MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDDLE AGES

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The twentieth century world is an increasingly complex environment, made up of many diverse cultural, religious, political, and economic perspectives. Multiculturalism in the classroom is now a crucial component of the responsible educator's curriculum. Yet diversity is not a phenomenon new to the modern world, but a fundamental feature of human civilizations both past and present. Although historians long overlooked the roles of many social, ethnic, and cultural minorities, recent studies have made great progress towards creating a more integrated view of the past.

One of the first problems encountered in implementing a multicultural curriculum is navigating the intense debate on the meaning, goals, and scope of "multicultural education." A brief visit to several classrooms or an examination of the scholarly debate over multiculturalism suggests that "multicultural education" is interpreted in many different ways. For the purposes of this discussion, it would be worthwhile to establish a clearly defined set of parameters for the use of the term "multicultural education." *The Encyclopedia of Educational Research* defines multicultural education as

> consist[ing] of at least three elements: (a) an idea or concept; (b) an educational reform movement; and (c) a process. As

an idea, multicultural education espouses the notion that male and female students, students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups, and students with disabilities should have an equal opportunity to learn in schools, colleges, and universities. The need for multicutural education is based on the assumption that students from certain gender, racial, and social-class groups have a better opportunity to experience educational success in schools, colleges, and universities as they are currently structured than do students from other groups. Multicultural education is also a process whose major aim is to change the social structure and culture of schools and other educational institutions, so that students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, gender and social-class groups will have an equal opportunity to experience academic success.[1]

Multicultural education

should not be confused with Ethnic Studies. Ethnic Studies focus on the history, social structure, differences ... of a particular group (e.g. the Polish-Americans, blacks, Africans ...). Multicultural Education, on the other hand, deals with the understandings, acceptances, knowledge, contributions (historical/present), problems, concern, values and barriers (language, prejudices, social, economic) of the many subcultures found in a country ... This broad perception prompts many to speak of "education that

is multicultural" instead of multicultural education.[2]

Defined in such a broad fashion, multicultural education enhances awareness and appreciation of the pluralism and diversity found in a given society. These three concepts are intimately related, for pluralism denotes "the existence of more than one social, cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial group in an area ... Pluralism is not only a cause, but is also considered by some to be a justification for education that is multicultural."[3] Diversity in education attempts to integrate these plural perspectives by "recognizing the value of the groups with which students and faculty identify as sources of important intellectual perspectives and personal support, and as avenues of participation in universal concerns."[4] A curriculum which truly implements multicultural education is by definition one which accepts pluralism and diversity and encourages an appreciation of the role of different cultural groups in a community or society.

The effort to integrate pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism into the curriculum, however, poses several difficulties for writers of textbooks as well as instructors. In the zeal to uncover lost voices of the past, one often presents the history of cultural groups outside the mainstream as if they are a subject unto themselves, and require a special history all their own.[5] On the other hand, several recent, highly original studies have been charged with overstating the contributions of these once silent voices and presenting an equally false picture of the past.[6] Education which is truly multicultural is not simply an extra column in a text, or an article focusing on minorities. It is an attempt to convey the richness of the social fabric, a fabric whose integral composition is multi-colored and many-faceted. Multiculturalism in the classroom is the recognition that society is a patchwork quilt, with each square being

necessary for its completion and existence.

Although there is a pressing need to implement multiculturalism, professors are so pressed to cover a curriculum which is already far too encompassing for the semester or quarter system that adding anything seems unmanageable. Yet multiculturalism is an essential perspective to convey to the modern student, and, through creative use of resources, can be successfully integrated into the traditional curriculum without cropping time honored topics. The most effective technique for implementing the complexity of a multicultural curriculum is a holistic approach to multi-disciplinary sources. Holistic education enhances appreciation of multicultural perspectives by providing an integrated view of literature, music, philosophy, art and architecture, politics and history.[7] Even subjects which historically have appeared immune to multicultural perspectives yield readily to a holistic approach which creatively uses multi-disciplinary resources.

The Middle Ages pose many challenges for instructors seeking to implement a multicultural perspective, and provide many examples of how to introduce this difficult topic in an efficient manner. One of the main problems faced in any study of this period is that sources are much more scarce than for other periods, and are often representative of the dominant cultural outlook. Nevertheless, there are sources through which one may uncover the latent multiculturalism of the medieval past, revealing a rich tapestry in which various gender, racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups all have a voice.

