

# Lecture 1

Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> 2011

Religion and Popular Culture:

Office hours: Thursday 4-5, Friday 1-3

DAWB- 4- 103D

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Goals & Objectives:

- What is the function of religion then it shows up in popular culture?
  - How has popular culture shaped religion?
- How do people use popular culture like religion to make meaning in their lives?
  - What is religion and what is popular culture?
- Are there ethical implications when western popular and consumer culture adopts, parodies or even ridicules religion?
- How can an interrogation of this topic lead to a greater understanding of religion and religious people, of secular society and of popular culture itself?

Typology:

Religion in popular culture

Popular culture in religion

Popular culture as religion

Religion and popular culture in dialogue

What is religion?

a deity or deities, worship, rituals, symbols, faith, sacred stories etc..

An essentialist definition of religion:

Believes that religion has a essence and tries to believe what that essence is (e.g. belief in a deity.

A Common critique of essentialist definitions is that they are not universal (e.g. many Buddhist are atheists).

A functional definition:

Tries to summarize the role religion play in society (e.g. religion functions to unite a community).

A common critique of functionalist definitions is that other systems do the same thing (e.g. hockey can also unite a community).

Religious Studies:

-The objective scientific study of religion

- Subjective: a confessional orientation towards religion (e.g. "Theology": the faith- based study of divinity).

- Objective: the disinterested scientific study of a broad category known as religion or religions ("Religious Studies" : The Scientific study of religion).

Summary:

The academic study of religion is different from the subjective study of religion

The history of Religious Studies as a discipline has privileged certain points of view and voices over others.

## **Lecture Overview:**

- Recap
- Introduction concepts regarding the study of popular culture
- Popular Culture as both Mirror of and influence on Society

## **Recap:**

- Historical intersections between the religious and the popular
- Theories of religion
  - Essentialist or functional
- Religious Studies/ the academic study of religion

## **Why study religion and popular culture?**

“The popularity of a given culture element (object, person or event) is directly proportional to the degree to which that element is reflective of audience beliefs and values” (Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause, *Popular Culture: An introductory Text*).

- Beliefs and Values
- Popularity is an indication of what the public values
- Popular culture “reflects values we already hold” (Forbes & Mahan, 5)
- Reinforces those values because they become normative
- Our ideas of race, gender, sexuality and even spirituality are directly shaped by what we see, read and listen to in pop culture.

## **The Role of the Audience:**

- Who attracted the audience?
- What does its popularity say about the audience?
- How does it influence the audience?

## **Role of the Creator:**

- What motivated the author?
- What statement were they trying to make?

## **What is Popular Culture?**

- Latin cultura: to cultivate the soil

- Culture: a diverse set of human behaviors and inventions including but not limited to technologies, rituals, symbols, language, beliefs, art, performance, lifestyle, clothing, music and dance.

**Geertz:** "A historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic

**Culture:** Is what humans construct intellectually, physically, mentally, spiritually, etc.

### **High/ Low Culture:**

Simply, is the culture that appeals to the populous, the general population

- "High culture is a gourmet meal, folk culture is grandmas casserole, and popular culture is a McDonalds hamburger" (Forbes & Mahan,2)

**High culture** Fine art, classical music, opera, French cuisine etc.

**Low culture:** McDonalds

### **Classist Categories:**

- "Cultured" people prefer high culture and "uncultured" people prefer low culture.

### **Theories of Pop Culture:**

- Frankfurt School:
  - Popular Culture hypnotizes the under classes and distracts them from true political engagement
- Culture Industries:
  - Sporting leagues, Hollywood, Bollywood, radio and television stations, book publishers, record companies, fashion houses, advertising agencies, etc.
- Adorno:
  - Pop culture does not have the revolutionary function of true art
  - Does nothing to promote social equality or awaken a revolutionary consciousness in the masses.

Religion & pop culture > Appearance of things in Pop Culture, appearance of language,

Appearance of subject matter,

Read Article for next week:

- One through UOT
- One through University of Saskatchewan

## Today's Agenda

- Recap
- Forbes and Mahan's typology
- Arcade Fire

## Recap:

- Popular Culture as both mirror of and influence on society
- Frankfurt School

Hegemony: Dominant beliefs are imposed onto working class and start to become normal rules/norms in society

## Forbes's and Mahan's Categories:

- Religion in Popular Culture
- Popular Culture as Religion
- Popular Culture in Religion
- Religion and Popular Culture in Dialogue

## Arcade Fire:

- "Neon Bible" was recorded in a church and utilizes the organ at Eglise St. Jean Baptiste in Montreal.
- Neon Bible contains explicit references to the Bible and ecclesial practices
- Neon Bible offers a parody of Christian symbols:
  - The final product is literally called
- Neon Bible employs the use of a biblical discursive form, the jeremiad.
- Songwriter Win Butler comes from a religiously affiliated family and studies scriptural interpretation at McGill University.

## Overview:

- Recap
- "How can popular culture activities look like and act like culture?"

## The Church of Baseball:

How can baseball possibly be thought of as a religion?

- It represents continuity in the midst of a constantly changing world
- It supports a sense of belonging to a community or larger family
- It represents the sacred space of home
- It has a rich array of rituals

How can Coca-Cola be thought of as a religion?

- Holy Water

## Pop Culture as Religion:

1. Church
2. Fetish- Commodity Fetishism
3. Potlatch

## **Agenda:**

- Joseph Campbell's Monomyth
- What is Myth?
- Star Wars

## **Joseph Campbell:**

- (March 16, 1904- October 30, 1987) was an American mythologist, writer and lecturer, best known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion.

## **Monomyth:**

- One of the standard narratives found across world cultures
- At the root of so many of the sacred and not so sacred stories we tell ourselves.

