

## **NEW MATERIALISM AND RELIGIOUS PERCEPTION OF WOMEN'S EMBODIMENT**

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### **Abstract**

The paper aims to investigate the correlation between modern materialism and religion, with particular emphasis on their historical settings and theoretical interconnections. The text also examines the theoretical framework of feminist new materialism and its interconnectedness with religion and corporeality. The research employs a qualitative methodology, employing critical interpretive and exploratory approaches. The research findings indicate that proponents of modern materialism recognize the significance of human corporeality, with a particular emphasis on the female body, and perceive the body as the focal point of a woman's identity as a human being. The study presents a comprehensive analysis of the need for a reevaluation of corporeality within the context of studying religion. The work contributes to the exploration of feminist materialism and addresses pertinent theoretical considerations within the growing discipline of women's studies. It concludes that the current methodologies employed in the study of religion may not align with the principles and approaches of new materialism.

**Keywords:** New Materialism, New Feminist Materialism, Religion, Women Embodiment.

### **Introduction**

New materialism is employed as an exploratory research design to connect with and shed light on the phenomenon and concept of emergence. A new materialist perspective need not put an end to spirituality; rather, it may have a sanctity that is consistent with immanence (Niemoczynski, 2013). This disproves the idea because transcendence is in conflict with physical reality. When it is obvious that perhaps the relaters, which are God, the cosmos, and people, might vary dramatically, the question of whether it is appropriate for theological and philosophical researchers to refer to something as a relation arises (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2021). This paper attempts to close this gap and recognizes the need for religious scholars to be honest and transparent. This study is a qualitative research and employs the critical interpretative and exploratory research methods. The scope of the research first covers the meaning and historical contexts of new materialism, then proceeds to discuss the theoretical relations between religion and new materialism. It goes further

to explore the new perspectives on feminist materialism, intersectionalizing religion, and how this connects with corporeality.

Finally, it looks at how women understand their bodies as sites of interactions and contestations and how this resonates with the theological idea of new materialism. This article makes a distinctive contribution to knowledge by providing critical grounds from a religious perspective for new corporeality as far as women's physical bodies are concerned. The research also provides an evaluation of new materialism and phenomenological approaches to religion that differentiates between widely confused elements and makes an argument for what may be the most intriguing and original of their linkages. It therefore generates fresh ideas on feminist materialism and engages relevant theoretical concerns in the expanding field of women's studies. In this sense, it makes a contribution to continuing feminist new materialist studies of religion, science, and the humanities.

### **Meaning and Historical Contexts of New Materialism**

The term "new materialism" was first coined by Braidotti (2002) to refer to a radical rethinking of human subjectivity after Foucault. The emphasis is on how material everything is, including social and environmental phenomena. The new materialism seeks to account for the non-instrumental value and causal power of the material cosmos. It first appeared at the turn of the century as a result of the post-constructionist, ontological, or material shift. A significant change in feminist theory and late-20th-century continental philosophy is what gives rise to new materialism. Without simultaneously reverting to essentialism, Elizabeth Grosz, Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and Karen Barad develop arguments that strive to ground feminist ideas in material contexts and realities (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008; Meilloux, 2008). The phrase "speculative realism" serves as a designation for a broad group of French philosophers who have refocused their attention on a metaphysical analysis. According to Niemoczynski (2013), to avoid any kind of dualism between spirit or mind and matter, new materialism acknowledges that matter is never just "matter." The excellent opening essay by Coole and Frost (2010) lists a variety of movements that are more focused and out of which the new materialist voice emerges. New materialism grew out of the idea that matter is not really a latent, passive, inert substance that acts on other things.

