Images That Move

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Inciting Modernity?

Images, Alterities, and the Contexts of "Cartoon Wars"

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> Caricature is by its nature an art of exclusion on the one hand and excess on the other.
>
> —*Howarth, "Jewish Art and the Fear of the Image"*

On September 30, 2005, the conservative Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* (Jutland Post) published an article entitled "The Face of Muhammad" (Muhammeds ansigt) accompanied by twelve specially commissioned cartoons depicting or referring to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632 CE). Two weeks previously, the Danish daily *Politiken* had run an article linking the difficulties experienced by the Danish author Kåre Bluitgen in trying to find an artist willing to illustrate his book on the life of the Prophet Muhammad with criticism of European self-censorship when it came to the representation of Islam. It was, an editorial in the *Jyllands-Posten* explained, in response to the phenomenon identified by *Politiken* that the cartoons were commissioned.

Attempts by offended Danish Muslims to seek redress against the *Jyllands-Posten* by invoking those sections of Denmark's criminal code dealing with blasphemy and incitement based on ethnicity, color, faith, or race failed. On December 6 a Danish Muslim delegation presented a forty-three-page dossier containing the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, along with others faxed to Muslim groups in Denmark, to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (an organization founded in 1969 after an arson attack on the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem), leading to a formal condemnation of the "desecration of the image" of the Prophet. By early 2006, demonstrations against

the publication of the cartoons had taken place from London to Jakarta. In the following months the global news media reproduced the offending images, provoking more protests and further reproductions throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, America, and Australasia.[1]

By the time the initial fallout from the controversy had subsided, somewhere between fifty and three hundred were dead; demonstrators in London had been jailed for soliciting murder; ministers of the Italian, Libyan, and Lebanese governments had been forced to resign; newspaper editors in Algeria, Belarus, Jordan, and Yemen had been jailed; Scandinavian consulates in Beirut, Damascus, and Tehran had been damaged or destroyed; and the Danish economy had suffered the effects of an international boycott. As of spring 2008 the controversy surrounding the cartoon controversy had still not abated. On February 13, 2008, at least seventeen Danish dailies, along with others in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Spain, reprinted the most controversial of the cartoons—a caricature reminiscent of the antianarchist propaganda of an earlier century, depicting a bearded figure wearing a turban in the form of a lighted grenade inscribed with the *shahāda* (the Muslim profession of faith)—in response to reports of a plot to assassinate its creator, the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard.[2] This reinvestment of Westergaard's image prompted further demonstrations in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia and the release of an audiotape apparently recorded by Osama bin Laden that threatened the European Union with unspecified retribution for the republication of the insulting drawings (*al-rusūm al-musī'a*), which he attributed to a new crusade led by the pope.[3]

If familiarity has bred a certain cynicism about the power of images, the unlikely vehemence with which the cartoon controversy erupted across the globe poses significant questions about the ethics, politics, and polemics of the visual in an era of mass media and transregional information flows. To quote Ulf Hannerz's characterization of the global controversy provoked by Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988), the cartoon controversy appeared "to be taking place everywhere, and nowhere in particular," a quality enhanced by the advent of cybertechnologies unavailable to protagonists in the earlier drama.[4] In both the Rushdie affair and the cartoon controversy, Muslims were accused of both too leaden and too literal a notion of representation. As a debate concerning images and the visual, however, the recent controversy regarding the Danish caricatures (and their progeny) raised a number of questions irrelevant to Rushdie's textual representations of the Prophet. Although the limits of free speech were identified with the culturally determined boundaries of imaging, the visual is not language, and images are neither speech nor writing, as W. J. T.

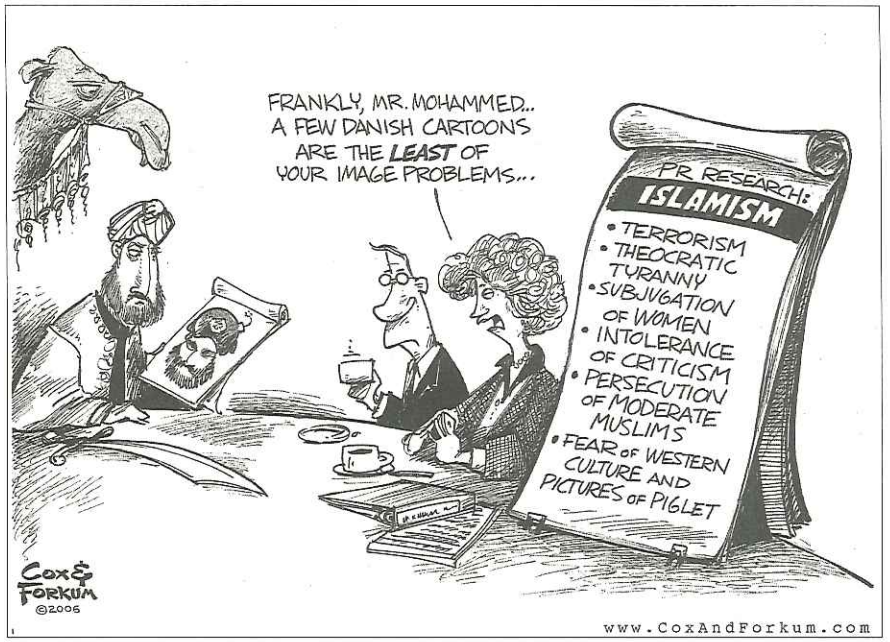

FIGURE 2.1

Image problem. *Cox and Forkum Editorial Cartoons, January 31, 2006. Reproduced with permission of Allen Forkum.*

Mitchell reminds us. In this sense the outrage generated by the Danish cartoons bears closer comparison to controversies concerning blasphemy that erupted around images such as Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* (1989) and Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary* (1998). However, as Mitchell notes, in the cases of Serrano and Ofili it was the particular specimen rather than the species (crucifixion scenes, depictions of the Virgin) that offended, whereas in the case of the Danish cartoons both were at issue.[5]

This was ostensibly a debate not only about the content or materials of representation but also about the permissibility of depiction and reproduction. The iconography of the caricatures addressed Islam's "image problem," its deficient relationship to the shibboleths of liberal secularism, but their production and dissemination engaged the perceived problem of the image in Islam. One of the original *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons drew (quite literally) a relationship between the visibility of women in Islam and the representability of the Prophet. This relationship was engaged by many subsequent meta-images, among them a cartoon by Cox and Forkum in which the representatives of a public relations (PR) firm confront the

Prophet with his own image (à la Westergaard) alongside a list of Islam's civilizational deficiencies, including "fear of Western culture and pictures of piglet" (figure 2.1).

Through the mapping of differing ontologies of the visual onto apparently incommensurate notions of the cultural, the Danish cartoons and some of the meta-images that they inspired assumed a mythic status (in a Barthesian sense).[6] This mythic status was performative, asserted and constituted by the reproduction and dissemination of the cartoons as an act of resistance to censorious Muslims and their liberal allies. The performative quality ascribed to circulation, its perpetuation of offense as both cause and effect, led to further disputes about (re)mediation and reproduction. The circulation of the cartoons by means of description rather than republication distinguished most of the US media from their European counterparts, some of whom reproduced them at a remove, illustrated by images of readers holding open the offending pages of newspapers that had published the drawings.[7] However, Algerian, Jordanian, and Yemeni print media reproduced the images as they had appeared in *Jyllands-Posten*, and the *Yemen Observer* (an English-language, biweekly publication) reproduced them literally under erasure, marked by a large X. The editors of these publications were prosecuted, fueling debate about differential access to the offending images in the Islamic world and further protests.[8]

Rhetorically at least, creation and consumption of the cartoons generated a public defined by its opposition to limits on the production, circulation, or consumption of images, in difference to those inhibited by the persistence of archaic taboos on image-making. In the text that accompanied the original cartoons, Flemming Rose, the editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, cast the obscure Danish daily as the savior of a secular liberalism indexed by the free circulation of religious caricature, a theme subsequently embraced and enlarged in apocalyptic commentaries on the creeping "Islamicization" of Europe:

> The modern, *secular* society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule. It is certainly not always attractive and nice to look at, and it does not mean that religious feelings should be made fun of at any price, but that is of minor importance in the present context.... We are on our way to a slippery slope where no-one can tell how the self-censorship will end. That is why *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* has invited members of the Danish editorial cartoonists union to draw Muhammad as they see him.[9]

Perceived Muslim taboos on figuration were thus yoked to a burgeoning discourse on the threat posed by the "Islamicization" of contemporary European life, pitting, according to one commentator, "the Western democratic assertion of a right to free speech and press freedom" against "the Islamic dictum against the representation of the Prophet Muhammad."[10] In effect the limits of both secularism and modernity were mapped onto the limits of representation so that a reticence about images and imaging functioned as a sign of radical alterity, facilitating contrasts between the "robust importance of taboo in Muslim life" and the rationalism that informed the lives of those who had transcended primitive proscriptions.[11]

Pitting a mystical fetishization of the image against a postmodern cynicism emblematized by the caricature as simulacrum, what *appeared* to be at stake in the controversy was not only the affective potential of caricature but also incommensurate notions of signification.[12] On the one side stood those who, thanks to the Protestant Reformation and the triumph of Enlightenment values, acknowledged the autonomy of the image, the contingent nature of the relationship between signifier and signified. On the other stood those who apparently persisted in eliding the distinction between the two, affording a quasimagical potency to the image in the process. Both propositions are highly suspect and merit much closer attention than they have received to date.[13] My aim here, however, is not to explore theories of signification, despite their evident relevance, but rather the way in which both images and discourses concerning them can be mobilized to deconstruct, define, and reconfigure boundaries of various sorts, constituting publics and counterpublics in the process.

