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**Truth in a Steel Mirror: On the Genres
of Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum***

Jane Beal

Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus* can be characterized as poetry, which it undoubtedly is, though it also contains prose sections. Its three major parts—the prefatory poems and missives to diverse women, the *Salve Deus* passion poem itself, and “The Description of Cooke-ham”—have been called a “triptych” (Beilin 177-207), an evocative term from medieval and early modern art that imagines the initial poems and concluding “Description” as two side panels helping to bring the reader-viewer’s attention to the central panel, the *Salve Deus*. In light of the fact that all three parts are infused with direct addresses to women, many of them quite laudatory, Barbara Lewalski has seen the poem as a book of good women, in the tradition of Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* and Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women* (213-41); Achsah Guibbory has seen *Salve Deus* as a gospel because of its extended passion narrative and harmonization of elements of Matthew and Luke, together with its pastiche of quotations from Genesis, Psalms, Song of Songs, and Revelation as well as other biblical books (191-207). In addition, several critics have recognized “The Description of Cooke-ham” as the first English country-house poem, in the classical tradition of Horace and Martial, contemporary with Ben Jonson’s “To Penhurst.”

Certainly Lanyer’s work participates in all of these genres. Yet the genres of Lanyer’s *Salve Deus* are not limited to them. The poet herself calls her *Salve Deus* a “Book,” a “Mirror,” and an “Apologie.” She uses artistic and dramatic metaphors to compare it to an icon and a stage play. She uses metaphorical language from biblical poetry, invoking the image of Bride and Bridegroom, to suggest that her work is also a kind of epithalamion. Her conclusion indicates that the title of her work was revealed in a dream, implying that her *Salve Deus* is at least part dream vision as well.

Why invoke such a plethora of genres and generic conventions? Aemilia Lanyer makes clear that she herself is convicted of the truth revealed in her poem, seeing it as undeniably as an image revealed truly “in a steel mirror,” as the Renaissance proverb would have it (Woods 5n). Her desire, made clear in her poem, is to impact her anticipated audience of female readers with truth about God (“Deus”) and themselves as women in relationship to God. By relating the truth of Christ’s Passion to women through a variety of genres grounded in the realities of Renaissance material culture (literary, rhetorical, artistic, dramatic, and religious), Lanyer seeks to inspire affective devotion that affects women’s

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identities, causing them to see the truth about their own lives in her work as well. As she writes in her prefatory poem “To All Vertuous Ladies Generall,”

Put on your wedding garments euery one,
The Bridegroome stayes to entertaine you all;
Let Virtue be your guide, for she alone
Can leade you right that you can neuer fall;
And make no stay for feare he should be gone:
But fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale,
That to your Faith he may his *Truth* reueale.
(12, lines 8-14, italics added)¹

Book, Mirror, Apologie

Lanyer shows her willingness to experiment with genre and generic convention in the first part of her *Salve Deus*: the prefatory poems addressed to diverse Renaissance women. She creates variations on the rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet (the poems to Lady Elizabeth and Lady Arabella), a dream vision (the poem to Mary Sidney), and prose missives (to Margaret, the Dowager Countess of Cumberland, and to the virtuous reader), as well as other genres that could be characterized as praise-poems or teaching-poems, for the poems seemingly aim to be both laudatory and instructive. It is in these poems that she first begins to make references to the *Salve Deus* as a “book.”

By calling the *Salve Deus* a “book” (in “To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majestie” 5, line 95 and 9, line 142), Lanyer alludes, in part, to the conditions of its material reproduction in Renaissance London’s printing presses. While a “book” might still be a handwritten manuscript in this period, Lanyer’s book would be printed in London by Valentine Simms for Richard Bonian to be sold at his shop in St. Paul’s Churchyard “at the Signe of the Floure de Luce and Crowne” (1) in 1611—the same year as the Authorized Version of the Bible was produced. In addition to showing an awareness of realities of print culture through this term, “book,” Lanyer also claims an authoritative status for her book among other books.

The notion that Lanyer is seeking recognition among other poets is reinforced by her obvious knowledge of Mary Sidney’s translation of the Psalms into English, evidenced in her dedicatory poem to the Countess of Pembroke (“To Mary Sidney” 26, lines 115–118, 120–121). She may be angling for literary status alongside Mary, among others. But she also invokes the idea that she is divinely inspired, not only in the classical sense (by a muse or muses), but by the Judeo-Christian God, which is why she also calls the *Salve Deus* a “holy work” (6, line 62) about “divinest things” (3, line 4). That these things are revealed specifically by “a woman’s writing” (3, line 4) indicates Lanyer’s understanding of herself as a female poet writing for an audience of women readers.

Lanyer also represents Christ as a book within her *Salve Deus*, in “To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majestie” (9, lines 140-44), “To the Ladie Arabella” (17,

lines 8-14), and the central passion poem: the soul “desires that he [Christ] may be the Booke / Whereon thine eyes continually may looke” (109, lines 1351-52). By referring to both her own work and Christ as a “book,” Lanyer strengthens the signifying power of her use of the term while drawing on a powerful iconographic tradition. As Femke Molekamp has argued,

Aemilia Lanyer’s poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, uses striking pre-Reformation iconography to present Christ as a book...this metaphor, together with the metaphoric presentation of her book as a sacred feast, lies at the center of the mode of affective devotional reading. It also aligns her own text with scripture and authorizes her poetics. In providing instructions for reading Christ the Book that are rich in the language of affective meditation, Lanyer draws on a tradition of pre-Reformation contemplative reading.... (311)

Not only reading, but also iconographic traditions may be inspiring Lanyer. In many scenes of the Annunciation, for example, Mary is pictured reading a book, so the incarnation of the Word is prefigured by the book symbolism. Christ is the *logos*, with all the power and meaning that implies, and one way to represent him, in both art and poetic images, is as a book. Lanyer weaves the textual metaphors, with deliberate awareness of their power to suggest truth, into her work.

Lanyer also speaks of her work as a “Mirror” (p. 5, line 37) or “Glasse” (5, line 40; 7, 90 and 97). She connects the reflective power of her work to the ability of her reader to perceive truth. She writes in “To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majestie”:

Looke in this Mirroure of a worthy Mind,
Where some of your faire Vertues will appeare:
Though all it is impossible to find,
Vnlesse my Glasse were chrystall, or more cleare:
Which is dym steele, yet full of spotlesse *truth*,
And for one looke from your faire eyes it su’th.
(5, lines 37-42, italics added)

By referring to the *Salve Deus* as a mirror, specifically a mirror of “dym steele” (5, line 41), Lanyer alludes, “conventionally, to the idea that a steel mirror gave a truthful reflection” (Woods 5n). The reader looks into it and sees the truth of her own soul’s reflection. Will she see a vain and wicked Queen—or an innocent Snow White? As she similarly writes in her poem to the Lady Anne, Countess of Dorset: “Then in this Mirroure let your faire eyes looke, / To view your virtues in this blessed Booke” (41, lines 7-8).²

By calling her work a “mirror,” Lanyer also suggests that she is writing in the genre known as “mirror for princes.” The most famous of these in the Renaissance are, of course, Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* (1528), Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1532), and Desiderius Erasmus’ *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516). In general, the *speculum principum* was

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meant to be an advice book for good rulers. The form of the mirror evinced by examples written for men by men is, of course, quite different from Lanyer's unique *Salve Deus*. It appears that Lanyer was crafting a mirror for princesses, written for women by a woman, and focusing on spiritual rather than temporal concerns, which could explain the differences in form. Nevertheless, the overall purpose may be the same: an advice book to rulers in their spheres of influence.

Lanyer also sees her *Salve Deus* as "Eve's Apologie," as both her title page, which lists "Eve's Apologie" as the fourth part of the work, and her reference in her first poem, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majestie," demonstrate:

"Behold, great Queene, fair *Eves* Apologie,
Which I have writ in honour of your sexe,
And doe referre unto your Majestie,
To judge if it agree not with the Text:
And if it doe, why are poore Women blam'd
Or by more faultie Men so much defam'd? (6, line 73-78)

In rhetorical terms, an *apologia* is a defense; in Lanyer's work, her defense is of women against accusations that women are responsible for the Fall and all manner of evils in the world. Her argument will be that it is men, not women, who are the more to blame.

In the course of retelling the story of Christ's Passion, Lanyer incorporates Pilate's wife, who appears only in Matthew's gospel, and has her articulate Eve's Apology (84, lines 753ff). Pilate's wife defends Eve and her actions in the story of the Fall, events recorded in Genesis 3. According to her, Eve acted in innocence, not realizing the wrongness of her action because "the subtle Serpent ... our Sex betrayed" (84, line 767), and her deed was done out of a desire for knowledge (86, line 797); when she gave the fruit of the tree to Adam, it was out of love for him (86, line 801).³ She points out that Adam, by contrast, *knowingly* disobeyed God's order not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and therefore his is the greater fault. Pilate's wife does not hesitate to note the irony that now men will boast of knowledge, which they took from Eve's hand, "as from a learned Book" (86, line 808).⁴

Furthermore, the defense continues, women protested the Crucifixion of Christ, but men carried it out. Therefore, Pilate's wife concludes that men ought to let women have their liberty again and "challenge to yourselves no Sovereignty" (87, line 826). Concerning men's crucifixion of Christ, the poet avers, "That sin of yours hath no excuse nor end" (87, line 832). She adds, of women, "To which (poor souls) we never gave consent" (87, line 833). The contrast here between male violence and female free will, resisting tyranny, is vivid. Indeed, Pilate's wife can perceive the truth about Christ, the God-Man, but Pilate cannot, even though she urges her husband to open his eyes:

Let barb'rous crueltie farre depart from thee,
And in true Iustice take afflictions part;

Open thine eies, that thou the *truth* mai'st see,
 Doe not the thing that goes against thy heart;
 Condemne not him that must thy Sauour be;
 But view his holy Life, his good desert:
 Let not vs Women glory in Mens fall,
 Who had power giuen to ouer-rule vs all.
 (84, lines 753-60, italics added)

By introducing Eve's Apology in the middle of the unfolding events of Christ's Passion, Lanyer suggests here that men are as blind to the truth as Pilate, but that women who have "put on [their] wedding garments" and "let Virtue be [their] guide" (p. 12, lines 8 and 10), as she urged them to in her prefatory poem to virtuous ladies, can perceive it just as Pilate's wife did. At the same time, she reminds her anticipated audience of female readers that there was a Fall, out of God's perfect intentions for humanity in the garden of Eden and into sin. This is what necessitated Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Icon and Passion Play

Christ's sacrifice is, of course, the main focus of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, the very title of which alludes to the words Pilate had nailed above the head of Jesus on the Cross: "King of the Jews." This moment of Crucifixion is powerfully preserved in traditional Christian iconography as well as in medieval English passion plays, which had only been outlawed by King Henry VIII in 1534 and remained as vestiges in recent memory. Lanyer uses metaphors within her work to allude to both of these genres, the one artistic and the other dramatic, and thereby associates her literary work with them.

At the center of the center of *Salve Deus* is the passion poem that retells, in detail, the sufferings of Christ's Passion. Lanyer also briefly describes the Resurrection and then gives a description of the physical beauty of the resurrected Christ, a blazon, which in Renaissance poetry was a generic form typically used to describe the beauty of a lady,⁵ but which Lanyer uses to describe the beauty of her beloved.

This is that Bridegroom that appeares so faire,
 So sweet, so louely in his Spouses sight,
 That vnto Snowe we may his face compare,
 His cheekes like skarlet, and his eyes so bright
 As purest Doues that in the riuers are,
 Washed with milke, to giue the more delight;
 His head is likened to the finest gold,
 His curled lockes so beauteous to behold;

Blacke as a Raven in her blackest hew;
 His lips like skarlet threeds, yet much more sweet

Than is the sweetest hony dropping dew,
Or hony combes, where all the Bees do meet;
Yea, he is constant, and his words are true,
His cheekes are beds of spices, flowers sweet;
His lips like Lillies, dropping downe pure mirthe,
Whose loue, before all worlds we doe preferre.
(107, lines 1305-20)

While some have seen this blazon as an unusual feminization of Christ, in fact Lanyer's view of Christ harkens back to medieval Christian contemplative traditions, originating with Origen in the second century and celebrated by Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth, who similarly uses the language and imagery of the Song of Songs to describe Christ (Matter 124-37). Indeed, it was not uncommon for the medieval Christian contemplative to regard him or herself as the Lover of the Song actively pursuing the Beloved, Christ. Notably, here, even within the context of describing Christ's physical beauty, Lanyer is careful to describe Christ's spiritual revelation of truth, for "his words are *true*" (107, line 1317, italics added).

After presenting this blazon, Lanyer directly addresses her primary patron, the Lady Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland:

Therefore (good Madame) in your heart I leave
His perfect picture, where it still shall stand,
Deeply engraved in that holy shrine,
Environed with Love and Thoughts divine. (108, lines 1325-29)

This "perfect picture" is suggestive of an icon of Christ. It stands in Margaret's heart, which is compared to a "holy shrine." It was common before the iconoclasm of the English Reformation to find icons and images of Christ in holy shrines, whether churches or monasteries, pilgrimage sites or other holy places. There is a kind of secret intimacy in this preservation of iconography in the heart, when icons and images were so greatly reduced in number in the churches of Renaissance England, which Lanyer emphasizes as a means of encouraging her readers' affective devotion to Christ and understanding of themselves in relationship to him.⁶

Yet Lanyer is not exclusively interested in private piety, but in public display and witness as well, as her use of stage metaphors strongly suggests. After the conclusion of the passion narrative, Lanyer addresses her patron at length, and she writes that the Queen of Sheba, "this rare Phoenix" (p. 123, line 1659), is like Margaret but falls short of her, because Sheba's love of Solomon was not as great as Margaret's love of Christ. In the course of her comparison, Lanyer speaks of how the Queen of Sheba was "Acting her glorious part upon a Stage" (123, line 1693). By making a phoenix-connection between the Queen of Sheba and Lady Margaret, by suggesting that Margaret is somehow spiritually the phoenix-Queen arisen again centuries later, she presents the idea that Margaret's life, too, is acting a glorious part upon a Renaissance stage.⁷

What play, then, is she in? By incorporating Margaret so prominently into her *Salve Deus*, a poem that performs the events of Christ's Passion, Lanyer subtly suggests this is a passion play, and Margaret—like the Marys in the New Testament gospels—is there at the foot of the Cross of Jesus, weeping. She is being spiritually formed and transformed by the mystery in the center of history.⁸

But acting in a play is not the same as giving an account in a courtroom. Yes, it is a public display, and it can even be a witness. But it is an artistic one, not held to the same cultural standards—the same legal consequences and potential censorship—as testimony given under a sworn oath. Thus Margaret's faith, Lanyer suggests, can be real and visible to others as she acts it out upon the stage of the world without necessarily drawing down the wrath of others (who believe differently) upon herself. Even if this faith is a secret Catholicism no longer countenanced by the English crown, it can rise phoenix-like not only in her heart, but also in relationship to other devoted Christian women and to Christ himself.