Although the role and influence of women is masked by the fact that literacy was restricted to the male-dominated nobility and upper clergy, art, literature, languages and hagiography allow the feminine voice to be heard. This is true not only in the west, but in the far east as well.

Although medieval societies emphasize uniformity of belief, plurality of perspective may be unmasked even in societies which traditionally have been seen as rigidly conformist in character. Interactions with other cultures created new traditions and philosophical eddies, without which these societies cannot be understood. Just as "No man is an island unto himself," no culture is an island unto itself. The growth of the media in the wake of the technological revolution has created a globally interactive community in which information travels from one end of the globe to another at an astonishing rate.

Yet if one studies the cultural interactions of world civilizations, global interaction, in a different context, has been one of the moving forces of history. The stream of ideas has many tributaries, even in cultures such as the Middle Ages, where they are not immediately apparent. Cultural diversity, then as now, was an essential feature of the social fabric. One of the main tasks of educators is to enable these silent voices of the past to speak to students, and in so doing, to awaken them to the many voices of today.[8]

THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE MIDDLE AGES

The study of the Middle Ages across cultures immediately provides opportunities to explore diverse perspectives, for the term refers to different periods and events in different cultures. Although it has been argued that "Middle Ages" is an ethnocentric term based on the western experience, many other cultures seem to share some of the general features of the medieval west. Moreover, the concept of stages of cultural flourishing interspersed with stages of stagnation is not alien even to the far east, where the dynastic cycle theory is often used to analyze the history of China. Many histories of China make

use of the concept of a Chinese "Middle Ages," thus providing the framework for a truly multicultural discussion of the Middle Ages.[9]

Although dating varies considerably, the western Middle Ages date from 476 a.d. (or 529 a.d.) to as late as 1450 a.d., and are traditionally seen as a transitional period between ancient and early modern. In the Middle Ages, the main tenets of the Catholic faith were codified and religious fervor was often evident, leading many to call it "The Age of Faith."

In China the "Middle Ages" encompass the period between the fall of the Han and the rise of the Sui, which was characterized by a lack of political unity and the arrival of Buddhism. Chinese culture, however, was at one of its most creative points, in contrast to the west, which was has long been seen as stagnant. The Japanese "Middle Ages" were characterized by the struggle to achieve centralization and to develop a uniquely Japanese culture despite heavy Chinese influences.

The Islamic world was characterized by rapid expansion, and the continuing quest to define orthodoxy, resulting in the development of several splinter sects. It was also characterized by cultural vitality, marked by the incorporation of many diverse cultural traditions.

Although these cultures share many common elements, such as religious fervor and political fragmentation, they are also diverse in many ways. Diversity in the meaning of "Middle Ages" in each society's history provokes deep underlying questions as to historiographical reasons for divisions within a culture's history and the assumptions implicit in describing a period as the "Middle Ages." Ideally, this will lead *away* from ethnocentrism and towards a richer appreciation of multicultural perspectives.

Medieval China

The Chinese Middle Ages encompassed the period from 220 to 589 a.d. As in the west, the Chinese Middle Ages were a transitional period, in this case between two more politically stable eras. Medieval China was composed of six southern dynasties, sixteen regional kingdoms in the north, and the empires of the Northern Wei and the Northern Chou. Among the many diverse cultural interactions of this period were the gradual sinification of aboriginal peoples such as the Thais, Tibeto-Burmans, the interactions with Mongolians and the influx of Chinese to the south in the wake of barbarian migrations. Despite attempts to assimilate the frontier peoples, China was both culturally and ethnically diverse, for although the Wei adapted Chinese customs and made use of a Chinese bureaucracy, dissatisfaction on the frontiers with the sinification of the Wei ultimately led to its collapse. These considerations point to a wide array of cultural precepts, the very foundation of later China.[10]

Despite the lack of political stability, medieval China broke away from the rigid Confucianism of previous eras, and introduced innovative interpretations of social structure, morality and ethics.[11] The Chinese Middle Ages present many examples of cultural diversity, for during this period Buddhist piety from India intermingled with Chinese Confucianism and was expressed in creative new contexts. The translation of the Buddhist Sutras into Chinese presented several problems, for the Sutras were written in polysyllabic, highly inflected sanskrit, whereas Chinese is monosyllabic, uninflected and ideographic script. Many concepts were of necessity altered, and the fusion of these concepts with native Confucian and Taoist traditions often produced completely different ideas.

