venerate them.24 Nationalistic patriotism and the public school intermingled and helped to forge a new variety of American civil religion.25 In the spring of 1888, Colonel George T. Balch (18284), West Point graduate, Civil War veteran, and auditor of the New York City Board of Education, visited a large metropolitan public school in the city in order to observe morning exercises. Balch was preparing a history of tenement housing in the city and had become interested in the role of public education in the condition of the urban poor. For fifteen minutes that morning he observed a patriotic ritual in which immigrant school children assembled before the American flag. The event touched him deeply. Balch later wrote that he had never learned so much about patriotism as in those few moments, and he declared that he glimpsed them the germ of a patriotic movement, which, in the hands of wise and judicious teachers, could be made to produce results, the far-reaching consequences of which it would be impossible to prognosticate at this time. Balch went to the school that morning possibly to witness the presentation of a Civil War flag or possibly to observe the patriotic ritual that had come to his attention as a result of recent presentations of Civil War colors to public schools. In any event, his response to the ritual veneration of the flag was informed by his concern for the future of the republic assailed by immigration. In 1890 he published a detailed guide-book for promoting patriotism in the public school. He brought to it an army bureaucratye for procedure and produced a blueprint for the public ritual of a national piety that anticipated the Pledge of Allegiance to the national flag, which would become the central symbol of American nationalism in public schools over the next century. Balchow largely forgotten book merits close attention, since it prescribes
the social life of pictures practices for the public school that stipulate a cultic veneration of the flag and signal its new status as the national icon. Colonel Balch regarded the American public schools as the government-funded and controlled equivalent of the paternalistic benevolent association, the great Victorian engine of benevolence and social amelioration. It was the public schools that would now engineer mass salvation in American society, redeeming the immigrant hordes and securing the future of the republic. Balchandor could be startling. He explained that his book ask was 16 introduction figure 2. Jan Gossaert, St. Luke Drawing the Virgin, ca. 1520, oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Photo: Foto Marburg/Art Resource, New York. European Christians. And seeing her seen by one of the authors of the four New Testament narratives of the life of Jesus eventually could be made to support the ambition of the artist to be more than an artisan. During the Renaissance, the artist aspired to be more than a copyist or technician. Those like Leonardo da Vinci or Jan Gossaert worked by inspiration and genius to offer a moving visual access to the mysteries of the faith. One senses the stature of the artist rising in Gossaertmage of inspired seeing, St. Luke Drawing the Virgin (fig. 2).
national icons 235 patriotism as it was to be fostered in the public school. He spoke of the Declaration of Independence as catechism of the nation itself named as the first means of patriotic education the awakening of the childpersonal relation made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
298 notes to pages 233 so disastrously affect its intellectual, not less than its moral and spiritual welfare, as the general abandonment of public worship. And is it not worthy of consideration, whether, among the causes which prevent so large a portion of the community from ever showing themselves in such places (except where the ritual or form of worship appeals merely to the senses), the want of sufficient education to enable them to understand or be profited by the service, is either the last or least? Packard], The Daily Public School, 20). Packard needed to account for the larger numbers of Catholics who attended public worship than Protestants and did so by means of a Protestant commonplace, by dismissing the Mass as merely sensuous. 23. Quoted in Colonel Geo[rge] T. Balch, Methods of Teaching Patriotism in the Public Schools (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1890), facing p. 16. Photo: Author. Students competed for the honor of bearing the flag academically, which would promote classism, Balch believed, but in the display of public virtues. The strict ritualization of flag display and veneration emulated military protocol. Students who conducted themselves honorably were to be rewarded with the Badge of Citizenship for Scholars (fig. 68). In order to heighten the medalacred quality, awardees received it with great ceremony, wore it for one day, and surrendered it (once again, with ceremony) to the teacher. This militarization accompanied the postwar valorization of a more aggressive form of American masculinity, as was discussed in the previous chapter. It also operated for Balch as a public strategy for assimilating the unruly children of an increasingly immigrant society. Students who exhibited the best behavior (modeling punctuality, self-reliance, self-control, self-respect, charity, and generosity) were recognized by the privilege of displaying a flag on their desks. A flag so earned served as distinguishing mark for
Flag.ller clearly affixed his call for protection of the sanctity of the flag to fears about American heterogeneity: our young republic, devoid of traditions, with a mixed population, augmented by constant arrivals from foreign shores, our government needs a national law Miller argued that such misuse of the flag as political partisan propaganda, advertisement, street entertainment, prosaic decoration, or as a device to promote labor unions s a bad example to the lower classes, who degrade the flag to its nadir.e lem of our republic, claimed, uld be kept as inviolate as was the Holy of Holies in King Solomonemple. This identification of nation with religious cult was not unusual among proponents of flag protection. In a deliberate invocation of the ancient
the olden time. A report to the Daughters of the American Revolution Flag Committee at the 1899 DAR National Convention insisted that the flag be kept as e and sacred as the cross. Clearly, the flag held specifically Christian significance for vocally patriotic groups whose membership traced a hereditary link to the soldiers whose heroic efforts gave birth to the flag, which been baptized in sentiment by the fire and blood and battle, one member of the DAR testified before a Senate committee in 1908. The emergence of hereditary organizations in the late nineteenth century answered unmistakably to anxieties about immigration and also to older fears about the mob. It was not just cities filled with unsightly foreign newcomers but also the prospect of mob rule, disorderly electorates voting their own interests, creating their own urban zones of heterodoxic culture, language, and religion. This prospect registered among many Protestants as a threat to the republic, that older ideal that appeared to rely on a middle-class aristocracy. Patriotic organizations formed in order to exclude those who lacked the pedigree of hereditary connections to the heroes and battles that formed the bulging cult of Americanism and to include only those who would unambivalently support lobbying and legislation on behalf of symbols and practices that would enforce the cult. Yet the movement to make the flag a nationalist icon encountered resistance. The efforts of those who traced a hereditary connection to the historical origins of the nation and its national emblem appeared to some critics as an attempt to bestow upon themselves a privilege that subverted democracy. There is one form of desecration of our national emblems more serious than those mentioned. That is using them in any way as the distinguishing badge of those self-styled rioticcieties which base their membership on their ancestry or which find their chief occupation in opposing the influence of eigners. Our flag stands for anything, it stands for opposition to hereditary privilege, the spirit of caste and exclusiveness, and all artificial distinctions and eminences. The same journal article of 1903 contended that the flag should become monplace rather than . . . regarded as in itself sacred. Numerous voices in the academy and newspapers objected in the early years of
hysterics. In another piece from a few years later, Godkin argued that forcing vows upon children or anyone else was not the way to achieve loyalty from citizens. Truth is, of its service. The flag, it followed, was not a fetish whose adoration was to be coerced and conditioned but a symbol of freely given loyalty. Moving directly against the grain of the American nationalist sentiment of his day and the following century, Godkin insisted that genuine patriotism ascends the petty bounds of city, State, or country, to embrace mankind. It hates injustice and oppression wherever they exist. It makes cause equally with the tortured negro in the Congo and the massacred Jew in Bialystok. Is internationalist or cosmopolitan perspective discerned in what Godkin called row patriotism mindset that remains in force a century later. Narrow patriotism vokes in [the .. ERR, COD:1.. would act as social adherence among American citizens and their nation-state by fostering gratitude for securing a just social order. There was nothing mystical about this bond, but something quite rational. The state would merit loyalty on the basis of its
the social life of pictures and spirit of belligerency. It opposes international arbitration simply because arbitration requires each nation to refrain from those riotic sterics which are dear to many of its rulers and citizens. Although Godkin’s view was not shared by a majority of Americans, legal controversies eventually supported his view of flag veneration as a religious practice. In a decisive Supreme Court case of forty years later, West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943), the Court recognized that for the majority the flag had come to function as a sacred object, and for this reason it upheld the right of members of the Jehovah.. the flag and any national emblem within American democracy asserts their symbolic rather than made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
icons 241 generation as well as the hard-won vision of Abraham Lincoln. After the Union victory, the connection of the citizen to the nation tended strongly to subordinate individual rights to the good of the whole. older idea of the patriot, e scholar has put it, one who ..ERR, COD:3.. and struggles against the outrages of centralized powers replaced in the second half of the century by a nationalism that exalted national unity as the patriotic ideal.47 The connection of the citizen to the nation tended strongly to subordinate individual
world may be decorated with highly crafted, intricate designs and calligraphy, including the black cover of the Ka (see fig. 1). The architecture of the mosque itself (fig. 14) is a medium that works intimately with the spoken word, with sound, serving to amplify as well as materialize it, to give it a place in which to resonate and be experienced within the ummah, or community of believers. Moreover, the affirmation of space is fundamental to Muslim worship and devotionalism, since the ornate and often highly elaborate visual decorations that appear in homes and mosques are rooted in architecture. Architectural forms, decorative patterns of mosaic, calligraphic renderings of the Qur and imagery such as depictions of the Ka combine to shape auditory-visual-spatial sensibility as part of a piety that eschews representation grounded in the human figure and the discrete tableau. Interior space is where the community focus of Muslim piety unfolds, principally in the form of prayer and Qurc recitation. The exterior form of mosque architecture typically dominates the village or local urban landscape: the prayer tower looms over everything, and the arches, walls, and domes of the mosque proclaim quite unambiguously that faith is the cornerstone of the community. In light of this configuration of multiple sensations in what is experienced as a single sensation, what might be called a soundspace, it is
national icons of purpose may not be served or defined at the expense of dissent. Unity does not mean uniformity; it means common dedication to purpose, which is the preservation of liberty. When the capacity for dissent vanishes, so does democracy. Patriotism, therefore, regards the venerable culture of the nationrything from flags to monuments to songs to national ritualspublic articulations of a founding contract that includes dissent as a fundamental democratic value. This contract need not be invested solely in a civil religion that sacralizes the state, as Rousseau claimed. Patriotic citizens of a democracy like that of the United States recognize the capacity of cultural forms to function in political discourse as symbols, as devices that underscore liberty by maintaining the character of esteemed symbols rather than becoming anything that is sacred in itself. As symbols they will preserve access to public discourse, participation in the public sphere, which can thrive only when dissent and difference are possible. Patriotism is dedication to the principles on which the state is founded and which are exemplified in the individuals, events, and institutions that endorse, conceive, and maintain those principles. Nationalism, by contrast, installs the flag and other objects and places in a national cult in which reverence of the emblems is understood to secure the nation as an earthly expression of divine will and therefore as a domain that cannot allow dissent. The nation itself is thought to be sacramentally deposited in forms that must be regarded as sacrosanct and holy. Such a view will refuse to distinguish between explicitly religious objects, such as the Bible or the Cross, and the American flag. The flag becomes a national icon, serving like the Bible in the public school as the object of public veneration. Nationalism sacralizes such objects as the flag in order to put them to use in a coercive campaign to eliminate differences that are taken as a menace to uniformity. The only hope for national survival, according to nationalism, consist of interpreting unity as uniformity. Othering is crucial to this enterprise, and the corporate veneration of national icons casts love of nation in religious terms: those who do not worship the national deity are infidels. The other nationalism is the stranger, alien, foreigner, outsider, unassimilated immigrant, savage, or aboriginal. The other of nonchauvinist patriotism is a truculent state as well as onen failure to realize onenalienable rights. Such patriotism faces the openness and contingency of the social compact and regards the nation as a willed, historical, mutable construction that requires effort and sacrifice in order to flourish. Nationalism thinks in images of destiny.