## **The Hero with a Thousand Faces:**

- A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (sic). (Campbell 1973, 30)

## **Myth:** Myth= "meaningful narrative"

- Is a sacred narrative or story that embodies knowledge that a community uses to help understand the world and define itself.
- These stories often have to do with the big issues: creation, life, death.
- Stories about primordial events (things that happened in the distant past- like creation) provide religious communities knowledge about how those events shaped current society.
- "Myth relates human beings to whatever powers they believe ultimately govern their destiny and explains to them what the powers expect of them" (Esposito 2006,7).

## **Myth: Fact or Fiction?**

## Agenda:

- Recap: Myth/ Joseph Campbell's Monomyth
- The Oriental monk in the west
- Said's Orientalism

## **Role of Religion in Star Wars:**

- Lucas wanted Star Wars to be a "traditional moral story"
- He wanted to give children something bigger to believe in
- Peace, wisdom, progress
- Powerful, spiritual

## **Stereotypes from Karate Kid:**

- Discipline
- Sense of Calm, peaceful
- Passing traditions & spiritual ways to the new world

## **Orientalism:**

- Edward Said (1935-2003)
- "The Other"- What we are not. A binary between us and other cultures. Constructs a normative society & culture and stands outside of it.
- "Othering"- Cultural anthropologists use the phrase "ethnocentric value judgement" to imply that we often judge others based on our own values, r worldview, or religion, or culture, etc.
- This is part of Orientalism: the process of "othering" another culture.
- Occidental: Western or European- based culture. (Opposite of the Orient)
- Oriental: The cultures of Asia, and all non- western cultures in general
- Orientalism: the projection of western ideas and concepts onto non-western cultures
- Explore issues of stereotyping
- Constant disparity between one to another, without knowledge
- The Repertory of Orientalism

- Othering & The other is to do with power. One culture has a power to dominate another culture viewing them are different.
- The idea of orientalism/the other is extended not just through colonialism but through scholars as well.
- European colonialism: expansion of the country, expanding their religion.

### **Travel Literature:**

- Tourism is inherently Orientalist because it seeks to consume a foreign culture through a series of preset touristic experiences in a small amount of time
- The orientalist goal of the tourist is to get to know the "real" Mongolia through a clutch of stereotypes.
- A travel writers job is to describe the "foreign" or "exotic" culture to the folks back home
- Creates cultural differences between us and them
- By doing so, if other people are considered "exotic", what are we?
- Orientalist gaze

### **The British Empire:**

- Covered nearly 30 million square kilometers
- With a population of 400-500 million people
- (roughly one quarter of the worlds population),
- Was the most extensive area under a single country's rule in history
- They were able to rule the orient based on how much area they owned/ruled.
- They were normative
- "The Other" was everyone else who was not in the British Empire
- Aboriginals/ Americans were considered "savages"
- Indians were considered un-civilized
- In claiming knowledge about a foreign culture, Europeans constructed that culture as its opposite or "other"
- Summary: Orientalism , then, is when culture "A" has the power to represent culture "B" using culture "A" terms of reference.

### **Erasing Differences:**

- Orientalization serves to “blunt the distinctiveness of particular persons and figure. Indeed, recognition of any Eastern spiritual guide (real or fictional) is predicted on their conformity to general features paradigmatically encapsulated in the icon of the Oriental Monk: His spiritual commitment, his calm demeanor, his Asian face, and oftentimes his manner of dress”. (27)
- Seems there are more tolerance to “the other”, but through this description this does not seem evident or true.
- “The Other” is to indulge in when you are there, not at home
- The Oriental Monk figure is portrayed as a desexualized male character who represents the last of his kind. Passing on his spiritual legacy to the West through the bridge figure represents his only hope for survival. Hence, this narrative implicitly argues that Asian religions are impotent within their racial context of origin, and are only made (re)productive if re-situated in a Western context passed the daring and innovative sensibilities that their Eastern counterpart presumably lack. (Forbes and Mahan, 2005)
- The icon of the Oriental Monk “allows for the recognition of peoples and cultures of Asian heritage while simultaneously subjecting them to a narrative of their own obsolescence” (Forbes and Mahan 2005, 33)

Tuesday October 4<sup>th</sup> 2011

Week 4 Lecture A

October-04-11

2:18 PM

Agenda

Evangelicals and popular music

The devils music

Little mosque on the prairie

Reading: an overview of evangelical religion and music. How religious people utilize music and popular culture to emphasize religious views. Might be an exam question.

Popular culture in religion

The ways in which religion procreates popular culture

How religion utilize elements of popular culture and how such borrowings have affected the form and content of religion -pg. 101

Romanowski

Evangelical Christianity has been affected or altered by its use of popular music forms and popular marketing methods

In what ways:

So it can compete in the secular society Compromised their sacred music into more secular "watered-down" religion and more about values and things like that

Copied popular music styles

More capitalist ideals within the music and how they marketed the music

Shift their goals from saving souls to making profits (capitalist ideals) which are often against the Christian ideals that they originally started with

Adopted the values and the rules of capitalism in Christian music

Amy Grant: Baby, Baby

The first converted song from original ideals. And it's a love song

Evangelical

To tell people about the good news, the story of Jesus, the new testament "good news"

Evangelical Christians understand the bible as the authoritative word of God and stress the experience of conversion or being "born again"

Played a major role in the women rights movement and other such things.  
They used to be more leftist and now they are seen as rightest  
This is different than fundamentalism: the literal word of god. All very literal  
where as evangelicals interpret the bible. Very different  
They are a more modernist approach to understanding and translating the  
word of god

Christian musicians and music industry professionals that seek to either  
evangelize or promote Christian values through popular music  
The whole concept the author was trying to draw on is that popular music  
has been known as devils music and evangelicals were known for  
condemning the popular music in the past

For a lot of people there is Christian music and there is popular music  
James Brown

How black people fused the popular music with religious music before  
anyone else in R & B.