The fields of bioethics, biomedicine, and biotechnology are examples of non-cognate disciplines that support new materialism. These bio-sciences suggest and bring about significant shifts in scholars' perceptions of what human existence involves. The idea that the human being is still a distinct entity in nature is contested by post-humanism (Tamsin, 2016). Indeterminacy is prized because it denotes the independence of all material events, not only thinking people. The idea that the human being is still a distinct entity in nature is contested by post-humanism. A similar strategy is used by Crockett and Robbins (2012) when they suggest the earth as the subject. According to Crockett and Robbins, it is astonishing how much modern materialism is

driven by an ethical imperative. This is stated by Dolphijn and Tuin (2012) in terms of modern materialism's monist orientation, which rejects the dualisms of matter and thought. In favour of a totally immanent framework for understanding reality and mind, new materialism rejects any assertion or appeal to transcendence. New materialism is a reconceptualization of physical objects like chairs, altars, books, robes, neurons, pens, and wood, as well as their motions, voices, and constant demands on human cognition and behaviour. The claim that objects are actors in and of themselves, with trajectories, propensities, or proclivities of their own, is what is novel about modern materialism. According to Reader (2017), by combining ideas from relational Christian realism, it is possible to effectively resolve flaws in current theological engagement with new materialism. These ideas, which are different but just as important, represent the relational and apophatic parts of a materialist theology.

### **Theoretical Relations between Religion and New Materialism**

New materialism is a reinterpretation of religion in material terms that rejects the traditional view of religion. According to new materialism, one problematic, definite understanding of religion has been replaced by a new, equally definite idea. The new materialism aims to codify religion into a valid object in order for it to be properly examined. At the same time, it makes significant new materialist assumptions clear. Object-oriented ontology (OOO), affect studies (AS), and Kant's teleological and aesthetic theories (KTAT) are subfields of philosophical aesthetics. There are overlapping areas between object-oriented researches, daily aesthetics, and affect studies that are seldom, if ever, openly addressed (Mosurinjohn, 2022). It can be contended that they should be seen as three answers to the field of religious studies that think about religion in the context of new materialism.

Object-oriented ontology (OOO) is a school of thought in metaphysics that was inspired by Heidegger and opposes the idea that human life should be prioritized above the existence of nonhuman things (Harman, 2002; Raud, 2021). Object-oriented philosophers share a critique of anthropocentrism and correlationism as well as the rejection of the maintenance of finitude, withdrawal, and ideologies that undermine or over mine objects. In tool-analysis, a withdrawn object is transformed into a sensual experience via a surface that is reachable by thought, action, or both. According to Morgan (2021), the objective is not to make the case that all faiths are essentially materialistic or that one religion's material study is more significant than any other.

"Affect" is used to refer to a wide variety of concepts, including action, atmosphere, capacity, force, intensity, potential, or connection to emotion, feeling, mood, sensation, and vibe. Affects are those almost imperceptible, excessively strong, in-between, or developing visceral energies and sentiments that go along with and mediate the intertwined material, particularly corporeal, and intellectual potentials of an occurrence. A direct perception of

the divine or of a religious object or being is how Schleiermacher (1958) defines religious experience. Harzard (2013) also emphasized that the subjective experience of religious occurrences is crucial to the study of religion. Fox and Alldred (2017) refer to a wide variety of concepts including action, atmosphere, capacity, force, intensity, potential, or connection to emotion, feeling, mood, sensation, and vibe. Affects are those almost imperceptible, excessively strong, in-between, or developing visceral energies and sentiments that go along with and mediate the intertwined material, particularly corporeal, and intellectual potentials of an occurrence. A direct perception of the divine or of a religious object or being is how Schleiermacher (1958) defines religious experience.

Harzard (2013) also emphasized that the subjective experience of religious occurrences is crucial to the study of religion. Fox & Alldred (2017) suggest that religious awareness is both deliberate, in that it has the infinite as its target, and instantaneous. The origin of aesthetics and teleology theories is traceable to Immanuel Kant. According to Kant (1987, 1988, 2001), there is a fundamental distinction between presentations that are intuitive or perceptible and those that are conceptual or logical. A judgment on an item can only be understood from the perspective of its purpose, and this is known as a teleological judgment. According to Kant, beauty must be regarded as purposeful yet without a clear goal. One may imagine a creator of nature who is not just clever but also has other qualities usually associated with God (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2021). If people are to accept the goal that the moral rule calls for, they must assume that an entity with these traits exists.