Buddhist thought on women was altered when it encountered Confucianism. The *Lessons for Women* of Pan Chao, written during the eastern Han period, is

representative of traditional Confucian thought on women. Here Pan Chao spoke of the need for devotion and obedience to the husband. This ideal dominated the translations of the Buddhist texts, in which the sutra "husband supports wife" became "husband controls the wife," while "the wife comforts the husband" was rendered as "the wife reveres her husband."

Other Buddhist concepts were more drastically altered. "Nirvana" was translated as "non-being" and "dharma" as "Tao."[12] In the hands of the translators, Indian Buddhism was transformed into a new body of thought, and was later used by the Empress Wu to maintain political power.[13] Translations from sanskrit also inspired a more scientific study of phonetics in China. During this period, Shen Yüeh (441-513) created the first definition of the tones of Chinese, which later became the basis for several dictionaries of rhyme.[14]

Buddhist art also reflected diverse cultural influences, for when Buddhism spread from India to Iran to Asia, it encountered the remnants of the Hellenistic empire. Representations of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas reflected Hellenistic influence in the folds of the drapery, as well as the poses and facial expressions.[15] Along with Taoist and Christian influences, China became a melting pot of diverse intellectual threads. Although China was physically delimited by walls, culturally it was interconnected with many other societies.

Medieval Islam

The expansion of Islam in the medieval period was equally varied, encompassing the Saudi Arabian peninsula, North Africa, Spain, Persia and finally Constantinople. Although early Islam emphasized the community of the Muslim faithful, the split between the Shi'ites and Sunnis

soon introduced diversity. These features are widely known, but diversity might also be approached from the point of view of the Muslim intellectual heritage and Islamic scholarship, which drew heavily on the Judeo-Christian tradition and the works of ancient Greece and Persia, among others.

Muslim scholars translated works from Greek, Syrian and Persian. The works of Hippocrates contributed to Muslim medieval knowledge, and Muslim philosophers diligently sought to harmonize the *Qur'an* with Greek philosophy, producing the wonderfully inventive works of Avicenna and Averroës. Greek and Indian astronomy were reconciled, and many of these works were translated into Latin, later influencing western Europe.[16]

In Cordoba, chess was a favorite pastime, which was transmitted to Europe. Having originally come from India, the checked board on which the game was played symbolized the rich shadings of Muslim culture. Art also reflected the fusion of several diverse influences, as seen in the fourteenth-century Persian miniature *Prince Humay Wounds Princess Humayun.* Composed at a time when the impact of Crusades was strongly felt and Persian art had no clear identity of its own, the miniature shows the assimilation of both European and Chinese styles. It relates the famous story of Prince Humay, who unwittingly encounters his beloved disguised as a warrior. The field upon which they battle is delineated by what appear to be European battle standards, their armor is strongly reminiscent of European armor, while the landscape is heavily modeled on Chinese art.

Among the most revealing indications of multiculturalism in the Muslim medieval period are those which give insight into the diverse character of African society. Mahmud Kati's (1468?-1593) *The Chronicler of the Seeker*, Al-Bakri's (d. 1094) *The Book of Routes and*

Realms and Ibn Battuta's (1304-1369) *A Donation to Those Interested in Curiosities* provide insight not only into the gradual spread of Islam and the motivations for conversion, but also into the diverse character and customs of African political, social and religious institutions. United by submission to Allah, the Muslim world was nevertheless an intricate multicultural web.

Gender in Medieval Civilizations:
The Medieval West

The medieval west poses another set of problems in the quest for diversity. Gender studies are a crucial component of multicultural education, and it is particularly difficult to integrate the study of women's history into discussions of the medieval west. This difficultly is partly due to the dichotomy in medieval theology between devotion to the Virgin Mary, the vehicle through which Christ became human, and disdain for Eve, who brought about the fall of Adam and, thus, brought death to the human race. This dichotomy was never fully resolved by the medieval, and the image of woman was never lifted from the endless abyss of her sin. Theologically Eve remained stranded in the garden long after Adam had begun his quest for purification in the monastery.

In late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the path to salvation for the female lay in the conquest of her gender and her approximation to male characteristics. The hermit Sara's cryptic remark that although she was a woman in body, she was nevertheless a male in spirit sums up the suspicion with which female sexuality was regarded.