Mid 20th century

Aretha Franklin- natural women

Ray Charles - this little light of mine

This is all very scandalise thing because they are originally known for their  
gospel singing and it is sinful that they take a church song and re-arrange  
the world and preform it in secular environment

Bessie Smith

"The devil is going to get you" popular song

Robert Johnson

"me and the devil"

"cross road blues"

Illustrates that popular music as the devils music

Pop Music Vs. Church Music

they are historically very different

The article assumes you know the split between these beliefs

Christian music industry

Evangelicals adopted the formats and technologies of mass culture for the  
purpose of evangelizing

Adopted pop culture forms but not content

People were outraged in the evangelical community and they were pissed  
that she sold her sold

The point of Christian music is not to be subtle. It is supposed to be loud and to practically scream the messages

Summary

Popular music and religion have not always gone hand in hand

The values of the popular music industry and evangelical Christians are very different

The use of popular music affected the evangelical Christianity

How religion can be changed, and how it is altered in popular culture from Forbs and Mahan's ideas

Consumer culture and mass culture tend to homogenize subcultures

Evangelicals were converted by American consumer culture

Popular culture is an important evangelization tool

Even though the message was watered down they were still getting the message out there and converting non-believers

Little Mosque on the prairie

-watch the episode

Thursday October 6<sup>th</sup> 2011

Week 4 Lecture b

October-06-11

2:33 PM

The assignment

You can stream the movie that the creator of little mosque on the prairie got her idea for the show from on the national film board website. The film is called me and the Mosque

How does little Mosque represent the other? What stereotypes of Muslims and Islam does this sitcom play with?

Due date is pushed back to Monday the 10th

Claire Morrison

Orientalism: representing the other and constructing a racialized threat post 9/11

Overview

Understanding orientalism

Edward said

Classical/contemporary

Orientalism in the aftermath of 9/11

Wake of the war on terror

State of expectation

Revisiting colonial discourses

Domination through detainment and torture

Politics of unveiling

Orientalism and the racialized threat

Edward Said

University professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

Grew up an oriental in egypt and palestine

Orientalism defined:

As academia: orientalism and the orientalist

As a way of thinking: distinguishing between the orient and the occident

As a corporate institution: how to deal with the orient

Orientalism and discourse

Corporate dealings with the orient: making statement, authorizing it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, and ect.

## Classical Orientalism

Timeless, sensual, exotic, fantasy, luxury, mysterious, eroticized, magical

The stereotypes that the westerners took about the orientalism

Went there and came back with the stereotype of the people. Came back thinking they knew all about it

They used the stereotypes and justified the colonization as a way to civilize this society

Aftermath of 9/11

Resurgence of old orientalism

Escalation of hostility and racism: more hate acts and general violence towards Muslims

Heightened levels of islamophobia: the media and news kept feeding these ideas and views because they were making a profit and the government needed validation to enter Iraq

The state-of-exception

Framing the enemy

State-of-exception

The suspension of human rights in the name of national security

Exists outside the rule of law

Held without charge for indefinite periods of time (guantanamo)

Brutality and torture

The right for police to exercise greater power over suspicious individuals

Omar Khadr

Only canadian citizen still in guantanamo bay

Revisiting colonial discourse

The west domination over the non-west

The photo from abu ghraib

The civilizing mission in afghanistan and iraq

Politics of unveiling

Liberation and the white mans burden

The white man has the burden to go and liberate the women and provide freedom and democracy to these countries

Domination at Abu Ghraib

Normalization of brutality

Reaffirmation western dominance

Justified torture

The white man would not like the same treatment

Politics of unveiling

White men saving brown women from brown men

White women saving brown women

Question of agency

Framing the hero and villain

The unveiling of the brown women was sexualized and led to a lot of rape and sexual fantasy

A lot of women were doing things before the west came in but the west pushed their own way of action on the liberation of women

The racialized treat

The need to redefine terrorist

The anomaly and the bad apple

To conclude:

Recognize new and old orientalist discourses in contemporary media and debate

Gain a hermeneutic understanding by acknowledging biases

Open channels of communication and encouraging dialogue and critique

Question the binaries and re-examine notions of difference

Look for a true understanding

Tuesday October 11<sup>th</sup> 2011

Thursday October 13, 2011

## **Midterm Information:**

- Multiple Choice
- Short Answers
- Essay
- All readings/ lectures & videos
- Hockey article, Price of Sports- know
- There will be information from this lecture(October 18)
- No Questions on Holy Cow & Today's reading
- Ex/ How does star wars show religion to its fans
- Ex/ Explain forbes typology to the dalai lama

## Muscular Christianity:

- Taking the process of extracating the femininity

## Religion in pop culture (religion in sport)

- Sporting venues can be used as an area or sacred space in which to participate or perform an organized religious visual. Ex/ stadium being used as churches. Tend to be prodisent . Being able to host a large community where they can stand up, dance, sing, yell etc.
- The religious denomination chooses specific sporting venues as a way to relate to a particular sport or sports team.
- Sponsoring certain teams. Ex/ in waterloo a church sponsoring a soccer game, to draw people into the church. Often the priest or pastor will be present at these events.
- Many sports teams in the professional level have someone come in to hold a spiritual and emotional ceremony before a game.
- For a religion that engages within a specific team there is the benefit as being seen to embody the same aspects as the team. Ex/ arsonald in England saying "we are the winning team, we are the winning faith".

