Hinduphobia and Hinduphilia in U.S. Culture

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In 1911, Hinduism went on trial in the United States. At issue was the last will and testament of Mrs. Sara Bull. The widow of Ole Bull (a celebrated violinist from Norway), Mrs. Bull was one of the principals at Green Acre, a spiritual retreat center in Eliot, Maine, devoted to interreligious dialogue. She was also a convert to Hinduism.

At her "Studio House" at 168 Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Mrs. Bull presided over a fashionable salon. There East Coast intellectuals met Indian teachers such as Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Vedanta Society and the most popular speaker at the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. Among the intellectuals who conversed with Mrs. Bull's swamis at the Studio House was a heady crowd of Harvard professors, including the Sanskrit scholar Charles Lanman, the philosopher Josiah Royce, and the psychologist William James.

After Mrs. Bull died in 1911, it was discovered that she had left almost all of her half-million-dollar estate to Vedanta Society members. Her daughter, Olea Bull Vaughan, challenged the will on the theory that her mother was mentally incompetent when she signed it. The trial that ensued in the small town of Alfred, Maine—"one of the strangest cases in the history of will contests in this country," according to the *New York Times*—was covered closely by U.S. newspapers and produced a "stream of scandal" in Norway. The key issue before the judge was Mrs. Bull's state of mind. Yet Hinduism was on trial too, since the main argument of Sherman Whipple, the daughter's attorney, was that Hindus had driven Mrs. Bull insane.[1]

Over the course of the five-week affair, Whipple called a variety of colorful witnesses, including a cook, a maid, and a "psychic barber," in an effort to build a case for Mrs. Bull's religiously induced insanity. One witness said her "excitable" employer "frequently lost control of herself, upsetting furniture and screeching loudly for help from imaginary dangers." Others said Mrs. Bull communed regularly with spirits of the dead, dabbled in astrology, and talked to pumpkins as if they were people. Still others testified to her odd eating habits and unorthodox nutritional theories, for example, her belief that a truly spiritual person could subsist on grain alone (or, in another version, a bit of milk and six almonds a day). Reportedly, Mrs. Bull employed a "professional masseur and magnetic healer" who "used to put [her] to sleep by passing his hands in wavy motion" over her breasts and face. She also befriended a woman who claimed to be able to heal the sick by lying in bed with them (a rite she allegedly performed with some regularity with Mrs. Bull herself). As Mrs. Bull grew older, witnesses testified, she came to believe that her enemies exerted "malignant psychic powers" over her, and "could propel those killing thoughts over the telephone." In an effort to chase away that "hypnotic power," she had her furniture rubbed regularly with a special mixture of ammonia and olive oil. On one occasion, she locked herself in a room when her daughter came to visit, fearing that Olea Vaughan was unwittingly carrying this malicious magnetism.[2]

Together these arguments were quite damning to Mrs. Bull's case. But they were peripheral to the main argument of the daughter's lawyers, who asserted that Hindus had driven Mrs. Bull mad—or, as her petition put it, that the testator's brain had been "inoculated with the bacteria of faith taught by Indian swamis." Mrs. Bull had come to Hinduism seeking spiritual wisdom, Sherman Whipple argued. What she encountered was a "psychic conspiracy" of Hindu swamis who put her under a spell, coerced her into taking a variety of Indian drugs, and stripped her of her morals, her mind, and her money. According to testimony, Mrs. Bull chanted in Sanskrit, burned incense, and meditated. She traveled to India to pursue her spiritual goals, abandoning a dying granddaughter to be with her beloved swamis instead. In the "Raja Yoga" room at her Brattle Street home, she conducted "mystic meditations" before an altar adorned with images of Vivekananda and his guru Ramakrishna. Thanks to her talent for esoteric breathing exercises—and spirit communications with Swami Vivekananda after his

death—Mrs. Bull reportedly became a yogi herself, hailed by friends as "Santi Sara" (Saint Sara).[3]

Apparently Mrs. Bull wanted to express her debts to Hinduism in death as in life, because she directed in her will that her corpse be cremated and her ashes spread by a courier on the grave of her husband in Bergen, Norway. In a letter written shortly after the will became public, Mrs. Bull's daughter complained bitterly about this postmortem plan. "Norway," she protested, ". . . is a Christian, not a heathen, country. A burial there must be in consecrated soil, and the scattering of human ashes by an expressman would hardly be recognized as a possible conception for a sane mind to tolerate."[4]

All this was front-page news from Portland to New York, but the most salacious testimony of the trial concerned neither brainwashing nor drug-taking but love and sex. Here the star witness was Mr. Nicola Ruberto, "a tall, handsome young Italian" variously described as a barber, a masseuse, a chauffeur, a billiard room operator, and a wine merchant. According to Ruberto, Swami Vivekananda taught an eight-stage practice of "Raja Yoga" that culminated in "an advanced stage of perfection and purity known as 'Bhakati.'" Those who attained that state, which Ruberto called "the acme of love," became gods themselves. Mrs. Bull, Ruberto continued, was a practitioner of *bhakti yoga,* which he described as "the attainment of super-consciousness through love." Some of what Ruberto had to say about "the delights of the love stage of yoga" so offended late-Victorian sensibilities that the judge heard it in closed session. And the transcript of what he said regarding Hindu "love rites" was sealed by the judge.[5]

One acquaintance testified that she believed Mrs. Bull's health declined after she was "attacked by malign influence which was sapping [her] life away." The daughter's attorney gave that "malign influence" a name—Hinduism—and placed the guilt for Mrs. Bull's mental and physical ruin at the feet of the Vedanta Society. "The mystic ritual of the 'Raja Yoga' cult," Whipple argued, "brought not only shattered health and loss of reason, but death to members of the band of Yogis and students who executed the psychic gymnastics in the home of Mrs. Bull." Whipple claimed that Swami Vivekananda had "died from excessive participation in the mysteries of the chamber of meditation," and he repeatedly invoked the case of Sarah Farmer, another American convert to Vedanta, who reportedly was "driven insane by the psychic orgies" and "had to be sent to an asylum because of psychic

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overindulgence." As for Mrs. Bull, she was coerced into taking "Hindu drugs" and other "oriental concoctions," which along with the "thought-viands, breathing-drills, wish-waves, malignant vibrations, incense incantations and orgies" of the Vedantist cult hastened her mental and physical demise.[6]

The motive behind the "incantations and orgies" of this psychic conspiracy was supposedly financial gain. Phony spirit messages—funneled through a London Vedantist called "Yum"—instructed Mrs. Bull to give money to Hindu swamis, and she complied by giving away tens of thousands of dollars in her lifetime. She was, Whipple argued, a "victim of spooks."[7] Her daughter was a victim too, robbed of her rightful inheritance and of her mother's affection.

