

# On the Myth and Magic of Apparitions: A Study Based on Mother Mary's Church in Sri Lanka

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**Abstract:** The design of this research article is to bring about the overall understanding about a Christian Religious myth on Mother Mary's appearances or magical revelations at churches to people and how these revelations impacted in creating new religious dogmas. These revelations are being experienced in all over the world from small scale to large scale including Sri Lanka and how people have absorbed these beliefs leading to social changes. The article gives an explanation on the root causes and other reasons that lead to a religious belief or a dogma. The article is constructed contrasting and the connections with the thoughts abided with Mother Mary's revelations to people. The essay is a qualitative descriptive analysis. The Methodology used is epistemological.

**Keywords:** Apparitions- Visions, revelations or appearances of Mother Mary. Adoration - Worship, glorify, praise and adore god in a symbolic way.

## I. BACKGROUND

The apparition or the revelation of Mother Mary has taken place in many parts of the world. It has taken place during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the years after. There are many research articles in the world about the apparition of Mother Mary. The essay discusses and validates the beliefs of the apparitions taken place in the world and in Sri Lanka. The essay discusses how apparitions take place, the nature of apparitions and how the virgin Mary's apparition became a dogma to the Catholic Christians who believe about it and how the worship of the Mother Mary's apparitions have taken a prominent place in Catholic and how it became a cult and culture. Worshipping Mother Mary is an important part of Catholic Church. The essay gives an understanding what apparitions are in Christianity and what Catholic beliefs are. The essay explains why the worship of Mother Mary has taken a prominent place of worship.

### *Statement of The Research Question*

The main objective of this essay is to give an understanding about what apparitions are in Christianity? Why it has taken a prominent place for devotees to worship them, go on pilgrims to sight them. It is also important to find out why the people are gathering around apparitions and seeking supernatural help for their helplessness? It is also important to find out and analyze the fact why the devotees expect miracles and visions? Are these apparitions of virgin Mother Mary is magic or a religious dogma? Are the apparitions a part of paganism? Are they some kind of religious cult? What is the reason

behind religious miracles, revelations and apparitions? The main research question is to research on why do people visit these sites in large numbers and worship them? Does it really provide the expected results?

*Other Objectives of the Research Question is Apparition an Ideology?*

This essay has attempted to find out answers to three questions. Firstly, is an apparition a religious ideology? Religion as an ideology means a belief system that distorts people's perception of reality in ways that serve the interests of the ruling class. Ideologies are a set of belief, values, myths, ideas, attitudes, and doctrine that shape the behavioral approach to political, economic, social, cultural or ecological activities of an individual or an organization. But not every person shares the same beliefs and values. According to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the book "On Religion" 1957, argues that "Religion is an Ideological weapon and social opium". Has the apparition of Mother Mary become a set of beliefs, among the Catholic devotees which has become a religious culture and an ideology? The apparition is becoming an ideology over a period of time to legitimate the claims

### *Are Apparitions Magic or Myths?*

Secondly, can apparitions be some kind of magic or a myth? Are apparitions or the revelations widely held false beliefs or ideas? Are they traditional supernatural stories that came from Western countries to Sri Lanka? Why did people start believing that these apparitions can bring forth solutions to their day to day life problems? Why the people are oppressed to seek for religious miracles? We need to find out whether apparitions are some kind of magic performed. Apparitions take the form of magic in Sociology. Magic or miracle making has become a new version of highly developed stage in religion. According to Emile Durkheim in "The Elementary forms of the Religious Life" 1912, argues that the people are in constant desire for fulfillments and these unfulfilled desires bring about new dogmas and religious ideologies.

### *Are Apparitions Connected with Cosmology?*

Lastly, can apparitions be cosmology? Hinduism and Buddhism are closely connected with Cosmology. Are apparitions similar to cosmology? The apparition or the revelation of Mother Mary has taken place in many parts of the world. It has taken place during the 19th century and in the

years after. There are many research articles in the world about the apparition of Mother Mary. This essay discusses and validates the beliefs of the apparitions taken place in Sri Lanka through particularly selecting a church that experienced the apparition of Mother Mary in Moratuwa. The essay discusses how apparitions take place, the nature of apparitions and how the virgin Mary's apparition became a dogma to the Catholic Christians who believe about it and how the worship of the Mother Mary's apparitions have taken a prominent place in Catholic and how it became a cult and culture.

#### *What Is Religion?*

Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals that serves to bind people together through shared worship, thereby creating a social group. Religion is a set of beliefs and practices that pertain to a sacred or supernatural realm that guides human behavior and gives meaning to life among a community of believers. Religion is a strong social institution and provides the base for science too. Religion is an institution consisting of culturally patterned integration. Religion has many functions. It works as an agent of socialization. Religion promotes welfare and provides mental peace. The critical feature of religion is that the beliefs, shared patterns of action and value systems in a religion. According to Emile Durkheim in the book *Elementary forms of Religion* argues that 'Religion is a unified sign of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things that is to say things set apart and forbidden. Beliefs and practices are in one single moral community, called a church or all those who adhere to them'. According to Emile Durkheim, there are functions of Religion which are reaffirming social bonds between people, creating social cohesion through religious rituals and binding individuals to society by establishing a collective consciousness.

Sociologists define Religion in three main ways: substantive, functional and social constructionist by the founding fathers of Religion.

#### *The Substantive Definition of Religion*

The Substantive definition attempts to establish what religion is about. It attempts to establish categories of religious content that qualify as religion and other categories specified as non-religion.

#### *The Functional Definition of Religion*

The functional definition of Religion emphasizes what Religion does for the individual or the social group. It emphasizes the way religion operates in human lives. When constructing functional definition is that sociologists ask what a religion does using psychologically or socially. The functional perspective Religion does not exist to explain our world, but rather to help us survive in the world, whether by binding the people together socially or by supporting psychologically and emotionally.