According to Ranjbar (2019), materialism has many faces. From a philosophical perspective, it represents a reduction of humanity and all things to the operation of matter following mindless physical laws. From the point of view of social relations, it involves valuing material objects or wealth over human values such as mercy, kindness, and love. The rise of materialism is often linked to and blamed on the growing authority of rational scientific thought. According to Ottuh (2020), Mainstream religions insist on a materialistic interpretation of concepts. For example, it takes the form of the conviction in Christianity that angels are entities that fly through space or that the heaven to which Christ ascended was the actual heaven. Similar tendencies emerged in Islam, leading to a literal interpretation of heaven and hell, the Day of Judgment, and the Resurrection.

Religion ought to be freed from these materialistic dogmas in order to experience its rebirth. Many materialists criticize religion and God. For Lucretius, superstition and fear were the root causes of religion. Materialists believed that religion was the root of all human depravity. For Ottuh and Idjakpo (2021), the true point of conflict most often arises when materialistic viewpoints are extended to people, God, and values. Vasquez (2011) uses cutting-edge research from a range of fields, including anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and environmental studies, to present a revolutionary new viewpoint on religion. According to Vasquez, materiality is in conflict with both earthly immanence and celestial transcendence. The argument that religion is

somehow private and self-contained is now a popular debate that often comes up in contemporary religious studies.

### **Feminist Materialism Intersectionalizing Religion**

The nature of matter and the materialism of the body have been prominent topics of discussion in recent feminist theory. These issues have raised interest in scientific study, especially biology. According to the argument, feminist critiques of science, new materialisms, and postcolonial science studies have all led to particular interactions with matter (Roy & Subramaniam, 2016). Here, a critical style of analysis is constructed by bringing various sectors into dialogue and exploring how the situations, local consequences, and contact zones of empire are manifested in materials and bodies. According to the notion of materialist feminism, society and capitalism force women into gender roles like raising children. Here, sexual identity is viewed as a social construct in materialist feminism, and society places gender norms on women. In this sense, the ideal society would treat women equally to men in both social and economic spheres.

Material feminism investigates the structural context in which social structures, such as gender hierarchy, emerge. Material feminism also takes into account how people of various ethnicities and races are kept in inferior economic positions because of a power imbalance that favours those who already possess them. Materialist feminists inquire about people's availability of free education, their ability to pursue occupations, and, if not, what obstacles stand in their way. The ideal society envisioned by materialist feminism is one in which men and women are treated equally, both socially and economically, and in which both sexes are equally intellectually and creatively gifted (Ottuh, 2010). A reconstructed academic environment may be seen to be forming with the altering of society on local, national, and worldwide scales as a result of economic, ecological, political, and technological changes and crises. According to Alaimo and Hekman (2008), every part of feminist philosophy should have an emphasis on matter. For example, scholarship tries to be multidisciplinary so that it can understand and analyze the complex dynamics of ongoing ecological, sociocultural, and political-economic changes.

There are differences among feminists in terms of how they see capitalism and how they perceive the structural factors that underpin oppression. Being a feminist does not automatically make one an opponent of capitalism, and being a materialist feminist does not automatically make one a socialist or even a critic of the existing *status quo*. Considerations of post-human, object-oriented ontology and the ontological or vital materialist approach are often related to feminist new materialisms (Ferguson, 1994). As a result of these theoretical shifts occurring in qualitative research, traditional positivist notions are challenged, researchers are directly involved in the research process, representationalism is questioned, and it is acknowledged that thinking with theoretical concepts is also empirical research. It is

contended that when people have meaningful conversations across cultures about things, a deeper investigation of mainstream religion is necessary (Allas & Muller, 2021). It makes sense for religion to be engaged in scholarly and curatorial inquiries into the lives of things if religions inform culture and culture influences the politics of power.