Such anti-Hindu invective was spread not only by the daughter's counsel but also by newspaper reporters. Although the trial evidence amply demonstrates Mrs. Bull's debts to Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, and Christian Science, journalists were fixated by her Hindu interests. In covering the case, the *New York Times* called Hinduism a "strange cult." Boston papers deemed Hindu rites "queer" and dismissed the icons in Mrs. Bull's home shrine as "pictures of fat swamis." The *Boston Herald* hit Hinduism particularly hard, sneering at the "psychic chaos of the Raja Yoga cult," the "psychic gymnastics of the Yogis," and the "weird doctrines of their creed." "Wealth is said to have no charm for the Yogis," it continued, ". . . but they appear to have practiced this only in books."[8]

In an editorial written toward the end of the trial, the *Herald* took Vedantist swamis to task for preaching "blissful fellowship with the divine" rather than educating Americans about Hinduism. "The Hindu ascetic in India," its editors wrote, "is for the most part a 'faker' as well as a fakir." "Real Hinduism in actual operation" was not about mystical union with God but about public prostitution, idol worship, antisocial ascetics, child brides, and the caste system.[9]

The Bull case concluded in late June 1911 with a stunning victory for the daughter. The attorneys for Mrs. Bull's estate knew they were faring poorly, in both the courtroom and the court of public opinion, so they agreed to a settlement that awarded virtually all of the estate to Mrs. Bull's daughter. Unfortunately, Olea Bull Vaughan did not savor her victory for long; she died of tuberculosis the day the settlement was announced.

SARAH FARMER AND "OOM THE OMNIPOTENT"

I first came across the Sara Bull case while I was teaching about the anti-cult movement, which began in the United States in the 1960s and ran its course by the 1990s. In that movement, evangelical Christians and their lawyers accused leaders of so-called "cults" (many influenced by Hinduism) of "brainwashing" their converts. Some anti-cult activists even kidnapped and "deprogrammed" converts, on the grounds that they were victims of "mind control." Anti-cultists also charged repeatedly that participants in new religious movements were sexual deviants, and that their leaders were motivated by material, not spiritual, rewards. Charges of religiously induced insanity did not begin with the anti-cult movement, however. In the mid-nineteenth century, dozens of Spiritualists were judged insane and confined to mental institutions.[10] And Hinduism itself stood at the center of lawsuits in two other cases that arose around 1911.

First, there was the case of Sarah Farmer, which was invoked repeatedly during the Bull trial. In the aftermath of the World's Parliament of Religions, Farmer established her spiritual retreat center in Eliot, Maine. Green Acre hosted a variety of speakers who had addressed the Parliament, including Anagarika Dharmapala, the Buddhist reformer from Ceylon, and Swami Vivekananda, the Vedantist from India. Many U.S.-born intellectuals also made their way there, among them the New Thought advocate Ralph Waldo Trine, the writer William Dean Howells, the photographer Jacob Riis, and the black educator Booker T. Washington. After Farmer became a Baha'i, she announced she would give much of her estate, including Green Acre, to the Baha'i community. Her heirs then got a doctor to declare her mentally incompetent and a judge to commit her to an insane asylum in Massachusetts. The Baha'is tried valiantly to reverse the order, but when the futility of that course of action became clear they took matters into their own hands, liberating Farmer from the facility in a daring night raid. After Massachusetts authorities decided not to pursue her, Farmer lived out her days in Maine.

Then there was the more notorious case of Pierre Bernard, a.k.a. "Oom the Omnipotent." Unlike Bull and Farmer, who were attracted to the nondualistic Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Ramakrishna and his disciples, Bernard gravitated to an esoteric form of Hinduism called

tantra. Bernard reportedly traveled to India around the turn of the century. After settling in San Francisco in 1904 or 1905, he began teaching tantric practices through his Bacchante Academy, later known as the Tantrik Order in America. He also operated the Tantrik Press and published at least one issue of the *International Journal of the Tantrik Order in America*. In 1906, the San Francisco police (acting on tips by two women, both former followers) charged him with "soul charming" and morals violations.[11] The charges were later dropped.

After the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, Bernard moved from San Francisco to New York City. Once again, scandal pursued him. Newspapers investigating his reconstituted "Oriental Sanctum" reported hearing "wild Oriental music and women's cries, but not those of distress." In 1910, Bernard was charged again by two young women, who accused him of forcing them to serve as spiritual prostitutes. Dailies from the *New York Times* to the *San Francisco Chronicle* followed this scandal regarding the "wild orgies" of Bernard's "love cult." Although the "Omnipotent Oom" spent a few months in prison awaiting trial, this case too was dropped. Ultimately, Bernard's accusers refused to testify, leaving the papers to speculate that he had exerted some irresistible psychic power over them. "I cannot tell you how Bernard got control over me or how he gets it over other people," one of the women told reporters. "He is the most wonderful man in the world. No women seem able to resist him."[12]

FORMS AND VEHICLES FOR INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS

Historians tell stories like this in part because they are entertaining, but our job is to make sense of them. My effort to interpret these three cases—of Sara Bull, Sarah Farmer, and the Omnipotent Oom—begins with the observation that all are instances of interreligious contact. For much of world history, religious traditions existed in splendid isolation. Modernity, however, has been characterized by raucous interactions among those traditions (as, it should be noted, were many pockets of the medieval and ancient worlds). Religions in practice do not respect the tidy boundaries we often assign to them in our books and courses. Hinduism, for example, is no longer simply a religion of

India. It is a North American religion, too. And it is practiced, as a *Time* magazine yoga cover of 2001 indicates, far outside the confines of Hindu institutions.