#### *The Social Constructionist Definition of Religion*

The Social constructionist definitions to Religion present a naturalistic explanation of the origins of Religion. Social constructionist says that it is not possible to produce a single universal definition or religion since too many religions exist. There is no consensus on the term Religion as it always involves with belief in God/supernatural. It is not assumed that religion performs similar functions for everyone in all societies.

#### *Other Definitions*

Religion is defined by sociologists in many ways. Religion is a form of culture, which involves beliefs that take the form of ritualized practice. It provides a sense of purpose. Sociologists are not concerned with whether the religious beliefs are true or false, but with how religions are organized beliefs constitute sources of whether religious social solidarity or conflict and what social forces are at work.

According to Talal Asad 1993, in the book "The construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category" pp27-54, "Definitions of Religion are an issue of serious debate in Sociology and Anthropology. How one defines Religion shapes ones explanation of its role in Sociology. Different definitions of Religion result in different interpretations. He further states that Definition of Religion tends to suffer from one or two problems. They are either too narrow and exclude many belief systems which most agree are religious, or they are too vague and ambiguous. Suggesting that just about any and everything is a Religion."

The following are definitions from the book "The Philosophy of Great Religions" by Dr. Ram Nath Sharma pp21-63.

Sigmund Freud defines that "Religion is a state of mind." According to Sigmund Freud, Religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world, in which we are placed by means of the wish- world which we have developed inside us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. If one attempts to assign to Religion its place in man's evolution, it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity".

According to Mahathma Gandhi, Religion is not what is grasped by the brain, but is a grasp of the heart.

Hegalian define Religion as an "Emphasize the element of reason in it."

According to Albert Einstein, "Religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are also to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotion conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms the idea of God".

“If we must play the theological game, let us never forget it is a game. Religion can survive only as a consciously accepted system of make-believe defines A. Huxley.

Mathew Arnorld defines Religion as “Nothing but morality touched with emotions.

Kant emphasizes the primary of moral will brings in God only as a moral postulate.

Religion is a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism” defines W.M James.

Each Religion necessarily contradicts itself defines Schopenhauer.

#### *What Is Apparition?*

According to the International Marian Research Institute of the university of Dayton, Ohio statistics, Apparition is a remarkable or unexpected appearance of some body, a vision or a reflection .In most cases it has happened with connection to The Virgin Mother Mary. The Marian apparition of the Blessed virgin mother Mary was reported as supernatural. The figure is always named after the town where it was reported. It has been believed to be occurred in many catholic Marian churches around the world as well as in Sri Lanka. According to the statistics, the famous The Lady of Lourdes, the Lady of Fatima are the first churches that experienced apparitions in the world. There are churches that many numbers of devotees visit to pray for their problems.

#### *Historical Importance of Marian Apparition/Revelation*

Mother Mary has always been an important part of the Catholic Church. Since the Bible does not have any information about the bodily taking (Assumption) of Virgin Mary there was no solid decision in the Catholic Church, but during the seventh century, the Catholic Church, accepted the bodily taking(Assumption) of Virgin Mary as on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, but according to the Carmel Seth Pahana church records ,theological debate continues.

According to R.L Stiraat, in “Power and Religiosity” pp34, sighting the disputes within the Catholic Church about the assumption of Virgin Mary the Pope Pius xii made a historical statement and defined the assumption of Mary as dogma on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1950. Pope Pius xii said,” By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed apostles Peter and Paul and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma, that the immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed as body and soul into heavenly glory”. The ultramontane’s atmosphere of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the particular religious inclinations of the Pope became increasingly important.

According to Hayer 1969, The Pope Pius IX was cured of epilepsy at the Marian shrine of Loretto and he had a strong personal devotion to Mother Mary. The apparition in1858, at Lourdes was very famous. It was announced that Mother

Mary was “Immaculate conception” and effectively the seal was put on papal and a dogmatic announcement was made by Pope alone without the Bishops.

According to Dr Joseph I Sriven, Mayo Clinic 2007, in his research and publish of book “Seizures among public Figures: Lessons Learned from the epilepsy of Pope Pius IX” argues that ‘the Pope indeed had Epilepsy” after consulting twenty one sources including the Library Congress, Librarians, and the Vatican Library to identify the health condition of Pope Pius IX. He further argues that the health condition influenced the papacy and the Marian doctrine. The Pope created the “Queen ship of Mary” in the Liturgical calendar, the 11<sup>th</sup> of October in 1954, which now falls on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August.

#### II. THE NATURE OF AN APPARITION.

Apparitions are a part of Religion and Religion is a strong social institution. An apparition is witnessed by one person or many people at a church. In some apparitions an image is reported absent of any verbal interaction. They are most of the time private revelations. There is no physical contact of the apparitions. Photographs taken, at times of the apparitions suggest silhouettes of a statue of the Virgin Mary but the images were subjected to verifying interpretations.

According to the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton statistics, Some apparitions have received a Canonical coronation from the Pope, most notably Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Perpetual Succor, Our Lady of Maneog, Our Lady of Pillar, and Our Lady of Walsingham.

According to the sacred Congregation for the doctrine of faith or the Holy See, (The Holy office), the Vatican has published a detailed set of steps for “Judging Alleged Apparitions and Revelations’ that claims supernatural in 1978. The sacred congregation for the doctrine of the faith or the Holy See (The Holy office) issued a statement of steps that has to be carried out to approve a Marian apparition. (The steps and guidelines are given in an annexure in the essay)

Professor Sandra L Zimdars- Swartz 2014, in the book “Encountering Mary” argues that “a specific kind of vision in which a person or a being not normally within the visionary’s perceptual range appears to that person, not in a world apart as in a dream but as a part of the environment without apparent connection to verifiable visual stimuli”.