Epithalamion

The central relationship that Lanyer reveals in the *Salve Deus* is the one between Bride and Bridegroom, the soul and Jesus Christ. Lanyer begins developing allusions and descriptions of this relationship in the prefatory poems and missives of the *Salve Deus*. She calls him "Bridegroom" ("To All Vertuous Ladies Generall" 12, line 9), "the true-love of your soul" and "this dying lover" ("To the Ladie Lucy" 32, line 6 and 33, line 16), "your most loyall Spouse" and "a worthy Love" ("To the Ladie Katherine," 37, lines 34 and 36) "in whom is all that Ladies can desire" (40, line 85), "the Bridegroom" at the feast ("To the Ladie Anne," 41, line 15) and the Lamb "whom your faire soul may in her armes infold: / Loving his love" (46, lines 118-19). In the poem dedicated to Lady Susan, Countess Dowager of Kent, she takes her metaphor, as it were, all the way:

Receive your Love whom you have sought so farre,
Which here presents himselfe within your view;
Behold this bright and all directing Starre,
Light of your Soule that doth all grace renew;
And in his humble paths since you do tread,
Take this faire Bridegroom in your soules pure bed.
(19-20, lines 37-42)

As these names for Christ and these exhortations to women to have an intimate relationship with him suggest, Lanyer is writing an epithalamion: a wedding-song celebrating the love of the Bride and the Bridegroom.

The poet further develops this relationship in the passion poem at the center of the *Salve Deus*. In direct address, again, to Lady Margaret, Lanyer calls Jesus "thy holy Love" (62, line 170) and "so true a Lover" (80, line 672). Her references to Christ as Bridegroom and Lover that are incorporated into insights

about an intimate, loving relationship with Jesus: “Who sees this Bridegroom never can be sad” (54, line 77), “The meditation of this Monarchs love / Draws thee from caring what this world can yield” (57, lines 153-54), and “Thy constant faith like to the Turtle Dove / Continues to combat and will never yield / To base affliction” (58, lines 157-59). Lanyer uses the dove imagery of the Song of Songs to refer not only to the female soul but to Christ, thus showing how he can be both pursuing Lover and pursued Beloved, naming him “this innocent Dove” (94, line 994).⁹

Lanyer calls Margaret “Spouse of Christ” (101, line 1170) and she names Christ Margaret’s “Love” (101, line 1172), her “rich Jewell” (105, line 1263), and “Lover...so true” (105, line 1267). But Margaret is not alone in her bridal role. Lanyer expands her emphasis on the individual soul as the Bride to encompass the traditional, corporate metaphor of the whole Church as Christ’s Bride: “For he is rize from Death t’Eternall Life, / And now those pretious ointments he desires / Are brought unto him, by his faithfull Wife / The Holy Church” (106, lines 1289-92).

Ultimately, the relationship between the Bride and Bridegroom, the soul and Christ, better enables the soul to understand what is true about Christ, her self, and their relationship to one another. For who can better understand the truth of love than the bride hearing it whispered to her in her bridegroom’s arms? The knowledge of truth becomes intimate knowledge in Lanyer’s epithalamion.

Conclusions

Lanyer repeatedly calls her “holy work” (6, line 62) a “Book,” a “Mirror,” and an “Apologie.” By calling the *Salve Deus* a book, she acknowledges the material realities of its production in the Renaissance printing press while imagining a place for it in the canon of literature and then expanding her book-metaphors to refer to the lives of both Christ and Eve. By calling it a mirror, she places it in the tradition of the “mirror for princes” genre, but her mirror is unlike its predecessors, for Lanyer desires her mirror to reveal the nature of the female soul looking into it. By calling it an apology, she makes clear her rhetorical purpose: a defense of women that participates in the then on-going *querelle des femmes*.

However, Lanyer does not limit her understanding of the form of her *Salve Deus* to literary genres. Metaphorically, she imagines it participating in artistic and dramatic forms as well. By calling the central panel of her work, the *Salve Deus* proper, a “perfect picture” of Christ and his passion, she emphasizes the highly visual nature of her poem and places it like an icon before the inner eyes of her anticipated female readership for meditation and contemplation, spiritual practices important to the tradition of affective piety. Furthermore, by referring directly to “acting” and using the “Stage” as a metaphor for life, she seems also to imagine her *Salve Deus* as a passion play, in the tradition of the cycle plays. This is significant, at least in part, because the mystery plays were forbidden from

being performed in 1534 when they came to be seen as too “Catholic” by Henry VIII and his newly protestant advisors.

Lanyer further developed another metaphoric language throughout all three parts of her poem, a love language that often relies on the Song of Songs and refers to the Bride and the Bridegroom. In the *Salve Deus*, these designations refer to the soul and Christ. Thus her work is a kind of epithalamion, though much different in form than, for example, Spenser’s.¹⁰

It is worth noting that when Lanyer concludes her work, she does so with a final missive “To the Doubtful Reader,” in which she states that the title, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, was revealed to her in a dream. Thus, at the conclusion, she re-casts her reader’s entire perception of the genre of the poem: whatever else it may be, it is also part dream vision, not only of the literary kind (such as she developed in her poem praising Mary Sidney), but of the literal, prophetic kind. The implication is, of course, that she received divine inspiration for her poetic work. This revelation in the final words of the work appears to be intended to reinforce the truth of the poem, the authority of the poet, and the need for emotional response and spiritual change in her anticipated audience of women readers during the Renaissance.

Notes

¹ This is the second of twelve direct references to “truth” in the *Salve Deus*. In this poetic passage, Lanyer artfully alludes to the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) to make her truth-claim. Note that all quotations from *Salve Deus* in this essay come from the edition edited by Susanne Woods.

² Considering that Lanyer uses the term “Book” to refer both to Christ and to her own *Salve Deus*, it is interesting to note that, in the Renaissance, English writers sometimes referred to the experience of seeing one’s own reflection in someone else’s eyes as seeing “babies” in that person’s eyes. In a sense, if Lady Anne (or any female reader) looks into Lanyer’s Book or book (whether Christ or the *Salve Deus*), she may see her own reflection therein.

³ Milton will make almost the exact opposite argument in *Paradise Lost*, asserting that Adam took the apple for love of Eve. However, theological analysis from within the standpoint of a Christian worldview suggests, of course, that neither Adam nor Eve could have been acting primarily from a motive of love when encouraging the other spouse to sin.

⁴ That Lanyer compares Eve to a book, after calling both Christ and her *Salve Deus* “book,” suggests an interesting relationship between Lanyer’s poetic metaphors. Eve, made in the image of God (*imago Dei*), is indeed like the God-Man, Christ, and so could be compared to a book. The *Salve Deus* tells part of both of their stories, Eve’s and Christ’s, so it is, in a way, their “book.”

⁵ For examples of the use of the blazon in Renaissance poetry, which could describe either the lady's face or the lady's body (from head to toe), see Sidney's Sonnet 9 "Queen's Virtue's court, which some call Stella's face," and inverting the tradition, Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun."

⁶ In addition to referring to her "perfect picture," Lanyer also speaks of Christ as an iconic "figure" in her poem: "For here I have prepar'd my Paschal Lambe, / The figure of that living Sacrifice" (7, lines 85-86) and "Yet this faire map of majestie and might / Was but a figure of thy dearest Love" (120, lines 1609-10). Notice, in the second case, how the figure is also a map to guide the female reader toward Christ-likeness. Later, Lanyer will speak of the need for her women readers to be "transfigur'd" (14, line 51) as well.

⁷ Indeed, readers will doubtless be reminded of Shakespeare's famous words in *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (II.vii). Lanyer uses similar phrasing in her prefatory poem to the Ladie Anne: "For well you knowe, this world is but a Stage / Where all doe play their parts" (46, lines 121-22). This metaphor was apparently becoming a conventional idea in this period. It is worth noting that scholars usually date Shakespeare's *As You Like it* to about 1600, and Lanyer's *Salve Deus* to 1611, so there is also the possibility of direct or indirect influence of Shakespeare's play on Lanyer's poem here.

⁸ This is, in fact, what Lanyer urges in her poem "To All Vertuous Ladies Generall": "Come swifter than the motion of the Sunne, / To be transfigur'd with our loving Lord" (14, lines 50-51). Note the use of the word "transfigur'd," which alludes to Christ's Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36 and referred to in 2 Peter 1:16-18) and suggests Lanyer's women readers should be similarly transfigured with their Lord.

⁹ Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also called God's "Turtle dove" (98, line 1093).

¹⁰ Spenser's *Epithalamion* is a sonnet sequence.

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**The Vicious Circle:
An Emersonian Reading of Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday"**

Michial Farmer

*"Genius is the activity which repairs the decay of things,
whether wholly or partly of a material and finite kind."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet"*

*"I shore these fragments against my ruins."
—T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land*

"Ash Wednesday," the first poem T.S. Eliot published after his baptism into Anglicanism in 1928, contains little of the joy and the hope associated with conversion. It is instead a poem of infinite suffering and infinite resignation, a brutal trudge up an endless staircase whose peak is unseen and perhaps unattainable. The traditional interpretation of the poem involves a combination of Anglican liturgy, the Bible, and a good deal of Dante. The endless stairway, says this interpretation, represents the mountain in Dante's *Purgatorio*; as Eliot's speaker climbs the stairs, "Vision is suddenly released...no longer confined by the darkness" (Williamson 176). Without denying the poem's references to Dante, I would like to offer an additional layer to its achievement, in the form of the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Using "Circles" and "Experience" in particular, I will recast Eliot's poem as a demonstration of what I term "active resignation," a self-reliant surrender to fate and to God. My reading partially integrates with the traditional reading, but it also augments and subverts it.

Emerson and Fate

Like Eliot, Ralph Waldo Emerson was a sometimes uncomfortable combination of poet and philosopher, a Buddhist/Christian mystic who was nevertheless one of the greatest intellectuals in the history of American thought. Indeed, John Dewey claims him "as the one citizen of the New World fit to have his name uttered in the same breath with that of Plato" (412)—and he gives as his reason that both Plato and Emerson "set poet and philosopher over against one another" (408). Emerson does not lay his philosophy out in a systematic fashion, and he oftentimes makes what seem like contradictory statements,¹ but he does set forth a philosophy, and it is more or less cohesive. Like other philosopher/poets

(I am thinking specifically of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche here, although there are many other examples), his work must be taken as a whole to be comprehended. The reader cannot examine one isolated essay and proclaim even on its own meaning, let alone the meaning of Emerson's thought as a whole. Emerson reads like one of Bach's concertos: He states his theme outright, and it continues underneath everything else, but the dominance of this theme can make it hard to hear the important countermelodies.

Emerson's main theme is indeed self-reliance, but it is a peculiar kind of self-reliance. Because he believes in an Oversoul, because he believes that all beings are made of essentially the same substance, summarizing his philosophy is not as easy as saying "trust yourself." Trusting oneself ultimately means submitting oneself to spiritual laws and to fate. Even self-expression ultimately expresses everyone in the entire universe. Emerson refers to our failure to express ourselves as our being "ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents" ("Self-Reliance" 260). Ultimately, no contradiction exists for Emerson between following one's own best light and resigning oneself to fate and the laws of the universe. To trust oneself is the same thing as to believe in fate.

Authors often treat fate negatively, but Emerson approaches this system of trust and resignation joyfully. In "Circles," for example, he declares that every improvement, every assertion we make stands in need of another one. He paraphrases Milton here: "Me miserable!" says Satan in *Paradise Lost*,

Which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
 Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
 And in the lowest deep a lower deep
 Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.
 (4.73-78)

Compare this, however, with Emerson's paraphrase: "Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens" (403). Though their language is parallel, Emerson's tone does not sound like Satan's here. He has no fear of divine retribution, and he certainly does not view life as a hell. His use of the "lower deep" ultimately affirms life. If the ground opens up, he seems to be saying, it is like the sunrise, something new to experience. The existential abyss that gapes underneath us is exciting, not paralyzing. It means a new freedom of movement. Likewise, while Fate decrees that no accomplishment is ever enough, Emerson does not mourn this state of affairs. Nothing lasts forever, but when he loses a friend, he says, "he gains a better" (406). The universe ultimately acts justly, and he trusts that he will receive what he deserves and that each day will be followed by another, for better or for worse.

Or perhaps not. The world is constantly in flux, according to “Circles,” and Emerson’s mood changes with the fluxes. At times, this changefulness becomes almost unbearable:

To-day I am full of thoughts, and can write what I please. I see no reason why I should not have the same thought, the same power of expression, to-morrow. What I write, whilst I write it, seems the most natural thing in the world; but yesterday I saw a dreary vacuity in this direction in which now I see so much; and a month hence, I doubt not, I shall wonder who he was that wrote so many continuous pages. Alas for this infirm faith, this will not strenuous, this vast ebb of a vast flow! I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall. (406)

Thus, if Emerson sounds generally upbeat when he describes the world’s constant replacing of itself in “Circles,” it is because he writes when he feels like “God in nature.” For the flip side of the equation, for Emerson as “a weed by the wall,” we must turn to “Experience.”

This essay finds Emerson in despair over existence itself, which has clearly become a chore for him—a curse, really, since “It is very unhappy...the discovery we have made, that we exist” (487). Life may not be meaningless, but its meaning is certainly unknowable. Emerson says that “All our days are so unprofitable while they pass, that ‘tis wonderful where or when we ever got anything of this which we call wisdom, poetry, virtue” (471). Human relationships become next to impossible, “oblique and casual” (471), and even the Divine, usually present in all things, seems distant:

God delights to isolate us every day, and hide from us the past and the future. We would look about us, but with grand politeness he draws down before us an impenetrable screen of purest sky, and another behind us of purest sky. “You will not remember,” he seems to say, “and you will not expect.” (483)

Much of the tone of “Experience” depends on Emerson’s attitude toward God here. Is it sarcasm when he says that “God delights to isolate us,” or is the passage an acknowledgement of the necessity of submitting to the divine? If the former, then Emerson has become Beethoven, deaf but still screaming at heaven; if the latter, then he is closer to Kierkegaard’s Abraham, a knight of faith who trusts that God has a reason for our lack of knowledge of the future (and indeed, for our alienation). For the first half of the essay, Emerson seems mired in despair and anger, alienated from the nature that once offered so much comfort, from the men who were manifestations of the Oversoul, and from the Divinity that manifested itself in all these things.