the social life of pictures (ifest destiny divine intervention, and
the progressive unfolding or self-realization of a national essence or
spirit. Nationalism, it seems clear, is a way of imagining a community
that is bound by a singular faith, while patriotism may serve as an
imagined community driven by common dedication to the justice that
foundling principles can impart.59 This manner of patriotic dedication is
a form of belief or assent. It is not surprising, therefore, to find
that nonchauvinist patriotism can practice some manner of civil
religion. Such practices as mourning war dead lead ineluctably to forms
of hero valorization that regard the loss as a sacrifice of sacred
character. Yet even revering the dead need not be a rite that slides
inevitably into state religion. Patriots may honor the national cultus,
such as by visiting the redaces of battlegrounds and national
memorials; may participate in communal observances of ritual remembrance
(Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Veterans Day); may endorse national
creeds such as the Pledge of Allegiance; and may uphold the codes
prescribed by the state, such as defending the country during war. But
these acts do not make them believers in the cult of the nation if the
referents of such rites are the principles that are the founding ideals
of the nation. The patriotic gaze constructs a relation among citizens,
the dead, and founding ideals. In contrast to this, a nationalistic gaze
fixes on the god endorsing the state. In either case, however, civil
religion is surely at work. Catholicism and Nationhood If the American
majority was not inclined to distinguish patriotism from nationalism,
litigation over the preservation of religious liberty in the first half
of the twentieth century helped to do so. One could be a patriotic
American without espousing the nationalist view of the (Protestant)
majority. Through generations of court cases contesting Protestant
hegemony, Catholics and other religious groups challenged the implicit
identification of Protestant interests with state and federal
government. Catholics themselves engaged in an internal debate over the
persistence of individual ethnicities versus adoption of a single,
modern, American Catholic identity.60 Despite the desire of some to
cordon off the church from American culture and adopt an antagonistic
stance toward national history and engagement with the
Conclusion What do scholars stand to gain from the visual study of religion? A tough-minded answer to the question might go like this: Unless scholars are able to show that they learn something more about religion by understanding how it happens visually, the visual culture of religion has little to recommend it as a field or method of study. If that is so, what sort of visual evidence will contribute to the study of religion? In chapter 6 I argued that the absence of fathers from domestic formation is visually registered in tracts, religious instructional materials, and Christian advice literature. Historians have long noted the idea of absent fathers, but the imagery makes the observation palpable because it connects the absence to an audience of viewers who were invited to think and behave in a way that accommodated the absence. The imagery makes possible the recognition of a visual discourse of the moral formation of children and raises important questions about how images contributed to this history of formation. But one must be careful in weighing the visual evidence. The visual record urges historians to consider the role of images in the circulation of an ideology of gender that may not have been as descriptive of domestic arrangements as it was prescriptive. The images may not reflect the fathers’ parture from home for the workplace as much as they assign gender roles to parents: fathers were breadwinners while mothers were directed to devote themselves to the moral formation of their children. Images were also a register of social change, marking shifts in thought and practice. A telltale trace of change lingers in two uses of 257
the social life of pictures figure 69. Rev. P. Raphael, OSB, Mary Immaculate, Patroness of the United States, ca. 1920s. Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission. grandeur of the shrine championed the Madonna as the national patroness and challenged the ascendancy of a secular, industrial dynamo over the Old World romantic ideal of the Virgin, diagnosed by Henry Adams. In 1922 the editor of Catholic World inaugurated that magazine with this observation: We Catholics are more hopeful for modern civilization than are they who built [it]. ...We believe that the world has a future. ...We shall be its saviors. An image appeared in shrine publications in the same year and was reused in order to celebrate and promote the cause of the shrine (fig. 69).67 Presented in the Baroque rhetoric of a visionary revelation, Mary appears as the Immaculate
national icons 247 Conception, a doctrine formally proclaimed church dogma in 1854 by Pius IX, who stands in full papal regalia beside Mary, presenting her to those gathered before the image. An aged Indian chief bends a respectful knee in acknowledgment of the patroness of the United States, while women and children draw near and tend to the flowers and American flag that accompany the Virgin's apparition. The central motif, borrowed from Venetian paintings of Mary from the sixteenth century, is flanked on one side by the U.S. Capitol building and on the other by the future edifice of the National Shrine itself. The image announces with triumphal and devotional fervor that Mary, totem of Roman Catholicism, has made her way officially to the United States and established her cult in the nation's capital. Once again, as with earlier Protestant visions, state and church intermingle, blurring the constitutional distinction of the two. Moreover, wittingly or not, the Catholic image redeployed the visual rhetoric that had once expressed the optimistic ambitions of nineteenth-century Protestant postmillennialism evident in figure 66. The American Tract Society had produced numerous versions of this sort of image, which valorized the American Protestant missionary preaching to an audience gathered about him or, in figure 66, the national unity and Protestant identity dedicated to a purpose no less glorious than ushering in the final age of humanity. Protestants had imagined a national mission of America as a millennial agent. By the 1920s, Catholic Americans were prepared to assume the cause as part of their national acculturation, which amounted to a partial rescripting of American history, a discernment of the latent influence of Catholic thought in the American past, and an appropriation of erstwhile Protestant enthusiasm. The nation imagined in figure 69 intermingled the old dream of prenational Christendom with the new polity of the American state, providing a bridge to the imagined community of American nationalism for American Catholics. The National Shrine would ground the two forms of imagined community in the same space, leaving to future generations of faithful the task of sorting out the conflicting allegiances that an image such as figure 69 left unarticulated. The Face of Consensus: Mid-Twentieth Century and the Image of Jesus Having come to see themselves as good Americans and, no less important, having been accepted as such by non-Catholic Americans, Roman Catholics by midcentury even displayed the same picture of Jesus in their homes as American Protestants did. Indeed, although Protestants
the social life of pictures figure 70. come a Nurse, ster issued by the United States government, 1942. Courtesy of the Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University. and Catholics alike assumed that Warner Sallmanead of Christ (see fig. 39) was their own factionb>image, more noteworthy was that the image belonged exclusively to no sect. As an image that appealed to both Protestant and Catholic subcultures, this picture of Jesus was used to redirect the nineteenth-century crusade to make the United States a Protestant nation toward a twentieth-century campaign to promote the United States as a Christian nation. During World War II, Sallmanead of Christ was distributed as a nonsectarian image of Christ among American servicemen in Europe and Asia through the United Services Organization (USO) by the YMCA and the Salvation Army. The filial piety of Jesus, gazing reverently to heaven and bearing an expression of solemn, self-effacing submission to his fatherill, also characterized the proper attitude of self-sacrifice encouraged by the government during the war. A poster from 1942 (fig. 70) shows a young woman receiving her commission as a nurse from the descending hands of the national deity, Uncle Sam, whose sleeves carry the national colors.