Mercea Eliade, in “a History of Religious ideas”1976, argues that “Religion is a belief in something sacred such as Gods or other super natural beings. He argues that there is a distinction between sacred and profane objects. He states that ritual acts are focused on sacred objects. A moral code believed to have a sacred or super natural basis”.

He argues that characteristically “religious feelings, sense of mystery, sense of guilt which tends to be around in the presence of sacred objects and during the practices of natural life and prayer and other forms of communications with the

supernatural beings”. He further argues that “a world view of the word as a whole and the place of the specifications of an over-all purpose or point of the world and an indication of how the individual fit into it”.

According to the Holy Bible King James Version New testament 2015, states that since the crucifixion of Jesus there had been apparitions of Jesus Christ. In John 20:24-29, Thomas the Apostle doubting conversation between Jesus and Thomas the apostle after the death of Jesus Christ until he felt the wounds of Jesus.

According to the Holy Bible King James version 2015, in the book of” Revelations,” which is the last book in the Bible, chapters one and two, states the author, John the Patmos, that “ He saw visions about the future that is going to happen.” The book is full of visions.

*Similar Experiences in The World*

According to R.L Stirrat in “Power and Religiosity” 1987, argues that in 1830, St Catherine Lamoure experienced an apparition of the virgin which was the stimulus for the cult of the miraculous medal. R. L Stiraat pp 46, 47 records that in 1849, there was a further apparition at Los Angeles Seattle and in 1858 the even more famous apparition at Lourdes took place.

Christian 1972, has suggested that the stress on Virgin Mary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was related to the growth of the symbolic importance of the family put other factors were also important. Given the renewed Christ centric nature of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic teaching, the role of the virgin “Christ’s mother”

A similar experience has occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Ireland, Eugene Hynes says, “This happened on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879, in a rural village of Knock, County Mayo .A group of villagers had seen a tableau of heavenly personages under the Parish church had framed as an apparition of the Virgin Mary. This apparition has captured the attention of scholars of popular culture and Religion. This is a good case study to understand the social construction of religious experiences. This incident has taken place due to pressures faced by the tenants from landlords and the disputes have made them to see help from their religion.”

Another similar incident which is the famous apparition in the world is the apparition at the church Our Lady of Fatima in Portuguese. This is said to be the largest Marian society in the world which was approved by Pope Pius Xii in 1917.

The Marian apparition at Lourdes was reported in 1858 by Bernadette Sourbirous, a fourteen year old miller’s daughter from the town of Lourdes in France from the 11<sup>th</sup> February to 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1858. She had reported eighteen apparitions of a “Lady” she has described the lady had been wearing a white veil, and a blue girdle. She had a golden rose on each foot and held a rosary of pearls. The claims were declared to be worthy of belief after an investigation and the apparition was known as our Lady of Lourdes. In 1860, the local Bishop declared

that “The Virgin Mary did appear indeed to Bernadette Sourbirous in 1858 and Pope Pius XII issued the “Encyclical Le Pelerinage de Lourdes” or “Pilgrimage to Lourdes” on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparition. Miss Sourbirous was canonized as a saint in 1933 by Pope Pius XI. Below shows the Mother Mary’s apparitions which have taken place at many places around the world and the names received by the churches under Mother Mary’s name.

Name of the church	Country
Our Lady of Lourdes	France
Our Lady of Fatima	Portugal
Our Lady of Gaudalupe	Mexico
Our Lady of Perpetual Successor	Italy
Our Lady of Manaoag	Philippines
Our Lady of Pillar	India
Our Lady of Walsingham	England
Our Lady of Beauraing	Belgium
Our Lady of Banneux	Belgium
Our Lady of Akita	Japan
Our Lady of Syracuse	Italy
Our Lady of Zeitoun	Egypt
Our Lady of Manila	Philippines
Our Lady of Betania	Venezuela

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

*Capitalism, Reason For Apparitions*

According to Karl Marx Religion plays a significant role in maintaining a status quo. The Marxist theory of Religion needs to be seen in the context of this general view of society. Karl Marx in “Das Kapital”, argued that Religion was actually a tool of bourgeoisie to keep the proletariat contended. Marx says that Religion is able to do this by promising rewards in the after- life rather than in this life. He further states that Religion is used extensively to maintain political needs. For an example, the state New-year celebrations and cultural events are used to cover up any political wrong doing. He further states that Religion can be used to mislead the people.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engles 1957, “On Religion” argue that Religion is an ideological weapon. Religion is an ideology. Ideology is a belief system that distorts people’s perception of reality in ways that serve the interests of the ruling class. Through education, and media new ideologies emerge. People, who have faith in Religion, believe that wealth is God given and sometimes they don’t work hard for earning but expect God to bring about everything to them. An Ideology is a collection of beliefs and values that an individual or a group holds.

Karl Marx in “Society and Social Change” 1973, states that there are two classes in a society. The two classes are proletariats and the bourgeoisie. There is a constant conflict

between the two groups. The Proletariats are continuously exploiting the bourgeoisie. Karl Marx, further states that Religion was actually a tool of the proletariats to keep the bourgeoisie contended. During his period he only saw the workers, children and women being exploited in London and Germany for low wages. He states that the proletariats are using Religion to cover up the exploitations in such ways that taking the staff on a religious pilgrimage, or a trip, holding a ‘Pirith’ session at office or any kind of religious activity is directed towards covering up the exploitations, for granting low wages, and unjust. He further argues that whichever class controls the society controls everything else.