But shortly after this ambiguous outburst heavenward, his tone changes, however slightly: “Man lives by pulses; our organic movements are such; and the chemical and ethereal agents are undulatory and alternate; and the mind goes

antagonizing on, and never prospers but by fits. We thrive by casualties. Our chief experiences have been casual” (483). Emerson plays with the double meaning of “casualty” here. On the one hand, individuals prosper only by chance, chance which by its very nature happens only occasionally. On the other, humankind prospers through casualties—deaths, disasters—that somehow make us stronger. And indeed, Emerson seems to prosper through the writing of “Experience.” He finds a way to reconcile the unspeakable darkness of the world with his pan(en)theistic theological and anthropological vision. But he cannot name the agent of reconciliation:

I am not the novice I was when I was fourteen, nor yet seven years ago. Let who will ask, where is the fruit? I find a private fruit sufficient. This is a fruit,—that I should not ask for a rash effect from meditations, counsels, and the hiving of truths. I should feel it pitiful to demand a result on this town and county, an overt effect on the instant month and year. The effect is deep and secular [far-reaching] as the cause. It works on periods in which mortal lifetime is lost. (491)

Emerson’s “private fruit” necessarily fails to satisfy the reader. We rely on Emerson for intellectual answers, among other things, but none come here. Instead, he gives us a mystical solution, an individual acceptance of fate that can be described but never named.

Emerson fleshes this concept out further in one of his final essays, “Fate,” from *The Conduct of Life*. Early in the essay, he posits mankind as the fool of nature, subject to “strokes...not to be parried by us” (946). Chief among these strokes is the fact that we are who we are and that we can do little to change that. His theme in “Fate” has striking echoes with “Experience”—humankind is isolated and helpless, and life is hard—but he adopts a more scientific tone, referencing biology and phrenology. Fate somehow seems harder, more set in stone, in the later essay, but it is still not all-powerful. It always serves something, and it always accompanies free will: “To hazard the contradiction,—freedom is necessary. If you please to plant yourself on the side of Fate, and say, Fate is all; then we say, a part of Fate is the freedom of man. Forever wells up the impulse of choosing and acting in the soul. Intellect annuls Fate. So far as a man thinks, he is free” (953). Fate, then, is not altogether a bad thing. Like the casualties in “Experience,” humankind can prosper from it. Fate hedges about us but it hems us in only “to bring up our conduct to the loftiness of nature. Rude and invincible except by themselves are the elements. So let man be. Let him empty his breast of his windy conceits, and show his lordship by manners and deeds on the scale of nature” (954). Fate, rightly used, simultaneously humbles and aggrandizes individuals. It shows people their correct place in the universe, neither weed by the wall or God in nature but both, “a little lower than the angels,” as Hebrews 2:9 puts it (KJV).

Emerson and Eliot

I believe that Emerson's philosophy comes closest to T.S. Eliot's on this point, prefigured in "Circles" and "Experience" but fully elucidated in "Fate." The two writers share a religious awe of Fate (or of God) and recognize the necessity of resignation and submission in seeing the true nature of humanity. Eliot was probably unaware of the similarities between him and Emerson. His correspondence makes only a few scant references to the earlier writer. In a letter to his mother on September 17, 1917, for example, he says that "He strikes me as very wordy. He has something to say often, but he spreads it out and uses very general terms; it seems more oratory than literature" (196). From this it appears that Eliot might have admired Emerson as a thinker if not as a writer, but elsewhere, Eliot makes it clear that he does not admire him in any way. F.O. Matthiessen notes that "he once remarked to me...of his sustained distaste for Emerson" (8), and he quotes an Eliot review of *The Cambridge History of American Literature* in which the poet says that "Neither Emerson nor any of the others was a real observer of the moral life" (24). Despite Eliot's objections, however, numerous critics have noted similarities and a shared lineage between the two poet/philosophers. Ronald Bush, for example, notes an affinity between Emerson and William Greenleaf Eliot, T.S. Eliot's paternal grandfather (7) and suggests that the two writers share an interest in protecting "the authenticity of [their] inner life against repression...through the rigorous honesty of inner craft" (6)—in other words, both men used their art to sort out their personal philosophies and theologies, whatever differences might lie in those philosophies. Robert G. Cook addresses the comparison more directly, claiming that, while Eliot rejected Emerson's individualism and optimism regarding human nature, "Emerson is very much a child of New England and the Puritan mentality which also shaped Eliot" (221). Further, he argues that

There is a congenial similarity between Eliot's theory of impersonality and Emerson's distrust of the purely subjective.... Both men explored thoroughly their own consciousnesses, but in a way totally different from the "romantic cultivation of the ego"; their interest was in general truth, not self-consciousness or self-advancement. To this end the entire soul, and not just the intellect, was to be fully explored. (222)

Emerson and Eliot come together, then, in their combination of the intellectual and the emotional/mystical, united in their roles as poet/philosopher. Thus, we may legitimately find echoes of Emerson in Eliot's work. Cook finds them in the Sweeney poems and in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," which he claims react to "Self-Reliance" negatively even as it is clear that certain of Emerson's ideas could offer Eliot's characters comfort and assistance.

The Spiral Staircase

“Ash-Wednesday,” it seems to me, takes a less antagonistic stance toward Emerson’s essays. It begins with a combination of two Emersonian images, the circle of “Circles” and the staircase of “Experience”: “Where do we find ourselves? In a series of which we do not know the extremes, and believe that it has none. We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us, which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight” (471). Eliot’s poetic persona awakes on an endless spiral staircase, the top of which he cannot see. He tires of climbing and repeats the line “I do not hope to turn again” several times (1.1-3). However, he cannot quite get the line out the second two times he tries, suggesting a loss of breath from ceaseless struggle. He seems to be coming closer to an Emersonian self-reliance: “Desiring this man’s gift and that man’s scope / I no longer strive to strive towards such things” (1.4-5). But at the same time, he shifts throughout the poem between God in nature and a weed by the wall. After his renunciation of social strata in the first stanza, he immediately admits that “I do not hope to know again / The infirm glory of the positive hour” (1.9-10). “Ash-Wednesday,” it should be clear, is a moody poem, as committed to the omnipotence of the moment as Emerson’s essays are.

This spiritual journey is personal and limited. It is “Because I do not think / Because I know” that “I shall not know / The one veritable transitory power” (1.12-13). This suggests a limit to knowledge. Eliot’s speaker has overstepped the boundaries of epistemology. Because he has done so, because he has pretended to “know” spiritual reality, he cannot commune with God and cannot move further up this staircase. After all, he later recognizes that

Time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual only for one time
And only for one place. (1.16-19)

This section of the poem recalls Emerson’s statement that “There is no virtue which is final; all are initial. The virtues of society are vices of the saint” (“Circles” 411). Eliot expands “virtue” to include “truth” and seems here to have settled upon a lesser truth—perhaps the renunciation of the world—which blocks him from ascension to higher truths, higher virtues. And these truths and virtues are wrapped up in power, which again echoes Emerson, this time his “Address on the Emancipation of Negroes in the British West Indies”:

Eaters and food are in the harmony of nature; and there too is the germ forever protected, unfolding gigantic leaf after leaf, a newer flower, a richer fruit, in every period, yet its next product is never to be guessed. It will only save what is worth saving; and it saves not by compassion, but by power. (30-31)

I suspect that Eliot would add compassion back into the formula for salvation, but it is clear that power is a major force for redemption in “Ash-Wednesday.” The narrator longs for God’s hand to lift him off the staircase and end this ordeal once and for all. In another nod to Emerson, Eliot describes the top of the staircase as a garden “where trees flower, and springs flow” (1.15)—if it is not the garden itself that has the power, as for Emerson, it is at least the Gardener.

In the next stanza, the speaker’s mood abruptly shifts again. Here, he understands and accepts the limits to knowledge and virtue. He says, “I rejoice that things are as they are and / I renounce the blessed face / And renounce the voice” (1.20-22). But he still appears to be stuck on his position in the staircase, even though he wants to begin climbing again, here changing “I do not hope to turn again” to “I cannot hope to turn again” (1.23). Eliot merges Emersonian self-reliance with Christian surrender in this passage. He says that “I rejoice, having to construct something / Upon which to rejoice” (1.24-25). Likewise, Stanley Cavell suggests that, for Emerson, “human freedom, as the opposition to fate, is not merely called for by philosophical writing but is instanced or enacted by that writing” (31). And so Eliot speaker’s constructing something upon which to rejoice—his shoring these fragments against his ruins, as it were—is an act of spiritual self-creation. It is a way to recognize himself, though it is significant that he constructs a self in order to worship God. Self-definition, for the newly Christian Eliot, is useless unless it points upward.

Nor is it a solely personal act. He immediately “pray[s] to God to have mercy upon us” (1.26), the plural pronoun suggesting a religious community that is largely invisible in “Ash-Wednesday.” The speaker, unable to decide between freedom and fate, is not able to accept his self-creation as a wholly positive act. He begs God for amnesia, to “forget / These matters that with myself I too much discuss / Too much explain” (1.27-29). In the end, even his construction of an altar and of himself appears to be one of Emerson’s lesser virtues: “Let these words answer / For what is done, not to be done again / May the judgement not be too heavy upon us” (1.30-32). He ends the first section of the poem with a vague appreciation for the space he occupies, rejoicing about the something he has created upon which to rejoice, although he prays that this stair too will not be permanent: “Teach us to care and not to care / Teach us to sit still” (1.37-38). He will not let himself hope that he will continue to ascend. At the same time, however, he hopes this station is not his final one.

Renunciations

The second section of the poem, heavily imagistic, presents the most problems for any interpretation. The speaker wakes up again, this time broken to pieces and picked clean by “three white leopards” (2.1). The leopards have eaten his legs (his ability to move and therefore to progress spiritually up the staircase) his heart (his ability to feel and to connect with God), his liver (the organ that produces bile, which may signify either his ability to get angry or his ability not to), and “that which had been contained / In the hollow round of my skull” (2.4-

5). His brain is not only destroyed; it is unnamable. He cannot think, feel, or move. As such he becomes an open conduit for the divine. Here he appears as the perfect mystic, the self he has so carefully constructed destroyed and ready to be replaced by a new one. The speaker renounces his past life: “I who am here dissembled / Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love / To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the ground” (2.11-13). All that is left him is the will to believe, a fact that Emerson would likely find significant: “So in accepting the leading of the sentiments, it is not what we believe concerning the immortality of the soul, or the like, but *the universal impulse to believe*, that is the material circumstance, and is the principal fact in the history of the globe” (“Experience” 486). In “Ash-Wednesday,” the particulars of the speaker and his belief system have been destroyed, and he is left only with the Emersonian “impulse to believe.” God will reconstruct him (“And God said / Shall these bones live?” [II.5-6]) in a more acceptable way, a way that is closer to how things are. Even Emerson, the supposed radical individualist, says that our self-construction is ultimately not enough and that “I believe we are to congratulate ourselves, as rational beings, that we are under the control of higher laws than any human will. We may congratulate ourselves on the impotence of the human will” (“Antislavery Remarks” 47).

While this destruction occurs explicitly only once in the poem, I suspect it is an ongoing process akin to the expanding and replacement of the virtues in “Circles.” The speaker’s acceptance of his place in the world gives him the brightest hope we have yet seen in this poem:

Let the whiteness of the bones atone to forgetfulness.
 There is no life in them. As I am forgotten
 And would be forgotten, so I would forget
 Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose. (2.18-21)

After the nods toward community earlier in the poem, the speaker is once again isolated, again sitting on the staircase, convinced of the uselessness of his own writing (“And God said / Prophecy to the wind only for only / The wind will listen” [2.21-23]). The past has been destroyed, and the future is unclear. God, as Emerson suggests, has hidden from him the past and the future, but the speaker is not bitter or depressed. He seems to trust that God has a reason for pulling down the veil. Indeed, his bones cry out that “We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other” (2.49), and he rejoices: “This is our land. We have our inheritance” (2.54). In my Emersonian reading of the poem, “our inheritance” is the present, the space in between the two veils of sky that God pulls down in “Experience.” The process of spiritual discipline forces the speaker to live in this ephemeral, yet permanent, in-between space.

Alienation and Community

The third section of the poem deals with alienation and human beings' responsibility to their fellow human beings. As we have seen, one of Emerson's laments in "Experience" is that human relationships have become "casual and oblique." In other essays, he suggests that man owes something to other men. "You cannot use a man as an instrument," he says, "without being used by him as an instrument" ("Lecture on Slavery" 99). This is perhaps an egoistic reason to care about other people, but his essay "Friendship" presents a strong and steadfast version of human connection: "Our friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions, because we have made them a texture of wine and dreams, instead of the tough fibre of the human heart. The laws of friendship are austere and eternal, of one web with the laws of nature and of morals" (345). Human connection is thus necessary but difficult to maintain because of the isolating nature of the world.

We see this same tension in the first lines of section three of "Ash-Wednesday," as the speaker sees another climber but is unable to help him:

At the first turning of the second stair
I turned and saw below
The same shape twisted on the banister
Under the vapour in the fetid air
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears
The deceitful face of hope and of despair. (3.1-6)

Clearly, the speaker identifies with this other figure—he describes him as "the same shape" as the speaker himself, and he sees that the other person is in the exact position that he was just two sections earlier. But the speaker cannot or will not aid his fellow traveler; he watches impotently as the other person wrestles the demon below. Eventually, "I left them twisting, turning below; There were no more faces and the stair was dark" (3.8-9). I wonder, however, if the lower figure does not offer a type of connection to the speaker. From his vantage point on the second staircase, he sees someone else passing through a bleak time he himself has already passed through. The "devil of the stairs" has never before been mentioned, but when the speaker sees someone else struggling, he can finally recognize what actually happened to him. Seeing the other person's struggle thus alleviates the speaker's alienation, even though he cannot help or even talk to him. The third section of "Ash-Wednesday" thus gives us a briefly simultaneous sense of alienation and community, and in doing so alleviates our own alienation. This is probably close to what we would have if we were to read "Friendship" and "Experience" at the same time.

We are then presented with an image of false community, in the form of "The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green" (3.15) that appears after the lights go out, a figure connected with "Distraction" (3.19). The figure "Enchant[s] the maytime with an antique flute" (3.16) and is apparently quite beautiful: "Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown, / Lilac and

brown hair;" (3.17-18). This figure is a temptress, the type of woman who distracts the intellectual and spiritual man from his worthwhile pursuits. This is the type of woman Emerson describes when he speaks of "The scholar [who] forgets himself, and apes the customs and costumes of the man of the world, to deserve the smile of beauty, and follows some giddy girl, not yet taught by religious passion to know the noble woman with all that is serene, oracular, and beautiful in her soul" ("Spiritual" 315). The broadbacked figure, then, is not evil but a lesser virtue, an example of human connection that should be let go. For, as Emerson says, "A man's growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends. For every friend whom he loses for truth, he gains a better" ("Circles" 406). In leaving the flautist on the second turn of the second stair, the speaker will gain not only truth but better companions, presumably in the garden at the top of the stairs.