national icons 249 Bestowing a vocation to serve, these hands enter the visual field in the same manner as the ancient symbol of the biblical deity, the hand of God, occluding his fuller person in conformity to the piety of Jewish and Christian monotheism, but reaching in nevertheless to direct the pious soul to the national task of service. In a striking instance of American civil religion, the poster avoids sectarian iconography without in any way forfeiting the dominant American religious ethos of Christianity and Judaism. While the call to service and self-sacrifice in the face of war is hardly unique nurse in the poster to Sallmanesus and the posterb>stark difference from alternative visualizations of wartime women in American popular culture, such as Rosie the Riveter, suggest an alignment with the three major faiths of midcentury United States. Without being one or another of the traditions, the poster can draw from the common features of each and deliver its message as especially compelling: the call to serve the nation comes with a solemnity and authority that is unmistakable. The poster seems to suggest that the call to serve transfigures the individual into a kind of type: the white-clad, finely appointed, and beautifully presented nurse, a gleaming archetype of femininity whose task is to obey male authority and respond to the prompting of the nation-god. Following the war, Sallmanmagery was put to more aggressively exclusivist use. A Lutheran businessman in Indiana undertook a project called Christ in Every Purse.s aim was to distribute wallet-sized versions of the Head of Christ as widely as possible. The businessman contrasted the need for d-carrying Christians the threat of d-carrying Communists.s campaign continued through the 1950s and into the 1960s as cold war anticommunism gripped America.68 A similar, yet historically ironic development took shape in Oklahoma in the late 1940s and 1950s as Ora Oey, a Choctaw Indian and Roman Catholic, led a local campaign to make her hometown of Durant, Oklahoma, the only city in the United States to display a picture of Christ in every home and public building. Whereas nineteenth-century evangelical publications often pictured Protestant missionaries at work among Native American communities (see fig. 64), Oey returned the favor in the mid-twentieth century as a Roman Catholic and Indian placing Christian images in the public spaces of her town in eastern Oklahoma, where the Choctaw nation had migrated in the late eighteenth century, after a colonial history of alliance with the French and enmity with the British. In 1949 Oey persuaded a district judge
all, Sallmanesus visually expressed this ethos and national identity, placing a Christian face on America. The image was able to signify simultaneously the nonsectarian
national icons 253 figure 72. School board president places shroud over Head of Christ. In Benton Harbornt Joseph Herald-Palladium, March 1, 1993. Photo: Jim Merithew. Courtesy of The Herald-Palladium. found that the defendantseclaration that the picture is displayed as an artistic work or that it is a depiction of a historical figure does not blind this Court to the religious message necessarily conveyed by the portrayal of one who is the object of veneration and worship by the Christian faith.Supporters of the school board ritualistically cloaked the image (fig. 72) in a red shroud produced by a local womenroup and cheered successive attempts at appeal all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which, on May 1, 1995, announced its decision not to hear the case, letting stand the appellate decision to support Gibsonuling.76 When the image was finally removed, local clergy led
the social life of pictures prayer as supporters wept. School officials left in place of the image the shroud that had covered it. In following days students pinned picture buttons of Jesus to the shroud, but these were removed shortly later after the ACLU threatened to take the school district back to court.77 The story sketched in this chapter turns on the recurring recourse some Americans have made to religious visual culture in order to respond to the perceived instability of their democracy. The story moves from the antebellum use of mass-produced images to create a Protestant nation by converting others to the dominant Protestant culture, to the emergence of a national Catholic identity, then to a generic Christian view following World War II (the face of which was Sallmanead of Christ), to the ironic urn of the ostrherring the cold war period in a crusade conducted by a Native American and Roman Catholic to reclaim the nation for Christianity; it ends in the recent and decisive rejection of the placement of a mass-produced picture of Jesus in a public space, however generic or putatively toricalat Jesus may be claimed to appear. In each episode, imagemother pictures of Jesus or ritualized, legally sacralized flagsvd as the means for dispersing influence in a nation for which any religious definition of national identity could only be voluntary and not endorsed by the state. In each case the subtle but significant transformation of patriotism into nationalism is evident in the symbols and paraphernalia of an American nationalist cultus. Until the Bloomingdale case, however, no case law stipulated that images of religious figures constitute a coercive or influential effect. What is significant in the Bloomingdale case is that the judicial system affirmed the tendency it had been developing since midcentury: it is no longer inclined to accept the argument of a prevailing religious ethos. In the courtiew, images, as elusive as their signification may be, can unambiguously endorse religion when prominently displayed under the auspices of the state. Clearly, this is something that sectors of American Protestantism have believed all along. That the judicial system has caught up with them, however, is no indication that Christians will forsake the currency of images in the quest for an elusive national identity. The recent refusal of a state supreme court chief justice in Alabama to remove a sculpture of the Ten Commandments from a state court house (not unlike a granite version of Benjamin Rushract illustration reproduced here as figure 63) is proof that the old argument
national icons 255 is not yet over. In fact, suits in as many as fourteen states were filed in the summer of 2003 concerning the display of the Ten Commandments on public lands or in government buildings. The prevalence of images of sacrifice, self-denial, saintly courage, communal solidarity, and memorial enshrinement suggest that religion and its mass-culture icons remain for Americans one of the most powerful components of their experience of nationhood.
conclusion the same illustration one year apart, before and after the
beginning of the Civil War (fig. 60). In chapter 5 images were studied
as material records of religious conversion, inculturation, and
appropriation. Embedded in images are ways of seeing other cultures, the
occupying and the occupied, the colonizing and the colonized. If the
gaze is a way of seeing, images are the material relays that exercise
it. The study of visual culture promises to excavate the visually
encoded social arrangements that help empower, disenfranchise, regulate,
invent, inspire, and unite people. But if these instances do not
challenge existing narratives so much as focus and accent aspects of
them, in chapter 7 the hitherto unnoticed shift from Bibles as national
icons to flags, then to an image of Christ, is made clear only by
consideration of the visual evidence. Although there is a large
secondary literature on the history of American nationalism, knowing
that educators at the end of the nineteenth century thought it urgent to
instruct American youth in certain national ideals by disciplining their
bodies in corporate conduct at public schools is something that scholars
of religious visual culture can contribute to the historical
understanding of nationalism. Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in
schools, ceremoniously installing and displaying the flag, rewarding
student performance with badges, structuring social relations around the
protocols of display and observance all contribute to the understanding
of what nationalism is, how it is taught and disseminated, and why it
persists. Yet there is another way to regard the contribution of the
study of religious visual culture. Enriching scholarship by adding fresh
evidence is clearly important, but no less important is what scholars do
with the evidence that is already in hand. The history of a field of
inquiry is a history of different theories and questions posed of
evidence. By defining visual culture as method or approach rather than
only as field or subject matter, we are able to focus on interpretation
as the measure of value. Approached in this manner, the study of
religious visual culture begins with a question that departs from most
art-historical approaches: what do we learn about religion by
investigating the power of images, that is, their capacity to frighten,
seduce, deceive, influence, and inspire? This approach stresses what
images do, hence the identification of various functions of imagery in
chapter 2. The ways of seeing experienced in religious visual culture
are felt more often than they are rationally articulated. As part of the
lived experience of belief, they inform the character and everyday life
of religion, which Catherine Albanese has helpfully summarized as creed,
code, cultus, and community.1 These
conclusion

Helpful rubrics suggest that a religion is a more or less coherent set of practices regarding what one says, how one behaves, how and the group that helps define one's own social identity. The visual culture of religion is, the images and visual practices as well as the covenants or assumptions about what one sees and believes one sees deeply invested in these coordinates. Each aspect of religion designated by Albanese seems pertains to a visual aspect. We can speak of the manner in which religion happens visually for a group or individual by examining the peculiar visual forms of creed, code, cultus, and community in a given case. It is the power of images to charge these coordinates of a religious way of seeing with an enduring authority that lends urgency to the study of religious visual culture. Certainly music and song, verse and scripture, movement and performance, food and dress all do likewise within the practices suited to them. And typically, as I tried to suggest in the introduction, several of these media work together in creating cultures of belief. But in order to study the operation of visual practice with some care, it is necessary to focus on images in their production and reception. Doing so leads to posing questions that take us to the heart of the appeal of images as objects of a gaze that situates viewers toward one another and toward the reality they feel is manifest in the object of their sacred gaze. For example, what did the Taliban imagine they would achieve by demolishing the ancient statues of Buddha (fig. 35)? What do Buddhists in Thailand believe they are doing as they pray before a statue (fig. 12)? Why do those Muslims who disparage sacred imagery circumambulate the Ka and, as its black velvet curtain is ritually raised, gaze raptly on the stones that compose it, in particular, at the Black Stone that the Prophet venerated (fig. 1)? Why do many American tourists experience a flutter and expansiveness when beholding Mount Rushmore (fig. 32) or the Marine Corps War Memorial (fig. 33)? Why do so many Protestants and Catholics see in Warner Sallman's version of Christ the actual likeness of the historical individual and not merely an artist's conception of Jesus (fig. 39)? In each case, seeing puts believers in the presence of what they wish to see, what they wish to venerate or adore. The sacred gaze allows images to open iconically to the reality they portray or even to morph into the very thing they represent. The latter is perhaps their fondest power for believers. The Taliban saw in the destruction of an image the defeat of the infidel no less than the vindication of God, feeling in their iconoclastic victory the flush of discipleship and obedience.