Part of a greater material shift in this area is the application of a new materialism to research on religion. The studies that have focused on ideality and stressed transcendence that have long dominated religious discussions are rejected, at least in large part, by new materialism (Hazard, 2013; Jones, 2016). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that new materialist historical approaches to religion have not yet proliferated. A more meaningful conversation connecting feminist theology and process theology is contained in feminist new materialism's attempt to compare postmodern and feminist process theology (Morgan, 2021). In this regard, feminist new materialism serves to further this discussion via methodical research. One of the vital parts of this tradition is that it tries to compare post-modernism to feminist process theology or religion.

### **Feminist New Materialism's Connection with Corporeality**

There is a need to revive the sociological seriousness regarding corporeality as the foundational ontology of the material body as self because of people's limited understanding of feminism. To showcase the relevance of the sensate body as the foundation of empirical and phenomenological investigations against this background, feminism provides a strategic platform (Delphy & Leonard, 1980). Corporeality comprises those experiences that are constrained by the physical world that humans' physical bodies are a part of. The divide nevertheless exists mostly in the physical body that is inhabited as humans, despite the blurring of the line between both the ur-real and the corporeal. The body is a crucial threshold term for new materialist studies, genealogy, and cartography that engage in processes of deconstruction and reconstruction.

The body is regarded in Western thinking as being opposed or subordinate to the soul or mind, which is a dualistic perspective on the body (Rogowska-Stangret, 2017). In the early phases of the emergence of the person's reflection, philosophers highlighted the issue of corporeality as that of the basic identity of a human being. Therefore, the postmodern age saw the end of the spiritualization of the body and the emission of the soul (Barad, 2003). Here is where the self-identification protest components appear. Dualism in general and mind-body dualism in particular could be reexamined in light of their political and ethical implications under the new materialism. By attempting to push dualisms to their extremes, new materialisms articulate two novel body concepts; hence, corporeality is the idea that perhaps the mind and body seamlessly converge.

The relationship between the materiality of the world and the body as bodily, corporeal material is unbreakable (Grosz, 1987). Because of its active-

passive characteristics and dynamic structure, it has the potential to move, respond, be acted upon, and form both itself and other things. These ideas about the body allow for simultaneous consideration of both human and non-human worlds and bodies. It creates the time and space for political thinking about relationships, allies, flows, and obstructions. As a result, the destabilization of onto-epistemological and ethical and political hierarchies is urgently needed as a result of the openness of the body, which also encourages new ways of thinking about persistent ethical and political issues. Sexual preference, sexuality, race, ability, and ethnicity are examples of categories usually connected with the body (Jagger, 2015). It is very important to think about these categories and look at how they are made and kept by power relationships that span bodies and environments.

The dualistic division of minds from bodies, or essences from culture, is rejected by feminist philosophy. It combines the phenomenological principle of embodiment with re-examinations of the complex relationship between bodies and power from the Marxist perspective. The sexualized nature, radical immanence, and effects of power relations on the world are the central ideas of feminist materialism. Deleuze's (1988) focus on processes, dynamic interaction, and dynamic boundaries is a high-tech version of vitalism, making his ideas extremely applicable to the study of the late industrial capitalist patriarchal culture that we live in today. He not only exhibits a high level of empathy for issues relating to diversity, sexuality, and modification, but he also gives the feminine a powerful new meaning. His emphasis on "becoming a woman" philosophy denotes a new kind of masculine philosophical sensibility that has learned to loosen the constraints of institutionalization and take some risks.