In my interpretations of interreligious interactions, I typically examine two factors: the form of the encounter and the vehicle for it. I see three dominant forms for interreligious encounters: *combination, collaboration,* and *conflict*.[13] Combination is a theme in my first book, *The White Buddhist* (1996), which explores the "Protestant Buddhism" of an early U.S. convert to Buddhism. Diana Eck's CD-Rom *On Common Ground*[14] celebrates collaboration: participants in interfaith projects who hold fast to their own religious identities even as they work with other people of faith to foster tolerance, build housing for the homeless, or combat AIDS. Finally, believers encounter one another in conflict—when members of the Nation of Islam denounce Jews as devils, or the pope warns Catholics of the dangers of *zazen*.

In considering interreligious encounters, I try to weigh the vehicle as well as the form of the interaction. Are practitioners of two different faiths interacting in person? Responding at a distance to each other's scriptures? Admiring (or destroying) each other's icons? Economists talk far more about distribution channels than do scholars of religion, but we too might be served by considering the channels through which religious traditions move across the country (and across the globe).[15] And so I like to speak of three vehicles for interreligious encounters: interpersonal, artifactual, and textual or, more informally, people, stuff, and books.[16]

Americans first encountered Buddhism, for example, in books. Sailors and travelers brought back artifacts from Buddhist countries, and a few missionaries met Buddhists abroad, but most Victorian Americans who knew anything about Buddhism got what they learned from the printed page. Ralph Waldo Emerson never met a Buddhist; his encounter with Buddhism (like the broader Transcendentalist encounter with Asian religions) was almost entirely textual. So there were no Buddhists around to correct him when he praised the Bhagavad Gita as a great Buddhist book. That began to change when Chinese immigrants came to the West Coast in the 1850s and Japanese immigrants, some of them Buddhist clerics, arrived in the 1890s.

Obviously, the quality of an interreligious encounter is quite different when it is mediated by a work of art as opposed to texts or

persons—just as the experience of going to an art gallery differs from reading a book or engaging in a conversation. The "Boston Buddhists" of the late nineteenth century traveled widely in Asia, especially Japan, and encountered Buddhists there firsthand, but the artifacts they sent home (many of which made their way into the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) enabled others to meet Buddhism artifactually—through Buddhist stuff.

The historian of religion W. C. Smith has argued that the study of religion should migrate from studying "isms" to studying persons. In fact, Smith has suggested that we accelerate that shift by banishing from our vocabulary words such as *Hinduism* and even *religion*.[17] There are many virtues to Smith's "personalist" approach, but it must be noted that in the past many people have encountered foreign religious traditions in "isms" alone, and never in the flesh.

My focus here is on interreligious conflicts that emerged during the first wave of immigration from India to the United States, which occurred during the quarter century between 1899 and 1924. The furors over Bull, Farmer, and Bernard arose in 1910 and 1911, just as the main vehicle for Americans' encounters with the Hindu tradition was shifting (because of immigration) from texts to persons, or, as W. C. Smith might have put it, as Americans were changing their focus from Hinduism to Hindus. It was the arrival of Hindus on U.S. soil, in other words, that prompted a flurry of Hinduphobia in print.

The anti-Hindu invective of the Sara Bull trial did not come out of nowhere, of course. There was already a substantial tradition of U.S. writing about Hinduism, stretching back through Mark Twain and Walt Whitman to the Theosophists and Transcendentalists. In order to understand why Hinduphobia proliferated in the first quarter of the twentieth century (and how it was related to Hinduphilia), it is necessary to review, however briefly, earlier U.S. encounters with the Hindu tradition.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF U.S. ENCOUNTERS WITH HINDUISM

Of all the religions of Asia, Hinduism has the longest history in the United States, and it initially came here via stuff. The *United States*, the first American ship to sail in Indian waters, initiated a vigorous trade between India and the United States upon its arrival in

Pondicherry in 1784. Soon U.S. traders were returning from the subcontinent laden with wares, some of which made their way to the East India Marine Society (established in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1799), whose collection of Indian artifacts became the first major U.S. collection of Asian art.

Of course, Indian artifacts were not widely distributed throughout the United States, and few Americans had the funds (or the stomach) to travel to India. So most Americans who learned about Hinduism got their information from books. Some scholarly texts touched on the subject, including Joseph Priestley's *Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with Those of the Hindoos and Other Ancient Nations* (1799) and Hannah Adams's *Dictionary of All Religions and Religious Denominations* (1817), but most Americans preferred more adventurous titles. Amaso Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels* (1817), one of the first popular travelogues, set the stage for later interpretations of Indian religion by focusing on the exotic rather than the everyday, on practices rather than beliefs, and on popular rather than elite religiosity. Like many early interpreters of India, Delano wrote of hook swinging, widow burning, and cremation. He described Hindu priests as "immoral, ignorant, and cruel"—superstitious idol worshippers who had wielded far too much power over ordinary believers.[18]

Sea captains were not the only Americans to go to India, of course. In 1812, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions dispatched the first U.S. missionaries to the subcontinent. Soon Americans were reading missionary memoirs, filled with delicious details about the exotic religious rites of the "Hindoos" of India.

Another genre that alerted U.S. readers to India was the Oriental tale. Like the travelogue and the missionary memoir, the Oriental tale presented Hinduism as an object of both fascination and fear, reveling in the exoticism of the East while warning readers about its manifold dangers.[19]

Today the Transcendentalists are remembered as the first group of U.S. intellectuals to take Asian religions seriously, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Transcendentalism's leading light, was surely one of the first Americans keenly interested in Hindu thought. Yet early in his life Emerson was more of a Hinduphobe than a Hinduphile. Influenced by popular Oriental tales such as Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), he initially understood the Hindu tradition largely in terms of its practices rather than its beliefs, and he judged those

practices to be despicable. Emerson wrote an undergraduate poem called "Indian Superstition," which a biographer has deemed "a jejune, xenophobic, condescending, even racist overview of Indic mythology from the vantage of European Christianity." The poem focused, however, less on myths than on rites—what Emerson called the "ostentatious rituals of India which worshipped God by outraging nature."[20]

Muhammad Ali once said that "a man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life." At least by this criterion, Emerson was no wastrel. Although never tired of disdaining "endless ceremonial nonsense" wherever he found it, he grew to love Hindu scripture. Late in his life, Emerson referred to Hinduism as "a simple & grand religion" and to his beloved Gita as a "venerable oracle"—"the first of books."[21]