as a mass-produced icon, a e portrait the incarnate God. The concept of the gaze offers to scholars of religion a way of studying the social and cultural embeddedness of seeing. Understanding how sacred images configure vision makes them important evidence for the study of religion, because the projection of rules and the arrangement of viewer and subject that constitute a gaze contribute to the social and historical construction of the sacred. Thus, in its quest for purity, the nationalistic gaze seeks to identify foreigners and then render them invisible by assimilation or deportation. The patriotic gaze seeks to remember war dead by installing them in a cultus of valorization, whereby they come to personify the principles for which their deaths are seen as sacrifices. In each case, a sacred gaze applies itself directly to the task of belief. Can we understand such practices as devotion, pilgrimage, and prayer without considering the practice of seeing that helps believers perform them? The power of images, which is the power of the sacred gaze, the power of the way believers behold images and are beheld by them and seek to hold others with them, consists of seeing the countenance of the otherwise intangible other it is the deity, nation, people, ancestors, destiny, covenant, or duty that guides a community and individual members of it. Inasmuch as visual evocations of the transcendent are part of a religion, the visual culture of belief offers scholars the opportunity to understand the powerful and pervasive ways in which the devout see the world, organize and evaluate it, and infuse into the appearance of things the feelings and ideas that make the world intelligible and familiar to them.
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Critique of Visual Culture, The Visual Culture Reader, ed. Mirzoeff, 86. 29. Belting, Likeness and Presence, 57 30. Robin Cormack, Painting the Soul: Icons, Death made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and ..ERR, COD:1.. never seen Jesus, at least not in the icalnse of the word. Paul suggested in one of his letters that he had once been ght up into Paradise a mystical experience, but he reported only to have rd things
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Visual Studies is a term preferred by some writers, particularly those who are engaged in founding academic departments and programs and providing curricular tools such as introductory Irit Rogoff, has put it, a critical culture in which we have been trying to wrest representation away from the dominance of patriarchal, Eurocentric and heterosexist normativization, visual culture provides immense opportunities for rewriting culture through our concerns and our journeys. Is characterization posits a fundamental ideological conflict and uses the first-person plural to underscore it. To whose concerns and whose journeys does the author refer? To those who reside in tical cultured war with white male patriarchy over the trophy of resentment, ich is a reified something to be snatched from the grip of onedological foes. Rogoff later refers to the we of her text as those who
and Child. In the case of Gossaert's picture, the divine intercession of the angel both compensates for Luke's lack of vision and certifies the authority of the resulting image. It does not matter, the angel's presence assures the viewer, that Luke had not seen his subject. And if that isn't converted into a draftsmanable. What does this mean? That word precedes image? Or that image is not to be reduced to word, but seen as its pictorial equivalent? Or that word and image are inextricably enmeshed in one another? I think the latter. The lectern from which scripture is read in worship services is now the instrument of visual revelation. One is further inclined to interpret the picture as an authorization of image-as-revelation because Luke has removed his shoes and kneels beneath a towering sculptural configuration of Moses. This would make the Virgin and Child a New Testament counterpart to the Burning Bush, an ancient, desert revelation of Yahweh to an errant Moses (Exodus 3). As the bush burned but was not consumed, a similar miracle held with Mary: although the Mother of God, she did not conceive the Son of God in a sexual act. Luke the artist is a new Moses,
and Representation in Research (London: SAGE, 2001); Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy, eds., Rethinking Visual Anthropology (London: Yale University Press, 1997); Gilian Rose, Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials (London: SAGE, 2001); and Jay Ruby, Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). 16. For a related list of a related list of normative descriptions of what visual culture consists of as a form of study, see Mitchell, erdisciplinarity and Visual Culture,3 17. A traditional distinction of culture and society states that culture may be defined as the things that people make, such as stories, songs, buildings, and theories, and that society consists of the laws, institutions, and practices that organize the making of those artifacts and their use. It is not always a clear distinction, particularly when it differentiates object and institution too firmly. The two are deeply conjoined in the practices of making, commissioning, distributing, displaying, and using artifacts. I understand object and institution to be engaged at the level of practice. My assumption is that images participate in both the social and the cultural construction of reality. The scholar of visual culture, therefore, may stress either one or both, as the subject of study requires. 18. While there are scores of art history and film studies graduate departments and programs in North America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, a smaller but growing number of programs in visual culture and related fields, such as visual anthropology, are emerging in these countries. Typically, these take the form of forums or tersr critical discussion and the promotion of research rather than degree-granting bodies. Very few cater to undergraduates. Perhaps the most developed and ambitious programs in the United States are located at the University of Southern California, at Los Angeles
notes to pages 33269 (visual anthropology), the University of Rochester (visual culture), and the University of Wisconsin, Madison (art history). Graduate and undergraduate programs in visual anthropology, film studies, art history, and visual culture also exist in one form or another at the University of California, Irvine and Riverside; Temple University, Philadelphia; New York University; Bryn Mawr; Sarah Lawrence College; SUNY, Stony Brook; the University of Montreal; the University of Otago, New Zealand; the University of Sussex, UK; and Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. SAGE Publications began publishing the Journal of Visual Culture in April 2002 (www.sagepub.com). Other journals, two of them available online, are Visual Communication, also published by SAGE, Iconomania, published by the University of California, Los Angeles (www.humnet.ucla.edu), and Invisible Culture: aid in visual anthropology, see Resources for Visual Anthropology,>www.usc.edu/dept/elab/urlist/. A journal, Visual Anthropology Review, official publication of the Society for Visual Anthropology, is published at the University of Virginia (etext.lib.virginia.edu). For an even longer list of programs and initiatives made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
288 notes to pages 172 sold to many non-Christians, who place them in their homes (105 For yet another mass-produced version of the triadic motif, also produced in Madras, see S. Brent Plate, ed., Religion, Art, and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 19 Visionary experience, with its challenge to regnant epistemologies such as naturalism, should also be included in the study of visual culture; see, for instance, William A. Christian Jr., Moving Crucifixes in Modern Spain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). 26. The purpose of the remainder of the chapter is not to provide a study of visual and interpretive theory for its own sake but to offer an introductory consideration of how scholars of visual culture understand evidence and construct their arguments using certain rudimentary conceptual tools. For those who wish to examine the subject of interpretive theory and images much further and as a subject matter in its own right, see the following influential studies: Mitchell, Picture Theory; Michael Baxandall, Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); James Elkins, On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and David Carrier, Principles of Art History Writing (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991). 27. For more on these figures, see David Morgan and Sally M. Promey, Exhibiting the Visual Culture of American Religions, exhibition catalogue (Valparaiso, IN: Valparaiso University Brauer Museum of Art, 2000), 81. 28. rovements in Sunday Schools: Extract from the Report of Sunday School No. 23, New-York Union Society, April 1824, erican Sunday School Teachermagazine 1, no. 8, July 1824, 256. 29. Ibid., 258. 30. An illuminating study of the levels of meaning added to German prints by devout viewers and colorists who hand-tinted them, often transforming Catholic originals into Protestant images of piety, is Susan Dackerman, Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color in Northern Renaissance and Baroque Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts (Baltimore and University Park: Baltimore Museum of Art and Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).