The inclination to link women with their bodies and to see the body as positively feminine is combated by paradoxical ideas. From the Bible to the present day, there is a wide range of written and visual art in the contributions. Using Christianity and Judaism for examples, they did not always or totally adhere to the physical world or spirituality, respectively. Jews may use Hellenistic philosophy, like that of Philo of Alexandria, or even Aristotelian ideas about the afterlife, like those of Maimonides, to shape their beliefs (Zizek, 2012). By accepting the concept of incarnation (the belief that the word became flesh), most Christians began to see God as a material being (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2021). Nevertheless, even though they borrowed from one another, Jews and Christians maintained their unique versions of reality. The core of Christian theology is the Jewish conception of God as an omnipresent, invisible, and bodiless deity (Miller & Bryant, 2013). God was believed to reside in the ark and, subsequently, in the temple in Jerusalem. The holy presence, known within the Talmud (Jewish rabbinic text) as the *Shekhina*, has been spread throughout the Jewish people since the collapse of the second temple. Actual gifts were transformed into words and everyday prayers. For instance, numerous times throughout the Talmud, a man named Antoninus converses with another man named Rabi Yehuda, who is undoubtedly the

highly regarded Sanhedrin president. Jewish sages who felt threatened by Hellenistic influence protested against it.

Orthodox Jews gather every bodily fragment, even if it is spread widely at the scene of a terrorist attack, to preserve the body's limbs as much as possible before burial. Maimonides (Jews who modernized Jewish thought and codified Jewish law) may not have agreed with it. His call for the soul's separation from the body after death was strongly opposed by Jewish sages of the time, and some even regarded him as a heretic. There is no one particular religion that is unique in its uncertainty over how to understand the physical body in religious philosophy. It is shown in numerous instances that the body may serve as a conduit or barrier for mystical knowledge. In this sense, feminist materialism aims to explore the subtle differences in how the body is treated and understood within and across religious traditions (Steyi, 2001). The contemporary feminist protest movement now demonstrates its affinities with the body politic, with social behaviours that express an individual's social and political views. In this regard, the act of first-person self-representation, like a Cartesian cogito (new thinking), is fundamentally pre-reflective or protestative. The new feminist protest movement is moving away from the political and social reality in a way that moves away the most active form of social reflection, which is the live heart of social action.

### **Perception of Women Bodies**

It is pertinent to examine how women's perceptions of their bodies as locations of interactions and conflicts align with the religious idea of new materialism. Women's relationships with their bodies are complicated. The body ought to be a source of enjoyment, a facilitator of agency, and a link between the outside world and the self. However, most women see their bodies as a source of disappointment, concern, and labour at least occasionally. Women use their bodies as a tool for self-improvement. Women are given instructions on a daily basis on the way their bodies should behave, look, and operate. Branding and other media, religious texts and authorities, medical professionals, policymakers, and other females all provide guidance in this regard (Ottuh & Onimhawo, 2020). Women are taught that one's body should be feminine, attractive, but not overly sexy, not slutty, pure, but not prudish, and curvy in the right places; young if they are adults; fashionably dressed; controlled in one's posture, bearing, warmth, and appetites; healthy, fit, and able-bodied.

Women ought to own, exhibit, and embody impossibilities. What they perceive other women to do and how they feel other women desire to look, among other ideals, serve as the foundation for how women establish personal standards for their bodies. While some organizations think that a beautiful woman should really have toned muscles, others think that showing off one's muscles is unfeminine. Norms have the drawback of making it impossible for women to know precisely the type of beauty maintenance different women do and how they require them to do it. As a result, women might fear that they are not accomplishing enough or that it takes them a lot longer than other women

to look their best. Ideals are attainable but should not be expected to be attained; merely making an effort to do so should suffice. Yet it appears that several women today have made the ideal of beauty their benchmark. Through nutrition, exercise, foundation clothing, cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, and other procedures, they make a concerted effort to manage and regulate their bodies. They also make wise fashion choices. They do this to try to live up to expectations, avoid being judged, follow cultural and gender norms, find and keep love and sexual partners, and improve their social standing.