Henry David Thoreau developed into even more of a Hinduphile. "I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindoos without being elevated as upon the table-land of the Ghauts," he gushed. "It has such a rhythmn as the winds of the desert, such a tide as the Ganges, and seems as superior to criticism as the Himmaleh Mounts." Like Emerson, Thoreau was attracted to Hindu texts rather than Hindu people. Unlike Emerson, however, Thoreau had something good to say about Hindu sannyasis. At the beginning of *Walden*, he seems to be perpetuating stereotypes "of Brahmins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; . . . or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree." But instead of sneering at these Hindu holy men, he redirects his readers toward the equally absurd austerities of his townsfolk in Concord. "These forms of conscious penance," writes Thoreau, "are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness" among Concord's bedraggled "serfs of the soil." "The mass of men"—from Concord to Calcutta—"lead lives of quiet desperation," Thoreau famously observes. What is the difference whether one is chained to a tree or to a plow?[22]

One senses in Thoreau a reverence for religious virtuosi who vaccinate that desperation via austere living, and that suspicion is confirmed in an 1849 letter. There Thoreau writes, "The yogin, absorbed in contemplation, contributes in his degree to creation: he breathes a divine perfume, he hears wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him, and united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes, he acts, as animating original matter." "To some extent, and at rare intervals," Thoreau concludes, "even I am a yogin."[23]

While the Transcendentalists were the first group of intellectuals in the United States to take Hinduism seriously, the Theosophists were the first organization to take Asian religions as their main cause. Helena Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott, who co-founded the Theosophical Society in New York City in 1875, both formally converted to Buddhism in Ceylon in 1880. Both saw all the great world religions as offshoots from the Hindu Vedas.

Yet the Theosophists and Transcendentalists alike mixed with their Hinduphilia large measures of Hinduphobia. The basic strategy in each case was to split Hinduism into two variants: one rooted in ancient scripture (call it "literary Hinduism"), the other in contemporary practice (call it "lived Hinduism"). Then they evaluated the ancient texts positively and the contemporary practice negatively, denouncing the popular Hinduism of the modern masses—the *bhakti* path of devotion—as heathenish while praising the elite Hinduism of ancient scriptures—particularly the *jnana* path of wisdom—for its lofty spiritual ideals. The Gita was, as Thoreau argued, better than Shakespeare. But Hindu rites were empty and the Brahmin priests who performed them were ignorant and superstitious. Or, to put it another way, even the Transcendentalists were Hinduphobes when it came to popular Hinduism. What they loved about the tradition was its past rather than its present, its texts rather than its rites, its great men rather than its ordinary believers. Emerson may not have changed his mind as much as we think.

HINDU INVASION

There are records of a man from Madras walking the streets of Salem in 1790, but Indian immigration did not begin in earnest until the turn of the twentieth century, when unskilled laborers from the Punjab (virtually all of them men) began to come to the West Coast to work on farms. By almost any measure, this influx was modest—a ripple rather than a wave. The pace quickened considerably after the turn of the century, but still, only 6,795 arrived between 1901 and 1920, taking up jobs in mines, in lumber mills, on railroads, and in agriculture.[24]

At the time, *Hindoo* was an ethnic rather than a religious designation. The term, first coined by British colonial administrators in the early nineteenth century, initially referred to all non-Muslims and non-European natives of India. In early-twentieth-century America, however, it meant anyone from India. The vast majority of the "Hindoo" immigrants to the United States in this period were Sikhs, and a considerable minority (perhaps as high as one-third) were Muslims. So at the time the Hindu tradition went on trial alongside Mrs. Bull, there were probably fewer than a thousand Indian-born practitioners of Hinduism in the United States.

Still, a host of critics saw this modest migration as an "invasion," denouncing "Hindoos" as practitioners of foreign faiths who were unwanted and unwelcomed in Protestant America. In 1910, the *San Francisco Call* ran an editorial cartoon called "A New Problem for Uncle Sam." The cartoon depicts three figures: Uncle Sam, the "Viceroy of India," and a man with bangles on his wrists, a turban on his head, a cigarette in his mouth, and a "Hindu" label on his pants. Uncle Sam is holding the "Hindu" (who is literally tagged incompetent and indolent) by the bottom and trying to pass him across the ocean to India. "Say! Take this impossible thing back! We don't want it over here!" The colonial administrator chuckles, "Ha! Ha! Not me."[25]

Echoing the *San Francisco Call,* white laborers derided these new immigrants, just as they had denounced the "Yellow Peril" from China and Japan. The Asiatic Exclusion League, formed in 1905 for "the preservation of the Caucasian race upon American soil," insisted that Hindoos, like the Chinese and Japanese before them, were unassimilable aliens. "From every part of the [West] Coast," the League argued, "complaints are made of the undesirability of the Hindoos, their lack of cleanliness, disregard of sanitary laws, petty pilfering, especially of chickens, and insolence to women." This bigotry graduated from words to action in 1907 in Bellingham, Washington, when an anti-Indian uprising forced hundreds of "Hindoos" working at lumber mills to flee for their lives into Canada. In 1917 it acquired the force of law when the U.S. Congress passed immigration legislation that severely restricted immigration from "barred zones," including South and Southeast Asia. Virtually all immigration from Asia came to an end seven years later, with the passage of the National Origins Act of 1924.[26]

In many respects, this abrupt resolution of the "Hindoo Question" mirrors what happened with the Chinese and the Japanese. But

in one important respect this story differs, since the prevailing racial theories of the day classified Indians as Caucasians. While both the Chinese and the Japanese had been condemned as heathens, efforts to send them home had focused on race. Anti-Indian agitation, by contrast, emphasized religion. Even the most outspoken critics of Indian immigration admitted that the Hindoo was "a brother of our own race—a full-blooded Aryan." What distinguished him from other Americans was his faith.[27]

Around the time the Sara Bull case hit the the *New York Times,* a variety of books and articles appeared denouncing the "Hindoo invasion" as a religious threat to Protestant America. Rather than focusing on the dangers cheap Indian labor posed to white working men, these critics emphasized the dangers Hindu swamis posed to innocent women. In articles such as "Strange Gods of American Women" (1912) and "American Women Going After Heathen Gods" (1912), anti-Hindu activists penned modern-day versions of early American captivity narratives. But this time the innocents were taken captive by Indians from Asia.