..ERR, COD:1.. definition of religion in her book America: Religions and Religion, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999), 2 other studies that may be ..ERR, COD:1..
the Governor of Pennsylvania, in Relation to Public Schools in England [Harrisburg: Elliott and McCurdy, 1841], 5). Such a view ran headlong into the position taken by Madison, as noted above (in n. 18), whose remonstrance had helped to defeat a bill to establish civil standards for teaching religion. 21. [Packard], The Daily Public School, 98. On Mann and Protestant educational reform, see Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic, 97. 22. Packard made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
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notes to pages 142 281 47. Kibbey, Interpretation of Material Shapes, 47. 48. Calvin, Institutes, 1: 108. 49. Andreas Bodenstein (Karlstadt) from Karlstadt, On the Removal of Images and That There Should Be No Beggars among Christians, 1522, in The Essential Carlstadt, trans. and ed. E. J. Furcha (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1995), 116 50. Ibid., 103. 51. On the violence associated with Karlstadt all for the removal of images from Wittenberg churches, see Michalski, The Reformation and the Visual Arts, and Carl C. Christensen, Art and the Reformation in Germany (Athens, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1979). This is not, of course, the only reason that iconoclastic acts occurred. Kibbey makes the point that Puritan iconoclasts felt compelled to destroy material images and any practice (such as preachers wearing the surplice during worship services) that presumed to make ritual stand in the place of genuine worship (Interpretation of Material Shapes, 58. By destroying images literally and figuratively, Kibbey claims, Puritans affirmed their ief in themselves as living icons0). Visible sainthood was their aim. This entailed a new semiotic or physiognomy of the sacred. make the visible church as much like the invisible,stinian Edmund Morgan wrote, later Congregationalists argued that the visible church in admitting members should look for signs of saving faithdmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963], 34). Iconoclasm served to keep the devout focused on the proper figure or image of faith, the real icon of the divine life: the gathered body of Godlect. An especially perceptive study of Reformation visual piety and iconoclasm is Joseph Leo Koerner, Icon as Iconoclasm, Iconoclasm, ed. Latour and Weibel, 164. 52. Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (1961; New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 13. Daniel Bell accorded the Puritans an important place in the American historical character and lamented the loss of what he called Puritan temper modern Americaegeneration into hedonism and the latry of the selfhe ...ERR, COD:1.
Moseserch on Sinai (Raphael Sassower and Louis Cicotello, The Golden Avant-Garde: Idolatry, Commercialism, and Art [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000]). Neither is the artist able to remain detached from commerce. After recalling the story of the golden calf fashioned for the Israelites by their priest Aaron while Moses delayed his return from the stormy summit of Sinai, the authors proclaim: culture of idolatry remains intact despite two thousand years of monotheism. That is, desire and aesthetic gratification cannot be overcome by scripture and customs. . . . The precious gold earrings are willingly traded for a sculpture, an idol, a god worth worshipping. And artists are there to accommodate the needs of their patrons, to further the goals of their leaders (in the ancient case, Aaron). Should they refuse the commission? Should they not participate in their culture. . . tical defiance the face of manifold idolatries. And they assert this within the Enlightenment tradition of modern secularity: we have lost our trust in religious institutions as a means to a spiritual end, and if we still wish to fulfill some form of spiritual quest, then we desperately need art, among other cultural expressions, as an alternative means through which to reach our spiritual destiny3).

Chapter 5: The Circulation of Images in Mission History 1. The literature on religion and contact in Peru is monumental. A good place to start, particularly with respect to indigenous imagery and the representation
284 notes to pages 152 Son of God Became a National Icon (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 267

notes made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and ..ERR, COD:1.. in the last decades. We have seen the crumbling of a culture. Increasingly we see ourselves living in a world that is post-Christian and even post-humanist, a neo-pagan world, one which is nihilist, or anarchist, or mystic. Whatever the signature of
292 notes to pages 199 Research Company, 1984). Because Currierame appears alone on the print, we know the image was produced sometime between 1835 and 1856. In 1857 the signature becomes Currier & Ives, including the name of Currier's partner, his brother-in-law James Merritt Ives, who had joined him in 1852. It 202 the social life of pictures figure 57. Robert Roberts (engraver). From ters on Christian Education by a Mother, >No. 197, in Publications of the American Tract Society (New York: American Tract Society, 1849). Photo: Author. gazes at a bound volume, no doubt the Bible, while tightly embracing her child. As the child reaches for the vase of flowers, his mother's embrace restrains him, and her gaze redirects his grasp toward the holy scriptures. But there seems to be something more at work here. The instruction practiced by this Protestant Madonna infuses the Protestant discipline of devotional Bible reading with a kind of Christology. One imagines that she gently whispers instruction to her child. If so, mother, not preacher or theologian, converts the written text of scripture with her gaze into the spoken word, as moral counsel murmured into the child's ear. As such, she is the mediator of divine and human. The Protestant mother becomes both Mary and Jesus. Viewing the mother as Christlike was not an isolated practice. Tracts and advice books visualized the parallel of mother and Jesus most frequently by juxtaposing Christ blessing the children with a mother teaching her little ones.24 In another instance, the American Tract
294 notes to pages 211 Protestant America, 18800 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). On muscular Christianity, see Donald E. Hall, Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature Christianity. Putney questions the degree to which Moody can be considered a supporter of muscular Christianity, since he valued the place of women in evangelical ministry (2 Putney rightly notes that the stridency of later proponents of muscular Christianity far exceeded MoodyYet Moodythe enthusiastic support of the YMCA and his appeal to a broad audience of American boys and men (as well as women) by virtue of his bushy-faced directness and simplicity of speech represent an early version of a masculinized practice of popular evangelicalism. 38. On the southern conception of honor, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s0s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 31 39. t a Change,11-Spring 18, no. 25, June 21, 1861, 95. In a brief paragraph Clifford Putney asserts that the Civil War ually undermined muscular Christianity in America by certifying the manliness of innumerable men,nce ..ERR, COD:1..
notes to pages 228 297 function, I am aware that my approach to the study of visual culture runs the risk of marginalizing the material characteristics of the image. This is a risk that must be minimalized by making a point to attend to the image qua object, since it is often the case that the use of the image and the interpretation given it by those who use it are keyed to the imagearticular physical features. I want to emphasize, accordingly, that the study of visual culture should attempt
schoolsle). 30. Albanese, America: Religions and Religion, 8 see chapter 2 here for discussion of these terms and their application to the visual culture of religion. For a full-blown, creeds to the cult of the nation, see William Norman Guthrie, The Religion of Old Glory (New York: George H. Doran, 1918). At the height of World War I, Guthrie advocated a national faith that regarded all citizens as subject to good of the social GOD of the Nation,r which Guthrie demanded ite, ..ERR, COD:1..
notes to pages 237–299 Render unto Caesar: The Flag-Salute Controversy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 2. 32. Balch, Methods of Teaching Patriotism, 25, 77. 33. Balch mentioned in his book that his plan had been tried in two schools of the Childrenid Society in New York City (ibid., 26). The year after he died his Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen (Indianapolis: Wallace Foster, 1895) appeared. The Primer was coauthored with Wallace Foster, who published it, and had gone through several printings by 1909. 34. Balch lamented that it required the formality of law in several states in 1889 and 1890 either to authorize or to require flying flags outside school buildings. He considered his own program of ritualized veneration a more oracular method of instilling patriotism. 35. See the convenient collection of narratives, songs, poems, prints, and speeches gathered in Wayne Whipple, The Story of the American Flag (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus Company, 1910), 84. Most read with the same fervent piety, didacticism, and moral stentorian tone of evangelical tracts. The nationalist penchant for the superlative resounds in the claim that the American flag is hout a rival. e same exclamation states that the flag been the pledge of freedom, justice, order, civilization, and of Christianity). 36. Charles Kingsbury Miller, Desecration of the American Flag and Prohibition Legislation, pamphlet containing Millerddress; reprinted in Robert Justin Goldstein, ed., Desecrating the American Flag: Key Documents of the Controversy from the Civil War to 1995 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 18. Goldstein.. an indispensable work of scholarship. 37. The Misuse of the National Flag: An Appeal to the Fifty-fourth Congress of the United States (Chicago: National Flag Committee of the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Illinois, 1895); reprinted in Goldstein, ed., Desecrating the American Flag, 12. 38. Report of the Daughters of the American Revolution Flag Committee, in American Monthly Magazine, April 1899, 903; reprinted in Goldstein, ed., Desecrating the American Flag, 21. 39. American Flag: Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, 60th Congress, 1st session, April 1908; reprinted in Goldstein, ed., Desecrating the American Flag, 33. 40. See Wallace Evans Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans Hereditary Organizations in America 17830 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955). 41. ..ERR, COD:1..