Thomas Aquinas codified this suspicion in his statement that woman was created entirely as an aid in reproduction. He remarked that "woman is said to be a misbegotten male, as being a product outside the purpose

of nature considered in the individual case: but not against the purpose of nature." <u>Summa Theologica</u> I, 92, 1 ad 1. Although woman was essential for the preservation of the human species, she represented a defective human being, a mere accident to the male sperm. Even the female's most definitive quality, generation, was inferior to that of the male, his generative power being active, hers being passive. From this perspective, the ideal of chastity conceived as being fundamental for the redemption of woman, ironically forced a woman to deny what the theologians told her was her very nature.

Integrating the female perspective into the Middle Ages is also difficult because of the dearth of primary sources in translation dealing with women and other social groups not at the apex of the social hierarchy.[17] One must find ways to creatively introduce this information, and often commonly known texts provide clues to these hidden figures. Monasticism was one of the most important social and religious movements of the Middle Ages, much of which rested on the Rule of St. Benedict. What is not commonly known is that Benedict had a sister, Scholastica, who became the patron saint of Benedictine nuns.[18] Later women such as the Anglo-Saxon Leoba would prove instrumental in the conversion of the continent, while the abbess Hilda would preside at the Synod of Whitby. While texts discuss Benedictine monasticism, few mention the plethora of nunneries and the influence of other Benedictine women.

Medieval art often betrays the integral role of women. The twelfth century Benedictine Hildegard of Bingen used feminine imagery to illuminate the Divine, pointing to a positive role for the feminine even within a patriarchal society. Consider Hildegard's vision of Ecclesia, or Mother Church, as Sophia, or Holy Wisdom.[19] This vision contains several striking images. The woman seems to

hold all of the faithful in her arms as in a net. Together with the scale-like images at the bottom of the illumination, this suggests a role for the church as a fisher, or extractor, of wisdom. The surrounding blue color calls forth images of the sea, known as "mother" to all life. The woman in red symbolizes virgins and martyrs of the church, with her "children," the bishops, priests, monks and nuns. Here the feminine is seen as the center of life and wisdom, who gives birth to the creativity of her flock.[20]

In another vision, Hildegard described the universe as an egg, a symbol found in many traditions, such as those of ancient Egypt and Buddhism.[21] It was a fairly unusual symbol in the Middle Ages. The egg is a universal symbol of unity and fecundity. Moreover, the round shape is traditionally associated with the female, making Hildegard's universe a feminine unity.[22] These images, as well as her explication of them, suggest a concept of the universe as a vital, continually evolving whole. Her career certainly mimicked her theology, for she wrote extensively on theology, science and medicine and also composed music. She preached against the Cathars and other heretical groups, as well as against the abuses of the current monarchs. Known as "Old Wrinklegard," Hildegard founded her own monastery for women. Truly she carved out for herself a role in society and monastic culture which equalled that of her most famous contemporary, Bernard of Clairvaux.[23]

The power and mystique of women in the Middle Ages is most clearly seen in the theology of the Virgin Mary. Mary is a powerful symbol of woman, for she was the vehicle through which Christ became man. Her humanity was his humanity, and through Mary, Christ became one with the human race. Icons of Mary portray her as the perfect dutiful servant, the model of what every Christian should be. Using rather shocking imagery, the twelfth

century Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux described Jesus as the mother of all and pointed to the female virtues as the saving virtues.[24] The role of the feminine face of God in the Middle Ages has been often underplayed, and prompts discussion on crucial issues within the religious world today.

Jacques de Vitry's thirteenth-century *Life of Marie d'Oignies* was a vindication of the role of the woman, illustrating her often powerful role as mentor for her male contemporaries.[25] Although denied access to the new orders, Marie and the movement she inspired, the beguines and beghards, may be seen as the climax of the women's movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[26] The beguines implemented monasticism in the secular world, without the benefit of the cloister.[27] The famous hermit Romuald expressed the desire to turn all the world into a monastery; the efforts of Marie and the beguines came far closer to implementing this ideal than did those of their illustrious predecessor.