Eliot's emphasis on "hope and despair" (3.6, 20) in this section recalls Emerson's statement that "Our moods do not believe in each other" ("Circles" 406). One moment, Emerson says, "I am God in nature"; the next, "I am a weed by the wall" (406). Eliot clearly means for faith to move beyond our shifting moods and to inhabit something steadfast and unshakeable, something with "strength beyond hope and despair" (3.20). But this strength would require knowledge and mastery over both the future (hope) and the past (despair), and, as Emerson says, God denies us access to both of these. And so Eliot concludes the third section of the poem by begging for a revelation that will give him the strength beyond hope and despair: "Lord, I am not worthy / Lord, I am not worthy / but speak the word only" (3.22-24). The speaker still hopes to be lifted off of the stair.

Transcendence

The fourth section of the poem opens with an image of heaven, with people in the garden above the staircase

walk[ing] between
 The various ranks of varied green
 Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,
 Talking of trivial things
 In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour. (4.2-5)

Those who have completed the brutal trudge up the staircase manage to be above both hope and despair, knowledge and ignorance, and, I suspect, right and wrong. They have broken out of Emerson's circles, and in this sense they are themselves poets. As Emerson says in "Circles," "Literature is a point outside of our hodiernal circle, through which a new one may be described. The use of literature is to afford a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it" (408). Eliot's speaker has not yet reached the garden and can only imagine the goings-on there, but this act of the imagination gives him a vantage point outside of the staircase. Whether or not his

image of heaven is accurate is beside the point; it gives him perspective. For the people he imagines, pain exists but does not matter. They are both aware and unaware of “eternal dolour,” and this act of creation gives him the hope that he will one day occupy the same state. This section is akin to the brief transcendental moments that Emerson describes in “Inspiration”:

Thoughts let us into realities. Neither miracle nor magic nor any religious tradition, not the immortality of the private soul is incredible, after we have experienced an insight, a thought. I think it comes to some men but once in their life, sometimes a religious impulse, sometimes an intellectual insight. But what we want is consecutiveness. 'Tis with us a flash of light, then a long darkness, then a flash again. (273)

With this vision, then, Eliot’s speaker experiences a flash of inspiration, something that goes beyond the intellectual and the religious, the past and the future, the hope and the despair. It is a type of revelation for him and perhaps the answer to his plea to God for mercy in the previous section.

The garden, in Eliot’s vision, is a place of redemption and renewal, a place for “the years that walk between” (4.12) and where God can “Redeem / The time. Redeem / The unread vision in the higher dream” (4.19-21). Words go unspoken in the garden. As Emerson puts it, “We cannot bandy words with nature, or deal with her as we deal with persons” (“Nature” 554). God substitutes for Nature in Eliot’s poem, although the two are clearly closely related (as the portrayal of heaven as a garden suggests). Thus, no words are spoken in the garden; words are the artifacts of temporal human relationships, and in the garden, the ontology of relationships has changed. It is interesting that, the speaker having asked God to “speak the word only,” God responds not with words but with a vision, which the speaker immediately translates into words. As he is not yet in the garden, he does not understand divine linguistics.

The Unspeakable

The vision disappears at the beginning of section five, and Eliot’s narrator attempts to understand the incomprehensible. The first stanza of this section is ripe with puns nearly to the point of incoherence:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled

About the centre of the silent Word. (5.1-9)

This abstract linguistic theorizing gets him nowhere, of course. He becomes lost in the sound of the words and seems to forget the vision that was given to him for his comfort. I suspect the seeds to his understanding divine linguistics are contained in this incomprehensible section, however. After all, he suddenly begins capitalizing *Word*, which suggests John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (KJV). In Christian theology, *Word* refers to Christ, and this transference of meaning designates that revelation is not a text but a person, somewhat akin to section four’s vision that went beyond mere words. Eliot’s speaker does not pick up on this substitution, however, and instead gets lost. But at least he recognizes his own lostness and says a prayer for his readers: “O my people, what have I done unto thee” (5.10). This is one of Eliot’s rare jokes, and it is at the expense of not only himself and his poetic persona but of his readers who also know that “because they know, they shall not know.”

And so Eliot’s speaker knows that he is missing a greater revelation. He knows that it is out there, but cannot figure out who will ever receive it. One thing is clear: The endless spiral staircase of life is not the place for sustained revelation because “there is not enough silence” (5.12). Aside from brief flashes of inspiration (like in section four), life on earth is as Emerson describes it in “Experience”:

It is very unhappy, but too late to be helped, the discovery we have made, that we exist. That discovery is called the Fall of Man. Ever afterwards, we suspect our instruments. We have learned that we do not see directly, but mediately, and that we have no means of correcting these colored and distorting lenses which we are, or of computing the amount of their errors. (487)

We must forever second-guess ourselves. We cannot trust ourselves, and we cannot even trust those flashes of inspiration—who is to say that they are correct? What happens if Eliot’s speaker spends his entire life trudging up the spiral staircase and finds no garden at the top? What if all we really have is the chain of signifiers with (at best) undefined signifieds that he presents at the beginning of this section? The speaker of the poem is struggling with what Eliot elsewhere calls “the demon of doubt which is inseparable from the spirit of belief” (“*Pensées*” 363). This crisis of doubt and meaninglessness is, in other words, built out of faith itself.

The speaker finds himself stuck again, as he was at the beginning of the poem. His circle appears to have turned all the way around and deposited him back on the same stair where he started. He now counts himself among

Those who walk in darkness, who chose thee and oppose thee,
Those who are torn on the horn between season and season, time
and time, between

Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those who wait
In darkness...
Children at the gate
Who will not go away and cannot pray. (5.20-26)

Eliot's speaker wrestles with himself, frustrated with his apparent lack of progress on the spiral staircase. He has reached an emotional impasse, and he feels guilty, not only for his unbelief but for any unbelief his readers might be led to in the reading of the poem. The section ends with a repetition of the line "O my people" (35). The quotation is abbreviated, suggesting once again that its speaker is short of breath, frustrated, defeated, a fool to fate and lost forever in the dark tunnels of existence.

Active Resignation

This penultimate section is a storm, and if the sixth and final section of the poem is not the sun emerging afterwards, it is at least the abatement of the rain and wind. Eliot shifts from "Because I do not hope to turn again" to "Although I do not hope to turn again" (6.1), and this substitution is significant. *Because* denotes rebellion—"Because I do not hope to turn again, I am going to fight this turning with everything in me." *Although*, on the other hand, is gentler; it suggests resignation—"Although I do not hope to turn again, I will if I have to." Eliot is still stuck on the spiral staircase, still "Wavering between the profit and the loss / In this brief transit where the dreams cross" (6.4-5), and he still "do[es] not wish to wish these things" (6.7). But that *although* makes all the difference. Although he is still stuck, although he cannot be where he wants to be, he finds solace here in the sixth section. That solace appears to be in a form of human connection: "the lost heart stiffens and rejoices / In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices" (6.11-12). The speaker finds comfort in the shared struggle. In hearing the other voices crying on the staircase, he knows that he is not alone. And so, although God's two veils of sky are hung down before and after him, he finds contentment through resignation. At the end of the poem, he prays,

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks...
Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee. (6.26-29, 32-33)

There is no rage or bitterness in these final lines. Eliot's speaker knows that he will likely make this climb for the rest of his life, and he knows there are no guarantees as to what awaits him at the top—if he even reaches it. But he is content with that. He gives himself over to an Emersonian active resignation. As Emerson says late in his life, "If Fate is so prevailing, man also is part of it, and

can confront fate with fate. If the Universe have these savage accidents, our atoms are as savage in resistance” (“Fate” 954). But for Emerson (and for Eliot), resistance is not the same thing as rebellion. Rather, it is understanding and submitting to the fact that “Law rules throughout existence, a Law which is not intelligent but intelligence,—not personal nor impersonal,—it disdains words and passes understanding; it dissolves persons; it vivifies nature; yet solicits the pure in heart to draw on all its omnipotence” (968). It is to this Law that Eliot’s speaker submits at the end of “Ash-Wednesday.” He resists his own destruction the only way he can, by “drawing on omnipotence.”

Because of this, the poem serves as a vision to its readers. Eliot’s language is complicated, but it is complicated in order to show the limits of language and thereby to transcend it. I suggest that the entire poem is meant to function for the reader as the fourth section functions for the narrator, as an unnamable, inconceivable solace, as a flash of inspiration to impart hope. The speaker’s pain becomes a way for readers of his poetry to understand and deal with their own pain—and to eventually make the same active resignation that the speaker does. Or, as Emerson describes it, “Leaving the dæmon who suffers, he is to take sides with the Deity who secures universal benefit by his pain” (“Fate” 967). Eliot’s enacting of this suffering becomes an Emersonian Beautiful Necessity that has the capacity to heal its readers.

Note

¹ This should not be a controversial statement. Emerson himself famously exclaims, “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do” (“Self-Reliance” 265).

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Thoughts and Reflections

Language, Translation, and Christianity

Kelly Leavitt

In March 2014, I attended the Midwest Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature (CCL) at Wheaton College. The theme was “Ancient Texts and Global Worlds: Translation in Theory, History, and Practice.” While “translation,” in a literary context, commonly refers to the rendering of one text into another language, the conference presentations illustrated the rich variety of interpretations the term can evoke. Etymologically, “translation” comes from Latin meaning “to carry across.” Viewing the meaning of “translation” in a mathematical context gives further insight: “A transformation in which the origin of a coordinate system is moved to another position so that each axis retains the same direction or, equivalently, a figure or curve is moved so that it retains the same orientation to the axes” (“translation”). Despite the varied definitions and interpretations of “translation,” the term inherently signifies movement as well as similarity or unity. However, these ideas can be contradictory: How can someone or something be moved yet remain the same? Is something gained or lost during this movement, during the process of “carrying across”? These are fundamental and controversial questions within translation theory and practice, and they loomed throughout the conference.

Presenters enriched the discussion of translation by offering a distinct Christian perspective to some of the fundamental questions mentioned above. In our current world, particularly within academia, the post-modern, post-Christian voice dominates. For instance, French philosopher Jacques Derrida’s revolutionary deconstruction theory suggests that a text—which according to Derrida is virtually everything—infinately signifies a signifier. In other words, its meaning is infinitely referred or deferred to another meaning, thereby destroying the concept of a central, original meaning. When applied to language, deconstruction denies an origin or source, which suggests that meaning in language is continually deferred; it debunks the concept of an authorial sense of truth, because meaning is always escaping the grasp of language. Through the study of translation—and, thus, language—the 2014 Conference on Christianity and Literature at Wheaton College offered a response to this popular post-modern perspective. While deconstruction argues for a lack of origin in language and meaning—each sign infinitely referring to a signifier—Christianity offers an opposing perspective of language. A Christian perspective asserts the ability of language to signify a transcendental truth, an original signifier, despite its “fallen” and fragmentary nature. This Christian response to post-modern theories of

language can be further seen by looking at three texts presented during the conference: Genesis 11, Czeslaw Milosz's poetry, and Lamin Sanneh's *Translating the Message*.

One argument for the "fallen-ness" of language can be found at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. Until this point, the whole earth spoke one language. Then, God decided to multiply the languages and scatter the people because of their efforts to build a tower to the heavens:

And the Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. (Genesis 11: 6-8, *English Standard Version*)

God disrupts the unity of the people because of the people's reliance on their own efforts apart from God, which echoes Adam and Eve's earlier rebellion and Fall in Genesis 3. From this point in Genesis 11, language is no longer "whole" or "pure"; instead, it is impure and derivative. The presence of many languages also creates divisions between people and places. The breakdown of languages from one to many abolishes the strength of the people, thereby exhibiting language as fragmented, or "fallen."

One poet highlighted at the conference who comments upon language—its origins, limitations, and possibilities—is Czeslaw Milosz. Milosz was born in 1911 in Lithuania, but his family returned to their native Poland after World War I. Milosz was raised Catholic, and while his faith was tested throughout his life, he remained loyal to it, which heavily influenced his writing. He even translated many books of the Bible. In 1939, Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia; during World War II, Milosz worked with the underground Resistance movement in Warsaw publishing poems under the pseudonym J. Syruc. To escape the communist regime in Poland, Milosz left in 1960 for the United States. He lived in the States, teaching at the University of California-Berkeley until his death in 2004. He won the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature.

In his poetry, Milosz affirms the fragmentary nature of language. During the conference, Dr. Clare Cavanaugh, professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at Northwestern University and Milosz scholar (currently working on a biography of Milosz to be published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), spoke of the poet's relationship to language and translation in her lecture titled "Translation and the Language of Paradise: The Case of Czeslaw Milosz." Dr. Cavanaugh focused on his poem "From the Rising of the Sun," written in 1974. First, Dr. Cavanaugh drew attention to the title of the poem, directing readers to the theme of origins with Milosz's reference to Psalm 113: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, / the name of the Lord is to be praised!" Throughout the long, seven-part poem, Milosz contemplates language and poetry. In part two, titled "Diary of a

Naturalist,” he writes about a young boy, who the reader can assume is himself, and says, “He knew what was needed for some ultimate moment/When he would compose from fragments a world perfect at last” (284). He speaks of this “ultimate moment” with the certainty of naïve idealism, but in the next lines, a jaded, more realistic voice responds: “Everything would be fine if language did not deceive us by finding different names for the same thing in different times and places” (284). The speaker resigns himself to language’s multiplicity, which makes writing an elusive process, never fully grasping meaning. Additionally, the repetition of the word “different” reminds readers of the fractured and divisive nature of language. Milosz also exemplifies the multifariousness of language in this poem by describing the names of a flower, the Alpine shooting star: “The plant was so named for its pink-purple flowers/Whose slanting tips point to the ground from under the petals, /And resembles a star from nineteenth-century illustrations/That falls, pulling along a thin sheaf of lines” (284). This description explains the name of the flower, but Milosz also references other languages to complicate the meaning of the flower. First, he refers to the flower in Latin, *Dodecatheon alpinum* (284). Then, he reminds the reader that the Alpine shooting star “in the Indian language will never be known” (285). With this line, Milosz suggests that each language holds its own cultural tradition that shapes and defines the words within a particular language. Therefore, the Alpine shooting star’s “identity,” or meaning, could change depending on the language defining it. In addition, Milosz reminds readers of forgotten languages in order to further expand the readers’ conceptions of the multiplicity of languages and direct readers toward linguistic uncertainty and mystery. Due to this linguistic uncertainty, Milosz questions poetry: “A word should be contained in every single thing / But it is not. So what then of my vocation?” (285) Instead of providing an answer, he merely continues the seemingly disordered poem by naming a European tree in a slang version of Lithuanian—*zalia rutile*—further reminding readers of Babel and language’s fragmentation.