The centrality of images to the cartoon controversy illustrates what Mahmood Mamdani has identified as the culturalization of contemporary debates about commensuration,[14] but the articulation of notions of alterity and assimilation around (apparently) incommensurate theories of the image has a much longer European history. Reified in nineteenth-century Central European scholarship as the *Bilderverbot* (prohibition on images), the "image question" has been historically central to etic representations of both Judaism and Islam instrumentalized in debates about European identity. One way of making sense of the cartoon controversy, therefore, is as a contemporary reinvestment of established discourses concerning the Bilderverbot, a performative assertion of particular epistemologies and

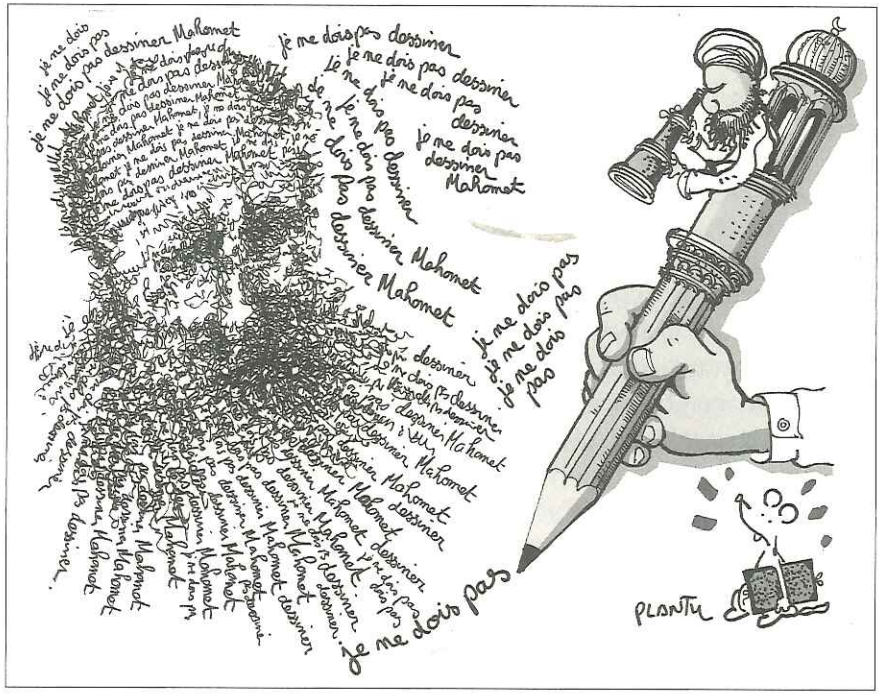

FIGURE 2.2

"Je ne dois pas dessiner Mahomet" by Plantu, Le Monde, *February 3, 2006. Reproduced with permission of the artist.*

ontologies of the visual in the face of a perceived challenge posed by the increasing mobility of both images and individuals.

PROPHETS AND PROFANATION

At the height of the cartoon controversy, an article posted on the website of the BBC explained that "Islamic tradition, or Hadith, the stories of the words and actions of Muhammad and his Companions, explicitly prohibits images of Allah, Muhammad and all the major prophets of the Christian and Jewish traditions."[15] The claim is erroneous, but illustrates a profound confusion as to the source of the anxieties raised by the publication of the Danish cartoons in Euro-American reportage on the episode, even when focused on the *act* rather than on the content or context of representation. The resulting ambiguity was reflected in several meta-commentaries that related the boundaries at stake to the ontological tensions between textual and visual depiction. In February 2006, for example, a Plantu cartoon published on the front page of *Le Monde* showed a bearded face in the process of realization, composed of repetitions of the phrase "Je ne dois

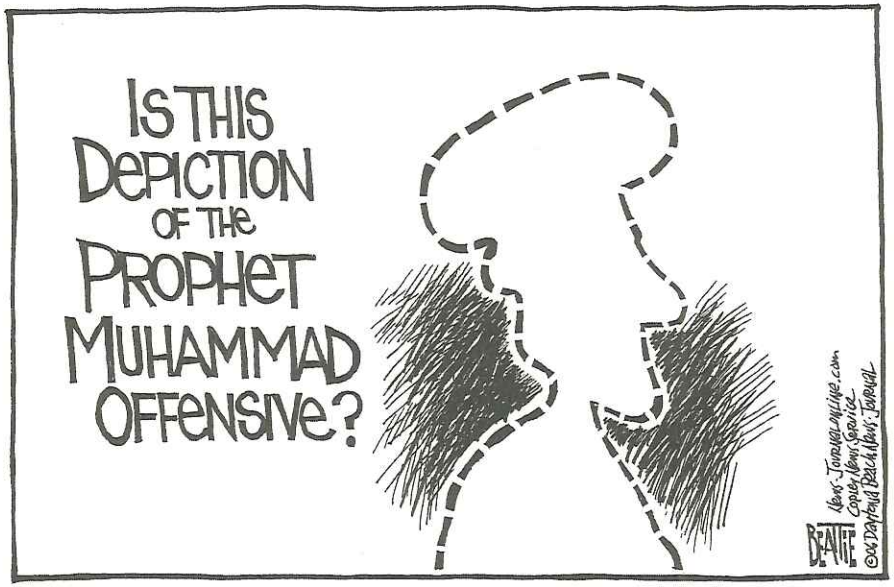

FIGURE 2.3

"Is this depiction of the Prophet Muhammad offensive?" by Bruce Beattie, Daytona Beach News-Journal, *February 4, 2006. Reproduced with permission of Bruce Beattie and Creators Syndicate, Inc.*

pas dessiner Mahomet" (I must not draw Muhammad), the cartoonist's work closely observed by a bearded, turbaned figure perched in a minaret emerging from the upper part of his pencil (figure 2.2).

Other cartoonists explored the boundaries as a commonsense question of cognition or degree, recalling a milestone of modern caricature, Philipon's famous 1832 quadripartite image in which King Louis-Philippe metamorphosed into a pear.[16] At the same time as Plantu's cartoon appeared, Bruce Beattie published a tentatively delineated profile of a turbaned, bearded figure with no internal features, accompanied by the rhetorical question "Is this depiction of the Prophet Muhammad offensive?" (figure 2.3)

Contrary to what many commentators assumed, the injunction against prophetic representation is found neither in the Qur'an (which has little to say on the question of representation) nor in the hadith (which have quite a lot to say on the question of images in general but little on the subject of imaging prophets in particular). The hadith evince hostility to the representation of all animate beings (the distinction between animate and non-animate being predicated on the potential to possess *rūḥ*, spirit or breath) in specific contexts.[17] Prophets, as animate beings, are clearly included in

the prohibition but are not explicitly mentioned. In addition, accounts of the Muslim conquest of Mecca in 630 CE and the subsequent Islamicization of its shrines indicate an apparent ambivalence toward the representation of prophets, detailing how the Prophet Muhammad ordered images of Ibrahim/Abraham painted in the interior of the Ka'ba to be effaced, but he covered depictions of Jesus and Mary with his hands, guaranteeing their protection.[18] The difference in attitude to the images of the two prophets related to their iconographic content: Ibrahim was depicted with divining arrows, the use of which is forbidden in Islam, whereas Jesus appeared in an innocuous manner, seated as a child on the lap of his mother.

Despite the proscriptions of the Sunna, iconic representations of the Prophet were on occasion produced in the Islamic world. The earliest extant anthropomorphic representation of the Prophet that has been identified with certainty occurs in an illustrated Persian epic produced in Anatolia around 1250 CE, although it is possible that earlier examples once existed.[19] Scattered textual references to earlier portraits of the Prophet Muhammad and his predecessors tend to occur in relation to the Christians of Byzantium.[20] This association of the Prophet's image with Byzantine (*rūmī*) artistry reflects its acknowledged excellence (and perhaps also the existence of Byzantine illustrated prophet books), displacing the act of representation onto Christian artists while asserting Christian witness to the truth of the prophetic mission.