## **Psychological Attraction:**

- Choose to express their passion through sports
- Psychologists call this emotional attachment

- Rather than going to mass on a Sunday, they stay home and watch a game.
- Adds a personal dimension to oneself
- This is an old phenomenon

Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2011

Midterm

An "A" paper:

- Well organized thought process and writing
- Superior writing standards
- Expresses its purpose clearly and persuasively
- Has a strong thesis, argument and supporting material
- Goes above and beyond the assigned tasks, demonstrates the student has mastered the concepts and shows a level of original thought or insight into the material
- Does not summarize readings and lectures
- Rather it synthesizes the material
- Demonstrates acute critical thinking/ reading/ writing

Agenda:

Discuss Pop Culture Analysis #1

Superheroes & Religion

Representing India

Superheroes:

Extraordinary power

Enemies

Strong Moral Code

Secret ID/ Costume

Origin story

Mythic Narratives:

Amar Chitra Katha (ACK)

"Immortal Picture Stories"

"Rama" – Hindu comic book

- Amar Chitra Katha indigenized comic books
  - Made the comic book medium Indian
- Combined Indian mythology, history, and sacred & secular stories to create a national canon of Indian heroes
- Immortal picture stories: seek to immortalize Indian heroes.

Religion in pop culture:

- Religious material in a comic book

Pop culture as religion:

- Learning sacred stories through a text that is fun to read instead of having to go to church

Religion & pop culture in dialogue:

- Stick to the original story

Pop culture in religion:

- The use of pop culture medium to show their messages

The Route to your Roots:

- Foundational text for religious and national education
- Promoted national integration
- Promoted Hindu history as "Indian" history and Hinduism as India's national religion

Canadian mythologies:

Critical Issues:

- Reproducing / resisting orientalism
- Facilitating nationalism
- Cultural appropriation
- Decolonization
- Represent identity
  - Race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality..
- Globalization
- Transnationalism
- Diaspora

Amar Chitra Katha function in religious, political and social ways

- Education
- Religious
- Promote national integration
- Promoted Hindu history as "Indian" history
- Important source of Indian identity for diaspora

"There are several conceptions that prevail in the west about India. There is firstly the spiritual India- a place where you go and find nirvana. Secondly,

there is a conception that India is entirely poverty stricken, with a permanent kind of begging bowl attitude". – Deepa Mehta

Deepa Mehta: Elements Trilogy: Fire (1996), Earth (1998), Water (2005)

Fire (1996): Controversies

- "immoral and pornographic"
- "against Indian tradition and culture"
- "spoil (Indian) women"
- teaching "unhappy wives not to depend on their husbands" and informing the public about "acts of pervasion."
- compared lesbianism to "a sort of social AIDS" which might "spread like an epidemic."

Water (2005): Controversies

- Protestors burning the set of Water
- "Breaking up the sets as far too mild an act, the people involved with the film should have been beaten black and blue. They come with foreign money to make a film which shows India in poor light because that is what sells in the west. The west refuses to acknowledge our achievements in any sphere, but is only interested in our snake charmers and child brides. And people like Deepa Mehta pander to them"

Tuesday November 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

Water:

- Chuyia (8 year old widow)
- Kalyani (widow forced into prostitution)
- Narayan (Brahmin, Gandhi follower)

Shows: Women poverty, women living under oppression, images of the caste system, lots of levels of hierarchy

Two different areas of India shown in the movie:

- Poverty area & rich area

Does Deepa Mehta fall into her own trap of showing India as either essentially spiritual or essentially poverty- stricken?

- Challenges/ Questions different ways of being

What do you think Mehta wants us to take away from this film in regards to India/ religion/ Hinduism?

- 

How does the film treat religion?

1960s- Beatles

George Harrison

Thursday November 3, 2011

Did Western counter culture approach Indian religions with the purpose of learning from an Indian perspective or simply gleaning favorable trends, tools, and philosophies for their own use?

The Love Guru:

- Makes fun of Westerners self interest

Religious roots of the counter culture:

- Transcendentalist
- Theosophists
- Beat Poets

Transcendentalism:

- American intellectuals that started a meeting of west and east philosophies
- Emerson wanted to "grasp through unmediated intuition the divinity in nature and in all human beings"
- "Plato; or the Philosopher" (1850)

Henry David Thoreau (1817-62)

- Walden: or, Life in the Woods (1854)
- Edited Transcendental periodical The Dial in order to publish translations of various Asian scriptures (1842)

T.S. Eliot (1888-1922)

- American Poet, studied Sanskrit, Pali and Indian philosophy at Harvard
- "The Waste Land" (1922) reflects on Hindu scripture in light of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection.

Theosophists:

- Theosophical society found by Henry Steel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky in 1875
- Aims:
  - Work towards a united human community
  - Study comparative religion, philosophy of science

- Investigate the powers of latent in humanity

DT Suzuki (1870-1966)

The Beat Generation:

- Alan Ginsberg & Jack Kerouac
- They were Post- War Hipsters
- Post WWII- looking for something deeper/more
- Alan Ginsberg's famous poem: Howl
- Jack Kerouac's famous writing: Dharma Bums

Alan Watts (1915-73)

- Writer/ Lecturer
- Interpreted Taoism and Buddhism for American audiences
- "Beginning a Counterculture" (1957)

Timothy Leary:

- The "pied piper of the psychedelic sixties:
- Coined slogan "Turn up, tune in, drop out"
- "The Buddha as Drop- out" (1968)

Mararishi Mahesh Yogi:

- Founded Spiritual Regeneration movement (1958): transcendental meditation
- Involved chanting a mantra as a meditation tool and could reduce stress, drug abuse, crime, increase intelligence, self- esteem and world peace.
- Used The Beatles to promote

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977)

- Founder of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON)
- Used John Legend and the Beatles to promote his religion

The Beatles:

- Two Beatles who were more religious

- John Lennon & George Harrison
  - Adapted Indian philosophies
  - Both promoted meditation & chanting
- George Harrison:
  - Continued longer than John Lennon

John Lennon:

- Used Indian artistic and philosophical influences for his own ends

George Harrison:

- Attempted to accept, practice, and promote Indian culture and religion without a Western spin on it

Ravi Shankar:

- Classical Indian music to the west
- Norah Jones father

Transcendental Meditation:

- John commented, "Our meditation has given us the confidence to withstand such a shock."
- George became more philosophical, hinting at samsara, "There is no such thing as death, only in the physical sense...we know he is okay now. He will return because he was striving for happiness and desired bliss so much"

Two representations of India:

- Postmodern: eclectic mixing of genres without much knowledge or respect for the apparent tradition (John Lennon)
- Spiritual engagement, religious devotion (George Harrison)

Postmodernism:

- Deletion of the boundary between art and everyday life
- The collapse of the hierarchal distinction between elite and popular culture
- A stylistic eclecticism and the missing of codes
- Parody, pastiche, irony, and playfulness

Postmodern Beatles:

- Indian music and culture is fragmented
- It is appropriated for their own ends
- Playful and full of parody

#### The Beatles Songs:

- "Love to You"
  - Hires Indian musicians
  - First example of Harrison purposely composing something in an Indian style and not just using Indian instruments
- "Within You Without You"
  - Indian Characteristics like 5/8 instrumental interlude, the underlying drone, and microtonal intervals
  - Themes: anti- materialism, seeking converts to Hinduism
- "The Inner Light:
  - Without going out of my good I can know all things on earth without looking out of my window I can know the ways of heaven. The farther one travels the less one knows..Arrive without traveling, see all without looking, do all without doing ("The Inner Light")

#### John Lennon:

- "I found that the best thing for myself is to take a little bit from here and a little bit from there"
- "Tomorrow never Know's": a taped LSD trip
- Enlightenment that was once reserved for devoted Buddhist monks and ascetic Hindus was now available to the world via LSD.

#### "I am a Walrus:

- Hint of Indian pantheism in first verse, "I am he as you are he as we are all together."
- Purposeful meaningless speech mixed with an attempt at social commentary and spiced with just enough Indian flavor to sound both exotic and intelligent at the same time while not committing to anything.

#### Maharishi Mahesh Yogi:

- Meditate half hour a day
- He was celibate, but there was no need to be celibate
- Materialism is a healthy part of life
- This is a far cry from other Hindu forms of meditation and spiritual enlightenment.

Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> 2011

Exam:

- There will be an exam question on Holy Cow

Pop Culture Analysis 2:

- Can be on anything etc.. Comic Books, Novels, Films, TV shows, Radio etc..
- Use a bit of Forbes typology (shouldn't be the main part of the analysis)

Recap:

- Transcendentalist
- Theosophists
- Beat poets
- 1960s Counter- culture
- The Beatles

Questions:

- What are the intersections between nationalism (or national identity or even anti- nationalism) and the way India was presented by:

A)The Amar Chitra Katha

- Brought the religion to the full circle
- Helps india bring people together

B. Deepa Mehta

- Trying to show India from the viewpoints of people who are not heard
- How they portray Indian Identity/ Hinduism

C. The Beatles/ Counter- culture/ The Beats

- Anti- nationalist approach

D. Sarah McDonald

- India is a bunch of religions
- Connects national identity to religion

Orientalism:

- What are the intersections between Orientalism, India and the counter- culture? (Such as The Beatles)?
- What stereotypes of the east do to Beatles reproduce?

### Appropriation:

- Is it okay to appropriate another's culture and religion?
- What are some problems with the way The Beatles appropriates Indian culture and religion?
- How is the appropriated ahistorical?

### Decolonization

#### Bob Marley:

- Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
- None but ourselves can free our minds
  
- The political withdrawal- The colonized country has to create their national identity.

#### Do The Beatles and/ or Deepa Mehta do the work of decolonization?

- Beatles used their popularity
- The Beatles changed the music, by incorporating Eastern sounds
- Deepa Mehta- tries to reverse stereotypes, deconstructs the Western Gaze

#### Holy Cow:

- Who is this book for?
- What is the purpose of this book?
- How does MacDonald's book compare to travel literature like the Lonely Planet?
- How is MacDonald's representation of India like or different from The Beatles?
  - Is she more of a George Harrison (seeker) or a John Lennon (postmodernist).
  - If this book was a record would it sound like Lennon's "Tomorrow Never Knows" or George Harrison's "The Inner Light"?
- How does she represent religion?
- How is MacDonald's representation of India like or different from Deepa Mehta's?



Thursday November 10<sup>th</sup> 2011

Pop Culture Analysis:

- Look on MLS for detailed instructions:

Agenda:

1. Tie Up Holy Cow
2. Commodification and religion
3. The Disneyization of religion

The Politics of Nostalgia:

- Yearning for an earlier time, privileging the "classical" era of a country/ culture
- Not interested in modern representations

Does MacDonald Engage in the politics of nostalgia

- No she does not, she historicalizes India but does not go back in the past

Is this an example of Orientalism?

- Is she projecting any fears/ fantasies onto the other?
  - Yes, how she describes India
- Does it exoticize India?
- Or Essentialize India?

Religion as commodity:

- Flip flops

McDonaldization:

- The process by which the [principles of the fast food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of the world
- Modernization (bureaucratic rationalization, organization, management and control) are extended....(missed the rest of sentence)

McDonaldization of religion?

- Can we apply the characteristics of McDonalization to religion?
- Sociologist Rodney Stark: Religious Economy

- There is a market of current and potential religious believers and a set of organizations seeking to attract them
- A competitive market is a healthy market

Disney:

- What do you take away from this song "Savages?"
- What does Disney want the audience to see here?
  - Disney dissolves the differences between each culture
  - Harmony of mutual denial
  - Effectively erases symmetries of power.