In her article on "The Hindu Invasion of America" (1912), Mabel Potter Daggett rehashed standard complaints about temple prostitution, child marriage, and widow suicide in India. She built her piece, however, around the image of the seductive serpent. The Hindu swami was that serpent, and the American woman was his Eve. "It is not the worship of images of stone and wood that constitutes the gravest peril in the teaching of the Orientals," Daggett wrote. "It is the worship of men." She described American women as literally kissing the feet of their gurus, offering them their riches and, in many cases, their bodies and souls themselves. The relationships these women formed with their swamis separated them not only from true religion but also from their husbands and children. Citing explicitly the cases of Farmer, Bull, and Bernard, Daggett argued that American women were attracted to yoga by "the promise of eternal youth." What they got was "domestic infelicity and insanity and death."[28]

Elizabeth A. Reed reiterated these same themes in *Hinduism in Europe and America* (1914). Reed's book is particularly important, since she was widely respected at the time as a scholar of religion. Praised by the pioneering Indologist Max Müller for her prior publications on ancient Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, she was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society. But her standing in the new field of

comparative religion did not prevent her from viciously attacking modern Hinduism. "The Guru," she wrote, "is a modern money-making invention." In India, ignorant Hindus blindly sell themselves, "body, soul, and mind," into "abject slavery." In the United States, swamis "creep into houses and lead captive silly women." Under "the hypnotic influence" of their gurus, who demand nothing less than "slavish devotion," these women become "helpless" and then "hopelessly insane."[29]

Scholars of the Americanist controversy in U.S. Catholicism now refer to Americanism as a "phantom heresy." The Hindu menace of the first quarter of the twentieth century may have been even more phantasmagorical. There were certainly no more than ten thousand Indian Americans in the country at the time, and probably only one or two thousand practitioners of Hinduism. The Vedanta Society, then the largest Hindu organization in the United States, was active in only a handful of U.S. cities, and in 1916 claimed only 190 members.[30] So it is worth pondering why Americans worried so much about "the tide of turbans."

Part of the answer lies in the prior history of Asian immigration to the United States. When it came to books, Hinduism preceded Buddhism in the United States. Americans were reading English translations of the Gita in 1785, while the first English translation of a Buddhist scripture did not appear until 1844. But when it came to immigrants, the Buddhists got here before the Hindus, and they came in far greater numbers. Chinese immigration began in force after the discovery of gold in California led to the famous gold rush of 1849. By 1880, over 100,000 had come to the United States, and roughly 10 percent of the California population was Chinese. The Japanese came next, and in larger numbers.

As a rule, Americans responded to these migrations from Asia with fear and trepidation. The black intellectual Frederick Douglass embraced the Chinese as true Americans, and Protestant missionaries defended them as Christians-in-the-making. But calls to "Keep California White" drowned out Douglass's plea for a "composite nation" of many races and ethnicities.[31] After the completion of the transcontinental railroad (much of it built by Chinese laborers) sent Chinese workers scurrying for work, nativism swelled. In 1882 U.S. legislators effectively ended Chinese immigration (and naturalization) via the Chinese Exclusion Act.

This process repeated itself with the Japanese, so when it came to the "Hindoo Question," Americans were able to draw on a long-standing tradition of anti-Asian nativism. Indian immigration mattered not because it was numerically significant—it was not—but because it raised the specter of another "Yellow Peril."

If this was one reason why Americans feared the "phantom menace" of Hinduism, it was not the most important. As I have argued, anti-Indian agitation differed from prior nativist campaigns in its focus on religion. The fear Americans exhibited regarding Hinduism was in my view more religious than racial. As a result, it took its clues more from Americans' fear of Catholics than from their fear of the Chinese or Japanese.

THE ANTI-CATHOLIC TYPE

Today there is reason to debate the religious character of the United States. One can reasonably argue that the United States is multireligious or secular, Judeo-Christian or Abrahamic. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, however, Protestants dominated the public square, first as evangelicals and later as liberals. De jure, the United States was secular, but de facto it was Protestant.

The anti-Hindu agitation of the 1910s and 1920s should be understood, therefore, as one episode in a broader story of the encounter of Protestant "insiders" with various religious "outsiders." In that story, the quintessential "outsiders" were Roman Catholics. So if Americans experienced a sense of *déjà vu* when reading about the Sara Bull and Pierre Bernard cases, what they were reliving was not so much the "Yellow Peril" as the "Roman Menace."

I cannot fully develop this argument here, but I can sketch its outlines. As I have already intimated, key themes in the anti-Hindu literature echo earlier captivity narratives about colonists and Americans kidnapped (and forcibly converted) by Native Americans and French Catholics. These parallels are worth exploring. But the parallels I want to highlight here concern the anti-Catholic furor that attended Catholic immigration from Europe in the mid-nineteenth century.

Americans who engaged Hinduism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—Hinduphiles and Hinduphobes alike—almost

always divided it into two parts: its ancient scriptures and its modern manifestations. Those who praised the tradition focused on ancient scripture, while those who condemned it emphasized modern manifestations. This basic strategy came in many variants, but typically American interpreters criticized Hindu rites far more than Hindu scriptures, and the priests who performed those rites far more than scholars of ancient texts. "Real Hinduism," a *Boston Herald* editorial contended, was not about Hindu thought (attaining "blissful fellowship with the divine"), as Vedanta Society swamis pretended.[32] It was about Hindu practice. Or, as other anti-Hindu literature of the time claimed, it was about:

- authoritarian religious leaders
- a superstitious, idolatrous, and dying faith
- mistreatment of women
- mind control
- illicit sex
- ill-gotten financial gain

What is striking about these themes is how closely they track nineteenth-century anti-Catholic literature. In a few cases, Hinduphobic writers explicitly compared Hindu and Catholic rites. Amaso Delano, for example, compared hook swinging with "the excesses of the Dominicans, the barbarities of the Inquisition."[33] But for the most part, the analogies were unstated.

Anti-Catholic tracts, sermons, novels, plays, and poems regularly described Popery (as they called it) as authoritarian and anti-democratic—a threat to individual autonomy and a destroyer of religious liberty. Still, anti-Catholic literature focused more on religion and morality than on politics and society. Or, to put it another way, while Catholicism was understood as an offense against democracy, republicanism, and individualism—what historian David Brion Davis called "an inverted image of Jacksonian democracy and the cult of the common man"—it was first and foremost an offense against Protestantism. In terms of theology, Catholics were idolaters, these texts argued, not Christians. True Christianity was biblical Christianity, but that form of religion had faded as Catholics hijacked the church, substituting idolatrous veneration of Mary for the true worship of Jesus. When it came to religious practice, Catholics were said to be superstitious.