From the fourteenth century onward, depictions of the Prophet produced in the Ilkhanid, Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman courts of Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey survive, many of them preserved in American and European museum collections. In these images the face of the Prophet is sometimes, but not always, veiled, obscured by light, or, more rarely, inscribed with a type of grid that evokes his variant names, denotations of specific qualities.[21] Complementing the anthropomorphic depictions that it accompanies, this calligraphic evocation of the Prophet and his qualities reminds us that the image need be neither material nor mimetic. The most celebrated representation of Muhammad, the *ḥilya*, was in fact a description of his person and character, transmitted verbally by those who knew him, and was committed to writing following his death.[22] The mental image of the Prophet conjured by the verbal representations textualized in the ḥilya is, itself, placed under erasure by their peculiar nature, narrative rather than descriptive, and characterized by dialectical negations (for example, "he was neither too short nor too tall" and "his hair was neither too short nor too curly") rather than direct propositions. The private, mental visualizations promoted by these narrations of the Prophet's person

stand in opposition to the public material images proscribed by the Sunna. The textualized traces of these verbal narrations of the Prophet's appearance were, however, sometimes afforded a quasi-iconic status. Starting in the seventeenth century, for example, Ottoman artists produced elaborate spatial arrangements of the calligraphed text composing the ḥilya. In some of these, the script formed iconic representations of objects associated with the Prophet, imbuing the representation with what Valérie Gonzalez (following Husserl) has described as "a double ontology," a Gestalt that oscillates between two modes of depiction, "linguistic/conceptual and visual/corporeal."[23]

In the twentieth century, controversies about the representation of the Prophet in the Islamic world often were related to the deployment and reception of new media, most obviously cinema. As early as 1926 the authorities of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, one of the most important centers of Sunni jurisprudence, issued a *fatwa* emphasizing that the representation of the Prophet was forbidden in Islam, in response to plans for a Turkish film on early Islam. In 1930 this prohibition was enshrined in Egyptian law and extended, in 1986, to all biblical figures and prophets. An ingenious solution to the prohibition was devised in Mustafa Akkad's 1976 film, *Al-Risāla* (The Message), which won the approval of the *'ulamā'* (religious authorities) of Al-Azhar.[24] In Akkad's film the Prophet is never depicted. Rather, as Ella Shohat notes, "the spectator is...placed within the subjective point of view of Muhammad himself," in effect producing the viewer as the Prophet's uncanny double, an eventuality that may have informed the negative reception of the film in some quarters.[25] In its attempt to develop a mode of visual representation that conforms to the spirit of the Sunna, this device is comparable to the depiction of the Prophet under erasure in early modern manuscripts. Similar negotiations can be found in contemporary images produced by and for observant Muslims, among them the cartoon strips produced as pedagogical tools by Islamic organizations in Egypt and Turkey in which the faces of prophets are usually obscured by a carefully orchestrated economy of gesture or by the light of prophecy emanating from their person (plate 1).[26]

The deployment of these devices reminds us that even known iconic representations of the Prophet are hardly lacking in contention. The point is underlined by the defacement of the Prophet's image in several early modern Islamic manuscripts.[27] Although the exact context in which such alterations occurred is unclear, if they were undertaken by pious Muslims concerned about the depiction of the Prophet, this would call into question the widespread assumption that both iconoclasts and iconophiles necessarily

elide the distinction between the image and its referent central to modern Euro-American semiotics.

These contentions about prophetic representation were minimized in the anodyne statements about historical precedents for the representation of the Prophet among Muslims that the international news media elicited from museum curators in the United States and Europe during the cartoon controversy. Those seeking historical precedents to illuminate the controversy might, however, have found more germane comparisons not in the artistic production of the Islamic world but in the rich (if largely unexplored) corpus of images of the Prophet found in illustrated English and French encyclopedias and histories of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Unlike Islamic precedents, the relevance of these images lies not in their mere existence but in their iconographic content and the context of their production, both of which highlight the historical centrality of verbal, textual, and visual images of the Prophet to anti-Muslim polemics.[28] Illustrating long-established notions that Islam was a Christian heresy and Muhammad a false prophet whose biography was marked by his deceptive, insincere, and licentious deeds, these medieval images amplify or enhance the vituperative themes of the texts that they accompany. Whereas earlier discussions of Islam were consistent in their depictions of Muslims as inveterate idol haters and iconophobes, in the aftermath of the First Crusade (1096–1099) European representations of Islamic beliefs and practices were marked by the emergence of a contradictory trope: that of Muslims as pathological idolaters offering demonically inspired worship to golden idols of the false prophet Muhammad (plate 2) or to a false Trinity within which he enjoyed preeminence.[29] These foils for the true images of Christianity made use of an established iconography of paganism or inverted the meaning of familiar Christian iconographies. Some explicitly contrasted the sparing use of images by Christians with the idolatrous, image-centered practices of the Muhammad-worshiping Muslims.[30]

In a society in which the illiterate far outnumbered the literate, and that sometimes made use of images in order to communicate the precepts of religion to the uneducated, the didactic value of these images can hardly be doubted. Although it is true that they appear mostly in luxury manuscripts, there are indications that large-scale propaganda images featuring the Prophet and designed to foster crusading zeal also circulated in the crusader states of the Levant and beyond.[31] Like many modern caricatures of Islam, the iconography of these medieval images and the texts that they accompany is marked by a limited number of recurrent themes: demonic inspiration, monstrous deception, and the death and desecration

of the Prophet's body through its representation in association with ritually polluting objects, most frequently dogs or pigs.[32] Among the latter is an image of Muhammad in a thirteenth-century copy of the *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris, which shows the Prophet standing atop a boar (plate 3), illustrating a tale that his death was occasioned by being smothered or devoured postmortem by pigs.[33]

It would be absurd to insist that the genealogy of the Danish cartoons and their progeny lies in the images found in medieval European manuscripts. Nevertheless, the limited iconographies of both attest to the persistence of long-established stereotypes regarding Islam and Muslims and to the dependence of the act of profanation through representation upon a basic knowledge of the tenets of Islam.[34] The interest of Gothic visual polemics lies less in their iconographic details, however, than in their attestation that *both* images and discourses concerning their ontological status and epistemological value in Islam can be and have been mobilized in service of "European" identities defined relationally. From the perspective of the *longue durée*, some of the most striking features of this mobilization have been the inconstancy and instability of Islam's "image problem," despite its historical centrality to etic representations of Muslims. The oscillation of the Prophet between iconoclast and idol underlines the fact that whether as image breakers, image haters, image worshipers, or idolaters, the relationship between Muslims and images in the European imagination has been something of a moveable feast, the ingredients and flavor of which have shifted in accord with the dynamics of contact between Europe and the Islamic world. The only constant is a persistent association between attitudes to images and cultural or religious alterity. There is in fact a demonstrable correlation between historical moments of European angst about either Muslims or images (or both) and the production, modification, or reinvestment of discourses on Islamic aniconism and iconoclasm.[35] Having made this point, in what follows I focus on more recent histories of Islam's "image problem" and on their relevance to the rhetoric of alterity and assimilation that pervaded the cartoon controversy.

PATHOLOGY AND PROTESTANTIZATION

On September 10, 2006, eve of the fifth anniversary of the September 11 atrocities, the *Observer*, a liberal British Sunday newspaper, carried a three-part article by the British novelist Martin Amis. Entitled "The Age of Horrorism," Amis's piece began with a vignette that evoked the proscriptions on images in Islam. In the bazaar outside a mosque in Peshawar, his protagonist finds a stall selling T-shirts bearing the image of Osama bin Laden.

Amis explained, "It is forbidden, in Sunni Islam, to depict the human form, lest it lead to idolatry; but here was Osama's lordly visage, on display and on sale right outside the mosque." The linkage of the proscriptions on images with an iconic sign of Islamist terror highlights the inconsistency and insincerity of belief and believers, providing the prelude to a lengthy, tendentious, and somewhat rambling discussion of the phenomenon of the suicide bomber and contemporary Islamist movements. Toward the end of the same piece, Amis used a simile that linked the sociocultural and psychic threat posed by Islamists to a Euro-American world order with the recent viral epidemics that patterns of global mobility have disseminated throughout the globe: "For quite a time I have felt that Islamism was trying to poison the world. Here was a sign that the poison might take—might mutate like bird flu."[36]

The image question with which Amis began his diatribe and the metaphor of contagion with which he concluded have long been associated in European discourses on Islam. In Islam, as in Judaism, idolatry and idols are sources of pollution and images the vector of potential contamination, associated in the hadith with the unclean dog. In most historical European writings on Islam, however, this trope is inverted so that the rejection of images (manifest as aniconism and/or iconoclasm—the two are often confused) is symptomatic of a contagion with both cultural and religious implications. For Amis, Islamism (an ideology or a movement whose relationship to the religion of Islam is never quite spelled out) has the potential to infect the healthy Euro-American body politic. For earlier observers it was antipathy to images that manifested the infectious potential of Islam most clearly. Hence, the Byzantine historian Theophanes (d. 818 CE) could refer to the emperor Leo III of Byzantium, who initiated the period of Byzantine Iconoclasm in 726, as Saracen-minded (*sarakenophron*), even as a modern scholar of Islam such as Patricia Crone, writing in 1989 of the (much disputed) impact of Islam on the Iconoclast Controversy in Byzantium, could note the ability of the former to make "epidemic what had hitherto been merely endemic in Christianity."[37]

For some modern commentators the question of the image is neither epiphenomenal nor symptomatic. Instead, it forms the core of the infection itself. Perhaps the clearest linkage between proscription and morbidity can be found in Alfred L. Kroeber's "Huxley Memorial Lecture," delivered to the Royal Anthropological Society in London in 1945. Not surprisingly, given the year of its delivery, the "Clash of Civilizations" looms large in Kroeber's text, with Islam springing "Minerva-like full-blown with the life of one man, something as German world-dominance would have sprung

with the will of Hitler if it had become realized." Reduction and restriction rather than expansion and enlargement are the cultural hallmarks of Islam, characterized by a catalog of negations that extends to the assumed primary goals of all highly developed civilizations, figuration and mimesis: "Representative art was banned. Purely decorative patterning—the name Arabesque is characteristic—provided only a low-level substitute."[38] As Marshall Hodgson noted in a perceptive article published in 1964, "in effect, Kroeber made the problem of Islâmic iconoclasm a key to the problem of civilization itself. If symbolism was dying in Islâm, the implication of his idea was that the death of symbolism—and doubtless the spread of Islâm itself—meant the death, or contraction, of culture as a whole; and that this might well happen at last universally."[39]