Tuesday November 15<sup>th</sup> 2011

## **Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray Gospel Music**

### **What is Gospel Music?**

- Southern Gospel
  - Bluegrass Gospel
  - Country Gospel
- Black Gospel
  - Spirituals
  - Gospel Blues
  - Praise and Worship
- Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)

The Story of Gospel (and the Blues, as it so happens. And Soul. And Rock & Roll)

- Early oral traditions: the Spirituals
- The rise of commercial recording and radio
- The Blues, Tommy Dorsey, and Gospel Blues.
- "Mainstream" Crossovers: Folk Revivals, Soul Music, The Civil Rights Movement

Early Oral Traditions: The Spirituals

- "Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" (Fisk Jubilee Singers Quartet, 1909)
- African Musical Traditions
- Christian Lyrical Traditions
- Layers of Meaning
- Work songs and related forms

Spiritual Cross Over:

- Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Rise of the Concert Spiritual
- Arranged Spirituals

Commercial Recording and Radio

- Commercial radio stations begin receiving licences around 1920
- The phonograph, 1877
- Expanded audiences

- "Race" records and Black radio

#### A Man Named Tommy Gets the Blues:

- "Sleep Talking Blues"
  - (Ma Rainey, 1928)
- "Devils Music"
- The Juke Joint vs. the Pews
- The Great Migration
- Thomas Dorsey/ Georgia Tom

#### Bernice Johnson Reagon:

- "African American gospel music is a twentieth- century phenomenon, born of a people moving from rural communities to the urban centre's of this country (The United States)

#### A Man Names Tommy Gets the Blues:

- Congregational Resistance
- Dorset founds publishing company
- Convention singing
- The Quartet Era
- Gospel Superstars
- The Juke Joint vs. the Pew, revisited
- "I'm going to Live the Life I sing About in My Song" (Mahalia Jackson, 1958)

#### Crossing Over (sort of)

- Folk Revival Movements (1930s and beyond)
- Motown and Soul Music
- "Precious Lord" (Aretha Franklin, 1956)
- "A Change is Gonna Come" (Sam Cooke, 1963)

#### The Legacy of Gospel Music:

- Mass Choirs
- Urban Contemporary Gospel
- "Oh Happy Day" (Edwin Hawkins Singers, 1968)
- Popular cultural representations of gospel singing

- Praise and worship
- The ubiquitous gospel choir
- Contemporary Christian Music

Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2011

Text Tuesday Pop Quiz:

Daniel Francis- Trellis - Online Book

Religion as Commodity:

- McDonaldization: the principles of the fast food restaurant extended to all other aspects of life and culture
- Pop culture engagements with religion are something akin to the McDonaldization of religion

Disneyfication of religion: (ON EXAM)!

- Homogenization
- Merchandising
- Sanitizing
- Repackaging religion in a Disney- ready form
- Elements of religion in Disney movies
- Simplify religion

Gospel of Disney:

- Universal human identity
- Differences don't matter
- Faith, hope & pixie dust
- Consistent set of morals and human values in Disney movies based on Judeo-xian faith and principles

Disney's Gospel:

- Good is always rewarded/ evil is always punished
- Faith is an essential element (faith in yourself, or something greater than yourself- home higher power)
- Optimism and hard work will pay off

Theological language:

- Faith
- Believe
- Miracle
- Blessing
- Sacrifice

- Divine

#### Secular Humanism:

- Idea that universal values can be articulated outside of a religious framework
- Mickey mouse was "the symbol of common humanity in struggle against the forces of evil."
- The disneyfication of religion then, is the erasing of anything that could be construed as offensive
- Under the rubric of global marketing, Disney is trying to gain the biggest market share/ audience
- Yet still promote "family values"

#### Drive- in Church

#### Disney films can be seen as religion:

- Disney provides meaning for its audience
- Disney theme parks are pilgrimage sites
- Disney offers a rival religion
- Teaches children moral instruction
- Disney world is a sacred space

#### Carolyn Morrow Long:

- Voodoo is often portrayed as threatening, sinful, vengeful
- Or as entertainment
- Not authentic religion
- Dr. Reillustrates "Person on the other idea"

#### Moral Neutrality:

- In Yoruban- based religions like Voodoo

#### Tensions:

- Commodification/ Sacred and Profane

So far...

- Commodification/ selling of religion
  - Marketplace model of Sarah McDonald
  - Disney repacks Judeo-xian values in fairy tales
  - Disney misrepresentation of religion

Spirituals?

- Was commodification a problem from the Black Church community?

Sacred/ Secular:

- Johnny Cash
- Jerry Lee Lewis

Great Contradictions:

- The great contradiction is America's "simultaneous embrace of holiness and hedonism"

The Byrds: I like the Christian Like

Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010

Canadian Mythology:

What are the persistent images and stories in Canadian History?

Myths that express the fundamental beliefs that Canadians hold about themselves?

- Peacekeepers
- Multicultural
- Non- American
- Polite

Myths about Canadians from other people:

- Live in igloos
- Polite

What do you tell foreigners about Canadian culture when you travel abroad?

- Lots of wilderness
- Urban & Rural Areas

National Dreams (book) by Daniel Frances:

- What our identity means

I Am Canadian

- "Ads are the cave art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century"  
Marshall McLuhan

The Story of Canada:

- Many of our cherished myths were invented by government agencies or private corporations for quite specific purposes. We embraced them because they expressed something we desired to believe about ourselves.

Heroic myths of Canada

- The story of the RCMP
- The Last Spike (CPR)
- The Canoe/ Wilderness
- Myth of the north
- Myth of the master race (British Race)

- Myth of the mosaic (we are a cultural mosaic)

#### Civil Religion:

- Robert Bellah
  - "Saints: George Washington
  - Central ritual: inaugurations of the president
  - The set of religious or quasi= religious beliefs, myths, symbols, and ceremonies that unite a political community and that mobilizes its members in the pursuit of common goals.