The attempt to transform such a conceptual model into scientific reality is undesirable. A societal system that sought to enforce an interpretation of reality that better suited its religious convictions is the same one Galileo encountered. It is an unquestionable matter of personal preference to hold to a materialist theory of reality. The body has been regarded for a large portion of western philosophy as one biological item among others, a component of the biological nature from which our reasoning abilities distinguish us. For feminists, it is problematic that the conflict between the mind and the body and the conflict between men and women are related. Feminists must face corporeality in a bid to understand and address constructs of sex difference in order to challenge such presumptions. Early feminists who supported a dualism between the body and the mind saw physical qualities as contingent aspects of the person. They believed that it was crucial to disprove any suggested deterministic connection between physical traits, mental faculties, and social roles, much as it was for later feminists.

The hazards that Wollstonecraft (1988) identified with women producing their bodies like objects for other people to judge have been reflected in feminist literature up until the present day. Through the efforts of women's rights activists like Mary Wollstonecraft as well as Sojourner Truth, who emphasized the significance of something like the body as both a marker of race and class, the body gained popularity in the 19th century (Ahmed, 2000). One can see an awareness of the way that physical characteristics are exploited to support either race or sexual oppression in Cady Stanton's works (Jaggar, 2015). The focus on the body is a key component of metaphysical, ethical, social, and political philosophy, thanks to feminist embodiment theorists. The variety of philosophical theories needed to make sense of the embodied self are highlighted in feminist literature. If embodied subjectivity is to be understood, naturalizing frameworks must be supplemented by phenomenological, poststructuralist, and psychoanalytic ones, much as feminist theorists have done. Despite the significance of the body to women's psychology, feminist materialists have been slow to take this interaction seriously. These ideas have an impact on conceptions of personality and the objectification of corporeal consciousness. Girls and women today see images of their bodies in the media and on social media all the time.

Women, and increasingly males, attempt to mold their bodies into the shapes that reflect predominate social norms through regimens of eating, makeup, exercise, clothes, and cosmetic surgery. The tangible contours of their bodies are regulated to conform to a social ideal by methods including hair

straightening, blue-tinted contact lenses, and surgical restoration of noses and lips. They demonstrate the privileged position that some often white, always capable bodies hold. The discipline of the gendered body—most insistently the female body—adopts Foucauldian (Foucault, 1979) insights on discipline strategies of the body. Such explanations emphasize how women consciously control their bodies to avoid social consequences as well as to experience specific types of pleasure. Instead of using physical force to compel compliance, people in this situation police themselves to conform to social norms. Since the early 1990s, Butler's (2004) explanation of gender consciousness has dominated feminist philosophy. She disagrees with the theory that gender differences and the assumptions around heterosexuality are the result of biological or innate differences. Instead, she investigates how this so-called "naturalizing trick" is accomplished; examining how such unification between biological sex, gendered identity, and heterosexuality becomes apparent as natural. Butler's explanation appears to address the need for an embodiment theory that may account for disparities based on race, class, and disability. Even while physical behaviours are designed to display gendered positionality, cultural positioning and other social constructs make it impossible to separate the strand of gender that is always present.

The body is actively engaged in processes of development and transformation; it is not only a materiality that defies any attempt to describe it. It is an effort to further develop Freud's assertion that the ego is a corporeal ego (Freud, 1962) and that there is curiosity inside the phenomenology of embodiment. The assumption that such outlines are perceived independently of social formation is not made here; rather, the emphasis is on the way the materiality of the body manifests in our perceptions of both our own bodies and those of others. Young (2005) contends that women frequently view their bodies as things or objects, which contributes to the inhibited intentionality feature of female embodiment. She frequently views their body as a burden that needs to be really pushed and prodded along while also being protected. Such experiences of embodiment, according to Young and Beauvoir, are more a result of how women are treated in modern society than of their anatomical make-up. Insisting on the importance of the body for social and political thought, feminist embodiment theorists have significantly contributed to the field of philosophy of embodiment. The theories that develop offer a broad explanation of the relationships between bodies and selves, not just gendered embodiment. The worldview of embodiment extends beyond social concerns to engage in discussions of the philosophy of mind/body, in which the focus on embodiment has gone beyond a straightforward reductionist view of the relationship among both mind and brain to take into account an incarnated self embedded inside an environment.