Kroeber's contrast between the rich dynamism of Hellenized civilizations (including those of Europe) and the arid negation characteristic of Islamic cultures reflects the notorious Orient oder Rom controversy that had preoccupied the preceding generation of Germanic scholarship. It was in a similar milieu that the term *Bilderverbot* was coined in the 1860s to reify a series of proscriptions and taboos believed to characterize Semitic races. Within hierarchical taxonomies of culture, Bilderverbot named both an inability to produce art and a related penchant for aniconism and/or iconoclasm. Whether viewed in positive terms or negative terms, this aniconic tendency served as a sign of alterity within racially inflected discourses concerning the assimilability of European Jewry.[40] Kroeber's text is one the first signs not merely of a postwar unease with the deployment of "Semitic" as a category of cultural analysis, but also of a subtle divorce between its two principal component elements, Arab and Jew.[41] If postwar recognition of Jewish suffering helped mitigate or occlude the historical indictment of the Jews vis-à-vis the Bilderverbot, postcolonial patterns of migration gave rise to a new and singular emphasis upon its persistence among the Arabs and, by (not entirely logical) extension, among Muslims more generally.

Like earlier debates about aniconism and alterity, the cartoon controversy engaged the Bilderverbot in relation to concerns about the nature of European identity, now inflected by teleological narratives of modernity. Analyses of the cartoon controversy (like those of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001) might mention historical episodes of aniconism or iconoclasm in Europe but were quick to emphasize that although militant Protestant aniconism and revolutionary iconoclasm were necessary stages on the road to European modernity, the advent of its full-blown incarnation rendered such practices obsolete.[42] Since the reordering of both the space and the time of religion is a precondition for the emergence of secular

modernity, those who persisted in championing taboos rendered obsolete by the autonomy and secularization of the image were depicted not only as inhabiting a different space from that of modernity but also as denizens of a different time.[43]

However, the allochronicity seen to characterize Islam in relation to the project of modernity is destabilized by the proliferation of information technologies that was central to the cartoon controversy. Refiguring the space and time of dissemination and reception, the advent of cybertechnology imbues moments of seeing and reading with a simultaneity impossible in the era of singular images and material copy. This simultaneity threatens the utility of "circulation" as an analytical category, even as it calls into question the notion of Islam as occupying a space "out there" and a time "back then";[44] as Appadurai notes, global cultural flows "[play] havoc with the hegemony of Euro-chronology."[45] The centrality of new media to reinvestments and rehistoricizations of the transhistorical concept of the *umma*, the metatopical space that defines the imagined community of Muslims, is a case in point, one inseparable from the emergence of a new religious public sphere both in the countries of Asia and the Middle East and among the Muslim diasporas of Europe and the United States.[46]

The centrality of these diaspora communities to the cartoon controversy reminds us that simultaneity of seeing and reading is permitted by the mobility not only of images or imaging technologies but also of human populations. Like the technologies that mediate changing concepts of the umma, the existence of new Muslim diasporas not only reconfigures perceptions of space but also is increasingly seen as threatening to the time of modernity itself. An interesting (and logically contradictory) corollary of this perceived threat is the abandonment of the very teleological narratives within which the persistence of the "image question" functions as an index of recalcitrant medievalism. This was manifest in some of the rhetoric surrounding the publication of the Danish cartoons, which invoked a fear that the allochronic aspect of Islam is sufficiently powerful to arrest or even reverse the forward march of modernity, the "pull to sameness" of what Talal Asad describes as modernity's "moral magnet," prescribing in its stead a "back to the future" model of development for an Islamicized Europe.[47] This rhetoric of reversion cast the controversy as an attempt to hold the fort or reinforce the status quo, ignoring the essentially dynamic quality of secular time, the constant redefinition of boundaries (here, those of religious identity) necessitated by modernity's drive to novelty.[48] While some observers of the cartoon controversy argued the need to extend existing blasphemy laws to include Islam, opponents assailed the same laws as a

medieval residue in European public life, remnant vestiges of a presecular past that might be reinvested by the anachronistic, antisecular values of Europe's burgeoning Muslim populations.[49] As with the earlier *Satanic Verses* affair, this charge of retrograde medievalism cut both ways: if European secularists could accuse Muslim critics of asserting a "medieval" mindset (illustrating what Bruce Holsinger identifies as a "discursive compulsion towards the medieval" that marks contemporary Euro-American representations of Islam), the latter could invoke the precedent of the Crusades and the derogatory representations of Islam that they engendered.[50]

If for many secularists the image problem indexed the perpetuation of a medieval mindset, for others the problem lay in a mindset that was insufficiently medieval (a critique of Muslims common to Islamists, if for diametrically opposed reasons). Hence, the insistence upon a distinction between an originary, more liberal Islam and the illiberal attitudes of modern imams with regard to figuration and representation, a historicism at odds with the ubiquitous essentialist characterizations of the relationship between Muslims and images. As mentioned above, this narrative exploited global museum holdings as an archive that could be deployed against protesting Muslims, providing them with object lessons for a more tolerant Islam in the form of Persianate paintings of the Prophet produced up to seven centuries ago.[51] The contemporary geopolitical context against which the global controversy unfolded and that was central to its meaning was largely ignored in favor of a retrospective and reductive emphasis on a past age when images were apparently less contentious.

In a 1990 analysis of the Rushdie affair, recently revised and reissued, the neoconservative commentator Daniel Pipes formulated an analogous variant of this "back to the future" aspiration for Islam, one that offered precedents from Christian rather than Islamic history. Expressing his hopes for the "Protestantization" of Europe's Muslim diasporas, Pipes attributed the controversy engendered by the *Satanic Verses* to those "Muslims opposed to Protestantization."[52] The metaphor of Protestantization was not chosen at random. Writing of Protestantization, proselytization, and modernity in Indonesia, Webb Keane notes that "the project of becoming self-consciously 'modern' can resemble that of religious conversion in certain respects. Both projects often propose to transform the human subject, disabused of earlier errors and abstracted from the constraints of former social entanglements."[53]

As Keane notes, this process is strongly implicated in the promotion of a semiotic ideology oriented toward the production of a subject that recognizes her or his distinction from the world of material objects. It is,

therefore, hardly fortuitous that the divorce of signifier from signified that is integral to the emergence of the autonomous image is frequently attributed to the Protestant Reformation and its formative iconoclasm.[54] If the taming of the image, a relegation to its proper place within universalizing epistemologies and ontologies of the visual, is seen as integral to the teleologies of modernity, the apparent recalcitrance of Muslims appears as an evolutionary failure with moral overtones. The temporally interstitial status that follows produces Muslims as ghostlike, "living between erasure of the past and the indelibility of the present" to haunt the triumph once vouchsafed the project of modernity itself.[55] The phenomenon raises significant questions about the discursive production of Euro-American modernity through the invocation of premodern or nonmodern others whose deficiencies are measured in relation to a specific historical experience represented as both sui generis and universally valid.[56]

Given the content and context of publication, there can be little doubt that the Danish cartoons were intended to both promote and provoke a public debate on Islam and the perceived threat that Muslim diasporas pose to the values of liberal secularism, perhaps even a reaction that would fuel that debate. To this end the Danish cartoons (and those that they inspired) suggest themselves as correlates to the hammers of iconoclasts, swinging at the fracture lines of taboo and its objects in order to assert universalizing discourses about imaging as a sign of the modern. The choice of genre is of course relevant, for in the public sphere of post-Enlightenment Europe, caricature has frequently served to test limits and push boundaries, notably those between religion and the secular. If political cartoons can be understood as agentive in their attempts to both reflect and shape public opinion, the subgenre of caricature is "a form of disfigurement and iconoclasm," an active remaking of perception through representation.[57]

The caricatures and the myriad of visual meta-commentaries that they engendered might also be seen as an *incitement to discourse* in a Foucauldian sense, a future-oriented attempt to reinscribe taboo within discourses of the rational.[58] Seen in this light, the *content* of the controversy generated by the circulation and reproduction of the images at its core appears less important than its promotion of universalized epistemologies and ontologies by which both acts and actors are bounded and against which they are measured. As a consequence, the publication of the caricatures necessarily promoted a discourse of assimilation and acculturation rather than one of commensuration and transculturation, a coercive induction into the profane ontologies of secular modernity.[59] The endeavor forms part of more widespread effort to produce the right kind of Muslim, one who inculcates

the norms of liberal secularism rather than contests their universal validity.[60] Like the current vogue for imposing democracy at gunpoint, the enterprise is fraught with paradoxes, not least the promotion of profanation as a mode of demystification that performs the universal virtue of tolerance.[61]

If, however, dissemination and viewing of the offending images and their progeny were represented as resistance to censorship within universalizing (and frequently inconsistent) discourses on the virtues of tolerance as a cultural value, the boycotts provoked by the offense (which included the renaming of Danish pastries as "Roses of the Prophet Muhammad") drew upon the economic aspects of consumption in order to stage a rejection of the hegemonic aspects of these discourses. In doing so, they highlighted the increasingly complex ways in which transnational capital can be exploited "to create a global ethics and politics outside the cognizance of states."[62]

CONTAGIOUS REPRESENTATIONS AND CONTINGENT CIRCULATIONS

The global mobility of images and discourses concerning them was a necessary condition for the eruption and sustenance of the cartoon controversy, but it was not sufficient. To illustrate the point, I would like to conclude by considering an interesting counterpart for the Danish cartoons, one that illustrates the generation of alternative publics though the circulation and consumption of quite different images of the Prophet Muhammad. Until very recently, the image in question circulated throughout Iran, reproduced in a number of variants, in poster form and on mundane objects such as car ornaments and key rings. It depicts a slightly androgynous youth, left shoulder bared, head cocked to one side, sporting a turban and wearing flowers above his right ear (figure 2.4).