While Milosz clearly presents the complications and limitations of language, he does not maintain a post-modern perspective of language. As Dr. Cavanaugh discussed, Milosz brings the reader to the Tower of Babel not to argue for division, difference, confusion, and a lack of meaning, but instead to argue for the Tower of Babel as the origin, or source, of language itself. When referring to Milosz’s view of language, Cavanaugh compared him with his contemporary, T. S. Eliot. Similar to Milosz’s “From the Rising of the Sun,” Eliot’s “The Waste Land” uses a variety of languages to illustrate fragmentation and multiplicity. However, Eliot’s use of language in “The Waste Land,” especially Sanskrit, seeks to recover the origins of language, or an original language, while Milosz argues against the quest for an original language or linguistic certainty. Instead, Milosz shifts the center, or origin, from Eliot’s idea of an original language to the Tower of Babel. Cavanaugh mentioned that Milosz believes human history could never be plumbed to its depths, so it is only through accessing Babel that he can consider a return to origins. By doing this, Milosz contends that the co-existence of multiple languages can be the source of human identity. By finding beauty

within multiplicity, Milosz redeems the perception of the confusion of languages as derivative and impure.

Similar to Milosz, Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and world Christianity and professor of history at Yale Divinity School, also sees the redemptive qualities of language in spite of its multiplicity. Dr. Tiffany Kriner, associate professor of English at Wheaton, introduced Sanneh, and his seminal book *Translating the Message*, during her presentation on Murkami's *IQ84* as a translation of Orwell's *1984*. Kriner used Sanneh's perspective of translation in her approach to the two novels to illustrate Sanneh's belief that translation both affirms and critiques a message. In other words, Kriner contended that *IQ84* carries the story of *1984* while also changing it and making it new, thereby critiquing it. This is one central argument in Sanneh's *Translating the Message*, first published in 1989, with a revised and expanded version in 2009. Sanneh eventually comes to this conclusion by first proving translation as fundamental to Christianity: "[F]rom its origins, Christianity identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew" (1). He goes on in the book to discuss the "religious theme of translation" within missionary work and evangelism in the historical context of colonial Africa (7). His thesis linking the origins of Christianity to translation, or, in other words, defending Christianity's translatability, testifies to a pluralistic quality within Christianity. He says, "Christianity has become a pluralist dispensation of enormous complexity, and religious statesmanship requires the flexible approach of translatability to foster this pluralism rather than opposing it as a threat" (6). Like Milosz, Sanneh recognizes pluralistic origins, but views pluralism as a center of meaning itself, versus infinite fragmentation and a lack of meaning. Also like Milosz, Sanneh acknowledges the divisive effects of the Tower of Babel, but he also maintains a Christian worldview of a central truth, despite the confusion of languages:

We can overcome barriers of exclusion and suspicion only when we turn to the one God in our own idiom, for that idiom in its variety is what we all have in common as the ground of our concrete individuality. It is here that God will meet and not leave us. As long as we accept the need to translate, the stream of a universal providence will continue to swell with the outpourings of a variegated humanity in its open, inclusive form. (8)

Sanneh emphasizes "the stream of universal providence"—the unity of God—existing amidst "variegated humanity"—multiplicity. Among variety and diversity, a sense of commonality and universality still exists.

While this is simply an introductory discussion of the relationship between Christianity, language, and translation based upon reflections from the Conference on Christianity and Literature, conference presenters contributed a valuable and necessary perspective on religion and literature scholarship. Especially amidst the pervasive presence of post-modernism in academia, the voice provided by CCL was refreshing and hopeful. Through the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 as well as Czeslaw Milosz's poetry and Lamin Sanneh's

Translating the Message, language can be redeemed from its post-modern, fragmented condition and re-imagined as possessing the ability to express meaning and truth through its jumbled, beautifully variegated origin. Despite its limitations and shortcomings, language offers readers and listeners meaning and truth. English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins beautifully captures the Christian truth amidst multiplicity and mixture in his poem “Pied Beauty”: “All things counter, original, spare, strange; / He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise him.”

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Motion, Stasis, and the “Place” of Women in Tim Gautreaux’s *Same Place, Same Things*

C. D. Albin

Louisiana native Tim Gautreaux has enjoyed notable success as a writer of short fiction, including a National Magazine Award and frequent selections of his work for acclaimed series such as *Best American Short Stories*, *New Stories from the South*, and *The O. Henry Awards*. Critics have praised his stories for their humor and deft plotting, as well as their richly detailed evocations of south Louisiana and empathetic portrayals of blue collar characters. Additionally, his characters often grapple with issues of conscience, their choices at times guided and at other times complicated by religious faith.

A Roman Catholic, Gautreaux has frequently described Catholicism as so pervasive an aspect of south Louisiana culture that he could not write realistically about the region’s people unless he addressed the role of religion in their lives. Specifically, he has said of his own religious background that “being raised a Roman Catholic in a region where Catholicism was a dominant religion has had a very strong influence on me. I guess that’s why I don’t see fiction that does not have some kind of moral concern as being very interesting” (Levasseur 43).

Gautreaux speaks most openly about the role of religion in his fiction during interviews, a context in which he appears modest and at ease, happy to describe not only the origins of story ideas and his remarkably thorough revision process, but also his teaching methods honed over a thirty year span at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. However, in a 2001 interview conducted by Julie Kane, Gautreaux seems momentarily caught off guard when Kane inquires about apparent differences between his male and female characters. “In many of your works a female character . . . wants more than anything to get out of south Louisiana,” Kane points out, “while the male lead characters seem to realize that their place is central to their identities, and want nothing so much as to stay put. Is the ‘gendering’ of this conflict something rooted in your personal experience?” (Kane 60).

Gautreaux’s initial response seems uncharacteristically brief: “I don’t know—I think I would have to be psychoanalyzed to figure that one out” (Kane, 60). In this reply one senses the author’s use of humor to deflect the question, but Kane persists, asking him if perhaps his own mother wanted to escape Louisiana. Gautreaux answers in the negative, but eventually elaborates: “Some of the women in my stories are a little rough around the edges, a little hard-hearted. And, to tell you the truth, a lot of rural women that I grew up with had to be pretty tough, intellectually and physically and emotionally, to survive the poverty and rough men they’d married” (Kane, 61). The answer acknowledges Kane’s

perception that Gautreaux's female characters, particularly those in the debut collection *Same Place, Same Things*, may hold different views of south Louisiana than their male counterparts. Yet the answer also implies a certain resistance on Gautreaux's part, a conviction that while some women may possess an understandable desire to flee, others may choose to stay, finding ways to establish their own, separate peace with the region. In fact, those female characters who do choose to stay often exhibit distinctly religious or spiritual impulses for doing so.

The choice of some characters to stay is made more remarkable by Gautreaux's unflinching portrayal of the region. In an early review of *Same Place, Same Things*, Rand Cooper observed that the Louisiana of Gautreaux's fiction "feels like a foreign country—one steeped in haplessness, where even the towns, places like Gumwood and Grand Crapaud, sound like insults, and the inhabitants know it" (24). Julie Kane is correct in observing that among these inhabitants, women do seem more compelled than men to seek escape from their surroundings. In fact, they often become so exasperated with the local version of crassness and banality that they elevate the idea of Elsewhere to hallowed status. Such women seem animated by a desperate foreboding that they will never escape their circumstances.

To note a few examples, Ada, the thirty-something farm wife who murders her husband in the title story, seems primarily interested in itinerant pump repairman Harry Lintel because, as she tells him, "You're the only person I ever met can go where he wants to go" (15). Raynelle Bullfinch of "Died and Gone to Vegas" is similarly obsessed with the notion of escape. She has come to believe that "the only sense of mystery in her life [is] provided by a deck of cards" (37), and when she finally wins the pot in a game of bourree, she decides to head for Las Vegas where she can "do some high-class gamblin'. No more of this penny-ante stuff with old men and worms" (54). In "License to Steal," Mrs. Lado informs her husband Curtis that she is finished with their marriage by leaving a note on the Formica-top table. The note reads simply, "I had enough" (151). Later, Curtis learns from his son that Mrs. Lado "said she was tired of living in Louisiana with somebody didn't bring home no money. Said she wanted to move to the United States" (151).

Ada, Raynelle Bullfinch, and Mrs. Lado are prime examples of Gautreaux's female wanderers, women who wish to create new selves in new places they hope will differ from the small Louisiana towns where they feel saturated in discontent—towns where they neither seek nor find spiritual succor. The depth of their discontent is most graphically illustrated by the actions of Ada. Her economic situation appears dire, and she is enduring the Great Depression in a community that outsider Harry Lintel judges "hangdog and *spiritless* [emphasis mine]...., beaten down and ruined inside by hard times" (2). With one sweep of his eyes Harry can see that Ada's yard has grown up in thistle and clover, and several of her windows are patched with cardboard. Yet it is her persistent curiosity about him—where he is from and where he has been—that makes him most uncomfortable. Her only explanation for her questions is that she is "curious why anyone would come to this part of Louisiana from somewhere's else" (3).

Harry's cryptic answer—"I follow the droughts" (3)—may be more spiritually discerning than he knows. During his short stay in this community—one for which the narrator twice uses the adjective "spiritless"—he will discover Ada's husband dead in a field, marvel at her lack of grief and her nearly instant pursuit of himself as a replacement, and puzzle out the clues that reveal her capacity for murder. Based on his knowledge of her guilt, he refuses to take her with him when he leaves the community, and Ada responds by assaulting him with a wrench and stealing his truck. At last she has mobility, but Harry knows her to be "a woman who would never get where she wanted to go" (17). The capacity for kindness has turned brittle inside her, and her violence at the end of the story is, in Joel Lovell's words, "the logical end of the slow, sure squelching of [her] desires." She may be driving Harry's truck into a drizzling rain, but she carries a killing drought within her, one which lays waste to any spiritual impulse she might once have entertained. By using violence to obtain her means of escape, she validates the self-fulfilling prophecy she made to Harry just before he discovered her guilt: "Same place, same things, all my life" (13).

Eventually drought imagery and its spiritual connotations also surround the only female character in "Died and Gone to Vegas." Raynelle Bullfinch, the cook on the *Leo B. Canterbury*, a government steam dredge, may travel up and down the Mississippi River, but she feels as trapped in her world and as thirsty for change as Ada does in hers. At the outset of the story, Raynelle insists that a reluctant young oil worker named Nick Montalbano fill an empty seat at an upcoming card game because, as she tells him, "you're just a college boy laying out a bit until you get money to go back to school, but for me, this is it" (37). Moments later, after checking her face in the glass of a steam gauge, she remarks, "My big adventure is cards" (37).

Raynelle is a loud, colorful, in some ways vibrant woman. As a result, her admission that her world has contracted to the size of a card table reveals a sadness not wholly masked by her boisterous ways. Likewise, her steady willingness to risk loss for a chance at change suggests an ingrained preference for the next hand rather than the one she holds, the next place rather than the one she inhabits. Try as she will, she cannot find variety or renewal in her daily life. Significantly, when her turn comes to tell a tall tale during the card game, she saddles her protagonist with what amounts to a curse of sameness. In the story she concocts, the man's whole family works in "the same place" (43) that he does, he offers the same ring to his girlfriend that he took from the finger of his dead fiancée, and the girlfriend takes on the same hair style, fashion sense, accent, and job as the former fiancée. Raynelle's story is entertaining, and it gets a rise from her fellow card players, but it also suggests the soul-numbing sameness she feels in her day-to-day existence.

Like Harry Lintel of "Same Place, Same Things," Nick Montalbano is this story's outsider, and as Harry does with Ada, Nick has what amounts to the last word with Raynelle. While she rakes in the pot in the card game and gleefully describes her plans for Vegas, Nick closes his eyes and imagines the aftermath of Raynelle's trip. In Nick's version she drinks far too much, loses her money as well as her plane ticket, and ends up "walking across the desert through the waves

of heat, mountains in front and the angry snarl of cross-country traffic in the rear” (55). There seems to be no ill will motivating Nick’s vision, no personal dislike or bitterness at the loss of his money. If anything, his vision seems motivated by a mild fascination with Raynelle, perhaps even a certain compassion for her. Still, the desert he imagines stretches “before her as far as the end of the world, a hot and rocky place empty of mirages and dreams. She might not live to get out of it” (55).

Ada and Raynelle are striking, memorable characters, and they cast long shadows in *Same Place, Same Things*. However, they are counterpointed in the collection by other women whose sense of place—and personal relationship to place—is not characterized by a desperate need for escape, but rather by a spiritual and sometimes explicitly religious commitment to south Louisiana. For instance, “Floyd’s Girl” is an ensemble story narrated largely from six different perspectives, three male and three female. The plot concerns the kidnapping of a young Cajun girl, Lizette Bergeron. Lizette’s mother is now living in Texas with her boyfriend, whom she sends back to Louisiana to take Lizette. Floyd, the custodial parent, gives chase, and he is aided by a number of Cajun friends and relatives, all of whom seem concerned not only for Lizette’s physical safety, but also for the disruption of spiritual and cultural continuity they fear she will experience by being yanked so forcibly from her home in south Louisiana.

Notably, in this story the three female perspectives—two by elderly women and one by the ten-year-old Lizette herself—portray deeply positive associations with place. For instance, when Mrs. Boudreaux learns of the kidnapping, her concerns about the spiritual shortcomings of Texas suggest—albeit comically—how rich a spiritual legacy she believes may be lost to Lizette:

A fear crept up through Mrs. Boudreaux’s stomach as she saw the dark-haired Lizette ruined by outlanders, dragged off to the dry plains of Texas she imagined from cowboy movies. She wondered if her mother would take her to Mass or to the Stations of the Cross during Lent. She knew Texans had some kind of God, but they didn’t take him too seriously, didn’t celebrate him with feast days and days of penance, didn’t even kneel down in their churches on Sunday. (168)

Like Mrs. Boudreaux, Lizette herself has already internalized a deep sense of belonging to a particular culture, and through her eyes we sense harbingers of displacement as her mother’s boyfriend drives her closer and closer to the Texas border: “They drove by little wood-and-tin towns, rice elevators connected by bent and rusted railroads, and she felt an empty-hearted flutter when she saw the sign that said Texas was a few miles ahead. She knew then they would pass out of the land of her blood and into some strange, inevitable place, into what must happen sooner or later” (175).