The "hocus-pocus" of transubstantiation was to Catholicism's critics as nonsensical as the antics of Indian magicians. "What are your Eastern fire-eaters, sword-swallowers, and dervishes to a Popish priest?" one anti-Catholic writer asked (in another explicit connection between anti-Hinduism and anti-Catholicism). "Why, it would be easier to swallow a rapier, ten feet long, or a ball of fire as large as the mountain Orizaba, than to metamorphose flour and water into the *great and holy God.*"[34]

The dominant story line in these melodramas featured a lecherous priest seducing innocent women into illicit sexual relations. In a system as authoritarian as Catholicism, there was no saying no to a priest. Invoking the snake of Genesis, Protestant critics argued that Catholic priests were as cunning as they were lustful, "covering their hypocrisy with the cloak of *religion,* and with more than the serpent's guile, worming themselves into the confidence and affections of their unsuspecting victims." Some of these priestly seductions began in the confessional with Catholic lay women, but more often they were set in the convent, with nuns. In Gothic tales of Catholic horrors, such as *The Awful Disclosures* (1836) of Maria Monk, convents were "slave factories," "priests' harems," and "baptized brothels" where priests, under the cover of religion and oaths of celibacy, compelled innocent nuns to have sex with them. They were also dens of infanticide, since the most common fate of the children born of this priestly debauchery was supposedly murder in the convent dungeon.[35]

Along with sex and death, convents also produced insanity. In the summer of 1834, a nun named Elizabeth Harrison escaped from an Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. According to newspaper reports, life as a nun had driven Miss Harrison insane, so one night she fled to freedom in a nearby home. When she came back to the convent a few days later, however, newspapers reported that she had been coerced into returning, and was atoning for her sins in the convent's dungeon. The Harrison case was the lead story in Boston for a few weeks, until an anti-Catholic mob took matters into its own hands, marching on the convent and burning it down.

As we have seen, similar themes dominated the anti-Hindu literature of the early twentieth century. Instead of focusing on ancient Hindu texts, American critics focused on contemporary Hindu swamis, whom they described as authoritarian, anti-democratic, superstitious, deceptive, immoral, and greedy. The basic story line in almost all anti-Hindu literature featured a lecherous priest seducing innocent (and

often wealthy) American women in order to gratify his own lust and greed. These seductions took place not in convents but in ashrams—in "Oom the Omnipotent's" "Oriental Sanctum," the Green Acre retreat center, and even Mrs. Bull's Studio House. In the end, Hindu swamis stripped these women of their autonomy, their virtue, and their money. They also made them idolaters, since these women supposedly came to worship their living saints as if they were gods. In some cases they even produced, in the words of the *Boston Globe,* "religious lunacies."[36]

The analogies between these two forms of nativism—the anti-Catholicism of the nineteenth century and the anti-Hinduism of the twentieth—are quite striking. Americans surely lashed out at Indian immigration because it reminded them of earlier waves of immigration from Asia. But most of the anti-Hindu fulminations were religiously rather than racially inflected, and they recalled more than anything else the anti-Catholic agitation of the nineteenth century. Whereas in the nineteenth century Americans accused Catholics of conspiring to overthrow the United States, in the early twentieth century they accused Hindus of conspiring to drive American women insane. If, as one nativist argued, Roman Catholicism was "the Mother of Abominations," anti-Catholicism was the mother of Hinduphobia.[37] It may also have been the mother of Hinduphilia, since much of what the Hinduphiles loved in Hinduism was framed in Protestant terms: its scriptures, its rejection of empty rites, its austerity, its ethics.

David Brion Davis has described anti-Masonic, anti-Mormon, and anti-Catholic literature as "both frightening and fascinating." Nativists, in his words, "projected their own fears and desires into a fantasy of licentious orgies and fearful punishments." Jenny Franchot has written of the "attraction of repulsion" in anti-Catholic literature—the thrill of reading these Gothic tales of intrigue, sex, torture, and escape. This same mixture of titillation and disgust can be found in the anti-Hindu literature, where the "attraction of repulsion" is also at play.[38]

CONCLUSION

For too long, scholars of U.S. religion have focused either on Protestantism or on pluralism. The way forward, in my view, is to attend to both. The history of Hinduism in the United States can be understood only in light of the Protestant dominance in the public square,

which lasted in the United States at least into the 1920s. American reactions to Hinduism can be understood only in light of American reactions to other foreign faiths, most notably the quintessential foreign faith of Roman Catholicism. The contentious meeting of Protestantism and Catholicism, which came to U.S. shores with the first English, Spanish, and French settlers, is the *Ur*-encounter of U.S. religious history. All subsequent encounters—including the encounter with Native American religions—took place among a populace already well versed in Protestant-Catholic conflict. Hinduphobia erupted in the United States in 1911 just as the U.S. encounter with Hinduism was shifting from books to people—from ancient Hindu scriptures (which many Americans had praised) to contemporary Hindu practitioners (whom virtually all Americans disdained). Anti-Hinduism quickly found its voice because the Americans who employed it already knew the script.

Since World War II, and especially since the 1960s, anti-Catholicism has to a great extent abated in the United States, as Catholicism has joined Protestantism and Judaism in the "triple melting pot" described by Will Herberg.[39] Hinduphobia has largely faded, too. But the stereotypes conjured up in the Sara Bull trial are alive and well. In a study of American views of India and China, Harold R. Isaacs interviewed prominent Americans in an effort to understand their views of Asian religion and culture. One informant said Hinduism conjured up a picture of "sacred cows roaming the streets; mobs of religious fanatics hurling themselves into the Ganges; naked ascetics, scrawny fakiers on nails; the multiarmed goddess; the burning ghats; the skull-laden figure of Kali; Benares; obscene Hindu sculpture, phallic symbols and erotic carvings on the temples." *Gyn/Ecology* (1990) by the feminist theologian Mary Daly also traffics in blatant stereotypes, reducing Hinduism to suttee in an effort to judge the Hindu tradition guilty of what she calls the "Sado-Ritual Syndrome."[40]

Few Americans affirm such xenophobia. What endures from the days of Sara Bull is the tendency to mistake part of Hinduism for the whole, to split Hinduism into its good and bad halves and then (depending on whether one loves or hates it) to define "real Hinduism" accordingly. Americans who love Hinduism today feel few compunctions about jettisoning those parts of the tradition that make them uncomfortable—reducing Hinduism to hatha yoga exercises, for example, and in many cases utterly divorcing those exercises from Hindu theology.