He suggests on how much the proletariat and the political leaders seen highly connected with Religion. We have seen and heard how the leaders in the countries go to temples to offer flowers, to observe “sil”, meet the Religious leaders and worship at highly recognized churches to gain publicity. Therefore he suggests that people are being misled through Religion.

Karl Marx argues that the structures of the religious buildings are used as weapons such as the Lord Buddha’s “Res” are fixed to temple gates and the large land areas with car parks for highly ranked churches, are all used as weapons to show the power of the miracle or the power of the church or temple that people visit large spaces are a welcome for more devotees. The churches that experienced apparitions are large in size.

Karl Marx on “Society and Social Change”1973, suggests that Religion mislead the poor into believing that suffering is virtuous that they will be favored in the afterlife. According to the Bible quotation “It is easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle”. He argues as to why the people cannot receive a good life during the current life? Karl Marx argues that why we have to suffer and virtuously wait until the next life to receive a good life.

Karl Marx argues that if the society was classless, Religion will not exist. He further states that the abolition of Religion as the illusionary happiness of the people is the demand, for their real happiness, and as a result people would overcome worldly rewards and oppression. Karl Marx predicts that the working class would ultimately become aware of themselves being exploited and will unite to overthrow capitalism.

#### *Religious Spirituality and Apparitions*

Sigmund Freud, throughout his life committed and devoted and endeavored to understand what Religion and spirituality was. He in his book “Totem and Taboo” 1913, argues about “Totemic” lives and worship of the people. People worshipped birds, trees, objects as Gods. Can apparitions be a similar experience of worship to the Totem cult?

Sigmund Freud in “The Interpretations of Dreams”1900, argues that when a person ends up in a helpless situation; the exact situation is directed or filled by Religion.

#### *Wish Fulfillment and Apparitions*

Sigmund Freud in the book “The Future of an Illusion/wunscherfullung”1989 argues that religion is just wishful thinking to combat psychological turmoil and this turmoil is due to pressures from society or fear of the natural world. In order to fulfill basic needs and desires the mind creates images and beliefs”. Wish fulfillment is the satisfaction of a desire through an involuntary thought process. Wish fulfillment can occur in dreams or in day dreams in the symptoms of neurosis, or in the hallucinations of psychosis. According to Sigmund Freud, wish fulfillment occurs when unconscious desires are repressed by Id, Ego and super Ego. This repression often stems from guilt and taboos imposed by society. Dreams are attempts by the unconscious to resolve some repressed conflicts. Therefore are these apparitions real or are they illusions that people saw due to the pressures and the turmoil’s they face?

Sigmund Freud in “The Future of Illusions”1900 argues that “Religion is not necessarily false, but illusionary and it is something that answers inner needs. He focuses on the functions of Religion in overcoming inner fears and turmoil. Sigmund Freud believed that religion was a great hindrance to society, and so set out to prove that it is merely a product of the mind, an “illusion”. He offered both psychological and historical explanation of the origins of Religion. Religion helps people to carry on with their lives. It is an illusion and a psychological vacuum that we have created. The problems and gaps in our lives are filled through religious magic, apparitions and miracles. Sigmund Freud, in the “New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis” 1933, argues that Religion is an illusion and derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our institutional distress.

Sigmund Freud in “An Outline of Psychoanalysis”1938 argues that Religion has dogmas that are designed to suppress the desires of the people and these dogmas are created and rooted in our “subconscious mind”. “Religion fills loneliness of a human”. He states further that Religion helps as a channel to receive what we cannot receive.

Sigmund Freud states that “Religion is what has been created in the mind”. Christians pray to God with faith and hope in God for what we need such as seeking a job, for an illness, or to find a partner and there is no end to the human desires to explain.

Sigmund Freud in “Psychosexual Development”1905 argues that Religion was an expression of underlying psychological neurosis and distress. At various points, in his writings, he suggests that Religion was an attempt to control the “Oedipal Complex” Oedipal complex means giving structure to social groups, wish fulfillment, an infantile delusion, and an attempt to control the outside world. Sigmund Freud argues that Religion is a largely unconscious neurotic response to respond to our problems, which were repressed over and over and the civilized society demands that if we do not fulfill our desires immediately, they will be repressed Sigmund Freud,

“Obsessive Actions and Religious practices 1907 pp 48 argues that “religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world, in which we are placed, by means of the wish-world which we have developed inside us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. If one attempts to assign to religion its place in man’s evolution, it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity.”

#### IV. MYTHOLOGY AND APPARITIONS

Myths make use of symbols. The role of symbols is, to distinct from that of myth. According to Dr. Ram Nath Sharma, in the book philosophy of Religion pp32 states that “The conception of divine or supernatural power, which constitutes the very spirit or quintessence of religion, the religion includes the sense of dependence upon some supernatural and extra human agencies of human welfare. It is felt that myriad ills, diseases and misfortunes which afflict men are consequences of the wrath or righteous anger of Gods and that these can be avoided or mitigated by propitiation of these powers and that by earning their goodwill man can be prosperous healthy and happy in his terrestrial abode.”

According to Professor A.A MacDonnell in “Vedic Mythology” 2000 pp 43 argues that “A myth actually arises when the imagination interprets a natural event as the action of a personified being resemble human agent.” He further states that Mythology is connected with Religion, providing myths and tales about origin and character of Gods and ways and means of their approach.

According to Gananath Obeysekera in “Buddhism Transformed”1988, Medusa’s Hair,1984 argues that the Kataragama devala is visited by Devala heads, samis, Manis, and the kapu men annually to offer rituals. They dress up in red and trample fire, and inserting thorns to the body to show that they are devoted to God in such a way. They are celebrating the connection of walli amma and the Kataragama God. It is symbolic to show Kawadi dance. They dance in front of the procession in full strength in mind. This is what Sigmund Freud’s meaning of rational argument to a person holding a religious conviction will not change the neurotic response of a person.