(August 2, 1906): 92. 45. Godkin, ining in Patriotism,. Hansen, The Lost Promise of Patriotism, xiv, has used the term cosmopolitan patriotism to describe a liberal model of citizenship that emerged in the early twentieth century as an alternative to the prevailing nationalist conception of the American citizen. 46. West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 1943; reprinted in Goldstein, ed., Desecrating the American Flag, 74 For a helpful discussion of this case in the context of the Courtembers and American religious history at midcentury, see Martin E. Marty, Modern American Religion, vol. 3: Under God, Indivisible, 19410 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 212 47. Mary G. Dietz, riotism: A Brief ..ERR, COD:1..
notes to pages 243 301 58. Liah Greenfield has argued in her major study of nationalism that the drive to American independence in the late eighteenth century was not a drive to create a new political reality but was motivated by a loyalty to the national values that Britain had enshrined in its constitution but failed to honor in its treatment of American colonists. The central value in this loyalty was dedication to liberty (Greenfield, Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992], 412ff.). This means that the revolutionaries were actually acting as good patriots. Their loyalty was not to a national sovereignty but to the ideals that the British nation was supposed to ensure its citizens. It was this loyalty to the abstract ideal of liberty that constituted American patriotism until the secession of the southern states, which considered the sovereignty of individual states to trump national unity and federal power. 59. For a Durkheimian study of the flag in the context of American civil religion, see Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 2. I have found Marvin and Ingle stimulating book helpful in reflection on the flag and civil religion, but I do not follow the relentless logic of their argument, which seems to grant ietary collective mind of its own in conducting expiatory rituals on behalf of the nation-god who demands blood-sacrifice in order to maintain order and harmony. Committed to historical analysis, I wish to ascribe responsibility for the fetishization of the flag to those groups whose ideological interests are served by the enforcement of a national cultus. Marvin and Ingle also fail to distinguish patriotism and nationalism, a distinction that my account considers essential for understanding the role of visual culture. 60. For discussion of this, see Dolan, The American Catholic Experience, 294. 61. I have benefited from a fine study by William M. Halsey, The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 19200 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980). 62. See Robert Handy, American Religious Depression, 19255,>Church History 29, no. 1 (March 1960): 3 63. See James W. Fraser, Between Church and State: Religion and Public Education in a Multicultural America (New York: St. Martinness, 1999), 127 64. Quoted in Halsey, The Survival of American Innocence, 71. 65. Quoted ibid., 72. Halsey discusses several attempts by American Catholic scholars and writers in the first decades of the twentieth century to discern the historical influence of Catholic ideas on the formation of American constitutional ideals (70. 66. Ibid., 48. 67. Reproduced and discussed by Thomas A. Tweed, ricahurch: Roman Catholicism and Civic Space in the Nationalapital, The Visual Culture of American Religions, ed. Morgan and Promey, 77 .ERR, COD:1.
District of Michigan, Southern Division, File No. 4:92-CV-146, pp. 9 It is worth comparing the judgeejection of the argument that the image was acceptable as a historical portrayal or an artistic work with previous case law. In the 1869Cincinnati ..ERR, COD:1.
class takes up the Fifth Reader and reads the fifth chapter of Matthew.

... it is done, ... if your Honors please, not as the words that fell from the second person of the Godhead, when incarnate on earth, but as a beautiful specimen of English composition to be the subject of the reading of a class stands, so ..ERR, COD:1..
..ERR, COD:1.. Bantu Religion (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 18 11.
Albanese, America: Religions and Religion, 8 12. Robert A. Orsi, Thank
You, St. Jude: Women Evotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes (New
Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 110 207 et   ..ERR, COD:1..
It is worth noting that the fantasy film *The Labyrinth* used the Escher motif, but as a test for the heroine, who struggles to find her way through it and defeat evil in the form of the Goblin King, played by David Bowie.
The caliph r commented to the Stone during the ritual circumambulation of the Ka: I know that you are only a stone which does not have the power to do good or evil. If I had not seen the Prophet kissing you, I would not kiss you quoted in Cyril Glass The New Encyclopedia of Islam, rev. ed.
266 notes to pages 28

Visual Irit Rogoff, has put it, a critical culture in which we have been trying to wrest representation away from the dominance of patriarchal, Eurocentric and heterosexist normativization, visual culture provides immense opportunities for rewriting culture through our concerns and our journeys. This characterization posits a fundamental ideological conflict and uses the first-person plural to underscore it. To whose concerns and whose journeys does the author refer? To those who reside in tical cultured war with white male patriarchy over the trophy of representation, which is a reified something to be snatched from the grip of ideological foes. Rogoff later refers to the we of her text as those who
notes to pages 77275 Method (New York: Crossroad, 1985): ry finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of uation saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is izon.e horizon made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and ..ERR, COD:1.. essential part of the concept of situation is izon.e horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point69). In that context, Gadamer was discussing the task of historical interpretation:
Moseserch on Sinai (Raphael Sassower and Louis Cicotello, The Golden Avant-Garde: Idolatry, Commercialism, and Art [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000]). Neither is the artist able to remain detached from commerce. After recalling the story of the golden calf fashioned for the Israelites by their priest Aaron while Moses delayed his return from the stormy summit of Sinai, the authors proclaim: culture of idolatry remains intact despite two thousand years of monotheism. That is, desire and aesthetic gratification cannot be overcome by scripture and customs. . . . The precious gold earrings are willingly traded for a sculpture, an idol, a god worth worshipping. And artists are there to accommodate the made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Putney, Muscular Christianity. Putney questions the degree to which Moody can be considered a supporter of muscular Christianity, since he valued the place of women in evangelical ministry. Putney rightly notes that the stridency of later proponents of muscular Christianity far exceeded Moody's enthusiastic support of the YMCA and his appeal to a broad audience of American boys and men (as well as women) by virtue of his bushy-faced directness and simplicity of speech represent an early version of a masculinized practice of popular evangelicalism. On the southern conception of honor, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1860s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 31-39. In a brief paragraph Clifford Putney asserts that the Civil War essentially undermined muscular Christianity in America by certifying the manliness of innumerable men, nce
268 notes to pages 30

ERR, COD:1. that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is izon.e horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."

notes to pages the fifth chapter of Matthew . . . it is done, . . . if your Honors please, not as the words that fell from the second person of the Godhead, when incarnate on earth, but as a beautiful specimen of English composition to be the subject of the reading of a class stands, so far as that exercise is concerned, on the same footing precisely as a soliloquy from Hamlet, or the address of Macbeth to the air drawn dagger11). In a much later instance, a similar appeal to historicity prevailed: when requested by Muslim groups to remove a sculptural portrayal of Muhammad from a frieze in the U.S. Supreme Court building, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist defended the presence of the image as ended only to recognize [Muhammad], among other lawgivers, as an important figure in the history of laws discussed by Sally M. Promey, Public Display of Religion, The Visual Culture ..ERR, COD:1.. but when class takes up the Fifth Reader and reads the fifth chapter of Matthew . . . it is done, . . . if your Honors please, not as the words that fell from the second person of the
..ERR, COD:1.. in the icalnse of the word. Paul suggested in one of his letters that he had once been ght up into Paradise a mystical experience, but he reported only to have rd things that cannot be told Corinthians ..ERR, COD:1..
presented by Oey with Sallmanmage (Durant Daily Democrat, December 22, 1949, 2; April 30, 1950, 1; May 4, 1952, 4). 70. Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology, rev. ed. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1960), 39. 71. Ibid., 258. 72. Ibid., 75, 80, 263. 73. By the 1990s, a wing of American evangelicalism had emerged as a prominent by earlier generations of fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and evangelicals for an explicit advocacy first tapped into by Ronald Reagan during the 1980s. 74. Vera Stafford, Christians need to speak up about Christ, letters to the Editor, South Haven Tribune, December 4, 1992. 75. Hon. Benjamin F. Gibson, Washtegesic vs. Bloomingdale Public Schools, February 3, 1993, United States District Court, Western District of Michigan, Southern Division, File No. 4:92-CV-146, pp. 9 It is worth comparing the judge's ejection. ..ERR, COD:1.
253 303 opening exercises, accompanied by singing, it becomes an act of worship; but when class takes up the Fifth Reader and reads the fifth chapter of Matthew . . . it is done, . . . if your Honors please, not as the words that fell from the second person of the Godhead, when incarnate on earth, but as a beautiful specimen of English composition to be the subject of the reading of a class stands, so . . . ERR, COD:1. to pages 253 303 opening exercises, accompanied by singing, it becomes an act of worship; but when class takes up the Fifth Reader and reads the fifth chapter of Matthew . . . it is done, . . . if
select bibliography

notes to pages 125–279. See David Morgan, Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), chap. 6. 19. Mills, Idolatry and Its Enemies, 267. 20. Richard H. Davis, Lives of Indian Images (Princeton: Princeton Early New England Material Practice and Puritan Piety, terial Religion 1, no. 1 (March 2005; forthcoming). 22. Davis, Lives of Indian Images, 723. Ibid., 54. 24. Ibid., 85. 25. This is a framework for studying imagery that might be fruitfully applied to other religious settings, such as the Black Stone of the Ka. Along similar lines, I have seen roomfuls of sacred crosses, icons, and sculptural figures discarded and removed from Ukrainian churches by priests and members who wish to cleanse, modernize, or traditionalize decoration and art. The objects were collected by priests and monastics who wish to save the work, restore it, and locate it in an ecclesiastical museum in Lviv. Another process of aestheticization is evident in the transformation of religious objects by the history of their reception as fine art as the Elgin Marbles, which is the museum name for the Parthenon deities from the pediment of the fifth-century BCE temple in Athens; or the Hellenistic figure group of Laocoon and his sons, which was spiritualized by Winckelmann and has been variously interpreted by many others. See Richard Brilliant, My 108–31. mha, Vishnoo, Siva, om Thomas Robbins, ed., All Religions and Religious Ceremonies: Part I. Christianity, Mahometanism, and Judaism; [William Ward,] Part II: A View of the History, Religion, Manners, and Customs of the Hindoos, together with the Religion and Ceremonies of Other Pagan Nations, 1823 129–32. Gutzon Borglumodel of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial, 1936 132–33. Felix de Weldon, Iwo Jima memorial (Marine Corps War Memorial), 1954 134.