Fortunately for Lizette, Floyd and his Cajun band do manage to stop the Texan before he reaches the border. They not only punish him, but also destroy his truck, and the elderly lady known as T-Jean’s grandmere has what amounts to

the final say as she berates the Texan along the side of the road: “You, if you woulda went off with her, all you woulda got was her little body. In her head, she’d never be where you took her to” (180). One can’t help but hear in this line the counterpoint to Harry Lintel’s judgment upon Ada in “Same Place, Same Things”: “She was a woman who would never get where she wanted to go” (17). Pertinently, Margaret Bauer believes the Cajuns in “Floyd’s Girl” perceive not just the Texas interloper as a villain, but also Lizette’s mother, “the one, an outsider who has come in and disrupted the order of things; the other, worse, an insider who does not appreciate that order” (61-62).

If there is a female character in *Same Place, Same Things* for whom order has been most disrupted, surely she is Elaine Campbell of the penultimate story “Returnings.” Elaine is a Vietnam-era farm wife who, having recently lost her only son, finds herself facing another unexpected crisis when a young South Vietnamese helicopter pilot training at a military base in Mississippi gets lost and sets his noisy craft down in her soybean field. Elaine’s choice to aid this pilot proves restorative for her, and it represents an alternate, ultimately spiritual response to the discontent she shares with so many other female characters in *Same Place, Same Things*.

Like Ada, Raynelle Bullfinch, Mrs. Lado, and even Floyd Bergeron’s ex-wife—in fact, more than they—Elaine has a deeply rooted cause for her discontent. The loss of her son Joe threatens to turn the family farm into a meaningless tract of land, and it has brought a new silence into her relationship with her husband Ralph:

There was nothing to say that they did not already feel in their blood about an eighteen-year-old son who was healthy one week, plowing and fixing things, and dead the next from encephalitis. They refused to reminisce, but they talked around their son at mealtime, as though he were at the table and they were ignoring him. When they touched in any way, the message of him was on their skin, and they knew their loss. Talking could not encompass what had gone from them. (184)

This silence has especially isolated Elaine, and the story’s opening scene finds her alone in the middle of a soybean field, nearly one mile from her house. Her husband, suffering from a bad back, has changed places with Elaine and now spends most of his days indoors.

Multiple ironies attend the notion of place in this story. For one, Elaine has assumed the stereotypical male “place” in the field, and she chafes slightly at the memory of Ralph’s pronouncement that “middle-aged women couldn’t farm” (183). For another, Le Ton, the young pilot who lands his helicopter in her field, is seemingly as out of place as anyone could be. Not only is he isolated from his native soil, but he is trying to follow directions from his training officer that he soon concludes are intentionally bogus. His bewilderment at the physical terrain corresponds to Elaine’s own disorientation in trying to understand a new emotional landscape, that of grief.

Revealingly, when Le Ton unfolds his military map and places it on the ground in front of Elaine, requesting that she tell him where he is, she cannot do so. Without familiar towns or roads marked in ways she can recognize, she is powerless to locate her own farm. She can recognize Le Ton's growing desperation though, his mounting fear that if he does not complete his training mission in the allotted time, he will be sent back to Vietnam as a foot soldier, a much more dangerous role than that of pilot. Despite her self-doubt and her fear that "she might be doing something illegal or unpatriotic" (187), Elaine puts aside her personal interests to suggest that Le Ton take her up in the helicopter. She has hit upon the notion that if they disregard the map, she may be able to decipher the local landscape from the air and direct him safely across the river to Fort Exter.

In making this choice, Elaine momentarily abandons the ordinary existence those long, straight rows of soybeans seem to have proscribed for her. She exhibits the freedom and capacity for new experiences that Ada, Raynelle, and other female characters from *Same Place, Same Things* pine after, but her actions do not proceed from self-interest. Her willingness to vault into the new and unknown is born out of her concern for Le Ton, not a wish to escape her own mourning. In fact, even as she struggles to discern a recognizable landmark in the terrain flowing beneath the helicopter, she remembers telling her son, an amateur photographer, that "he should photograph people, not only objects. People are what have to be remembered.... Places are nothing" (188).

Elaine does succeed in helping Le Ton find his way back to Fort Exter, and in a concomitant act of generosity, he insists on returning her home instead of setting the helicopter down next to a highway as she had suggested. By focusing on her home, Le Ton seems to offer Elaine a hint of personal restoration. For instance, near the end of the story after Le Ton flies back to the base, Elaine and Ralph stand "together in the half-plowed field, in the middle of all they had lost" (194). The weight of grief has not been lifted from Elaine's shoulders, or from her husband's, but the two of them do stand side by side, making plans to "drive two towns over and get a fancy meal" (193). This field of loss is one from which they need only periodic escape. They know they can return.

Given the depth of Elaine Campbell's loss and the tempered but earned hope with which "Returnings" closes, the story represents Gautreaux's most positive rendering of female alienation from place, particularly the place of south Louisiana. Although Elaine is simultaneously drawn to and distanced from her farm, she is not overwhelmed by the need to balance these competing concerns. Moreover, in a choice that is both spiritual and practical, she accepts other people as the primary means by which she assigns value to place. Although she will feel her son Joe's loss to the end of her days, she has in this story abandoned no individual, and because of that we can imagine her in years hence, still farming the same land, "satisfied at the even rows of brown dirt [she heaps] up" (183).

While it is true that the protagonists in Gautreaux's *Same Place, Same Things* are almost exclusively male, the struggles of the collection's female characters create a meaningful subtext, one that clearly enriches the book's spiritual dimensions. Julie Kane highlighted an important aspect of the collection with her 2001 question about the angst of Gautreaux's female characters.

However, in her characterization Kane overlooked Gautreaux's practice—whether conscious or not—of counterpointing women who choose distinctly different responses to the cultural conditions of south Louisiana. If readers overlook this counterpoint motif, they are unlikely to notice that *Same Place, Same Things* dramatizes one of the oldest of spiritual questions: How does one maintain a vibrant, responsive soul under circumstances which seem bent on destroying that soul?

Gautreaux's exploration of this question is not exhaustive, but *Same Place, Same Things* is a work of fiction rather than a theological treatise. By counterpointing the fortunes of women like Ada and Raynelle—who feverishly seek only physical escape from their circumstances of place—against the integration into community of women like Mrs. Boudreaux and Elaine Campbell—who find in place a daily reminder of the worth of fellow human beings—Gautreaux quietly reflects his own religious outlook and subtly shades the ethical center of his book toward Christian spirituality.

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Book Reviews

David Lyle Jefferey and Gregory Maillet. *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011. 336 pages, \$19.20

Reviewed by Kelly Leavitt

Published by InterVarsity Press as part of the Christian Integration Series, this book is an indispensable handbook for Christian college students seeking to understand the connection between their faith and literary studies. In this work, David Lyle Jeffrey, professor of literature and the humanities at Baylor University, and Gregory Maillet, professor of English at Crandall University describe a “crisis” affecting the health of literature programs in the academy. They make a clear call to Christian students of literature to “take up what Tolkien called the work of ‘recovery’” and restore to the discipline “access to a full range of texts that encounter and explore divine truth” (327). Jeffrey and Maillet suggest that “the thoughtful and soundly prepared Christian student can help to restore to that ‘soul of the discipline’ its power to choose for health” (326). The combination of fundamental theories and thoughtful critical practice as well as its approachable, balanced, and truthful presentation makes *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice* an essential introduction to the intersection of Christian faith and literary studies for the ambitious young Christian literature scholar.

One reason this book is an excellent guide for students is its ability to convey a comprehensive survey of both the philosophical foundations and practical exercise of Christian literary criticism. The book is divided into three parts, with three chapters per part. Part One presents theoretical foreground while Parts Two and Three critically examine Christianity from medieval literature to postmodernism. In the last chapter of Part Three, the book returns to its thesis and the authors assert how a “Christian worldview can provide a pertinent and fruitful approach to literary study” and how Christian literary scholars can engage with this academic field, both now and in the future, in a Christ-honoring way.

Part One, titled “Christian Foundations,” unravels a rich, multifarious response to the fundamental question, “What has Jesus Christ to do with English literature?” (35) Jeffrey and Maillet respond to this question throughout three chapters: “Literature and Truth,” “Theological Aesthetics and Christian Literary Criticism,” and “Our Literary Bible.” Simple yet essential questions (such as the one above) shape this first part, which allows the reader to approach the involved

theoretical conversation with clarity and focus. For instance, “What has *truth* to do with literature—which, after all, is “fiction”?” introduces the relationship between literature and truth in Chapter 1 (38). From these broad questions, Jeffrey and Maillet assert truthful and tangible—not overly simplistic—responses. One of the ways the authors respond to the relationship between truth and fiction is through our “hard wired instinct” for analogizing: “As with Jesus’ parable about hireling shepherds and his remarks about wolves in sheep’s clothing (Jn 10:1-17; Mt 7:15), we readily see lived reality beneath an engaging cortex of imaginative analogy and say of the extended metaphor or fiction, “Aha! That rings true” (40). This basic, often unconscious, act of comparison may seem obvious; however, it is a foundational step that enables the reader to see truth in literature, “disguised as a fable, parable, or ‘harmless tale’” (43). Chapter 2 presents a distinctively Christian approach to literary criticism called theological aesthetics, which combines “theistic realism” with “critical realism” (84). To practically apply this, Christian literary critics can seek the true, the good, and the beautiful in literature (87-89). Finally, the last chapter in the first part, chapter 3, caps the conversation of the relationship between literature and truth by discussing the Bible’s “massive influence” on literary tradition as well as pointing out literary aspects of the Bible (95). An especially helpful aspect of the chapter is the thorough analysis of ten literary features of the Bible: binary construction, archetypal narrative, grand narrative, covenant history, the relationship between history and allegory, confessional autobiography, etiological or eponymous narration, poetic language and biblical wisdom, parables, and internal skepticism concerning the limits of literary language (100-134). Such analysis provides a scriptural framework from which students can examine fiction. In Part One, Jeffrey and Maillet skillfully lay the theoretical groundwork that primes readers for a practical application of Christian literary criticism.

After the foundations of Part One, Parts Two and Three show readers, through critical practice, the development of Christian thought from medieval literature to postmodernism. The three chapters that comprise Part Two are “Tradition, Liturgy, and the Medieval Imagination,” “Faith and Fiction in Renaissance Literature,” and “Literature and Religion in an Age of Skepticism.” From St. Augustine of Hippo to Donne, Herbert, and Milton, this second part discusses the beginnings of Christianity in the English-speaking world and how the Christian faith has been expressed in literature up until the Enlightenment. After discussing the influence of St. Augustine and monasticism upon the spread of Christianity and development of education, Jeffrey and Maillet examine Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* to illustrate its Christian themes. In reference to the social commentary of the *Tales*, they state, “He [Chaucer] is not in our sense calling [...] for social reformation alone but for the Christian sacrament of reconciliation, and thus for corrective self-knowledge and personal obedience to Christ on the part of all who would be faithful members of his body” (159). Chapter 5 describes the cultural context of the Renaissance with specific attention to significant historical events in relation to literacy, such as the invention of Gutenberg’s printing press and the development of modern English, among others. Significant authors such as Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, William

Shakespeare, John Donne, and John Milton are featured for a closer Christian analysis. For example, Jeffrey and Maillet draw attention to Sidney's ethical value of poetry, which "allows us to know what perfection is and what our souls should become" (175). Considerable space is given to the analysis of Shakespeare's plays from which universal, Christian themes such as self-sacrificial love, resurrection, mercy and justice, and kingship are derived: "Shakespeare writes history plays that forthrightly describe the sins of men and monarchs while always remaining watchful for signs of God's providential will at work within human history to bring good out of evil" (186).

In addition to its valuable comprehensive scope, the book illustrates its scholarly credibility by respectfully exposing readers to opposing views. For example, Chapter 1 presents the three theories of truth underlying epistemology: correspondence theory, coherence theory, and pragmatic theory. Even though the Christian worldview diverges from the dominant cultural perspective of pragmatism, the authors present all three approaches to help the reader "empathize with the thinking of persons who hold these views" (62). Also, throughout the book, Jeffrey and Maillet assert the Christian critic's responsibility to uphold the commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31):

Christian literary critics will see every author and fellow critic, each of whom is to be considered in respect of their correspondence to truth, as a neighbor. This implies a charitable, self-effacing "reading" of the other, a reading determined on truth rather than on an opportunity to score rhetorical or political points. (332)

This humble imperative to view "every author and fellow critic" with neighborly love and respect challenges Christian critics to cultivate a mature, biblical approach amidst academic environments too often politically laden.

While Jeffrey and Maillet admittedly state this isn't an exhaustive investigation, it is a very necessary and reliable compendium for Christian students of literature. Not only does it provide significant points of the theoretical conversation and presents examples of applied Christian literary criticism, but it also calls the Christian critic to a distinct, higher standard, one not being upheld within English departments today. Jeffrey and Maillet extend a call for Christians to lead the academic literary field "to reacquire its access to a moral and rhetorical authority derived from at least a quest for truth" (324). Although the authors do claim the readership to be an "elite" one—the concepts intricately involved and writing style scholarly, yet rich—it promises to challenge any undergraduate or graduate student interested in a serious study and thorough introduction to the topic. In addition, each chapter ends with extensive "Suggestions for Further Reading," encouraging further study. Amidst the abundance of ominous declarations of the disintegration of the Humanities, especially literature programs, it is refreshing to hear a perspective that soberly acknowledges the falsity within such academic departments, while still brightly illuminating the

truth and beauty within literature itself, and thus the spiritual significance of its continued study. However, Jeffrey and Maillet don't leave the reader with a naïvely hopeful idea; they humbly challenge students "to become better readers of Scripture itself" and equip them with critical insight and skills that empower them to seek truth, beauty, and goodness, thereby knowing Christ and making Him more fully known.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr. *Reading for Preaching: The Preacher in Conversation with Storytellers, Biographers, Poets, and Journalists.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. 147 pages, \$14.00

Reviewed by C. Clark Triplett

This delightful little book is a work of wisdom and wit that provides priceless advice and counsel for preachers of the Gospel: to read widely and prolifically. Although evangelical preachers, in particular, are to be commended for their faithfulness to Scripture, they are often less estimable in understanding and representing the broader cultural world. There is a tendency to rely heavily on the same evangelical writers and theologians who are quoted as experts on everything from science to literature. This is not to deny the value of theological expertise, for the musings of Augustine, Calvin, and even Schleiermacher and Barth proffer deep nourishment and “suggest possibilities that have dawned on no one else” (viii). Plantinga wants to make it clear, however, that good preachers seek help both from their shelves of old books as well as their shelves of new and modern books. Those who are willing to read widely even within the field of theology will be far ahead of other pastors and will find “fresh water flowing” in their preaching (ix).

Major questions of life certainly are addressed by reading widely among the great theologians. At the same time, storytellers, biographers, journalists and poets also ponder the same issues in ways that stir up and awaken the heart. It is not necessary to be a theologian to ponder the profound experiences of existence. Plantinga reminds his readers that classic theologians such as John Calvin understood better than most that “the Holy Spirit sows truth promiscuously, and the searching preacher is likely to find it in some unlikely places” (ix).