#### V. ICONOGRAPHY AND APPARITIONS

According to Gananath Obeysekera, in “The cult of Goddess Pattini” 1984, pp69, we can find examples in our religious environments such as the twelve different Bandara cult in Kandy. The

Wishnu God having six faces and twelve hands, body piercing at Kataragama are a few examples for “Iconography”. People use Iconography to show power in the mind. Sigmund Freud says, Religion gives a “hope” to fill the vacuum in the mind. Now it has become a cult and a culture. Iconography is the use or study of images, symbols or modes of representation collectively associated with aspersion or movement.

#### *Outward Projection of Human Inner Nature*

According to Ludwich Feurbach in the book “The Essence of Religion”2014, God and the idea of God at a higher being is dependent upon the force of attraction to religion and giving divinity to religion to a figure like God is a being that acts throughout humans in all forms. Religion is an outward projection of human inner needs. Feuerbach developed the idea that God is projection of the unconscious mind. Sigmund Freud’s explanations were built on Ludwich Feurbach’s ideas, while Sigmund Freud added a psychological foundation. He also adds the explanation that adoption of Religion is a reversion to childish patterns of thought in response to feelings of helplessness and guilt. When people sin, they don’t reveal it to anyone except God or it can be some serious need of a person such as the helplessness to have a child, the helplessness to find a partner to marry. These requests are directed to God. For an example, according to Professor Premakumara de Silva, “Beyond the Sacred Journey Pilgrimage Practices at the Temple of Sri Pada”2012 the helpless requests such as to have a child and find a partner is written in “Sripade” at Adams Peak. The primary social psychological reason why religion continues to exist is because it answers existential questions that are difficult. If not possible, it has to be addressed scientifically.

#### *Effects of Post Colonial Settings and The Cult of Virgin Mary*

According to R.L Stirrat in the book, “Power and Religiosity in Post- Colonial Setting”, states in his study of the villages of Kudagama, Pallansena and other villages in Kandy that he researched, saw a “cultural fragmentation in contemporary Sri Lanka focuses on a series of new Catholic shrines that attract hundreds of pilgrims. Their fame is based among other things on their efficacy as centers for demonic exorcism, for alleviating suffering and helping people to find jobs.” R. L Stirrat further examined that the rise of these shrines in relation to the historical experiences of the Catholic community rather than in terms of narrowly defined religious criteria. Central to this broader non- religious context is the role of power and especially the impact of post colonialism on the small Roman Catholic population in Sri Lanka”.

He further argues that “The third major theme in Missionary Religion was the cult of the Virgin Mary. Again the development and propagation of this cult must be seen in terms of processes based in Western Europe which had an important political dimension.

According to Ralph Peiris 1948, In both Europe and Sri Lanka, devotion to Mary had of course been a major theme in popular religiosity prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ralph Peiris further argues that “Mariolatry” became increasingly important. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the great period of Marion revival, especially in France, and many French missionaries had personal devotions to the virgin.

The below is a table that explains about Apparitions that took place in the world.

Year	Place	# People Involved	Approval of Faith Expression (Prayer, devotion) at site.	Approval of Supernatural character
1991	San Juan (Puerto Rico)	Luz Diaz		No decision
1991	Lake Ridge (U.S.A.)	Father James Bruse		No decision
1991	San Bruno (U.S.A.)	Carlos Lopez Jorge Zavala		No decision
1991	Paris (France)	Two people		No decision
1992	Moscow (Russia)	N.A.		No decision
1992	Falmouth (U.S.A.)	Sandy		No decision
1992	Toledo (U.S.A.)	Sally Steadman		No decision
1992	Scottsdale (U.S.A.)	Carole Ameche Peterson		No decision
1992	Enfield (U.S.A.)	Neil Harrington Jr.		No decision
1992	Aokpc (Nigeria)	Christina Agbo		No final decision
1993	Thu Duc (Vietnam)	1 girl		No decision
1993	Arc-Watripont (Belgium)	1 boy		No decision
1993	Belleville (U.S.A.)	Roy Doiron		No decision
1993	Cincinnati (U.S.A.)	Rita Ring woman		N.A.
1993	New S. Wales (Australia)	Matthew Kelly		No decision
1993	Rochester (U.S.A.)	1 man		No decision
1994	Dechtice (Slovakia)	Martin Gavcnda Maria Gavendova Lucia Vadikova Martina Kalasova Adrianna Kudelova Simona Kumpanova Jozef Danko		No decision
1994	Emmitsburg (U.S.A.)	Gianna Talone-Sullivan		Negative decision
1995	Sterling (U.S.A.)	Patricia Mundorf		No decision
1995	Ham Lake (U.S.A.)	Little Mary		No decision
1995	Enugu State (Nigeria)	1 man		No decision
1996	Bahia (Brazil)	Fabiana Olivcira		No decision
1996	Brooklyn (U.S.A.)	1 man		No decision
1996	Elyria (U.S.A.)	Maureen Sweeney Kyle		Negative decision
1996	Bachaquero Zulia (Venezuela)	1 person		No decision
1997	Minnesota (U.S.A.)	Rev. Andrew Wingate		No decision
1997	Platina (Brazil)	Francisco Ovidio da Salva		No decision
1997	El Dorado (U.S.A.)	Augustine Halverson		No decision
1997	Satua (Samoa)	Suor Ruth Augustus		No decision
1997	Mexico City (Mexico)	1 man		No decision
1998	Greenfield (U.S.A.)	John Snide		No decision
1998	St. John's (Antigua)	Don Gerard Critch		No decision
1998	Montreal (Canada)	Delmis		No decision
1998	Saskatoon (Canada)	Carmen Humphrey		No decision
1999	Marpingen (Germany)	Christine Ney Marion Guttma Judith Hiber		No decision
1999	Montsur (France)	Agnes Marie		No decision
1999	Pennsylvania (U.S.A.)	Louise Starr Tomkiel		No decision
1999	Staten Island (U.S.A.)	Carmelo Cortez		No decision

Source: International Marian research institute of the University of Dayton, Ohio.