Nationalism and patriotism stand as expressions of profound piety

#### What is a nation?

- Imagined communities: within a nation we have similar core beliefs, core values, core myth, history and allusions although we know there are differences between us
- Common identity
- Civic Ideology

#### Alliance to institutions & Politics:

- CBC
- The society safety net
- Universal health care
- Multiculturalism/ mosaic
- Hockey

#### Greatest Canadians:

- Tommy Douglas
- Frederick Banting- invented/created insulin
- David Suzuki
- Terry Fox
- Wayne Gretsky
- Don Cherry

#### Canadian Mythology

- Myths organize the past into a coherent story, the story of Canada
- Demonizes people- aboriginals, communists, Asian workers etc..

### Ideology of the Canoe:

- The myth of wilderness
- "It's the "mother image" of our national dreamlife, the symbol of our oneness with a rugged northern landscape."

### Group of seven:

- There pictures can now be found on:
  - T-shirts
  - Mugs
  - Pictures

### Grey Owl:

- Archie Belaney masqueraded as Iroquois/ Ojibwa trapper from Northern Ontario
  - Talked about environmental problems

### The Last Spike (CPR) Myth:

- "CPR created Canada not by binding it together with steel rails, but by inventing images of it that people then began to recognize as uniquely Canadian"
- Canada was the last, best west
- Canada was an exotic wilderness

### The Myth of the RCMP:

-

Thursday November 24<sup>th</sup> 2011

Pop Culture Analysis:

Sacred and the Profane

America is both hedonism and holiness

Pop culture and religion and provide a way to understand

Disney:

How Disney can be an example of religion, act as religion, yes there are elements of religion but there are gospels in Disney (ways to understand)

How they function like religion in society

Agenda:

Recap: National dreams: A Canadian Mythology

Stompin' Toms Canada

Civil Religion (Robert Bellah)

- Nationalism/ patriotism stand as expressions of profound piety
- "the set of rituals or quasi-religious beliefs, myths, symbols, and ceremonies that unite a political community and that mobilizes its members in the pursuit of common goals".

National Dreams:

- Our "core myths" become the mainstream memory of the culture, our national dreams
- National Identity
- Unites us as Canadians

Ideology of the Canoe:

- They symbol of our oneness with a rugged northern landscape
- These painting have worked themselves into our national psyche, and are out visual clichés

The myth of the RCMP

- Stern rectitude
- Pleasant helpfulness
- Always get their man
- Civilized
- Honest

- Canada as peaceable kingdom
- First Mountie movie was in 1909
- By 1922 there was one every couple of weeks

#### Myth of the Master Race:

- "I am a British subject, and a British brn, and a British subject I hope to die" – John A. MacDonald
- Canada derived its value, it was taught, from its imperial forbears
- Worship of the monarchy and empire had almost cult statuses

#### Textbook Indian:

- The material which was devoted to Aboriginal cultures was focused almost entirely on what they lacked
- Brits congratulated themselves on their superiority and this gave them justification for conquest and hegemony.

#### Cultural Mosaic:

- Canada is characterized by a tolerance for ethnic and cultural diversity quite unlike other countries
- Chinese "head tax" 1923-1947 banned Chinese immigration
- Japanese banned 1940-1967
- Indians banned from 1908
- Anti- Semitism was widely practiced until after WW2

#### Mosaic:

- Mosaic trope first used 1922
- 1926 Kate Foster
  - "Our Canadian Mosaic"
- 1938 John Murray Gibson
  - "Canadian Mosaic"
- Excluded Blacks, Asians and Jews
- Mosaic originated by white Euro society
  - Celebrated diversity to a point
  - Ignored realities of inequality and racial injustice in our society

- Used by CPR chiefly to promote Cda as tourist destination- folk culture, crafts, art from natives for sale art festivals
- Exotic, picturesque

Stompin' Tom Connors:

- Wrote about Canadian stories, places and people

My Canadian Dream:

- In the 1960's He sang because there was no Canadian mythologies
- He would sing for each town so the local bar would hire him and people would want to hear about their town

"No Canadian Dream"- Stompin' Toms Song:

- "Canadian Radio, boy it is grand/ when you want to hear stories from some other land/ They teach us to long for those far away scenes' We have no Canadian dream"
- "I began to see how my songs could have special meaning for the people of the whole nation"

Connecting Nation:

- "On every album I've put out, I've put diverse Canadian songs on it. They're not provincial albums, my albums are national albums.
- They'll be a song about Saskatchewan and Vancouver and Nova Scotia on there. I guess you could say that Stompin' Tom connects the nation through his albums, and, if I've accomplished that, I'm proud."

Why are songs about Canada and the nation:

- Creates a larger Canadian Identity
- Develops dreams, and ways for us to think about ourselves

Canadian Mythology:

- Involves a feeling of identity, or belonging, a nationalism, patriotic pride, a sense of place, being part of a community.

Canadian Civil Religion?

- "The lack of shared beliefs, symbols, and values regarding the "Canadian Way" indicated that there is no pan- Canadian civil religion" Andrew E. Kim (1993)
- The symbols, beliefs, rituals and myths that Connors invents/ reproduces transcend any single region by making one area's stories, histories and traditions common for the whole country.

#### Nationalism:

- Nationalism involves fortifying a place with placeness, giving it meaning, and believing in that meaning.
- A geographic place is just a piece of land until it is enriched with cultural meaning
- Those ideas that a nation imagines about their landscape are as important as the landscape itself.

#### National Symbols:

- Maple tree ("Zephyrs in the Maple," "Johnny Maple", "Maple Leaf Waltz," "Land of the Maple Tree")
- Maritime Life ("The Old Atlantic Shore," "My Home cradled in the Waves," "The North Atlantic Aquadron")
- Geography ("Reversing Falls Darling," "The Bridge Came Tumbling Down," "Blue Nose")
- Historical events ("Cowboy Johnny Ware")

#### Mythologizes Canadian Heroes:

- Rita MacNeil
- "Big Joe Mufferaw", "Johnny Maple"),
- Everyday Canadian worker: Sudbury Saturday Night," "The Canadian Lumberjack," "T.T.C. Skidaddler,": "Bud the Spud," "The Peterborough Postman".