The last time I taught my "Hinduism in America" course, I asked my Hindu students what they thought of the contemporary yoga craze. What, I asked, did Madonna and other popularizers of yoga owe to the Hindu tradition? My students responded with a minimal demand. They hoped only that U.S. borrowers would show Hinduism some respect, acknowledging the fact that yoga originated in India thousands of years ago. I think Americans owe the Hindu tradition a bit more: We need to be clear about how we are adapting its beliefs and practices to U.S. circumstances. In order to do that, however, we need to be honest about what Hinduism has been and what it is becoming. Although I understand why, for praise or polemics, Americans have whittled "real Hinduism" down to these beliefs or those practices, it is the job of scholars of religion to keep them honest. All religious traditions—at least all traditions that have survived over the centuries—rightly precipitate in us some measure of both fear and fascination. All harbor "texts of terror" alongside lofty ethical axioms.[41] All have sordid chapters in their histories, and brilliant episodes of which they are justly proud. To understand any of the world's religions we need to understand what they do well, and what they do poorly. We need to see Islam as a religion of both war and peace; we need to understand that Christianity has produced pacifists as well as warriors. We need to see how different religions have produced both insanity and the equally troubling propensity to find insanity in others.

All this is to say that scholars of religion serve their students and readers best when they steer clear of both Hinduphilia and Hinduphobia. As any observer of the Indian political scene can attest, Hinduism is not by nature as tolerant as I was once led to believe. But neither can it be reduced, as it was in the Bull case, to a series of techniques for brainwashing and seducing unsuspecting women. Like any great religious tradition, "real Hinduism" deserves to be understood for what it really is, not for what its lovers and haters wish it to be.

NOTES

1. "Says Psychic Plot Swayed Mrs. Bull," *New York Times,* 23 May 1911, p. 1; "Spirits Urged $25,000 Gift, Said Mrs. Bull," *Boston Herald,* 15 June 1911, p. 1.

2. "Looked at Pictures and Made Eyes Move," *New York Times,* 26 May 1911, p. 13; "Mrs. Bull's Indian Tonics," *New York Times,* 27 June 1911, p. 5; "Sister Nevidita Disregarded Nurse's Order," *Boston Herald,* 27 June 1911, p. 1; "Mrs. Bull Was Insane, Says Yogi Ruberto," *Boston Herald,* 25 May 1911, p. 1; "Hindu Tonic for Mrs. Bull," *New York Times,* 2 June 1911, p. 6; "Tells Rites Observed in Bull Home," *Boston Post,* 24 May 1911, p. 1.

3. "Refuse to Make Bull Case Legal," *Boston Herald,* 13 June 1911, p. 8; "Masseur Tells of Bull Revels in 'Holy' Room," *Boston Herald,* 24 May 1911, pp. 1–2.

4. "Spirits Urged $25,000 Gift, Said Mrs. Bull," *Boston Herald,* 15 June 1911, p. 3.

5. "Masseur" (see n. 3 above), p. 2; "Hindu Love Lord in Bull Will Case," *New York Times,* 24 May 1911, p. 2; "Mrs. Bull Was Insane, Says Yogi Ruberto," *Boston Herald,* 25 May 1911, pp. 1–2.

6. "Swami Son of Ole Bull, Said Widow," *Boston Herald,* 27 May 1911, p. 7; "Eight Wills by Mrs. Bull in Evidence," *Boston Herald,* 26 May 1911, p. 7; "Says Psychic Love Plot Swayed Mrs. Bull," *New York Times,* 23 May 1911, p. 1; "Mrs. Bull's Wish About Ashes Unkept," *Boston Herald,* 28 May 1911, p. 4; "Says Psychic Love Plot Swayed Mrs. Bull" (see above), p. 1; "Mrs. Bull Inflamed by Hindu Drug," *Boston Herald,* 17 June 1911, p. 1; "Thorp Admits Drug was Given to Mrs. Bull," *Boston Herald,* 2 June 1911, p. 1; "Swami Son of Ole Bull" (see above), p. 1.

7. "Read Spirit Messages to Mrs. Bull in Court," *Boston Post,* 16 June 1911, p. 1.

8. "Bull's Cook Tells of Indian Drugs," *New York Times,* 17 June 1911, p. 5; "Tells Rites Observed" (see n. 2 above), p. 2; "Another Halt in the Bull Hearing," *Boston Globe,* 27 June 1911, p. 2; "Swami Son of Ole Bull" (see n. 6 above), p. 1; "Mrs. Bull's Wish About Ashes Unkept," *Boston Herald,* 28 May 1911, p. 4.

9. "Swamis and Others," *Boston Herald,* 2 June 1911, p. 6. See, however, "The Swamis Defended," letter to the editor, *Boston Herald,* 10 June 1911.

10. See William Sims Bainbridge, "Religious Insanity in America: The Official Nineteenth-Century Theory," *Sociological Analysis* 45, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 223–39. In the infamous Beecher-Tilton adultery trial of the 1870s, the husband of Mrs. Tilton accused the beloved Protestant preacher Henry Ward Beecher of brainwashing his wife. "I think she sinned her sin as one in a trance," he testified. "I don't think she was a free agent. I think she would have done his bidding if, like the heathen priest in the Hindoo-land, he had bade her to fling her child into the Ganges or cast herself under the Juggernaut" (quoted in Richard Wightman Fox, *Trials of Intimacy: Love and Loss in the Beecher-Tilton Scandal* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999], p. 114).

11. Quoted in Nik Douglas, *Spiritual Sex: Secrets of Tantra from the Ice Age to the New Millennium* (New York: Pocket Books, 1997), p. 195.