### **Religious Response to Women's Bodies Perception**

Recent theorists have made an effort to take human physicality seriously and refuse to view the body as a temporary home for the soul. Race

and gender issues are shown to be important indicators of how humans have perceived their own place in the universe. The body and its cultural image are inseparable. The body is influenced by social constructions, much like every other facet of human life and society. Particular and rigorous discipline have indeed been placed over what has been perceived as being a potentially chaotic and hazardous place of experience under the pretense of resolving the concerns inherent in emerging as a physical being. According to Foucault (1990), political interference has molded the erotic nature of the body in and of itself. Women are typically linked with the physical; hence, attempts by the religious to regulate the body have a disproportionately negative impact on the female body. Religion can be best comprehended within the context of its social role. Religious rituals and beliefs serve as components of humanity's effort to impose order on what appears to be a chaotic natural world. This process of trying to figure out what is clean, organized, and therefore holy and what is dirty, disorderly, and therefore impure does not leave the body out.

Although female bodies remain susceptible to different types of release, including excrement, the female body has traditionally been linked more closely to the perceived risks of discharges. According to Doniger (1997), a negative outlook on using the body to find spiritual fulfillment inevitably results in misogyny. According to Ruether (cited in Collins, 1997), the foundation of patriarchal religion is millions of suppressed fears about the power of female biological processes. The foundation underlying patriarchal attempts to regulate the natural environment is mistrust of the female body, as well as its unpredictable but also awe-inspiring beauty. In these cultural contexts, men can safely appear to be women, particularly in regard to aspects of care and reproduction. This same female body has always been viewed as potentially hazardous, with a variety of taboos imposed on its unruly nature. The virginal and maternal aspects of women's looks have also been celebrated at the same time.

In Christianity, the most revered person is the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the embodiment of God and Christ. Women's bodies have been reclaimed by body theologians from patriarchal interpretations and control. Nelson (1998) challenges the notion that sexuality should be seen as a component of man's lower, animal nature by applying feminist concepts to the growth of an embodied male spirituality. He reconsiders the nature of God as a result of integrating spirituality and sexuality. God is found through relationships rather than existing as an essence separate from the world and its workings. Moving beyond any standard description of the body and accepting the relevance of difference for comprehending physical practice is a significant step. This conclusion, however, does not take away from the need to pay attention to the body. For example, taking into account the views of people who live with disabilities makes the idea that the body should be seen as the center of human self-understanding more likely.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has highlighted the significance of corporeality as the foundational ontology of the physical body as a person. Feminist philosophy challenges the dichotomous division between essences and culture, as well as the separation of minds and bodies. It highlights the inclination to link women with their physical bodies and their sense of self, and the fact that new materialism challenges the perspective that a conscious entity exercises control over lifeless matter and instead highlights the need to recognize human embodiment while downplaying the idea that the physical body only acts as a temporary dwelling for the soul. Additionally, this analysis underscores the influence of social constructs on various facets of human existence and societal dynamics, as well as the liberation of women's bodies from patriarchal interpretations and dominance.

New materialism asserts that the composition of the world and human history consists of events that are comprised of both cultural and natural elements, devoid of any discernible structures, systems, or processes. The concept is widely accepted and integrated into disciplines like bioethics, biomedicine, and biotechnology; thus, a contemporary iteration of vitalism that incorporates advanced technology places emphasis on dynamic processes, interactive dynamics, and fluid boundaries, thereby proposing a novel manifestation of masculine intellectual sensibility. However, the study of religion as a phenomenon is incongruous with the methodologies employed by modern materialism. It is imperative to prioritize the recognition of human corporeality and the influence of societal constructs. More so, in the views of philosophers, theologians, and religious thinkers, it is imperative to liberate women's bodies from patriarchal interpretation and control. In this sense, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive understanding of women's bodies that extends beyond their physical appearance.

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