#### Sum:

- Civil religion= unifying symbols
- Unifying Symbols= national memory
- National memory= shared mythology

- Canada is more dependent than many may care to admit upon the imagination of perceptive writers in the field of popular culture to evoke the images of places from which a nation fashions the myths by which it lives. (Lehr 1983)

Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> 2011

Agenda:

- Recap: Stompin' Tom's Canada
- The Politics of Appropriation
- Final quiz next class

Recap:

- Civil Religion (Robert Bellah)
  - Nationalism/ patriotism stand as expressions of profound piety
  - "the set of religious or quasi- religious beliefs, myths, symbols, and ceremonies that unite a political community and that mobilizes its members in the pursuit of common goals"

Stompin' Tom:

- Stompin' Tom helped to sacralise specific symbols, heroes events, rituals, and cultural elements of Canada
- Made them part of the national fabric, the national unconscious, the national mythology

"No Canadian Dream":

- No stories= No Canadian Dream
- "Canadian Radio boy is it grand/ when you want to hear stories from some other land/ They teach us to long for those far away scenes/ We have no Canadian dream"

Sum:

- Civil Religion= unifying symbols
- Unifying Symbols= national memory
- National memory= shared mythology

Appropriation:

- "The Taking- from a culture that is not one's own- of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (Ziff & Rao 1997)
- Example: White skinned Indians, Canadian musicians singing reggae music

- Non- contentious/ political examples: Opening up a Italian restaurant, while not being Italian

#### Examples of Appropriation:

- At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sculpted marble friezes were taken from the Parthnon in Greece on orders from the British Ambassador
- A Folksinger from the United States recorded an ancient Senegalese folk song, the writer of which is unknown
- A muscle relaxant known as d- tubocurarine is patented by a pharmaceutical company. It was derived from an Amazonian row poison
- A nonaboriginal artist paints work based on images of Native cultures of North America. Patterns and symbols found on carpets, earthenware, blankets, and clothing are used
- The Nahua people of Mexico, under the hegemonic control of Spain, adopt the colonial discourses of this imperial presence, assimilating the cultural practices of this (European) "Other".
- I wrote this list word for word from a book on cultural appropriation and did not cite it.

#### Three Themes:

1. Appropriation concerns relationships among people
2. There is a wide range of modes/ types of appropriation
3. It is widely accepted, but sometimes highly contentious

#### Difficult to come up with a notion of universal fairness

- Matisyahu
- Robbie Shakespeare, Sinead O'Connor, Sly Dunbar

#### Grey Owl:

- Spoke on behalf of Aboriginal people
- Many people knew he was not Aboriginal, but they agreed with what he had to say

#### Power:

- Relationships of Power are a central concept to the ethics of cultural appropriation
  - Unequal power relations can result in unethical appropriations

What does this have to do with religion?

Spirituals/ Gospel:

- Rooted in the historical experiences of slavery, colonial Christianity and the culture of lower class black society
- Yet many of the artists that now share musical, ideological, performative and material culture come from different economic, social, religious, and racial backgrounds.
- The price of appropriation of spirituals is erosion of their intended meaning

Homage of Theft?

- Grey Owl?

Appropriation is bittersweet:

- Recognition of cultural worth
- Yet at the expense of
  - Obliterating the historical context
  - Not recognizing human worth

Deborah Root:

- "White Indians": The Appropriation of Politics and Display"
- She found it "embarrassing to be reminded of the way we so blithely appropriated bits and pieces of what appeared to us to be floating cultural exotic".

Appropriation & Colonization:

- Western nations have routinely consumed cultural commodities created by subalterns

Summary:

- Popular culture is an important site of appropriation

- Often appropriation is a harmless, an example of the hybridity in a globalized society
- Can also point to unequal power issues:
  - New colonialism, modern conquest, cultural imperialism
  - Decontextualize/ dehistoricize religious traditions

Thursday December 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

Appropriation:

- "The taking- from a culture that is not one's own- of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (Ziff & Rao 1997)

Power:

- Relationships of Power are a central concept to the ethics of cultural appropriation
  - Unequal power relations can result in unethical appropriations
- Recognition of cultural worth yet at the expense of
  - Obliterating the historical context
  - Not recognizing human worth

Crossing Over

- In the case of spirituals, African American music, dialect, style born out of struggle and strife "crossed over" but black people has not "crossed over"
- Deborah Root: Native style cross over, but not Native issues

Appropriation & Colonization:

- Western nations have routinely consumed cultural commodities created by subalterns in "colonized hinterlands" (Lipsitz, 1994, 5)
- One part in this dialogue speaks "from positions of highly unequal access to power, opportunity, and life chances"
- Cultural appropriation can be theorized as a new colonialism, modern conquest, or cultural imperialism.

Native Spirituality:

- White westerners find value in native culture and spirituality
- Root questions the way it is appropriated:
  - A romanticized understanding of the Native is easier than to deal with than the harsh realities of real native people and their struggles (racism, land, sovereignty issues...)

Plastic Shammas:

- How do the new age practitioners characterize their appropriation of Native spirituality?
- How do the Aboriginal people in the film see appropriation of their traditions?

#### Summary:

- Popular Culture is an important site of appropriation
- Often appropriation is harmless, an example of hybridity in a globalized society.
- Can also point to unequal power issues
  - New colonialism, modern conquest, cultural imperialism
- Decontextualize/ dehistoricize religious traditions

#### Course wrap up:

- What is religion/ culture/ pop culture?
- What is the historical relationship?
- What is the function of religion in pop culture
- How has pop culture influences or shaped religion
- Holy Cow
- Tension (sacred & the profane)
- Commodification of religion

#### What to take from this class:

- Pop culture is more than entertainment
- Trudster reading- rockin roll, sports- critique of religious studies
- We live in a secular society- but there is a lot of religion going on around us
-