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CONTENTS

conceptual/non-conceptual opposites all on his own, which makes me wonder why Phaedrus also appears in this dialogue ("Socrates is simultaneously absence and presence, sameness and difference, knowing and ignorant, both in and out of place" [203]). The descent into Platonism is complete by the end of the conclusion, where place "represents a transcendence for which the philosopher is striving" and philosophical activity operates in a limbo world, not "in the realm of human beings" (203), which is unfortunate, to say the least.

12. Hunt: Method and Metaphor. A Reading of the *Sophist* 216a1-226a6 (209-229). Gro Rørstadbotten makes several significant observations (in the context of a dramatic analysis): e.g. that "the reader is able to understand somewhat more of who the Stranger is by once again noticing what he is doing", exemplifed on that page by the fact that the Eleatic guest makes a contradiction, then emphasizes it ("the mentioned contradiction is stated even more bluntly" [220]).

13. Plato's *Sophist:* A Different Look (231-240). John Sallis takes at face value references to the difficulty in distinguishing the philosopher from the sophist and the statesman in the context of the greater discussion about being and appearance. Is it really that difficult to distinguish the philosopher from the sophist without the aid of Being and Non-Being? Nevertheless, the treatment of late dialogues, often considered undramatic in comparison with earlier dialogues, in a book on Platonic drama, is to be applauded and encouraged, especially in the style of articles 6 and 12. As was pointed out in article 6, however, only a complete dramatic analysis can get to the bottom of a dialogue, whether early, middle, or late.

There is an index (241-247).

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Lisa Maurice, *Screening Divinity*, Edinburgh University Press, 2019. 240 pp. ISBN 9781474425735.

What do God and the gods have in common? According to classicist Lisa Maurice, quite a bit, at least when it comes to the movies. In *Screening Divinity*, Maurice examines two types of film: fantasies based directly or loosely on Greek or Roman mythologies, and Biblical epics and biopics. By bringing them together, Maurice hopes to show the commonalities between these two genres, which share the challenges inherent in bringing gods and goddesses to life in the visual media of film and television. Maurice suggests that these two groups of films can be considered a single genre of "divinity movies". Her book demonstrates the fruitfulness of this approach.

The first chapter introduces the subject, and then provides historical surveys of particular topics: the cinematic approaches to both sets of movies; the roles of the gods in the Graeco-Roman tradition, and their reception in the Western art-historical tradition; and finally the ways in which Christian and Jewish thinkers have understood and talked about God. The chapter then identifies the fundamental problem that all God-talk — theological, artistic, cinematic — must face: anthropomorphism. As Maurice notes, even if they posit an abstract invisible god, humans can only talk about and depict that god in physical terms.

Chapter 2 addresses anthropomorphism in greater detail. The chapter begins with a sweeping overview of philosophical approaches to the problem (Bacon, Feuerbach, Marx, Darwin) which, though necessarily brief and superficial, appropriately situates film, and the study of film, within a broad intellectual and historical context. Maurice argues that movies about the Greek and Roman

gods can more easily address visual representation than films focused on biblical themes and narratives. Yet the former set of films presents a different challenge. If gods resemble humans, how can films convey their divine or semi-divine status? The discussion of this issue focuses helpfully on visual effects such as the use of lighting (dark and light, luminosity) and relative size (gods looming larger than humans). The chapter then turns to the visual portrayals of Jesus. The same problems exist, exacerbated by the long and familiar art historical tradition depicting Jesus as fair-haired and blue-eyed. For films made in the golden age of the biblical epic, the censorship code is also a factor, since there were limitations on whether and how Jesus could be portrayed. Here too Maurice takes a historical approach, providing a survey of how Jesus was portrayed from late antiquity to the present, and the development of the stereotypical view that seems to be embodied in Robert Powell, who starred in Franco Zeffirelli's made-for-tv miniseries *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977).

Chapter 3 considers "Physiology and the Physical Appearance of the Divine (I): The Patriarchal King Figure and the Devil". Maurice begins with the Greek and Roman gods, proceeding one by one through the major male classical gods, and then turns to the biblical God. A major focus is on the relationship between God/the gods and Satan/Hades. Most interesting here is the discussion of God's depiction in comedies such as *Oh, God* (Carl Reiner, 1977), in which George Burns plays God) and Morgan Freeman's portrayal of God in *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2003) and *Evan Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2007).