Although Plantinga focuses on the importance of major writers and great literary works in the task of preaching, he never underestimates the priority and power of Holy Scripture. Scripture is the first priority, and additional reading always amplifies and illustrates the word of God. The value of literature is that storytellers know their way around the world and narratives stretch our sympathies for the complexities and complications of the human situation. The author’s interest is not so much for developing aesthetically pleasing sermons, but “the reading preacher will discover that great writers know the road to the human heart and, once at their destination, know how to move our hearts” (6). Rather than creating “pretty sermons,” a knowledge of great writing makes the gospel come alive and provides tools for helping the preacher orient his message to the real world.

Reading for preaching has a deeper value for Plantinga than simply offering erudite citations and interesting illustrations. Short stories, for example, provide a “narrative arc” that is similar to sermons: “how to start a sermon, how to stop one, how to introduce tension, how, and when, and whether to resolve it” (11). These are essentials to developing an effective sermon. There are many types of excellent writing that assist the preacher in mastering his craft and using

language. Poets are exemplars of selecting the precise word for opening up the pathways of understanding and perceiving the world in novel ways. Poetry also exhibits a model for rhythm, pacing, and tone that help the speaker learn how to match the pace of the recitation to the subject of the discussion.

The various types of writing provide complex insights into the nature of the human condition. A shortcoming of many evangelical sermons is a tendency to oversimplify and sometimes even misrepresent the ambivalent, nuanced, and conflicted reality of psychological, sociological, and cultural processes. It is unfortunate that some pastors have such an elementary understanding of subjects and processes that are so integral to the life of parishioners. Plantinga stresses the importance of reading deeply in the field of the human sciences because they have such serious and subtle implications for intense emotional and relational struggles of human beings. He refers to the observation of Robert Karen “that shame is contagious, that when we are around somebody who is ashamed our own ‘shame demons’ begin to stir” (19). This kind of insight needs elaboration by the preacher and will inevitably bring untapped treasures to listeners. This level of reading generates intensely personal and spiritual reflection.

At least half of the book is devoted to encouraging preachers to seek wisdom. It is a daunting task for contemporary pastors to speak the message of grace to such a “mixed audience” on a weekly basis: “Where else in North American life today do we find a speaking assignment that is comparable” (65). Articulating the truths of Scripture to Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and progressives, young and old, requires a level of sophisticated and critical insight that is formidable. Such acumen assumes a deep reading of the social, political, and cultural context of the time: “The wise know how human life goes—its times and seasons, its patterns and dynamics, its laws and rhythms” (70). This certainly demands that a preacher be conversant on a broad range of biblical topics, but the Bible does not say everything there is to know about any one topic. There is a need for additional resources that provide wisdom and “general literature abounds in incidents, characters, images, and observations that *illumine* everything under the sun” (74). A wise individual has the ability to make complex connections between life and the text. Reading good literature “pulls at the imagination” and reminds pastors that “life is more various and mysterious than I had imagined and that it will not stay within the bright lines I have drawn for it” (92). Simplistic responses will not satisfy the complex questions of life and death. A cavalier approach to these issues disregards the seriousness of the needs of people. Plantinga argues that preachers should welcome challenges to their shibboleths because dogmatism “subverts the richer understanding of life within the gospel and (I) disqualify myself as a responsible minister of it” (93).

This book is a work of significance and should be on the reading list of every minister, or for that matter, of every Christian interested in relating the gospel to contemporary culture. Plantinga believes that uninformed and naïve preaching is a form of malpractice and is a disservice to the people of God. Sermons should challenge the stereotypical and expected interpretations of human experience. At the same time, what a wise preacher wants in return is someone to constantly “upset his sense of where the lines of reality are drawn and to make

him wonder all over again about the mighty hand of God in the world” (104). Plantinga’s prodigious firsthand knowledge of great writers and good books makes this book worth the effort of reading. He clearly understands the concerns of the modern evangelical preacher to deliver messages that address the complex needs and issues of the congregation while remaining true to the gospel of Christ.

Dean G. Stroud, ed. *Preaching in Hitler's Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. 215 pages, \$20.00

Reviewed by Cordell P. Schulten

In his Christmas circular letter of 1942, written just months before his arrest and imprisonment, Dietrich Bonhoeffer poignantly asked, "Who stands fast?" Ten years after Hitler's ascendancy to the German chancellery, Bonhoeffer was both challenging and encouraging those to whom he wrote who had chosen to act responsibly within the concrete realities of life. The ones he sought, then and there, were to be found among those who boldly preached in Hitler's shadow.

In the recently published work, *Preaching in Hitler's Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich*, Dean Stroud, professor emeritus of German studies at the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse, has gathered together and annotated a powerful selection of sermons by some of those faithful followers of Christ who stood fast against the Nazi's rising tide of evil in the middle of twentieth-century Europe. They include both the well-known figures (Barth, Bonhoeffer, Bultmann and Niemoller) and those we would do well to know better (Schneider, Ebeling, Gollwitzer, Busch and others). Their sermons, spanning the period from Hitler's election as Chancellor in 1933 through the near end of the war in 1944, reveal the growing resistance mounted by these responsible pastors. The subjects and substance of the selected sermons not only expound a historical account of efforts at resistance in the face of the Nazi takeover of the German church and the unleashing of the Holocaust, but they also issue a call to the alert and receptive ear for responsible action in our day as well.

Stroud begins each chapter with a brief biographical sketch of the preacher's role within the resistance movement and then proceeds to provide the full manuscript of each sermon including its title, Scripture text, occasion or date, and the location where the message was preached. Since the selected sermons are arranged in chronological order, the careful reader may perceive through the words spoken a heightening intensity of resistance. This intensity emerges out from characteristic German indirectness toward increasingly bolder, direct calls to stand fast against attacks upon the Lordship of Christ over his Church and the loyalty owed by his followers to Christ alone.

Stroud introduces his selection of sermons with an essay setting out the historical context within which these messages were presented. He succinctly charts the emergence of Hitler's "positive Christianity" as a counterfeit "faith" that captivated increasing numbers of nationalistic Germans by cultivating a hatred of traditional Christianity with its Jewish Jesus and his teachings about love of neighbor, forgiveness, peacemaking and humility. This captivity culminated in the rise of the German Christian Movement and the Nazification of the national church by claiming in its wake the fulfillment of the Reformation initiated by Luther nearly 450 years before. Resisting this rising deception, the pastors whose sermons make up the substance of this work began to expose

Hitler's false Christianity by issuing the Bethel Confession and organizing their resistance to the Aryan Clause through the formation of the Pastors' Emergency League. They advanced what would later become known as the *Kirchenkampf* – the “church struggle.” Barth's influential role in the struggle was expressed through his principal authorship of the Barmen Declaration, even as young Bonhoeffer was gaining an increasing voice by his authorship of a treatise on “The Church and the Jewish Question,” as well as his prophetic and courageous preaching. Stroud concludes his introductory essay with this telling summary:

Throughout the Reich, the Church Struggle took place in both pulpit and pew. Preaching in Hitler's shadow was risky business.... Against the horrible distortion of words by Goebbels and his propaganda machine, the Christian in the pulpit offered the truth of the Gospel and the integrity of the “Word made flesh.” In so doing, certain themes stand out in these sermons of opposition: the authority of Jesus Christ; the sovereignty of God; ...the certainty of God's judgment on Germany for immorality and for failure to love neighbor, especially the Jewish brother and sister; ...and the Gospel's insistence that Christians must risk even their lives for the truth of Christianity. (48)

The sermons begin with Bonhoeffer. Preached on a text from Judges in February 1933, his sermon recounts the story of Gideon. Stroud notes that the use of Old Testament texts by Bonhoeffer and others in the Confessing Church is quite significant given the Nazi hatred for anything Jewish. In the opening lines of his sermon, Bonhoeffer strikes out at the German Christian Movement, though indirectly, yet unmistakably:

In the church we have only *one* altar—the altar of the Most High, the One and Only, the Almighty, The Lord...before whom even the most powerful are but dust.... The worship of God and not of humankind is what takes place at the altar of our church. Anyone who wants to do otherwise should stay away and cannot come with us into God's house. Anyone who wants to build an altar to himself or to any human being is mocking God, and God will not allow such mockery. (55-56)

From the account of Gideon, Bonhoeffer draws guidance for the Christians of his day and for the church: “Don't try to be strong, mighty, famous, respected, but let God alone be your strength, your fame and honor. Or, don't you believe in God?” (59) Just as Gideon conquered the enemies of God and his people, not by amassing the strongest, most fortified army, but instead, by believing and obeying God's command, so the church was called to conquer and would indeed conquer by faith alone. Thus, the victory did not belong to Gideon, nor would it belong, in the present struggle, to the church or to the individual Christians who responsibly engaged the battle, but to God alone.

From Bonhoeffer's early rallying cry to faith and obedience at the outset of the *Kirchenkampf*, Stroud turns our attention next to a sermon by Barth preached in Bonn during the Advent Season at the conclusion of 1933. His subject was the Jewishness of Jesus. Copies of this controversial sermon were immediately printed and distributed throughout the Confessing Church. Barth even sent a copy to Hitler himself. Some who heard the original sermon were so offended by his words that they walked out of the church sanctuary. Barth later wrote in a letter to a woman from the congregation he served: "Anyone who believes in Christ, who was himself a Jew, and died for Gentiles and Jews, *simply cannot* be involved in the contempt for Jews and ill-treatment which is now the order of the day" (64). What had initially been an indirect call to resistance was now becoming quite explicit in its application of Christ's words and work to the church struggle.

Ten more sermons follow those of Bonhoeffer and Barth, with each one progressing through the years of the rising tide of evil being perpetrated by Hitler and the Nazis. By 1940, Gerhard Ebeling, who had studied theology under Bultmann and Brunner, and was one of Bonhoeffer's students at Finkenwalde's underground seminary, readily took up the pastoral care of a couple within his congregation whose son had been murdered by the Nazis in the notorious Aktion T4's euthanization by gas, starvation, or lethal injection of those deemed mentally and physically weak. In his memorial sermon, Ebeling used Jesus' welcoming of the "little ones" of society as the command to view every human persona as God's beloved child and not as disposable and inconvenient waste material. He concluded with this challenge to all who heard him:

Like the Old Testament prophets, [Jesus] called "injustice" "injustice," "wrong" "wrong," and "sin" "sin." And his calling such things by name he passed on to his disciples, to Christians, to the church as our mission. So we must testify today to this work of Christ in the midst of our world so that we never despise one of the little ones, that we do not abandon those Christ has accepted and for whom he died. (140)

These faithful heralds of God's word did not shrink from their calling even though the word they proclaimed put them at risk of loss of liberty (Niemoller, Gollwitzer, and von Jan were imprisoned) and also their very lives (Bonhoeffer and Schneider died at the hands of their Nazi captors). The sermons here collected and annotated by Stroud inspired and empowered and were embodied in the resistance of the *Kirchenkampf* in Germany. They should well be read by all who would endeavor to live such responsible lives within the concrete realities of this day.

Saul M. Olyan. *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 200 pages, \$80.00

Reviewed by Carol J. Austin

Disability in the Hebrew Bible, authored by distinguished professor Saul Olyan at Brown University, significantly expands the growing body of disabilities studies literature. Presenting a unique biblical and historical perspective of social marginalization, this thought-provoking book invites the reader to examine multiple references to physical and mental disabilities found in Hebrew biblical literature. Exploring beyond the many references to those blind and lame, the author expands passages not typically associated with disabilities—passages such as David’s contrived insanity, Jacob’s limp after wrestling with God, and restrictions on priests.

The volume begins by detailing the broad and varied definitions, interpretations, and characterizations of disability. Pointing out that there is no biblical word equivalent to disability, the author explores the term “defects,” which appears often in the Hebrew Bible and provides the basis to examine characteristics of disabilities. Concentrating on mental and physical aspects, Olyan sheds light on biblical authors who often reference disabled persons in their plots, stigmatizing the disabled persons, thus providing a contrast to the magnificence of Israel’s god YHWH.

Building on this foundation, the author divides the book into seven chapters supporting his assumptions. The first chapter explores the dichotomy of beauty and ugliness, a distinction that shapes the discussion of disabilities in the Hebrew Bible. Beauty, associated with good qualities that are correct and desirable, represents qualities revered by the writers, whereas ugliness, linked with bad qualities that are wrong and evil, is shown to be deficient. Thus, portrayal of individuals by identification with beauty or ugliness can show which characteristics biblical writers’ value.

Following the discourse on the dichotomy of beauty and ugliness, the next three chapters are devoted to a specific category of disability, covering congenital or acquired physical defects, other diseases and physical conditions, and mental disabilities. Each area is thoroughly explored via corresponding biblical references and succinct explanations. Examples of physical disabilities leading to stigmatization and marginalization include restrictions on priests offering sacrifices and the blind and lame who cannot enter the temple; these restrictions were viewed as a punishment from gods or rulers. Other disabilities include deafness, muteness, skin disease, and genital flows; people with these disabilities were typically less socially marginalized. Noting that defining mental disability continues to be difficult, even from the current Western perspective, the author explains the Hebrew translations related to madness. Examples of people with mental disabilities in the biblical text include those who exhibit loss of self-control, mental disturbance, drunkenness, excessive risk taking, extreme reactions

to disasters, and mental retardation, all of which are shown as devaluing and marginalizing the person.

A fascinating chapter, projecting into the future, presents disabilities in prophetic visions through examination of a variety of biblical utopian passages. These verses refer to people with disabilities being miraculously transformed, empowered, and now included in the social strata. However, the author prompts us to think of this utopian view as devaluing and stigmatizing towards disabled persons, suggesting people with disabilities need special intervention to change their disabilities to be included. Thus, the author posits that utopian visions can be seen as a metaphor for divine rejection.

Extending the concept of disability in Hebrew Scriptures, the author devotes one chapter to writings in Qumran literature. These texts add much to our understanding of the concepts of disability in ancient biblical times. For example, writings in the Dead Sea Scroll are shown to raise the level of stigma and marginalization associated with disabilities. People with disabilities, seen as a threat to the holy presence of angels, were excluded from assembling with the community.

After illuminating the various facets of disabilities within the Hebrew writings, Olyan concludes his book with more insights and questions to ponder. Although typically the etiology of disabilities is traced to divine agency, some writers viewed disabilities as resulting from accidents, natural, or physical development. One could then ask how the deity of the Hebrew Bible might view those with disabilities. This leads to an exploration of the motivation behind the biblical authors who often stigmatized and marginalized people with disabilities. These questions highlight the need for more research on disabilities in non-Western, pre-modern historical contexts as we expand our concepts of disability.