Marie d'Oignies was the most famous and well-known such woman of her time. Her holiness and devotion were widely admired, and Jacques de Vitry, well-known bishop of Acre, became attracted to her cause and later wrote her life. de Vitry's *Life of Marie* represents an attempt to portray such women in the highest possible light, and to justify their life of fervor outside the cloister. Marie is compared to the most holy people of antiquity, starting with the desert hermits, for he described France as a parched desert whose holy women made it akin to the Holy Land. His portrait of Marie makes her the equal of holy male saints from the past. He likens her mortifications of body to those of St. Anthony, the most venerated name in monasticism. Marie is not seen as a frail, weak creature inferior to man, but rather as an example of piety whose excellence is to be admired.[28]

In an age such as this, one had to be careful not to

go too far, and de Vitry depicted Marie as a shining example of order in a world of chaos. Unlike many women, she did not exhibit any disordered mannerism. So holy was she that her life always served to inspire, rather than to incite to sin. Thus, Jacques attempts to portray Marie's expressions of piety as entirely orthodox, exhibiting order, balance, moderation, and above all, concern for the effects of her behavior on others. These were, not surprisingly, characteristics traditionally associated with male religious. Although de Vitry's account justified a new way of religious life for women, in the end he resorted to the use of accepted male characteristics to vindicate this woman whom he idolized. Nevertheless, Marie clearly functioned as a teacher and mentor for the famous de Vitry, and so carved out a role for the holy woman in the midst of an age which seemed to deny her one.

Japan

Upon entering medieval Japan, one is led into a far different world of refined courtly etiquette, in which superficial appearances are far more real to the players than underlying reality. While the medieval west struggled with the dichotomy between Eve and the Virgin Mary, Japan struggled with the transition from a society which was dominated by powerful empresses to a society in which the role of the female became ever more passive.[29]

During the Heian period (794-1192), the Male became dominant in Japanese politics, religion and sexual relationships.[30] Perhaps the greatest example of this shift is Lady Murasaki's *Tale of Genji*, which explores the rigid world of the Heian court as seen through the eyes of the prince Genji and his descendants. Her name was perhaps a reference to the main female character of the Genji, or a pun on her connections to the Fujiwara clan, whose name

roughly translates to "violet" as did her own name Murasaki.

It is significant that her name was taken from a literary reference, for in the Japan of the Heian period, identity was often couched in one's handwriting as opposed to details of character or inner emotions.[31] Handwriting was itself an art in Heian Japan, and often, love affairs began in the novels through the mere sight of the beloved's handwriting. The words themselves were not important, as they often did not convey truth. But the writing, the product of one's own hand, served as an identifying mark in medieval Japan. Hence, it is ironic and appropriate that Murasaki's name should be drawn from her own pen.

Handwriting acquired such a status because of the severe restrictions placed on women. The empress whom the Lady Murasaki served severely restricted her servants and their behavior. They could not even intimate imperfection in manners or inappropriate behavior around males, for this was enough to banish them from court. In marriage the woman resided with her father and the husband visited the wife. Her power, if there was such a thing, was determined by how often the male visited her. The Fujiwara maintained their control over Japan by marrying their females to emperors, and thus, females became known as "borrowed wombs." In the home, she was unable to act without the impetus of the male.[32]

Due to these conditions, women in Japanese novels could only communicate with a lover through a letter, yet even within such a restrictive framework, the female's role was often frustratingly restricted. Confined to the house, she is forced to wait until her letter is read. Unless the male opens the letter and reads it, she has no power at all. A letter returned unopened is the ultimate symbol of powerlessness for the female; even the opened letter was often a symbol of repression, for the male rarely read the

text at his leisure and even more rarely in the literature did he read the entire text. The female literary character was confined then, to an endless suspension in time, waiting for the male to act.

Genji betrays the influence of Buddhism, for the only salvation for the woman, who was inherently sinful, was to be reincarnated as a man.[33] The seemingly endless repetitions of plot allude to the Buddhist view of reincarnation. Fittingly, often one woman is merely a symbol for another, just as Genji's early loves so closely resemble his mother as to be virtually indistinguishable from her.

The world of Genji was a pluralistic society characterized by its fusion of Buddhism and Shinto, as well as a bilingualism based on gender. *The Tale of Genji* was written in Japanese, another mark identifying the writer as a woman. While Chinese was the language of the government, and hence, of men, Japanese was restricted to the private sphere and regarded as the domain of women. Early Japanese poetry and prose was considered the domain of women, a way in which emotions and private thoughts could be expressed.[34]

Ironically, however, it was the women of the Heian court who left the most memorable records of medieval Japan. Condemned by many sects of Buddhism to everlasting perdition, women fought back the only way their society allowed -- through the written word.