Chapter 4, "Physiology and the Physical Appearance of the Divine II", compares the cinematic Olympian males with Jesus. The chapter discusses the use of star performers to play the classical gods and heroes. Maurice argues that in identifying with these stars, viewers form "parasocial relationships" with the characters as well as with the actors who portray them. She notes, however, that some directors have preferred to use unknown actors to portray Jesus, to preserve the mystery surrounding this figure. There are some exceptions, however, such as Max von Sydow, in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (George Stevens, 1965), Jeffrey Hunter in *King of Kings* (Samuel Bronston, 1961), and James Caviezel in *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004). Maurice addresses the historical disconnect between history and tradition: as a first-century Galilean Jew, Jesus himself likely looked very different from the stereotypical renaissance Jesus portrayed in numerous films. By contrast, depictions of male gods are not constrained by prior representations in quite the same way.

Chapter 5, "Gendering the Divine (I): Greek Goddesses on screen", considers the use of "screen divas", that is, beautiful female actors who portray goddesses. These goddess divas inspire devotion and reverence but goddess and actor alike are objectified through this focus on their physical beauty.

Chapter 6, "Gendering the divine (2): Holy Female Figures in the Judaeo-Christian Film", focuses primarily on Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene. Whereas Jesus' mother is portrayed in various ways — young and innocent, wise and mature, symbolic, maternal, and feminist — Mary Magdalene is almost always depicted as a reformed prostitute or adulteress. Maurice suggests that "what scantily clad beautiful goddesses do for films based on Greek mythology, Mary Magdalene must do for Jesus movies" (137-38), that is, titillate and provide a moral lesson.

Chapter 7, "Human-Divine interactions", focuses on miracles, prophecy, and prayer. Among the films and series discussed are the Cecil B. deMille classic *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and the Doctor Who series, among others. In discussing prayer, Maurice also pays attention to the ways that films appeal to modern audiences when drawing on modern postures in movies that

depict ancient times, as in the scene of mourning for Abigail in the epic *Solomon and Sheba* (King Vidor, 1959).

Chapter 8, "Blurring the Boundaries: Apotheoses and Deicides", addresses the different forms of death and revival in films involving Greek and Roman deities and then turns to the fraught question of killing and resurrecting Jesus on screen. Maurice addresses briefly the deicide charge and its legacy in anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. She concludes that films generally do not focus on Christianity's ascent over Judaism but on its triumph over paganism.

In the brief postscript, Maurice situates her study in the context of changing demographics and the growth of secularism. While deities may be viewed with greater negativity and suspicion than in the past, filmmakers remain very interested in making films about God or gods, revealing a fascination with the idea of divinity even as the very existence of divine beings is denied.

The book is a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature on the cinematic representations of and interactions with the classical and biblical worlds. Rather than treating cinema as an entirely self-referential medium, Maurice situates the films within the broader historical context concerning the role of God and the gods in ancient belief, thought, and practice. This emphasis is important in that it considers film not only as shaped by but also as a part of this intellectual history.

I learned the most from the treatments of the films based on Greco-Roman divinities. This is no doubt due to the fact that my expertise lies in biblical studies and "bible and film". Maurice, on the other hand, is a classicist, and while she is knowledgeable about the Bible and Bible movies, there are small errors that suggest that she is not steeped in the biblical studies as she is in classics. One such error concerns her references to the "Judeo-Christian tradition". This usage has long been critiqued and set aside in the field of biblical studies because it elides two very different religious traditions and histories. A second concerns the reference to the "three Mosaic faiths" that have historically sought to minimize anthropomorphism. While Judaism and Christianity may perhaps be considered Mosaic faiths, it is difficult to know what the third one is. Samaritanism perhaps? The reference may be in fact to the three *Abrahamic* faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This error should have been caught in copy-editing and proof-reading. More serious is the underlying assumption that Judaism and Christianity were separate from the Greco-Roman world. While Judaism and Christianity eventually rejected polytheism, their conceptualization of the divine, and of the heavens, were profoundly shaped by their full participation in Hellenistic and Roman culture and history.

Although the book focuses primarily on cinema, it also discusses numerous television shows and series. This makes sense insofar as both cinema and television involves projecting images on screens, accompanied by soundtracks. Yet at the very least this decision must be defended. Film studies and television studies are generally considered to be distinct, due to the differences in the production processes and values, as well as the different sorts of interactions with their viewing audiences.

These comments do not detract from the overall value of the book, however, which is a very welcome addition to the body of scholarship on the cinematic portrayals of God, the gods, and the human beings who interact with them. It could easily serve as a textbook, alongside other materials, for courses in religion and film, and as a valuable foundation for further research on an important corpus of films.

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