*Apparitions That Were Approved and Not Approved by The Vatican.*

The statistical analysis of the Marian apparition directory, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Apparitions that were not made a decision	Negative decision	Yes and approved
299	79	8

Source: Directory of the Marian Page.

There were 8 apparitions that were reported as approved as apparitions by the Vatican which followed a series of steps to identify as it was real. There were 79

apparitions that were given disapproval with negative decisions. Out of the total 336 apparitions 299 were not given a decision and are silent.

VI. ARGUMENTS

*Structural Functionalism and The Impotance of Studing Apparitions*

Marian apparition has become a social fact. Modern study of miracles including the Marian apparition is not too popular in the academic world but time has now come reveal the importance of discussing such thoughts in Religion. According to Talcott Parsons Structural Functionalism theory

Religion as an institution plays an important role in a society which interconnects, interrelate and influence other institutions such as economy, government, and education. If religion has an important role to influence the society we need to take it as primal importance when people are gathering to witness a miracle and learn why the people are gathering.

### *Helpless Desires*

According to the data gathered from the questionnaires, the results show that people worship apparitions due to various helpless desires to be fulfilled. The unfulfilled desires were identified as financial issues, seeking jobs and employments, marital issues, fertility issues, health issues, and educational requirements. People go to church to pray for their various needs. This kind of time spending in a church would give people inner peace to think and overcome their turmoil. When supernatural miracles such as apparitions' takes place there are chances of having many devotees and the impact would result significance to the church increasing the numbers of people attending for prayers. There will be many people seeking for conversion to Roman Catholic, which will lead to construction of largest Roman Catholic Marian movements and societies.

According to the records and data on account of the devotees who came to witness the apparition that happened as well as the questionnaire results, people are very oppressed and as a result it had been useful to introduce or declare specific dogmas and doctrines so that there will be pilgrimages organized to visit these churches, resulting many numbers of devotees expecting miracles to happen .Apparitions are responsible for tens of millions of Marian pilgrimages per year. The dogmas and the strict teachings of the churches lead to such practices of worship by the devotees.

## VII. RESULTS OF THE WORLD WARS AND POLITICS

According to a Research Gate article, by the University of Bialystok of Poland, The faculty of History and Sociology, on 'Religious studies Review'2016 states that Poland had miracles after the Second world war at Stalinism, miracle of Lublin in 1949 and a series of other miracles took place in 1959, the Nowolipki, The miracle of Zabłudow in 1965, and the miracle of Mirtial Olawa in 1983. The miracles were largely people's reactions to the threats which carried with it. The polish people at the time after the world war two faced a conversion to Communism. There was social unrest, political strife, and severe economic difficulties while the government imposed strict anti- religious policies and anti- religious campaign. After the last apparition at Poland, a new network of visionaries contacted each other and established the Visionaries World Congress in 1993. The people are much oppressed with the pressures of life and are of the constant need of this kind of apparition for them to end their worries. According to Karl Marx's theories "Religion is an ideological weapon".

### *What Does the Bible Say?*

According to the results of the questionnaire there were fifty devotees who believe the Marian apparition and four said that the results are not received by them yet. According to the Holy King James version in the New Testament of the Bible, 1 John: 4; 1 quotes that, "Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of Gods: Because many false prophets are gone out into the world." According to 2 Corinthians 11: 14-15 "and no marvel, the Satan himself is transformed into an angle of light." According to Romans 5: 1, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". According to The Old Testament of the Holy Bible, New International version, 2011 Exodus 20:2,3, 4 Ten Commandments states that "Do not worship any God except me", "Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth". "Do not bow down and worship idols". Marxists criticizes the Functionalist view as they argue Religion is a unifying force that strengthens the value consensus and is a feature of all society such as people tend to go to church to receive a miracle for their helplessness.

### *Apparitions and Illusions*

Sigmund Freud "The Future of an Illusion"1927 argues that Religion is an illusion". He argues that Religion is set out to prove that it is merely a product of the mind, an illusion .He offered both psychological and a historical explanation of the origins of Religion. He further states that, Religion is what has been created in the mind. Religion fills the gap of loneliness. We ask God various needs to be accomplished and when they are difficult the Religion fills the gap with hope to achieve. Hitherto can the Marian apparitions fill the gaps of unfulfilled desires? Will this be enough for the mankind?

### *Religion Is Wish Fulfillment?*

Sigmund Freud in "Interpretations of Dreams"1900 argued that Religion has a psychological foundation .Religion is wish fulfillment. Sigmund Freud adds the explanation that adaption of Religion is a reversion to childish patterns of thought in response to feelings of helplessness and guilt. According to Sigmund Freud in "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices"1907 argues that Religion is an expression of underlying psychological neuroses and distress. He suggests in his writings that "Religion is an illusion and derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our institutional distresses" Sigmund Freud asserted that' Religion is a largely, unconscious neurotic response to our problems. However, Sigmund Freud's arguments were criticized too.

## VIII. UNCONSCIOUS MIND

According to Ludwich Feubarch in "The Essence of Religion" 2010 developed the ideas saying that "God is projection of the unconscious mind." Can apparitions be a projection of the unconscious mind of the human? What is an unconscious mind? Unconscious mind is an unconscious absorbent mind that grasps in everything in the environment of an infant of his or her birth.