INCORPORATING THE SOURCES INTO THE CURRICULUM

These examples provide many readily available sources with which to uncover the latent diversity of the Middle Ages. World Civilization courses need to be enhanced by the inclusion of resources such as the ones

mentioned above. In most cases, this material can be incorporated into existing courses without losing traditional content. It takes only minutes to point out that female monasticism was as prevalent as male monasticism, that Leoba accompanied Boniface on his missionary journey, to add a discussion of Hildegard's illuminations to an appraisal of the twelfth century Renaissance, or to present the Limbourg brothers' illuminations in a discussion of daily life in the Middle Ages. Instructors might consider assigning a research project focusing on a particular group, such as Jews, ethnic minorities, and religious dissidents. Journaling is an effective way to cover a great deal of information in short assignments. Before a discussion of the Middle Ages, students might be asked to write a brief synopsis of a woman, or a member of another cultural group who lived in the period, or to imagine a day in the life of their historical figure.

These suggestions are cases where material needs to be added to the curriculum. In other cases, multicultural materials might replace current texts. Heian Japan, for example, could be taught entirely through an examination of *The Tale of Genji* and is more memorable to students if so approached. Assigning a well chosen passage and asking students to analyze it for social customs, attitudes toward women, religious and political concepts illuminates Heian Japan more than any textbook summary. Working in small groups, students might play the roles of various characters and debate the propriety of the events and actions in the book from the point of view of their figure. As a creative writing assignment, a westerner might be asked to visit the court of Genji and write his or her reactions, or a Japanese woman might attempt to explain her position in Heian Japan to a modern western woman, or better yet, to a woman living in the medieval west.

Medieval China is usually slighted in world

civilization courses, primarily due to a lack of time and, perhaps, awareness of the resources available. Through the use of small groups with clear and limited assignments, the issues raised above can be approached in a minimum of class time, and will enhance the study of China in later periods. An effective exercise is to divide the class into small groups and have them locate the various regions of medieval China. Each group could be assigned a particular region, and, as an out of class short project, could discover two to three pertinent facts about each of the traditions represented by the regions identified. This information would then be shared with the class in brief one to two minute presentations. A "travelogue" of a journey through the various regions of China might also be effective.

The study of Islam provides an excellent opportunity to encourage critical thought and to supplement what instructors are able to cover in class. A short writing assignment, as an essay question or journal entry, in which students analyze a Muslim written or visual source for diverse cultural practices is useful. The African sources mentioned, and visual resources, such as a picture of the Alhambra, which shows Roman, Visigothic, and Muslim influences, allow students to further explore diversity.

Through a judicious use of art, literature, hagiography, lecture, group discussions, and writing assignments, one can lead students to discover that the medieval world was thoroughly diverse, exhibiting many layers of cultural interactions and gender roles. Medieval civilizations display a multi-faceted cultural vitality, and shatter any notion that multiculturalism is a recent phenomenon which cannot reasonably be integrated into the curriculum. The diversity of medieval civilizations highlights the debts owed by every civilization to many other civilizations. Multiculturalism, then, should not be thought of as a cumbersome *addition* to the curriculum, but as a

6. George G. M. James's *Stolen Legacy* (1954), Cheikh Anta Diop's *The African Origin of Civilization* (1967), Yosef ben-Jochanan's *Africa, Mother of Western Civilization* (1971), and Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* are apt examples of studies which attempt to reevaluate the contributions of Africa and to integrate Africa into the mainstream of western civilization. These studies have generated a tremendous amount of negative commentary, such as Mary Lefkowitz's "Not out of Africa," in *The New Republic*, 10 (1992): 29-36.

7. Holistic education "recognizes that all aspects of life are fundamentally interconnected ... [is] concerned with the physical, emotional, social and esthetic/creative, and spiritual qualities of every person." Miller, Ron, *What are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture* (Brandon: Vt: Holistic Education Press, 1992), .

8. It is interesting to note that scholars from both the eastern and western traditions have noted the importance of global interaction. William McNeill, in *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), discussed cultural interactions as the moving forces of world history long before multiculturalism became the focus of scholarly debate. Conrad Schirokauer, in his *Brief History of China and Japan,* 2nd ed. (Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1989), also emphasizes the unity of world culture in his discussions of cultural interaction during various stages of Chinese history.

9. See Schirokauer, *A Brief History of China and Japan*.

10. See Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (1940) for an account of the interactions of Chinese and non-Chinese peoples.