A caption beneath informs us that this is an image of the adolescent Prophet by the Christian monk Bahira (painted from life or the memory of a living encounter), the original of which is kept in a Byzantine or Christian museum (*muzē-i rūm*). The identification of the photographic image conflates familiar tales of Byzantine portraits of the Prophet with another well-known account of how the monk Bahira recognized the Prophet when the latter traveled to Bosra in Syria as part of a Mekkan caravan before he was initiated into his prophecy around 610 CE.[63] The ground for the reception of the photograph was undoubtedly prepared by the ubiquitous images of the Shi'i martyrs Imam 'Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet and fourth caliph, and Imam Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet killed at Karbala in 680 CE. Their images are displayed publicly throughout contemporary Iran.[64] The dissemination and reproduction of these kinds of images in Iran, the

FIGURE 2.4
Popular image of Muhammad, contemporary Iran.

government of which was at the forefront of global protests against the Danish cartoons, suggests that, for some Muslims at least, the controversy concerned content and context rather than the *act* of representation.

Recently, it has been demonstrated that the Bahira portrait is in fact one of a number of homoerotic photographs of North African youths produced by the Orientalist photographers Rudolf Franz Lehnert (1878–1948) and Ernst Heinrich Landrock (1878–1966), active in North Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century.[65] This particular photograph dates from 1905 or 1906 and circulated (perhaps as late as the 1920s) in the form of a postcard captioned "Mohamed," even if it was otherwise identified in other publications (figure 2.5).[66]

FIGURE 2.5
An Arab and His Flower, National Geographic Magazine, *January 1914.*

The caption evidently informed the selection of this image from among the larger corpus of Lehnert and Landrock's oeuvre, so the generic title came to identify the image as a portrait of the originary holder of the same name. How the image traveled to Iran is not certain, although a recent resurgence of interest in Lehnert and Landrock's work in Europe is reflected in several French exhibitions of their work and at least one in Cairo. Since there is little record of the image in Iran before the 1990s, it has been suggested that the catalogs accompanying these exhibitions provided the prototype of the image.[67] Conversely, the subsequent identification of the source of the image may explain why, as of summer 2009, the

image was no longer as ubiquitous in the bazaars of Teheran as it had been just four or five years earlier.[68]

That the Lehnert and Landrock *Mohamed* image was seized upon as an image of the Prophet, rather than any other among the many images of Arab youths produced by Orientalist photographers, underlines the fact that even if images flow freely in a physical sense, circulated by digital and print media, their reception is neither entirely contingent nor informed by an entirely free flow of meaning. Similarly, the emergence of Kurt Westergaard's image of the turban grenade as iconic, even when others of his original cartoons (which made reference to the status of women or the religious status of suicide bombers) were potentially more controversial, recalls Dan Sperber's observation that "human cognitive and communicative abilities might work better on some representations rather than others," so some representations are "more contagious, more 'catching' than others."[69]

However, just as circulation and mobility cannot of themselves explain the translatability of certain images, the invocation of transcultural cognitive factors, even if relevant, offers little insight into why some images are more "contagious," more mobile, and more readily received (both intra- and interculturally) than others. In the case of both the Bahira image and the Westergaard caricature, catchiness was less a quality of the much vaunted power of images alone, or even of generic cognitive factors, than of captions and texts and the mediations of images that these affect. The histories of Iranian icon and Danish anti-icon thus illustrate both the way in which the polyvalence of the image enables transcultural reception and how captions and texts can set the parameters of this process, affecting both translation and transfiguration.[70] The phenomenon was parodied in a Daryl Cagle cartoon from February 2006 that drew upon hackneyed stereotypes of the fanatical Muslim to suggest that what was at stake in the cartoon controversy was not only the content or status of images but also the semiotic potential of naming, which located the abstract or generic within particular histories of images and imagining (figure 2.6).

The relationship between image and caption is, however, by no means determining—images have the capacity to exceed their captions. The Bahira image may ignore geographic and temporal borders in surprising ways, but neither the bare fact of mobility nor the caption is sufficient to explain its production as an image of the Prophet. Rather, its reception was informed by a constellation of its Orientalist caption, ancient hagiographies featuring prophetic portraits, and the canonicity of kinds of religious imagery specific to Iran. The transformation of this piece of kitsch into a

FIGURE 2.6

"Muhammad descending a staircase," *by Daryl Cagle, MSNBC, February 5, 2006. Reproduced with permission of the artist.*

valorized icon with a historical relationship to its purported subject thus adumbrates more complex relationships between image, text, and technology than those generally suggested by the binaries of tradition/modernity. Similarly, the global impact of the Danish cartoons cannot be attributed to their reproducibility or consequent mobility alone. Their impact is the product of a complex conjunction of contemporary European anti-immigrant politics, coercive attempts to remake Muslim religious subjectivities, resistance to these endeavors, anger and anxieties about globalization, neocolonialism, the violence of both state and nonstate actors, and, ultimately, the increasingly equivocal status of modernity itself.

CONCLUSION

While the mediascapes that Appadurai identifies as a characteristic of modern global information flows may provide the necessary conditions for circulation, neither the emergence of a modern public sphere nor the availability of new technologies of mediation and reproduction is sufficient to explain the ability of certain images to "go global."[71] The transregional reception of the images discussed here illustrates the limits of circulation as an analytical heuristic, suggesting that it may be more useful to think in terms of rhizomatic image flows governed by networks of contingency.[72] The basic fact of mobility is in any case less analytically significant than the semiotic forms and social architectures that facilitate and impede circulation, a theme addressed by Brian Larkin in chapter 9 of this volume. Culturally specific conceptions of the ontological status and

epistemological value of images are integral to these architectures. As with the spectacle occasioned by the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the provocation and global scale of the cartoon controversy would have been unthinkable without the mobilization of preexisting discourses on Islamic aniconism or iconoclasm, discourses that have proved equally instrumental to both Islamists and their secularist opponents.[73] The cartoon controversy thus reminds us that theories of the image and imaging (or at least the rhetoric surrounding them) are part of the conceptual infrastructures that enable or frustrate the circulation of mental and material images and the consequent generation of publics under conditions of commensuration (or their absence).

It is clear that images do not flow freely either within or across borders. The free flow of information and images (as of capital) is seen as central to liberal political formations, but in practice access to both is limited by economic interests and moral norms, enshrined in law as copyright, anti-blasphemy, anti-incitement, anti-libel, or anti-pornography legislation.[74] In addition, pragmatic concerns often mitigate implementation of the Euro-American legislative codes whose absolutist imperatives were said to lie at the heart of the decision (and ability) to publish and reproduce the offending images. Qualifications in the content and implementation of legislation governing freedom of expression are in fact enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, which notes that freedom of expression "carries with it duties and responsibilities" and hence that the exercise of the relevant freedoms may be curtailed by law and/or the necessity to protect national security, prevent crime and disorder, and so forth.[75] Whether or not appropriate, these codes are both prescriptive and proscriptive, so free speech (including the dissemination of certain types of images) is circumscribed in European liberal democracies.

The degree of circumscription was highlighted in July 2007, even while the cartoon controversy was raging, when a cartoon depicting Crown Prince Felipe of Spain and his wife, Letizia, having sex was published on the cover of the Spanish satirical weekly *El Jueves*. Judging that the cartoon constituted *lèse majesté*, Judge Juan del Olmo of the national court in Madrid ordered all copies impounded, prompting police raids on newsagents all across Spain. Following a template established a year earlier during the Danish cartoon controversy, the offending image was subsequently posted on the website of *El Jueves* and reproduced on the website of *El Mundo* in solidarity with its sister daily.[76] The convolutions and contradictions intrinsic to both Danish and Spanish cartoon controversies are illustrated by the fate of the *Wikipedia* entry on the Danish caricatures. The original

Wikipedia article was illustrated with depictions of the Prophet drawn from the premodern and early modern Persian manuscripts mentioned above. As of February 2008 the presence of these images led to more than 180,000 requests for their removal. Attempts to remove or delete the images from the site, characterized by its communitarian and self-regulating nature, led its moderators to both block edits and issue a statement against censorship.[77] The proscription and prevention of user edits on a site that built its reputation on being user edited and the representation of such an action as both statement and stance against censorship encapsulate and enact some of the paradoxes exposed by the cartoon controversy.