*Protestant Work Ethics*

In Methodism, a protestant approach, by John Wesley, do not accept worship of statues. The doctrine of John Calvin adhered to strict codes to avoid sin. According to Max Weber "The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism" 1904 argues hard work and discipline brings the subscriptions and the values for an individual. The Protestant ethic and the Calvinist ethics or the Puritan ethics emphasizes hard work brings forth subscriptions to life. In Sociology, in Economics, and in History this concept is discussed. This idea contradicts or contrasts with Roman Catholic traditions. A person does not need to be a Calvinist, a Methodist, and a Roman Catholic or follow protestant ethics to receive subscriptions for the life. The immigrants to United States of America, Canada, and European countries introduced the protestant work ethics to them. The Government of Singapore has extra money to give distribute residents of its country. It is a strong belief and a dogma in the Catholic Church where the devotees worship The Mother Mary's statue asking her to pray to God for their needs without asking them on their own, the devotees uplift the message to Mother Mary and that is her role to pray to Jesus and inform God of the needs of the devotees. According to the Holy Bible we are all given equal responsibility to work as priests to spread the message and worship a religion.

*Hallucinations and Apparitions*

According to the statistics about apparitions and visions and only 8 of them being approved and 79 apparitions were rejected and 299 apparitions were not given a decision. A report says that Marian messages from Veronica Francis Mugavero of Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and reports of Mother Mary appeared everyday under a pine tree in England were rejected by the Vatican and some cases are kept silent. Visions are classified as "hallucinations" in Psychology and some patients receive psychiatric treatments. There are no justifications to prove that the apparitions claim really true. We have only heard people say about them.

*Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus*

Religious ideologies deals to establish a social and a living system in the light of basic principles of a religion. An Ideology is a collection of beliefs and values that an individual or a group holds. According to Louis Althusser, in the book "Ideology and Ideological State apparatus" 1971, argues that the social institutions are divided into two categories which are Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus. The Repressive State Apparatus wielded by those holding state promotes power potential or actual and functions by violence. The Ideological State Apparatus functions through ideology such as family, religion, education, law, political parties, trade unions, arts, and mass media. Repression is through laws and punishment controlling the masses through force. The Ideological State apparatus generates beliefs and values and ensures relations of production. Therefore, Ideologies are everywhere. Ideology can begin in a form of an apparition.

*Feminist Thoughts*

Evaluating Feminist views on the role of Religion, it is important to discuss about the prominent role that Mother Mary carries through apparitions has given rise to feminist ideas. Not all the feminists agree that Religion is essentially patriarchal, arguing that many early Religions featured prominent goddesses and other female figures. Instead they argue that patriarchal societies have changed religions in order to ensure they reflected and reinforced patriarchal values.

According to Karen Armstrong, in "A History of God" 2011, argues that it was the development of monotheistic religions with their all powerful male Gods, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which imbedded Religion with a patriarchal and sexist core. She argues that various goddesses and priestesses were replaced with male prophets. With the rise of the Marian apparitions being honored she holds a prominent place in Catholics as much as the worship of the saints.

Nawal El Sadaawi in the book "The hidden face of Eve" 1980 argues that Religions are not the direct cause of women's exploitation and oppression, although they are often the tool employed to the end. The cause is a patriarchal society. She argues that powerful men reinterpreted religious beliefs and ideas in order to benefit themselves.

Linda Woodhead in "Religions in the Modern world" 2016 argues that Religion is not necessarily sexist or patriarchal and writes of a "Religious Feminism". She argues that the veil in Islam societies has been misinterpreted by some western Feminists. She argues that many Muslim women choose to wear a veil and see it is a positive and a liberating choice. However Nawal El Sadaawi, in "The hidden veil of Eve" 1980 argues that the veil is a tool to oppress women. She discussed about the women in the Arabic world.

The virgin mother Mary too which depicts in statues dresses herself in a veil or a hood cover. In her situation, she is respected but not oppressed or disguised for covering her head in all the apparitions that took place. There are suggestions that the religion is becoming increasingly female dominated, particularly in western Democracies.

According to Fr. Tissa Balasooriya in "Mary and Human Liberation" 1997 argues that for submissive figure of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ has influenced the church's attitude towards women. The figure of Mother Mary has a significantly challenging message more than it is said in the Bible. The role of the Mother Mary is to make a stable economic status and eradicate poverty and other serious issues in Sri Lanka as he described the rebels in July and other similar issues in Sri Lanka. However, his work is not approved by the Catholic Church.

*Apparitions and Cosmology*

Cosmology is a set of knowledge, beliefs, interpretations and practices of society or culture related to explanations about the origins and evolution of the universe as well as the role and

the meaning of humans, life and the world, within the universe or cosmos. A cosmology involves explanation of the past and the present and the future of the society and they are part of its understanding. Cosmos are supernatural beings who can fly or appear anywhere in a vision. Cosmos are believed to be existing in Buddhism and Hinduism such as Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda are cosmos.

Cosmologies differ if they are based on the traditional big religions, new religions or traditional shamanic religions or if they are not based on any religion or spiritual approximation.

#### *Apparition and Magic*

Magic is defined as a set of beliefs and practices designed to control the visible/invisible world for specific purposes. Magic often offers ways to explain the world, very similar to Religion and sciences. Religion and science evolved out of the inability of magic to explain the natural world. Magic is used as an attempt to create change in the natural world through supernatural means. Depending on culture, magic can be used by humans or can originate from high power. Magical thinking in various forms is a cultural universal and an important aspect of religion. Religion and magic conceptually separated with the development of western monotheism, where the distinction arose between supernatural events sanctioned by the mainstream religious doctrine and mere magic rooted in folk belief or occult speculation. In pre-monotheistic religious traditions, there is no fundamental distinction between religious practice and magic.