11. The various representatives of the School of Mysteries (hsüan-hsüeh) are an excellent example of the creativity of the Chinese Middle Ages, among them Hsiang Hsiu (223?-300) and Kuo Hsiang (d. 312 a.d.), who wrote commentaries on the *Zhuangzi (Chuang-tzu)*, and P'ei Wei (267-300), whose *Treatise on the Pre-eminence of Being* (*Ch'ung-yu-lun*) was later instrumental in the dissemination of Buddhism by disguising its differences from native Chinese philosophy. Chinese art and literature in this period was equally innovative. The famous gathering at the Orchid Pavilion (lan-t'ing hui) is an excellent example of the aesthetic wonders of the Middle Ages. Here, forty one poets competed at improvising poems, among them the poet and calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih. The work of the eccentric third-century intellectuals known as the Seven Sages of the Forest of Bamboo (Chu-lin ch'i-hsien), and the Taoist works of T'ao Ch'ien (365-427) and Hsieh Ling-yun (385-433) are other good examples. See also Xiao Tong (Hsiao T'ung), *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, trans. David Knechtges (1987) and Richard B. Mather, ed. *A New Account of Tales of the World* (1976). Ko Hung's separation of beauty from morality in his *Pao-p'u-tzu* (c. 317) conveys the break with classical tradition which characterizes the period. The art of Ku K'ai-chih (345-411) is representative of the vibrant new character of painting.

12. See Philip P. Yamposky, trans. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch: The Text of the Tunhuang Manuscript* (1967).

13.   The Empress argued that she was an incarnation of Maitreya and ordered the study and commentary on the *Dayunjing* sutra, which prophesied the appearance of a female ruler 700 years after the passing of the Buddha.

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14. The dictionary of Lu Fa-yen, *Ch'ieh-yün* (601), is a good example of this genre.

15. The Yün-kang caves, Lung-men, and Mai-chi-shan caves are the greatest examples of Buddhist art in the Middle Ages. Perhaps the greatest example of cultural interchange during the Middle Ages was the pilgrimage of Fa Xien (Fa-hsien) (399-414), whose *Fo-kuo-chi (Report on the Buddhist Kingdoms)* is the most well-known of several
such accounts. These travelogues provide the clearest knowledge of India during this period, and are apt examples of the influence of Buddhism on China. Two classic analyses of the dissemination and impact of Buddhism in China are S. Mizuno and T. Nagashiro, *Yun-kang, the Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Vth Century in North China*, 16 vol. (Kyoto, 1951-56) and E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China, the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 2 vol. (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

It is effective to ask small groups to examine a representative piece of art from China, Greece, and India and ask them to find two points of similarity and two points of difference. This exercise encourages students to internalize the meaning of cultural interactions.

16. Ramon of Sauvetat, bishop of Toledo (1126-1151), was an avid supporter of translating the works of Aristotle, Avicenna, Alfarabi and others into Latin. Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187) and Dominicus Gundisis, Johannes Hispanus and Henricus Aristippus were also enormously influential in translating Greek and muslim works into Latin.

17. In addition to the sources discussed below, see Thomas de Cantimpre's *Life of Christina Mirabilis*, trans. Margot King (Toronto: Peregrina Press, 1990) and *The Life of Lutgard of Auywières*, trans. Barbara Newman (Toronto: Peregrina Press, 1991). For further information on Marie

story. Here, it is Scholastica who seemed to embody the spirit of the Rule even more so than her brother. Although most hagiographies refer to a female companion as a literary device, this story is so uncomplimentary as to suggest the historical existence of Scholastica.

19. This vision as well as the following one are found in *Scivias*. Hildegard described her vision as being like a "certain brightness white as snow and like transparent crystal lighting up the ... image of a woman. She was shining with a reddish gleam like the dawn from her throat to her breasts ... In the center of her bosom ,a woman in red stands out and surrounding her is a very great tumult of persons brighter than the sun, all wonderfully decorated with gold and jewels." *Scivias* II.5.