Perhaps more than any other kind of contention, disputes over the role of religion in modern public life make manifest "democratic deficits" that stem from contradictions in and between the rhetoric and realities of secular modernity.[78] Regardless of the zero-sum rhetoric that they employ, these contentions are rarely about unlimited freedom, but more often about who gets to set the limits and how: in short, about enfranchisement. At issue in the cartoon controversy was the question of Muslims not only as a reservoir of anachronistic and erroneous models of representation (and hence reality) but also as potential stakeholders in contemporary European debates about appropriate modalities of cultural expression. That these debates were emblematized by the image and its incommensurate ontologies is hardly surprising, given the historical utility of the "image question" to European debates about alterity and Islam.

In contrast to the particularist truths attributed to religious belief, the rhetoric of the *Jyllands-Posten* invited European Muslims to subscribe to a series of secular imperatives portrayed as both transcendental and universal.[79] Refusal to acknowledge the autonomy of the image on which this tradition is premised functioned as a sign of alterity vis-à-vis the epistemologies and ontologies of transcendental secularism. The paradoxical depiction of aniconic or iconoclastic Muslims as fetishizers of images thus found its counterpart in the powerful role ascribed to images and imaging by European secularists, confident of their ability to perform and promote the values of secular modernity. Appealing to the universal truth of these values, the paper's editors explained that their publication of the caricatures "was an act of inclusion, not exclusion," integrating Muslims into a modern, secular, satirical tradition directed equally against Christians and Jews. The claim to both inclusion and transcendence was, however, undermined when it came to light that the *Jyllands-Posten* had rejected cartoons satirizing Jesus three years earlier on the grounds that they might have provoked controversy.[80]

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Notes

1. The following summary has been synthesized from a variety of reports carried in the print editions and on the websites of American, British, Middle Eastern, and South Asian media between January 2006 and June 2008. For the way in which the affair played out in the Arabic online and print media, see Ana Belen Soage, "The Danish Caricatures Seen from the Arab World," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, no. 3 (2006): 363–369. For a useful survey of the controversy and its local and translocal contexts (although one at odds with the analyses cited in note 12 below), see Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

2. Rosalind Ryan and agencies, "Danish Newspapers Reprint Muhammad Cartoon," *Guardian*, February 13, 2008; Michael Kimmelman, "Outrage at Cartoons Still Tests the Danes," *New York Times*, March 20, 2008.

3. Osama bin Laden, "Falatathakilunā ummahātnā ān lam nanaṣara nabīynā 'alayhu al-salām" (May our mothers be bereaved of us if we fail to help our Prophet, peace be upon him), published by al-Sahab Media. I am grateful to Bernard Haykel for supplying me with a copy of the Arabic transcript. For an English translation, see http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefabinladen0308.pdf (accessed December 1, 2008).

4. Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections, Culture, People, Places* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 11.

5. W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 135–136, 140–141. It is, however, worth noting parenthetically Osama bin Laden's discussion of the Danish cartoons as an example of an unrestrained freedom of words (*aqwāl*), not drawings (*rusūm*).

6. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 114–117. As of January 2008 the Danish National Royal Library, the Danish National Museum, and the Museum of Danish Cartoon Art in Copenhagen were competing to acquire the originals of the cartoons as primary documents of Danish history: Clemens Bomsdorf, "Danish Museum to Buy Muhammad Cartoons Which Sparked Global Riots," *Art Newspaper*, January 31, 2008.

7. The technique was adopted by at least one Moroccan newspaper: Anver M. Emon, "On the Pope, Cartoons, and Apostates: Shari'a 2006," *Journal of Law and Religion* 22 (2006): 315.

8. Gwladys Fouché, "Cartoons Published in Jordan," *Guardian*, February 2, 2006; Michael Slackman and Hasan M. Fattah, "Furor over Cartoons Pits Muslim against Muslim," *New York Times*, February 22, 2006; Faris Sanabani, "Tolerance on Trial: Why We Reprinted the Danish Cartoons," March 15, 2006, http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2006/03/tolerance-on-trial-why-we-reprinted.php (accessed November 28, 2008).

9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_cartoon#_note-muhammeds_ansigt (accessed December 2, 2008). The Wikipedia entry on the controversy also reproduces the offending cartoons; a full description is provided by Art Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood: Outrageous Cartoons and the Art of Outrage," *Harpers*, June 2006, 48–50.

10. "Fifteen People Killed in Northern Nigeria Muslim Cartoon Protests," *USA Today*, February 18, 2006.

11. Daniel Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1990), 104, 108.

12. Webb Keane, "Freedom and Blasphemy: On Indonesian Press Bans and Danish Cartoons," *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009): 56–61; Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?" *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 841–850; Naveeda Khan, "Images That Come Unbidden: Some Thoughts on the Danish Cartoon Controversy," *Borderlands e-journal* 9, no. 3 (2010): 1–14.

13. Useful starting points are David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998).

14. Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leaves Press, Doubleday, 2004), 17–62.

15. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4674864.stm (accessed December 5, 2008). For an analogous error in an otherwise insightful essay, see Brian Goldstone, "Violence and the Profane: Islamism, Liberal Democracy, and the Limits of Secular Discipline," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2007): 216.

16. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 344, fig. 282.

17. Daan van Reenen, "The *Bilderverbot*, a New Survey," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 27–77.

18. G. R. D. King, "The Paintings of the Pre-Islamic Ka'ba," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 219–230.

19. For the controversial suggestion that a standing figure depicted on the early Islamic coinage of Syria in the 690s, usually identified as a caliph, is in fact an image of the Prophet Muhammad, see Robert Hoyland, "Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad: Problems and Solutions," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (2007): 593–596.

20. Oya Pancaroğlu, "Signs in the Horizon: Concepts of Image and Boundary in a Medieval Persian Cosmography," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2001): 34, 37; Oleg

Grabar, "Les portraits du prophète Mahomet à Byzance et ailleurs," *Comptes rendus de l'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 146, no. 4 (2002): 1431–1445; Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, "The Story of Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad," *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 19–33.

21. Priscilla P. Soucek, "The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated Versions," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1988), 193–218; Christiane Jacqueline Gruber, "The Prophet Muhammad's Ascension (Mi'rāj) in Islamic Painting and Literature: Evidence from Cairo Collections," *Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt* 185 (Summer 2004): 24–31; Christiane Jacqueline Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting," *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 1–34. The aniconic evocation of the Prophet by means of commemorative devices is attested at a much earlier date: Finbarr Barry Flood, "Light in Stone: The Commemoration of the Prophet in Umayyad Architecture," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, Part II, *Jerusalem and Early Islam*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, ed. Jeremy Johns (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 311–359.

22. Nabil F. Safwat, "The Ḥilyah: The Verbal Image of the Prophet," in *The Art of the Pen: Calligraphy of the 14th to 20th Centuries*, ed. Nabil F. Safwat and Mohammed Zakariya (London: Nour Foundation, in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1996), 46–50; Grabar and Natif, "The Story of Portraits," 33–34.

23. Valérie Gonzalez, "The Double Ontology of Islamic Calligraphy: A Word-Image on a Folio from the Museum of Raqqada (Tunisia)," *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift* (Istanbul: Anabasım A.Ş., 2002), 313–340.

24. Despite this, concerns that the Prophet was represented in the film were sufficient to inspire threes sieges by a Hanafi African-American Muslim group in Washington, DC, in March 1977 in an attempt to derail the release of the film in the United States: William Greider and Richard Harwood, "Hanafi Muslim Bands Seize Hostages at 3 Sites," *Washington Post*, March 10, 1977.

25. Ella Shohat, "Sacred Word, Profane Image: Theologies of Adaptation," in *A Companion to Literature and Film*, ed. Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 33–34; Freek L. Bakker, "The Image of Muhammad in *The Message*, the First and Only Feature Film about the Prophet of Islam," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Encounter* 17, no. 1 (2006): 77–92.

26. Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Arab Comic Strips, Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 83 ff.; Jamal J. Elias, "Visual Images and Religious Pedagogy in Islam: *Du'ā* Girl and the Comic Book" (lecture, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, October 2005). The distinction between caricatures and cartoons is worth emphasizing here: François

Boespflug, *Caricaturer Dieu: Pouvoirs et dangers de l'image* (Paris: Bayard, 2006), 24–38. A recent judgment by Shaikh Sa'ud al-Funaysan, former dean of Islamic law at Al-Imam University in Riyadh, explains that cartoons are permissible but "should have appropriate content and be used in an appropriate manner": Sa'ud al-Funaysan, "Drawing Pictures and Producing Animated Cartoons," http://www.islamtoday.com/showme2.cfm?cat_id=2&sub_cat_id=811 (accessed November 28, 2008).

27. Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr)," pl. 1.

28. Suzanne C. Akbari, "Imagining Islam: The Role of Images in Medieval Depictions of Muslims," *Scripta Mediterranea* 19–20 (1998–1999): 9–27. Largely ignored in the Euro-American media, the broad parallels between the medieval images and modern caricatures were noted in an article by Tarek Kahlaoui published in Arabic in *al-Quds al-Arabi* and *Middle East Online* in February 2006, accompanied by some of the least offensive of the relevant paintings.

29. Jennifer Bray, "The Mohammetan and Idolatry," *Studies in Church History* 21 (1984): 89–98; Jean Flori, "La caricature de l'Islam dans l'Occident medieval: Origine et signification de quelques stereotypes concernant l'Islam," *Aevum* 66, no. 2 (1992): 245–256; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 1993); John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 105–134.

30. Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 129–164, esp. 136–137; Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 165–192, esp. 167–168.

31. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 308.

32. John Tolan, "Un cadavre mutilé: Le déchirement polémique de Mahomet," *Le Moyen Âge* 105 (1998): 62; Tolan, *Saracens*, 135–170. See also Walter B. Cahn, "The 'Portrait' of Muhammad in the Toledan Collection," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 51–60. The dossier on the *Jyllands-Posten* drawings presented to the Organization of the Islamic Conference in December 2005 reportedly contained three additional caricatures, including those showing the Prophet with the head of a pig and being violated by a dog.

33. Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*, 190–192, figs. 97–99.

34. The utility of profanation within polarizing discourses was demonstrated in 2007, when Tatiana Susskind, a twenty-five-year-old Israeli, produced a poster depicting the Prophet (identified by an Arabic caption) as a pig stomping on the Qur'an with one foot while writing the sacred text with the other. The poster was reproduced and

pasted on at least twenty sites in Hebron. In the ensuing violence, at least twenty-four Palestinian demonstrators were shot, and two Israeli soldiers were injured by a pipe bomb: Walter Rodgers, "Pig Insult Sparks West Bank Violence," http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9707/01/israel.palestinians/ (accessed December 2, 2008). In April 2008 the graves of World War One Muslim servicemen at Arras in northern France were desecrated, and a pig's head was hung on a tombstone: "French Muslim War Graves Defaced," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7333344.stm (accessed December 2, 2008).

35. See, for example, Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1998), appendix. A full discussion of the historiography of the "image problem" in relation to the representation of Islam can be found in chapter 1 of Finbarr Barry Flood, *Islam and Image: Polemics, Theology and Modernity* (London: Reaktion, forthcoming).

36. Martin Amis, "The Age of Horrorism," parts 1 and 3, *Observer*, September 10, 2006.

37. *Theophanis Chronographia* (Hildesheim, Germany: G. Olms, 1963), 402, 404–406, 414; Patricia Crone, "Islam, Judeo-Christianity, and Byzantine Iconoclasm," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 59. On the general tendency to view iconoclastic acts as potentially contagious: Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion, 2007), 193.

38. Alfred L. Kroeber, "Ancient *Oikoumenê* as an Historic Culture Aggregate," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 75 (1945): 10–11.

39. Marshall Hodgson, "Islam and Image," *History of Religion* 2 (1964): 226.

40. Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

41. This issue is discussed in detail in Flood, *Islam and Image*, but see Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 35–36; Gil Anidjar, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007).

42. See, for example, Paul Richard, "In Art Museums, Portraits Illuminate a Religious Taboo," *Washington Post*, February 14, 2006.

43. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 26; Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 97–99, 187–188, 193–194; Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

44. Although the production and publication of the cartoons was presented as an assertion of regional cultural norms in the face of the threat posed by transregional mobility, the controversy was marked by a paradox regarding the differing claims of

the local and global: the Arabic text carried by *Jyllands-Posten* after the controversy had initially broken was, for example, evidently intended for global consumption. The extent of these global information flows was underlined by protests outside the US embassy in Jakarta not only against the Danish cartoons but also against a bas-relief depicting the Prophet in the company of historical lawgivers or lawmakers in the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC: Declan Walsh, "Church Ablaze as Cartoon Protests Continue across Globe," *Guardian*, February 20, 2006, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/20/pakistan.muhammadcartoons (accessed July 15, 2009). In 1997 the Council on American-Islamic Relations had requested that it be removed, objecting to both the fact that the Prophet had been depicted and the nature of the depiction—his portrayal with a sword. In preceding years the bas-relief had been largely ignored, until the cartoon controversy, when a number of US-based dailies ran stories noting its existence; it was presumably these or similar sources that drew the attention of Indonesian protestors. A recent Saudi fatwa on the permissibility of this depiction of the Prophet provides an interesting example of how understandings of the proscriptions on image-making contained in the hadith are contextually inflected in Islamic jurisprudence: Taha Jaber al-Alwani, "*Fatwa* Concerning the United States Supreme Courtroom Frieze," *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, no. 1/2 (2000–2001): 1–28.

45. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (1990): 3.

46. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, "Redefining Muslim Publics," in *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 14.

47. Talal Asad, "Modern Power and the Reconfiguration of Religious Traditions," *Stanford Electronic Humanities Review* 5, no.1 (1996), special issue, *Contested Polities: Religious Disciplines and Structures of Modernity*; Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 162. For a novel take on an analogous theme, see Faisal Devji, "Back to the Future: The Cartoons, Liberalism, and Global Islam," http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-terrorism/liberalism_3451.jsp (accessed May 15, 2009).

48. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 201.

49. Thus, for example, during the trial of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in February 2007 for inciting racial hatred, its editor, Philippe Val, denounced the "medieval process" to which the weekly was subject. Flemming Rose, editor of the *Jyllands-Posten*, cast the trial of *Charlie Hebdo* not only as a clash of civilizations but also as a contest of temporalities, asserting, "I just cannot imagine the consequences not only for France but for Denmark and Europe if they lose the case.... It would turn back the

clock decades, ages": "French Magazine Sued over Cartoons," February 7, 2007, http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2007/02/200852514315841974 9.html (accessed November 29, 2008).

50. Bruce Holsinger, *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism, and the War on Terror* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007), 41. In an interview with Michael Kimmelman published in the *New York Times* on the same day as the Bin Laden tape was released, the editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, Flemming Rose, archly pointed out the presence of Danes among the Crusaders, posing the rhetorical question "Is this another Crusade now, or what is it?": Michael Kimmelman, "Outrage at Cartoons Still Tests Danes," *New York Times*, March 20, 2008.

51. Finbarr Barry Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art," in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (New York: Routledge, 2007), 31–53; Jessica Winegar, "The Humanity Game: Art, Islam, and the War on Terror," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2008): 651–681.

52. Pipes, *Rushdie Affair*, 222. Note that the rhetoric of Protestantization has been adopted by some Islamic reformists, who explicitly invoke the precedent of the Reformation: Saba Mahmood, "Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation," *Public Culture* 18, no. 2 (2006): 324.

53. Webb Keane, "Sincerity, 'Modernity,' and the Protestants," *Cultural Anthropology* 17, no. 1 (2002): 67.

54. Among many others, see Werner Hofmann, "Die Geburt der Moderne aus dem Geist der Religion," in *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, ed. Werner Hofmann (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1993), 23–71; Keane, "Freedom and Blasphemy," 59–61.

55. S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islam* (New York: Zed Books, 2003), 1.

56. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Otherwise Modern: Caribbean Lessons from the Savage Slot," in *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies*, ed. Bruce M. Knauft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 220–237; Andreas Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," *New German Critique* 100 34, no. 1 (2007): 192.

57. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 132; Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood," 45. The genre has been deployed with increasing frequency against both Islam and Muslims in the postwar period: Christina Michelmore, "Old Pictures in New Frames: Images of Islam and Muslims in Post–World War II American Political Cartoons," *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* 23, no. 4 (2000): 37–50; Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008).

58. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 17–35. I am indebted here to Joseph Massad, "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (2003): 361–385.

59. On the profane time of modernity, see Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 97–99, 187–188, 193–194.

60. See Mahmood, "Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire"; Flood, "Prophet to Postmodernism?"

61. William T. Cavanaugh, "Sins of Omission: What 'Religion and Violence' Arguments Ignore," *Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture* 6, no. 1 (2004): 43; Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 149–175.

62. Devji, "Back to the Future"; "Pastry Targeted as the Cartoon Jihad Continues," February 17, 2006, http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,401509,00.html (accessed November 30, 2008).

63. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79–81; Grabar, "Portraits du prophète," 1442–1444; Grabar and Natif, "Story of Portraits," 35, fig. 4.

64. The iconographic genealogy of these images has yet to be determined, but for an interesting discussion, see Alireza Doostdar, "Religious Commodities, Magical Circulations, and the (Im)moral Economy of Iran," http://www.doostdar.com/articles/magical_circulations.pdf (accessed November 15, 2008). I am grateful to Christiane Gruber for drawing my attention to this article.

65. Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont, "Une étrange rencontre: La photographie orientaliste de Lehnert et Landrock et l'image iranienne du prophète Mahomet," *Études photographiques* 17 (2005): 5–15; and "The Story of a Picture: Shiite Depictions of Muhammad," *ISIM Review* 17 (Spring 2006): 18–19.

66. Frank Edward Johnson, "Here and There in North Africa," *National Geographic Magazine* 25 (January–June 1914): 35; Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont, "Une étrange rencontre," 7–9.

67. Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont, "Une étrange rencontre," 10.

68. I am grateful to Talinn Grigor for this information.

69. Dan Sperber, "Anthropology and Psychology: Towards an Epidemiology of Representations," *Man*, n.s., 20, no. 1 (1985): 74, 79; Dan Sperber, "Interpreting and Explaining Cultural Representations," in *Beyond Boundaries: Understanding, Translation, and Anthropological Discourse*, ed. Gísli Pálsson (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1994), 179.

70. Mary Price, *The Photograph: A Strange Confined Space* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 55–58; Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition," *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 387.

71. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 35–40. The point is made by Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 106; Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, "Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 192; Gaonkar and Povinelli, "Technologies of Public Forms," 387, 392.

72. Christopher Pinney, "Four Types of Visual Culture," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley et al. (London: Sage, 2006), 141, drawing upon Deleuze, Guattari, and Latour.

73. Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm and the Museum," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (2002): 641–659.

74. The point has been made frequently: Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 244–245; Emon, "On the Pope, Cartoons, and Apostates," 310–311.

75. http://www.hri.org/docs/ECHR50.html#C.Art10 (accessed December 5, 2008). These proscriptions extend to new media. It has recently been revealed, for example, that the Internet Watch Foundation, a British watchdog that enjoys government support, prevents British Internet users from accessing approximately ten thousand websites each year, keeping the names and details of these sites secret: Charles Arthur, "Censor Lifts UK Wikipedia Ban," *Guardian*, December 9, 2008.

76. Giles Tremlett, "Police Raid over Sex Cartoons of Spanish Prince," *Guardian*, July 21, 2007.

77. Caroline Davies, "Wikipedia Defies 180,000 Demands to Remove Images of the Prophet," *Observer*, February 17, 2008.

78. Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, 149–175; Emon, "Pope, Cartoons, and Apostates," 316.

79. Goldstone, "Violence and the Profane," 208, 210, 219; Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Radical Worlds: The Anthropology of Incommensurability and Inconceivability," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 327. See, however, Edward Said's comments on the reconstitution and reconfiguration of religious forms in the secular frameworks of Enlightenment thought: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 121–122.

80. Gwladys Fouché, "Danish Paper Rejected Jesus Cartoons," *Guardian*, February 6, 2006; Fleming Rose, "Why I Published the Muhammad Cartoons," *New York Times*, May 31, 2006.

3

The Enclave Gaze

Images and Imaginaries of Neoliberal Lifestyle in New Delhi

Christiane Brosius

> Every time you go out shopping, remember you are a part of something big that is happening in India. Retail is the mantra of the moment. It's what [is] driving investment. It's generating employment. Most significantly, it is making people like you think and feel a whole lot better about the way you can spend your money and improve your quality of life.... Drive down a highway leading out of any of India's metros. Now look around you. What do you see? A landscape dotted with impressive high rises cased in aesthetically imposing steel and glass. Too much of steel and concrete maybe, but this changed landscape has a story to tell. It is the story of India's growth as a market. Inside those buildings plans are being drawn to bring a million new products and services to tens of millions of middle class Indians who have begun to expect more than the ordinary. Now shut your eyes for a moment. And think back fifteen years.... What did this landscape look like then? Nice and empty for miles on end. What story did those barren arid stretches tell you? That we were a poor country that looked and felt poor. Maybe we are still a poor country. But surely we are less poor today than we were fifteen years back. Our metropolitan cities and their suburbs, however, do not look the type of a third world country.... For better or for worse, Indians (especially middle class urban Indians) have become more nattily dressed, have learnt to exercise specific choices over the brands, and developed enhanced skills in organising their lifestyles.
>
> —*Debra Mookerjee, "It's More Than 'Just Hopping'"*[1]

This quote from *Celebrating Vivaha*, a leading Indian bridal magazine, paints a rather crude picture of India "before" and "after" economic liberalization, before the advent of retail marketing, large real estate companies, and a range of expanding service sectors on the once "barren" landscape of India's urban rims and centers. Most obvious seems the change in urban landscape and consumer worlds. The quote suggests that

or at different angles; you must go by the eye, meaning thereby no doubt the eye of the trained artist."[36]

Elsewhere in the judgment, the photographs' potential indexical claim is undermined by an emphasis on the conventionalized context of their appearance. Justice Biswas pours scorn on one witness's introduction of photographs: "[It] seems to me to have been invented by someone who had seen too many sentimental pictures from Hollywood."[37]

Here, an earlier form of photographic portraiture—what Allan Sekula has called "sentimental realism"—collapsed under the weight of its own sentimentality: "not a portrait," as Benjamin wrote. This unwillingness to render the face as a map is undoubtedly partly a product of the relocation of juridical identity in *dactylography*, that is, fingerprinting, which appropriately enough was pioneered by William J. Herschel (in Bengal), the son of John Herschel, the inventor of the cyanotype process.[38] But this relocation of authority also reflects the seepage of a facial physiognomy onto a social physiognomy, where photography's venatic eye searches for entrails.

Photography as divination appears in a highly marked form in 1956 in the report of the Netaji Inquiry Committee. Netaji is the popular appellation for Subhas Chandra Bose, a former Indian National Congress president who, following conflict with Gandhi, decided that alliance with the Axis powers was the most efficient way to rid India of her colonizers. Japan supported the formation of the Indian National Army (INA), with whom Bose fought against the British in Burma. He died in contested circumstances in a plane crash in Taiwan.

Bose might be described as the Indian Elvis: many Indians are unwilling to believe that he died as claimed, or died at all, and a number of committees of inquiry have attempted to put matters to rest.[39] The 1956 inquiry headed by Shah Nawaz Khan, a former major in the INA, was charged with investigating the "circumstances concerning the departure of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose from Bangkok about the 16th August 1945, his alleged death as a result of an aircraft accident, and subsequent developments connected therewith."[40] On that day—the day after the Japanese surrender—two planes, organized by the chief of the Japanese Liaison Mission, were due to take Bose and a small party of key personnel to Saigon for onward transport to a place of safety. In Saigon Bose was offered only two seats on a plane (a twin-engine heavy bomber from the Third Air Force stationed at Singapore), although Bose insisted that the whole party travel to the aerodrome in an attempt to get aboard. The plane left with Bose and Captain Habibur Rehman, leaving the rest of the party behind in Saigon. The plane refuelled at Tourane, where all surplus baggage and twelve

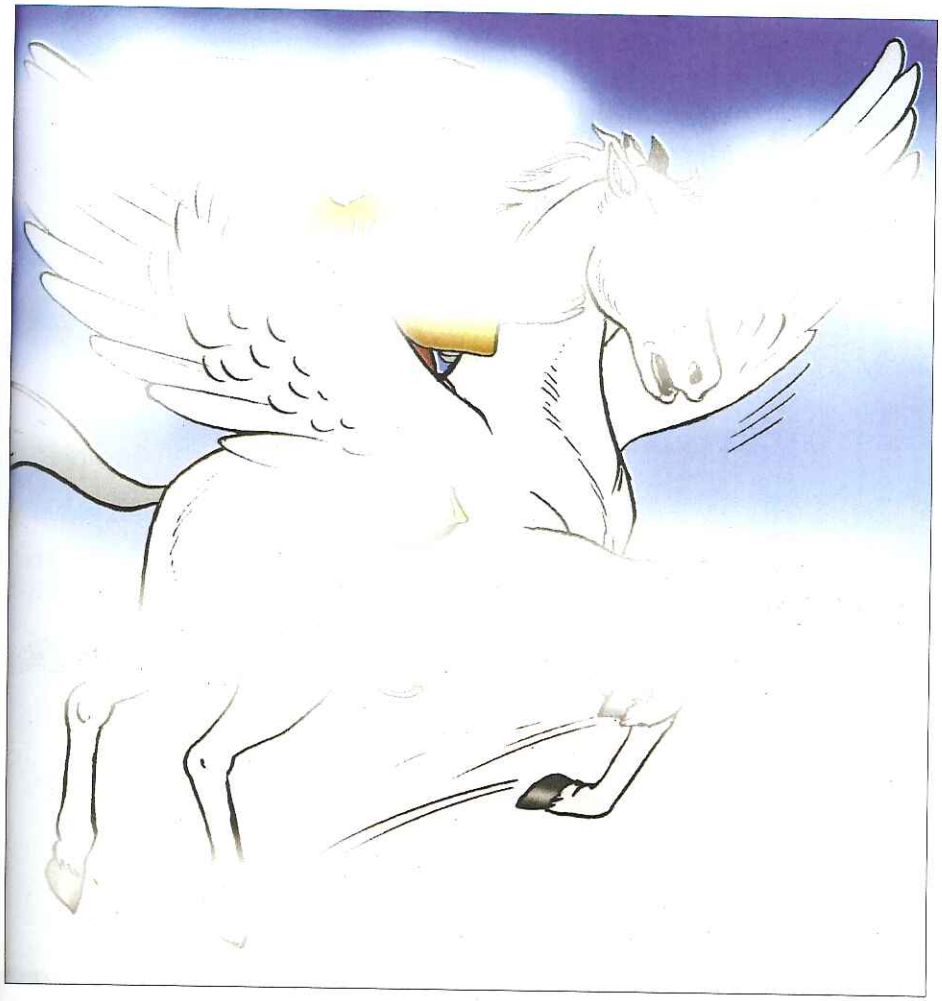

PLATE 1

The Prophet Muhammad on his steed Buraq, from Mürşide Uysal, Peygamberimizin Hayatı, *n.d. Reproduced with permission of Uysal Yayinevi.*

Plate 2

Inspired by the devil, Muslims worship a golden idol of Muhammad, from Vincent de Beauvais, Miroir historiale *(*Speculum historiale, *French translation by Jean de Vignay), Paris, fourteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscrit Français 52, folio 97, detail. Reproduced with permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.*

Plate 4

"Creating a new India," billboard at South Delhi's