Imitative magic attempts to control the universe through mimicking of a desired event for an example doing a rain dance to bring rain to dry crops. Contagious magic involves the use of physical objects that have been in contact with the person who the magic is to affect, like a toe nail for an example; contagious magic is often associated with witchcraft.

White magic is often used for healing, focusing individual while the black magic is supernatural. Any form of magic is used in four ways. Productive magic is used during hunting, magic for fertility magic on rain making, security, successful or abundant harvesting such as fishing and they are performed by private individuals or by magicians and it is socially approved. Protective magic are taboos to guard property and magic is used to access collection of debts, to avert misfortune, cure of the sickness, safety in travel, performed by private individuals by themselves. Destructive magic is used to destroy others to produce sickness, bring death and destruction. It is the form of harmful sorcery or to destroy others to produce sickness, bring death and destruction. It is the form of harmful sorcery or witchcraft.

#### *Paganism and Apparitions*

Paganism is a religion other than one of the main world religions, specifically a non-Christian or pre-Christian religion. They are converts from paganism to Christianity. Paganism is a modern religious movement incorporating beliefs of practices from outside the main world religions.

Catholic pilgrims try to obtain salvation of the soul through this physical journey by making a journey to a shrine or a sacred place of importance to a person's faith. Pilgrimages attract visitors from widely dispersed cultural background and physical locations. A Pilgrimage is a journey on behalf of ritual and religious belief. Pilgrims worship a sacred object, a tree, or a statue. The location of sacred sites varies. Shrines often represent some great miracle or divine appearance. The pilgrimage is evident in all world religions and is also an important pagan religion of the ancient Greece and Rome. Pilgrimages attract visitors from widely dispersed cultural backgrounds and physical locations.

According to Edith Turner, in the book "Communitas" 2012, argues that an unstructured state in which all members of a community are equal allowing them to share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage. Communitas takes the community to the next level and allows the whole of the community to share a common experience. Order is always structured and the disorder is always unstructured, but it becomes more balanced in a pilgrimage. Victor Turner argues that separation from the common everyday world and in displaying those separation pilgrims may mark their new identity by wearing special clothes or abstaining from familiar comforts. Furthermore, frequently pilgrimages link sacred place with sacred time.

### IX. CONCLUSION

Pilgrims are organized annually, to worship the Marion sites to grant the people for what they desire. These beliefs are gaining importance over a period of time and making it an ideology to legitimize the claims that they are real. In conclusion, this article has explained to think in a different way since people have faced many issues in lives and we need to be modernized.

During the time of the renaissance new ideas and thoughts emerged in Europe and the Western countries. There were civil wars, cold wars and World wars and people were facing changes due to pressures of economic and political changes. People faced Nazism, Communism and Capitalism from Feudalism.

Industrialization, Science and technology have evolved. Urbanization, new cultures sub cultures, and new societies have emerged. Making a better life for everyone and meeting the unfulfilled desires are important for development for a country. People need to experience "Modernity". Modernization of the man is Development. Sustainable Development and meeting the Millennium Goals are stages of Development.

According to Alex Inkles, in "Becoming Modern: Individual change in six developing countries" 2013, theorized a social structure and personality when applied to an individual psycho-social modernization. He states that the modern man is not a construction in the mind of a sociological theory but he

can exist with some good qualities depending on his own time of approach and according to his will and planning.

People have many unfulfilled desires and when the desires are not fulfilled they expect to grant them by supernatural beings, and miracles. They expect miracles in day to day life. They are oppressed, and under many burdens and pressures of life. They do not have a way to overcome their problems.

Religion fills the gap of this loneliness. Different doctrines and dogmas and strict teachings are introduced. Pilgrimages are organized for the devotees to worship the large and miracle making places. People are in great distress and due to their turmoil they make regular visits expecting miracles.

According to Alex Inkles, in "Becoming Modern" 2013, in every era, there are social and political dramas. After liberation from the colonial powers many countries worked for real liberation and saw modernization. Many of the emerging nations entered a decade of development, yet some of the third world countries developed very little or they were backward nations. Whether the person is from western or Eastern, it was no matter but the true fact is that these modern men are seen everywhere if there is a willingness for adoption to modernization.

#### ANNEXURE

##### *The Holy See Statement*

The statement issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of faith (Holy See) in 1978 which was issued in Latin is translated to English for understanding.

The Diocesan bishop can initiate a process on his own initiative or at the request of the devotees to investigate the facts of an apparition.

The National conference of Bishops will intervene, if the local diocesan bishop refers to them if he thinks it is important nationally.

The Apostolic See or the Vatican too can intervene at the request of the local Bishop or a group of devotees.

The local Bishop manages the investigatory process, working with the help of the commission of experts such as theologians, and medical doctors.

The investigation involves questioning of alleged visionaries and witnesses and the seriousness of the vision.

The bishop declare that the apparition was true or false or seek for additional help and if the Bishop conference cannot reach a conclusion the matter is referred to Pope, who then calls the congregation for the Doctrine of the faith to either advise or conduct its own investigation.

##### *Criteria Taken For Consideration When Investigating An Apparition*

###### Positive criteria

Moral certainty to the investigation.

Evaluation of the personal qualities of the person in question such as mental balance, honesty, moral life, sincerity, obedience to the church authority.

###### Negative criteria

Glaring errors

Doctrinal errors

Any pursuit of financial gain.

Gravely immoral acts committed by the person or those associated with the person at the time of the event. Psychological disorders.

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