20. In other visions, Hildegard compared Ecclesia to a fisherman, who, with his net, reels in the faithful and embraces them. Here, she fused the allusion to the male Peter as a fisher of men with that of the female Ecclesia, as fisher of the faithful. Hence, the imagery of this vision, which so closely resembles that of a net and the scales of a fish seems to draw on the same fusion of images. Matthew Fox's controversial *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen* (Santa Fe: Bear and Co., 1985) presents a psychological interpretation of these images which draws on well-known feminine symbols. Many medievalists find his analysis to be taken out of historical context, yet due to Hildegard's descriptions of Ecclesia in other visions, his reading here is supported by her commentary on previous visions. For an excellent scholarly study, see Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

21. ". . . I saw a vast instrument, round and shadowed, in the shape of an egg, small at the top, large in the middle and narrowed at the bottom . . . and in the midst of these elements is a sandy globe of great magnitude,

which these elements have so surrounded that they cannot waver in any direction . . . This openly shows that , of all the strengths of God's creation, Man's is most profound, and in a wondrous way with great glory from the dust of the earth and so entangled with the strengths of the rest of creation that he can never be separated from them." *Scivias* I.3.

22. This is essentially Fox's analysis of Hildegard's imagery. Her text, which focuses on the need for God's people to repent and
on the unity of creation, does not literally convey Fox's analysis, but again, her insistence on unity combined with the egg imagery is at least consonant with his analysis. Interestingly enough, Hildegard continued to be supportive of the subordinate role of women in the church, despite her innovative vision of the feminine face of the Divine.

23. Other good artistic visions of gender roles can be found in the Limbourg Brothers' *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (1416), which depict scenes common to every month of the year. In many scenes, women are seen working in the fields and carrying large bundles. These illuminations paint a picture of woman as integral to the work force, providing excellent material for discussions of the division of labor and comparisons to the roles of women today.

24. See Carolyn Walker Bynum's *Jesus as Mother* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) for a provocative discussion of the use of feminine imagery in the twelfth century.

25. Jacques de Vitry, *Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. Margot King, 2d ed. (Toronto: Peregrina Press, 1993).

26. The fundamental dichotomy between Eve and the Virgin Mary was played out in the reform movement of the Central Middle Ages, in which interest in monasticism flourished and there was a proliferation of new monastic orders. Women as well as men were caught up in the new wave of austerity and fervor of the Central Middle Ages. Norbert was rumored to have female followers numbering in the thousands; Robert of Arbrissel also attracted a large following of women from particularly diverse backgrounds, including prostitutes as well as widows and virgins. Yet this was a period of illusions wonderfully crafted and simultaneously shattered for women, for although the theology of the twelfth century raised the feminine to new heights, the institutionalized church swept *femina* off her pedestal as quickly as she had been elevated.

The illusory promises of the new age of reform, at least for women, can best be seen in the struggle of Clare, disciple of St. Francis, for recognition and independence. Although Francis and Clare seemed to have had a close working relationship in the years after Clare's conversion, this was soon to change. As Francis himself was forced to struggle for recognition of a way of life which was still suspect in the eyes of the institutionalized church, he was soon forced to divest himself of responsibility for Clare as well. The Franciscans vigorously protested all attempts by the papacy to make them assume responsibility for the growing numbers of women who wished to enter religious houses. Similarly, the Cistercians prohibited the acquisition of any further nunneries in 1228, and deprived already existent communities of the right of visitation and pastoral care. The resistance of the new orders towards women is one of the great tragedies of the twelfth century.

27. For a good discussion of the beguines and beghards, see Ernest McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards of the Middle Ages* (Rutgers, 1954).

31. For other examples, see Annie Shepley Omori and Kochi Dei, trans., *Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920); Ivan Morris, trans., *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

32. So closely was the woman guarded that in the poems and literature of Murasaki's age, a woman is considered to be violated if an amorous male glimpses her through the bushes or enters her bedchamber through a curtain. In *The Tales of Ise*, the mere act of penetrating the curtain is considered the rape of or total capitulation of the woman, which conveys the courtly ritual surrounding women and their appearance in public. For further discussion of marriage in promodern Japan, see William McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 27 (1967): 103-67; Haruko Wakita, "Marriage and Property in Promodern Japan from the Perspective of Women's History," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 10 (Winter 1984): 77-99.

33. For an excellent discussion of sexual dichotomy in medieval Japan, see Hitomi Tonomura, "Black Hair and Red Trousers: Gendering the Flesh in Medieval Japan," *American Historical Review* (February 1994): 129-154.

34. In her diary, the Lady Murasaki comments on this disparity between males and females in letters. As a child, she learned to read Chinese characters along with her brother, and indeed was even more adept at reading than he was. Remarking that she should have been a boy, her father advised her to keep her prodigious skills to herself. Later in life, Lady Murasaki heavily criticized other female authors for writing in Chinese, the domain of men.