schoolsle). 30. Albanese, America: Religions and Religion, 8 see chapter 2 here for discussion of these terms and their application to the visual culture of religion. For a full-blown, unrestrained religion of American nationalism, which explicitly subordinated all religious creeds to the cult of the nation, see William Norman Guthrie, The Religion of Old Glory (New York: George H. Doran, 1918). At the height of World War I, Guthrie advocated a national faith that regarded all citizens as subject to the good of the social GOD of the Nation, which Guthrie demanded ite, a Ritual, a Sacrament, a Ceremony. The principal object was none other than the American flag (399). 31. Two years before Francis Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance and President Benjamin Harrison inaugurated Columbus Day as a national holiday, to be observed in public schools, Balch offered his protocol for saluting the flag. At the principal command, the assembled company of students was to raise extended right hand to the forehead (palm down), in unison with a like movement of salute, flag in military fashion. Methods of Teaching Patriotism, 34). On the pledge and Columbus Day, see Donald E. Boles, The Two Swords: Commentaries and Cases in Religion and Education (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1967), 139; and David R. Manwaring,
the judgeeejection of the argument that the image was acceptable as a historical portrayal or an artistic work with previous case law. In the 1869Cincinnati case, lawyers for the defendants, the board of education, argued that McGuffeyreaders, six of which the plaintiffs had entered as exhibits (as evidence that removing religious instruction from the public schools would require the elimination of all the Readers at great expense to the school sys-tem, even leaving students without books [8]), were not in fact religious books and therefore did not contradict the boarddecision to eliminate Bible reading and religious instruction from the classroom (The Bible in the Public Schools, 123, 211). As one attorney claimed, when the Bible is read in
Speaking of the erotic female nude in Temptation of Christ, Taylor argued that there was sound theological basis for the sensuous nature of the artist's paintings: think that it is terribly important to...
notes to pages 168 287 Monographs, no. 82 (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1978). My thanks to He Qi, the artist, whom I was able to contact for confirmation made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
..ERR, COD:1.. his letters that he had once been ght up into Paradise a mystical experience, but he reported only to have rd things that cannot be told Corinthians 12:2 32. See Belting, Likeness and Presence, 57 Cormack, Painting the Soul, ..ERR, COD:1..
and others have stressed the need to investigate what they call getext notext, visual-textual unit of meaning that cannot be reduced to either pure image or text. See W. J. T. Mitchell, Picture Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 83 et passim; and Peter Wagner, Reading Iconotexts: From Swift to the French Revolution (London: Reaktion Books, 1995).


23. A helpful study of visual culture that balances the hermeneutical view of understanding the life-world with the structuralist idea of explanation is Malcolm Barnard, Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture (Houndmills, England: Palgrave, 2001). For consideration of this approach in the history of approaches to the study of art and religion, see David Morgan, . . . ERR, COD:1. . . see Elkins, Visual Studies, 9

19. Mitchell, erdisciplinarity and Visual Cultured t I s Visual Culture?. Mitchell and others have stressed the need to investigate what they call getext notext, visual-textual unit of meaning that cannot be reduced
..ERR, COD:1.. study of religious visual culture in several religious traditions, see David Morgan, *ual Religion*, ligion 30 (2000): 417. I have found most helpful Catherine L. Albaneseiscussion of the definition of religion in her book *America: Religions and Religion*, 3rd ..ERR, COD:1..
282 note to page 148 market, the avant-gardexistence is dubious at best, though some have looked for a chastened version of it. In a recent book on idolatry, commercialism, and art, Raphael Sassower and Louis Cicotello resist definitions of the avant-garde as complete artistic autonomy in which the artist towers over society by virtue of genius or divine revelation akin to Moseserch on Sinai (Raphael Sassower and Louis Cicotello, The Golden Avant-Garde: Idolatry, Commercialism, and Art [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000]). Neither is the artist able to remain detached from commerce. After recalling the story of the golden calf fashioned for the Israelites by their priest Aaron while Moses delayed his return from the stormy summit of Sinai, the authors proclaim: culture of idolatry remains intact despite two thousand years of monotheism. That is, desire and aesthetic gratification cannot be overcome by scripture and customs. . . . The precious gold earrings are willingly traded for a sculpture, an idol, a god worth worshipping. And artists are there to accommodate the needs of their patrons, to further the goals of their leaders (in the ancient case, Aaron). Should they refuse the commission? Should they not participate in their culturepheaval? Can they refrain from taking part in their own culture?). Artists . .ERR, COD:1..
284 notes to pages 152 Son of God Became a National Icon (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 267 6. Bailey (Art on the Jesuits Missions, 22) has also discouraged reliance on the notion of dominance in the study of missions. 7. There are, however, made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
in Christian Art outside the West: Developments since 1950, Journal of Ecumenical Studies 10, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 116). 20. Taylor, Jesus in Indian Paintings, 121. A British missionary in India, Taylor defended the style of Thomas's paintings of Christ, though long after the controversial period in the late 1940s and 1950s (see Taylor, Interpretations of Jesus in Indian Painting, Religion and Society 17, no. 3). Think that it is terribly important to point out that Thomas here assumes what many in the Western Christian tradition have not dared to face, that Jesus's manhood must include, in some sense, his authentic maleness3). 21. The Life..ERR, COD:1.. think that it is terribly important to point out that Thomas here assumes what many in the Western Christian tradition have not dared to face, that Jesus's manhood must include, in some sense, his authentic maleness3). 21. The Life
made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and the end of the book recalls Butler's arguments in many respects: world has changed in the last decades. We have seen the crumbling of a culture. Increasingly we see ourselves living in a world that is post-Christian and even post-humanist,
292 notes to pages 199 Research Company, 1984). Because Currierame appears alone on the print, we know the image was produced sometime between 1835 and 1856. In 1857 the signature becomes rier & Ives, cluding the name 202 the social life of pictures figure 57. Robert Roberts ( engraver). From ters on Christian Education by a Mother, No. 197, in Publications of the American Tract Society (New York: American Tract Society, 1849). Photo: Author. gazes at a bound volume, no doubt the Bible, while tightly embracing her child. As the child reaches for the vase of flowers, his mothermbrace restrains him, and her gaze redirects his grasp toward the holy scriptures. But there seems to be something more at work here. The instruction practiced by this Protestant Madonna infuses the Protestant discipline of devotional Bible reading with a kind of Christology. One imagines that she gently whispers instruction to her child. If so, mother, not preacher or theologian, converts the written text of scripture with her gaze into the spoken word, as moral counsel murmured into the child's ear. As such, she is the mediator of divine and human. The Protestant mother becomes both Mary and Jesus. Viewing the mother as Christlike was not an isolated practice. Tracts and advice books visualized the parallel of mother and Jesus most frequently by juxtaposing Christ blessing the children with a mother teaching her little ones.24 In another instance, the American Tract
James Madison remonstrance against a bill before the Virginia General Assembly that would have enforced the examination of teachers of religion: hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments, Toward Benevolent Neutrality: Church, State, and...ERR, COD:1.. Compare Packard's language about lousy James Madison remonstrance against a bill before the Virginia General Assembly that would have enforced the examination of teachers of religion: hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens, and
302 notes to pages 249 68. See David Morgan, *Jesus Have Sat for a Portrait?e Likeness of Christ in the Popular Reception of Sallmanrt, Icons of American Protestantism:*

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..ERR, COD:1..
at the American Bible Society, 2004. Visual Piety: A History and Theory Sally M. Promey, Public Display of Religion, The Visual Culture of American Religions, ed. Morgan and Promey, 40. The difference would appear to consist entirely in the pedagogical setting of the first instance and the made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and ..ERR, COD:1.. in Bloomingdale High School, and therefore displayed as portraits and as historical persons, one wonders if the judicial judgment might have been otherwise. 76. reme Court Roundup,w York Times, May 2, 1995, A12. 77. The ongoing event stimulated robust press
..ERR, COD:1. for the painting, see Henri Pauwels et al., Jean Gossaert dit Mabuse, exhibition catalogue (Rotterdam: MusBoymann-van Beuningen, 1965), 108. Chapter 1: Defining Visual Culture 1. seems to me to be an interesting idea: that is to say, the idea ..ERR, COD:1.