12. Charles Boswell, "The Great Fuss and Fume over the Omnipotent Oom," *True: The Man's Magazine* (January 1965), http://www.vanderbilt.edu/~stringer/fuss.htm; quoted in Douglas, *Spiritual Sex,* p. 195; "Wild Orgies in the Temple of 'Om': Police Get New Light on the Doings of Fakers of New York," *San Francisco Chronicle,* 5 May 1910; "Pierre Bernard, Oom the Omnipotent, Promoter and Self-Styled Swami, Dies," *New York Times,* 28 September 1955, p. 35; quoted in Paul Sann, *Fad, Follies, and Delusions of the American People* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1967), p. 190. After a few years in Manhattan, Bernard moved again, this time to Nyack, New York, where he set up an ashram of sorts known first as the Braeburn Country Club and later as the Clarkstown Country Club. There Bernard continued to teach his own brand of Tantra, affirming among other things that "love, a manifestation of sexual instinct, is the animating spirit of the world" (Pierre Bernard, "Tantrik Worship: The Basis of Religion," *International Journal, Tantrik Order* 5, no. 1 [1906]: 71). But in rural New York, Bernard came to be regarded more with love than with fear. In fact, he became "one of the most active and patriotic townspeople of Nyack" ("'Omnipotent Oom' Scents a Fraud," *New York Times,* 27 October 1922, p. 3)—the president of a local bank, the treasurer of the local chamber of commerce, the president of the Nyack Athletic Club, and the benefactor of an annual circus featuring his beloved Indian elephant "Mom."

13. My views of these matters have been shaped by a series of conversations with Catherine Albanese. See, e.g., her discussion of "religious interchange" in "Exchanging Selves, Exchanging Souls: Contact, Combination, and American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History,* ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 200–226.

14. Diana Eck, *On Common Ground: World Religions in America,* CD-Rom, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

15. I am grateful to Colleen McDannell for pressing this point with me.

16. Over the last decade or so, Americans have begun as well to engage with other religious traditions over the Internet—in chat rooms, discussion groups, and through surfing the World Wide Web. So it makes sense to add to my interreligious *yanas* (vehicles)—the interpersonal, artifactual, and textual—a fourth vehicle: the online or *virtual* encounter.

17. See, e.g., Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

18. Quoted in Thomas A. Tweed and Stephen Prothero, eds., *Asian Religions in America: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 31.

19. Americans also learned about Hinduism from more scholarly books, including Joseph Priestley's *Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with Those of the Hindoos and Other Ancient Nations* (1799) and Hannah Adams's *Dictionary of All Religions and Religious Denominations* (1817), though neither of these books was as objective as its author believed. See Tweed and Prothero, *Asian Religions in America,* pp. 44–48, 54–57.

20. Robert D. Richardson Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 8–9; Emerson quoted in Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth-Century Explorations* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 48.

21. "Muhammad Ali: A Candid Conversation with the Greatest—and Prettiest—Poet in the World," *Playboy* (November 1975), http:// www.sportsline.com/b/member/playboy/7511.html; Emerson quoted in Jackson, *Oriental Religions,* pp. 53, 45.

22. Thoreau quoted in Jackson, *Oriental Religions,* p. 64; Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961), pp. 3, 4, 8.

23. Thoreau quoted in Jackson, *Oriental Religions,* p. 65.

24. Herbert R. Barringer, Robert W. Gardner, and Michael J. Levin, *Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), p. 24.

25. "A New Problem for Uncle Sam," *San Francisco Call,* 13 August 1910, http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/echoes/chapter4/chapter4_1.html.

26. Ronald T. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 201, 297.

27. Agnes Foster Buchanan, "The West and the Hindu Invasion," *Overland Monthly* 51, no. 4 (April 1908): 309. For a time, the courts seemed to agree. In landmark cases in 1910 and 1913, the courts ruled that Indian immigrants were Caucasians and, as such, were eligible for naturalization under a 1790 law restricting citizenship to "white persons." (Those rulings were overturned in 1923 in *U.S. v. Thind,* when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Indian immigrants, while Caucasian, were not "white persons" in the common sense of that term.)

28. Mabel Potter Daggett, "The Heathen Invasion of America," *Missionary Review of the World* 35, no. 3 (March 1912): 214, 211, 210.

29. Elizabeth A. Reed, *Hinduism in Europe and America* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), pp. 117, 112, 133, 129, 131, 129. Indian Americans did not have the access to the many popular publishing venues enjoyed by scholars and missionaries, but they did respond to the critiques nonetheless. See Girindra Mukerji, "The Hindu in America," *Overland Monthly* 51, no. 4 (April 1908): 303–8; Saint Nihal Singh, "The Picturesque Immigrant from India's Coral Strand," *Out West* 30, no. 1 (January 1909): 43–54; Sudhindra Bose, "American Impressions of a Hindu Student," *The Forum* 53 (February 1915): 251–57. See also Swami Paramananda's *Message of the East,* which began publishing in 1912, in part in response to the Sara Bull affair. These apologies played into prevailing stereotypes by downplaying the

devotional Hinduism and emphasizing its wisdom traditions, and also by presenting Hinduism as anti-caste and for women's rights—in other words, as a tradition friendly to the Protestant social gospel.

30. Carl T. Jackson, *Vedanta for the West: The Ramakrishna Movement in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 108.

31. Frederick Douglass, "Our Composite Nationality," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 4: 1864–80,* ed. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 240–59.

32. "Swamis and Others" (see n. 9 above), p. 6.

33. Quoted in Tweed and Prothero, *Asian Religions in America,* p. 30.

34. David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 208; Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1952), pp. 353–54. There is an extensive debate on the origins of anti-Catholicism in American life. In *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1880–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), John Higham understands anti-Catholicism in socio-economic terms, while Davis sees it as largely ideological. Two more recent treatments are Mark S. Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), and Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable* Prejudice (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a provocative application of anti-Catholicism to a seemingly unrelated area, see Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

35. Billington, *Protestant Crusade,* pp. 57, 366.

36. 1909 *Boston Globe* editorial quoted in Sara Ann Levinsky, *A Bridge of Dreams: The Story of Paramananda, a Modern Mystic, and His Ideal of All-Conquering Love* (West Stockbridge, Mass.: Lindisfarne Press, 1984), p. 116.

37. Billington, *Protestant Crusade,* p. 273.

38. Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion," pp. 208, 217; Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 197–220.

39. Will Herberg, *Protesant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in Religious Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955). See, however, Jenkins, *New Anti-Catholicism,* and Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America,* on the persistence of what they both term "the last acceptable prejudice." See also the proceedings of a conference on this topic held at Fordham University in May 2002, http://www.catholicsinpublicsquare.org/calendar/commonwealcalendar/fordham524.html.

40. Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Views of China and India* (White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1980), p. 259; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 136.

41. Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).