48. ##page_start_bm##

##start##280 notes to pages 131-32. Ibid., pp. 10-154. 33. See chapter 7 here for further discussion of the fetishization of the Amer-ican flag as a national icon. 34. Boime, Unveiling of ..ERR, COD:1..
and rid,suring the reader of the imageealistic portrayal of the original: nose, eyes, and ears are very accurately presented in the pictureIdol,ildaper (May 1867): 20. In fact, the article is correct. Comparison of this illustration with surviving statuary demonstrates the accuracy of the illustration. See reproductions of Hawaiian sculpture in J. Halley Cox with William H. Davenport, Hawaiian Sculpture, rev. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 128, 136, and 196. For further discussion of the role of fear and images among American Protestants, see Morgan, Protestants and Pictures, 217 31. In the twentieth century many Christian organizations and publishers issued collections of hymns, liturgies, and worship settings, drawing from mission fields and church traditions around the world. The publications disseminate these forms internationally, cycling indigenous worship styles back to Western churches to serve as resources for worship renewal. An example is H. B. Thompson, ed., Worship Mabel Shaw, Godandleights (London: London Missionary Society, 1932). 32. Quoted in Lehmann, Christian Art in Asia and Africa, 45. 33. On putative condescension, see ibid., 36; on inaccuracy, see chapter 7 here. 34. Butler, Christian Art Overseas,7. See also Butler, Christian Art in India, 123. 35. Arno Lehmann, igenous ..ERR, COD:1.. Quoted in Lehmann, Christian Art in Asia and Africa, 45. 33. On putative condescension, see ibid., 36; on inaccuracy, see chapter 7 here. 34. Butler, Christian Art Overseas,7. See also Butler, Christian Art in India, 123. 35. Arno Lehmann, igenous ..ERR, COD:1..
Moseserch on Sinai (Raphael Sassower and Louis Cicotello, The Golden Avant-Garde: Idolatry, Commercialism, and Art [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000]). Neither is the artist able to remain detached from commerce. After recalling the story of the golden calf fashioned for the Israelites by their priest Aaron while Moses delayed his return from the stormy summit of Sinai, the authors proclaim: culture of idolatry remains intact despite two thousand years of monotheism. That is, desire and aesthetic gratification cannot be overcome by scripture and customs. . . . The precious gold earrings are willingly traded for a sculpture, an idol, a god worth worshipping. And artists are there to accommodate the needs of their patrons, to further the goals of their leaders (in the ancient case, Aaron). Should they refuse the commission? Should they not participate in their culture.. their own culture?). Artists make idols, the authors believe, when they sell to accommodate the needs of their patrons, to further the goals of their leaders (in the ancient case, Aaron). Should they refuse the commission? Should they not participate in their culture.. tical defiance the face of manifold idolatries. And they assert this within the Enlightenment tradition of modern secularity: we have lost our trust in religious institutions as a means to a spiritual end, and if we still wish to fulfill some form of spiritual quest, then we desperately need art, among other cultural expressions, as an alternative means through which to reach our spiritual destiny3). Chapter 5: The Circulation of Images in Mission History 1. The literature on religion and contact in Peru is monumental. A good place to start, particularly with respect to indigenous imagery and the representation
288 notes to pages 172 sold to many non-Christians, who place them in their homes (105 For yet another mass-produced version of the triadic made his view of Catholicism quite clear. Early in his book he stated that single change in the habits of a community would so soon and
61. Quoted in Costantini, L'architecture, 148; italics in original. 62. M.-A. Couturier, Universal Humanism, Sacred Art, ed. Dominique de Menil and Pie Duploytrans. Granger Ryan (orig. pubn. in L'archit. 1951; Austin: University of
xiv preface intentions: Gauvin Bailey, Nandini Bhattacharya, Gretchen Buggeln, Lynn Schofield Clark, Paul Contino, John Davis, Lisa DeBoer, John Dixon, Erika Doss, Elizabeth Edwards, James Elkins, Yacob Gobedo, Jeanne Kilde, Ken Mills, Brent Plate, Sally Promey, Stephen Prothero, Charles Schaefer, Kristin Schwain, Mark Schwehn, Jill Stevens, and Sue Taylor. I would also like to thank several friends and colleagues for their gracious assistance with images, bibliography, travel, consultation, and conversation: Sandy Brewer, Wai-Tung Cho, Don Cosentino, William Dyrness, Jim Green, Cordula Grewe, Ena Heller, Renu Juneja, Connie King, Brian Larkin, Padmini Makam, Harvey Markowitz, AdMedrano, Birgit Meyer, Polly Nooter Roberts, Jane Pomerooy, He Qi, Karen Racine, Martha Reinke, Allen Roberts, Siriwan Santisakultarm, Charles Schaefer, Holly Singh, Tom Tweed, Nelly van Dorrn-Harder, and Robin Visser. My experience with the International Study Commission on Media, Religion, and Culture has goodwill, I would not have written a word. Several of the chapters have benefited enormously from their presentation at conferences and symposia. Comments from colleagues and audience members have illuminated problems and moved my thinking to broader and deeper dimensions. These events took place at several institutions and professional conferences, which I can only quickly list:
you the large number of people known and many unknown to me participated in these events and contributed to my reflection while this project was in preparation. A few portions of this book appeared in different form in essays that I previously published. A few passages in chapter 2 were derived from an essay in Belief in Media, edited by Peter Horsfield, Mary Hess, and AdMedrano, published by Ashgate. Chapter 4 draws from an essay that appeared in the journal Religion. A much shorter version of chapter 6 was included in American Visual Cultures, edited by Dave Holloway and John Beck, published by Continuum. A brief portion of chapter 6 appeared in an essay in an exhibition catalogue, The House of God: Religious Observation within American Protestant Homes, edited by Margaret Bendroth and Henry Luttikhuizen, for the occasion of an exhibition at Calvin College. And a few paragraphs in chapter 6 appeared in somewhat different form in an essay published in Mediating Religion, edited by Jolyon Mitchell and Sophia Marriage, published by T. & T. Clark. Finally, I would like to thank Reed Malcolm, Sue Heinemann, and Lynn Meinhardt, at the University of California Press, and the copy-editor Robin Whitaker, for their enthusiastic support for and contributions to this book. It is a pleasure to continue to work with Reed and his colleagues. ..ERR, COD:1..
Preface This book is for students and scholars of history, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and any other discipline who study religion in one way or another and would like to think about the place of visual evidence in their work. These chapters have grown from my own work as a scholar and teacher and offer, I sincerely hope, an accessible account of one way of making images and visual practices part of the scholarly study of religion. The aim is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the study of religion that can be applied and adapted to different circumstances by students and scholars whose interest is the study and understanding of religions past and present. I have dedicated this book to the several long-suffering teachers who have contributed mightily to my life. There have been many of them, but I would like to name the several here who have come repeatedly to mind over the years of my career as a college teacher: John Lee, Don Dynneson, Reinhold Marxhausen, Robert Quinn, and Martin Marty. These teachers expertly modeled the craft of teaching by demonstrating the supreme values of patience and persistent encouragement for engaging students in the serious joy of thought and imagination. In every case, they were able to overlook the limits of their student and nurture his passion to think. My gratitude only begins with my teachers. I would like also to thank many colleagues and friends who helpfully read and commented on various drafts of the book and its countless proposals and outlines. They suffered through listening to me try to frame and reframe my xiii
preface xv Vanderbilt University Divinity School, University of Arizona, University of Colorado, Calvin College, Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Southern California, Getty Research Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, University of Iowa, University of Miami, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the International Association for the History of Religions, the International Association for Media and Communication Research, the American Academy of Religion, American Historical Association, and the American Society of Church History. I express a blanket thank you to the large number of people known and many unknown to me participated in these events and contributed to my reflection while this project was in preparation. A few portions of this book appeared in different form in essays that I previously published. A few passages in chapter 2 were derived from an essay in Belief in Media, edited by Peter Horsfield, Mary Hess, and AdMedrano, published by Ashgate. Chapter 4 draws from an essay that appeared in the journal Religion. A much shorter version of chapter 6 was included in American Visual Cultures, edited by Dave Holloway and John Beck, published by Continuum. A brief portion of chapter 6 appeared in an essay in an exhibition catalogue, The House of God: Religious Observation within American Protestant Homes, edited by Margaret Bendroth and Henry Luttikhuizen, for the occasion of an exhibition at Calvin College. And a few paragraphs in chapter 6 appeared in somewhat different form in an essay published in Mediating Religion, edited by Jolyon Mitchell and Sophia Marriage, published by T. & T. Clark. Finally, I would like to thank Reed Malcolm, Sue Heinemann, and Lynn Meinhardt, at the University of California Press, and the copy-editor Robin Whitaker, for their enthusiastic support for and contributions to this book. It is a pleasure to continue to work with Reed and his colleagues.
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