Throughout the book, the author's assertions are well supported with numerous biblical examples, thorough footnotes, and numerous references. Written for biblical scholars, but also easily read and understood by the average layperson, each chapter is well organized in a logical flow. Olyan concludes with insightful suggestions for further exploration in the history of disability, history that guides our present understanding of cultural acceptance and stigmatization for those who are labeled socially different.

Appealing to multiple disciplines of study, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible* is a worthy read. For those examining through a biblical view, Olyan's work provides new insights and new ways to interpret biblical literature relative to the concept of disabilities. The author presents his ideas through the lens of disability, through his unique views of disabilities, and through ancient literature and the potential social ramifications. For social scientists, this work sheds light on the roots of stigmatization and social inequality in biblical times as we attempt to make meaning of those who are marginalized in our society. Indeed, by bridging multiple disciplines, Olyan offers much food for thought as well as stimulation for further exploration of disabilities in ancient times.

Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper, eds. *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 248 pages, \$105.00

Reviewed by Carol J. Austin

Expanding the growing body of literature devoted to disability studies, editors Candida Moss (assistant professor at Notre Dame) and Jeremy Schipper (associate professor at Temple University) present twelve diverse essays from biblical experts in the Old and New Testament. These varied subjects, themes, and conclusions are united in that they broaden understanding of how the original biblical authors viewed, valued, and constructed various disability issues. Most importantly, this collection maintains the rigor of divergent academic backgrounds, while providing new insights into the diverse approaches to disabilities in biblical literature.

The editors begin by elaborating on models used by scholars for interpreting disabilities, also pointing out generalizations made by disability theorists in regards to biblical or religious explanations of differences. Moss and Schipper remind us that concepts of disabilities are not static across all cultures, historical locations, and time periods. Further, it is important to enlarge the discourse on disability beyond medical or biological conditions, to include legal, educational, social, political, religious, and environmental contributions. In addition, we are invited to view disabilities as more than an individual struggle, enlarging our examination to include the system in which the person is situated. This involves moving beyond the medical model, understood by a medical diagnosis that places the disability within the body, to include social and cultural contexts.

A distinction is made between social models that focus on social discrimination associated with the diagnosis of a disability and cultural models that explore how our understanding of disabilities is shaped by culture. It is noted that biblical disability studies have been greatly influenced by the cultural model that advocates for constructing meaning through exploring how people interact with and interpret their world. Thus, expounding on literary characterizations through examination of representational language often forms the basis for interpreting the biblical cultural world when views of disability are extrapolated.

After explaining the constructivist nature of biblical interpretation, the history of scholarship pertaining to biblical literature and disabilities is traced. Exploring the contributions of textual analysis, as well as explanations based on perceived life experiences during ancient times, it is noted that western culture has greatly influenced attitudes towards impairments as portrayed in the bible. A caution is given to not oversimplify the West's perceived religious discrimination and to hold our biases towards persons with disabilities portrayed in biblical passages at bay.

After establishing the groundwork for reviewing disabilities in biblical literature, the editors present twelve essays. The essays represent a wide range of

subjects and methodological approaches in addressing disability found in biblical texts, moving beyond expounding on isolated biblical passages to searching for broader social and cultural meanings. As one author points out, it is important to remember that not only are disability categories not consistent throughout the Bible, it is important to consider our twenty-first century presuppositions and the changes in culture.

Subjects covered range from infertility and sexual issues, to healing the sick and disabled, epilepsy, and demonic causality, all shedding scholarly light on how passages used by biblical writers influenced religious and social behaviors. The specific insights are quite varied as seen in the following examples. Infertility issues, ranging from barren women banned from sanctuary space, to the social place of eunuchs, are presented in several selections. Some contributors explore writings regarding physical disabilities in religious observances as stigmatizing and reflective of moral character. Conceptions of discrimination are challenged and given potential alternative meanings by others. It is posited that Paul's thorn with which he struggled is epilepsy, causing the reader to consider how this insight might impact reading his letters. Also explored are scenes in which disabilities and illnesses, which caused marginalization, can be attributed to demonic forces. At the conclusion, the reader is left with the knowledge that despite disparate understandings, pursuing biblical views is indeed valuable and worthwhile as our preconceived concepts of disability are challenged.

Authored by those at the top of their fields, these essays are aimed toward the serious Biblical scholar. Every essay is well documented with multiple references supporting each author's suppositions. It is interesting to note that, while writing about diversity, the authors display much diversity in subject matter and approach, making it apparent that there is no one unified religious model of disability. Despite differences in approach, the authors do agree on the importance of pursuing biblical views of disability as we seek to understand more about the Bible and its relevance for our current culture. Perhaps the biggest contribution of *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* is that it brings to our attention the scholarly research on biblical views of disability, providing the impetus for continued research and interpretations of disabilities as portrayed in the biblical literature.

Shusaku Endo. *Foreign Studies*. Trans. Mark Williams. Peter Owen Modern Classic. London and Chester Springs, PA: Peter Owen Publishers, 2009. 200 pages, £9.00

Reviewed by John J. Han

Shusaku Endo's (1923-96) fiction reflects the lifelong inner conflict about his seemingly odd status as a Japanese man who is also Catholic. His childhood conversion was not voluntary. After his parents' divorce in Manchuria, then a Japanese colony, he followed his mother to Kyoto, Japan, where his aunt lived. A committed Catholic, the aunt was willing to let them live in her house on the condition that they convert to Catholicism. Having no choice but to accept the seemingly harmless offer, Shusaku and his mother were baptized. Shusaku was only eleven at that time. From his conversion till his death, Endo never renounced his Catholic faith, yet it is clear that he grappled with the issue of what Catholicism, a faith transplanted from Europe, means to Japanese converts. The seeming incompatibility between traditional Japanese culture and Christian faith, which forms the foundation of European culture, constitutes a main theme in his well-known Catholic novels *Silence* (1966), *Kiku's Prayer* (1982), and *Deep River* (1993).

Foreign Studies, originally published in 1965, is further evidence that Endo was preoccupied with the tension that arises when Christianity meets Japanese culture, which is rooted in Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and other Eastern religions and philosophies. The volume is a collection of three interconnected stories, all of which deal with the cross-cultural issues more directly than the novels mentioned above.

The first story, "A Summer in Rouen," is set in the mid-twentieth century. It concerns a young Japanese Catholic's traumatic experience during his stay in France as a study-abroad student. Initially, the main character, Kudo, is excited about being chosen to go to France at the invitation of a Catholic church, whose parishioners volunteer to cover all of his expenses, including room and board. Once he arrives in France, however, Kudo's excitement turns into bewilderment and then into frustration. The mission-minded priest and his parishioners have good intentions for him: They are friendly toward him and do their best to care for him. The problem is that they constantly burden him with the "great expectations" of him to spread the Gospel once he returns to Japan. The priest makes sure that Kido understands why the French believers "are willing to give him so generously and why the Vealeauxes are happy to take [him] in" for the summer (17).

Kudo is also baffled by a sense of cultural superiority exhibited by the French. The priest, who wears "a condescending smile" (14), wants him to experience "a true Christian home" at the Vealeauxes residence. His host family also provides some insensitive comments about his native culture. When he says that Japanese doors are made of paper, the family wonders why Japanese do not use glass doors. He is also told that when he returns to Japan, he should take a

fork because it is more “useful” than chopsticks (23). He is encouraged to learn French manners, but then he is expected to play a certain cultural role to affirm the French people’s preconceptions about Japanese culture. If he does not meet their cultural expectations, they are disappointed. Having grown up in a culture that emphasizes harmonious living and discourages confrontation, he endures all of his emotional strains in silence until he “[feels] physically and mentally drained” (38).

The second story, “Araki Thomas,” is more a historical narrative than a short story. The title character is an early figure in the history of Japanese Catholicism, the first Japanese student at the Vatican in the early seventeenth century. He was one of the Japanese intellectuals of the day who embraced Catholicism as a new “vogue.” The Vatican expected him to complete his ecclesiastical training, return to his native country, and preach the Gospel. As the only Japanese studying in Europe at that time, Araki was both respected and loved by believers. Like Kudo, however, he feels overwhelmed by the Church’s high expectations of him as a Japanese convert:

The affection and kindness which the people of Rome showered upon him gradually developed into a heavy burden. He tired of having to assume an attitude that accorded with their expectations whenever he was in their company—and of having to force a smile to his lips from morning to night. (46)

He loathed himself for acting piously when he was interacting with Cardinal Belamino, who was particularly fond of him and recited the daily prayer with this foreign student.

As the time approached him for his return to Japan, he became concerned about his safety. During his study abroad, persecution of Japanese Catholics had become more severe, and by the time he returned to Japan, approximately 100 believers had been executed. (According to Fr. Roger Landry, an estimated 35,000 Japanese Catholics died as martyrs between 1597 and 1639. See his 2008 article “The Martyrs of Japan,” which is available online.) As a Catholic priest whose unavoidable functions included saying Mass and hearing confessions, he knew that he would end up being arrested and executed by authorities. However, Rome expected him to preach the Gospel and, if needed, die a martyr’s death—similar to the Western missionaries who were giving up their lives for the Gospel in Japan.

Despite his eerie intimations, he had no choice but to return to Japan. After all, he was a Catholic leader in a position to exemplify the faith he had embraced. Soon after his arrival in his native land, Araki was captured. Then, after a brief torture, he apostatized. Thus, his name became synonymous with religious cowardice. Near the end of the story, the narrator conjectures that Araki might have screamed at the mission-minded Europeans, “That’s enough! Leave me alone! Don’t try and force your ideas on the Japanese!” (49).

The third story, “And You, Too,” is a novella set in Paris the mid-1960s. The story focuses on a young Japanese instructor of French literature from a

Tokyo university who goes to France with high hopes, becomes depressed, contracts tuberculosis, and is forced to return to Japan prematurely. Unlike the two previous stories, “And You, Too” is not a particularly religious story, although the main character, Tanaka, feels overwhelmed by the heavy presence of Christian civilization in Europe. Initially, Tanaka feels fortunate that his university has allowed him to study in France, which would clearly advance his academic career. His goal is to conduct research on the Marquis de Sade in France, return to Japan, write an original dissertation, and become a respected scholar.

As he reaches France, however, his jubilation turns gradually into depression. In Japan, he was a promising scholar admired by his students and envied by his colleagues. In France, Tanaka’s sense of self-worth suffers a crushing blow. Time and again, he undergoes humiliation and belittlement in his interactions with French people. Initially, he is exhilarated that Gilbert Ruby, an authority on Sade studies, has granted permission to interview him at his home. A meeting with Ruby would provide some key information on Sade that would add quality and prestige to his dissertation. To Tanaka’s consternation, however, Ruby regards Tanaka with contempt, muttering, “I have no idea why an Oriental like you should be studying Sade” (91). After this event, Tanaka wonders why he, as a Japanese scholar, should be studying a French writer. Self-doubt, which he never experienced in Japan, begins to creep in. He also finds a disconnection between his personal values and what he has chosen to study. (The term *sadism*, which means “love of cruelty,” is named after the Marquis de Sade.) Tanaka knows that he chose Sade because there was no other authority in Japan; as it sometimes happens in Asian academia, it was a purely pragmatic decision, not a decision based on his scholarly passion. Nevertheless, in Japan, he never wondered why he was studying a French writer.

Throughout his stay in France, Tanaka feels alienated and disrespected. He eats alone in the corner of a cafeteria and endures stares from strangers. Shunned by the French, most Japanese scholars and artists in France get together for drinks and argue over petty matters among themselves. Tanaka avoids his fellow Japanese, instead focusing on his studies. Such behavior alienates him from his compatriots, who gossip about his inability to get along with others. In the end, Tanaka feels trapped between two cultures which he both loves and hates.

In his introduction to the story, Endo states that “And You, Too” is a prelude to his novel *Silence*, which also deals with the issue of whether Asian and Western cultures can find common ground. Endo says that the main character represents his “former self,” not his present self:

As a result of continuous consideration of the concept of “the unconscious” in my literature, I am now convinced that meaningful communication between East and West is possible. I have gradually come to realize that, despite the mutual distance and the cultural and linguistic differences that clearly exist in the conscious

sphere, the two hold much in common at the unconscious level.
(11)

Regrettably, Endo does not explain what can be done to resolve the various challenges non-Western students face in the West—the challenges he so brilliantly portrays in the story.

Times have changed, and unlike what Endo portrays in his stories, most Westerners are more sensitive to cultural differences. Yet, his stories show that when two cultures meet, tensions will inevitably arise. *Foreign Studies* is an excellent resource for understanding potential conflicts that result from cultural encounters. The book also vividly portrays the distress many international students face—cultural, emotional, and psychological—when they come to a completely different culture. Some people adapt well to the new environment, but others feel out of place and depressed. This is a must-read text for those who interact with international students, such as admissions counselors, instructors, and international student advisors. Those who wish to go to the mission fields in Asia or another non-Western continent will also find this book highly instructive. It will be an eye-opening experience to read Endo's book.

Poems

“Carpenter” and Other Poems

Todd Sukany

Carpenter

I shook the hand of a carpenter once,
more like holding a living stone,
callused from years of brushing away splinters,
absorbing vibrations from the hammer; his palms
ripped with strength. He played violin

with the tenderness of a savior,
a grandfather bouncing a knee,
beaming indescribable pleasure
as evangelistic as a descending dove
dropping to the shoulder of another wood-

shaper, who, one violent afternoon,
carried the weight of eternal separation
on a cross, nailed a stronger bond.

Widow Woman

walks then drops
two mites
hardly worth
the trip
until the Master
canonizes
an object lesson
in eternity

The Trance of Sin

If I understand the chronology of God in the garden, it goes something like this: God moves on the face of this waste, in His Spirit, His Word, and out of nothingness appears somethingness in all of its minutia.

Toward the end of the week, God looks to Himself and gathers dust into His own image, moves on the face of the waste, in His Spirit, His Word, and out of dust-filledness blooms the beginning of history.

God places man in the garden to tend it as a naked horticulturalist and master of the living kingdom. God looks around and sees it all as very good, speaking the one small detail to Adam.

God watches Adam work with no sweat and all things bear fruit after their own kind. God ends innocence by creating woman and Adam manages to tell the story incorrectly from then on.

Prayer

...is so different than the Jack-in-the-Box
wind-up toy that plays a blithe tune
as the suppliant grinds the handle round and round
and round, knowing that the red-nosed clown
is scheduled for a random pop-out
that will startle and tingle the fingers
wrapped tightly around the plastic knob.

Gen 2:16 ¶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Calling Home

From the water's edge she looks across the pond
squawks in the direction of tiny wings

Shadows in formation fashion the point
of an arrow rippling northward to Eden

Saints gather with faces upward downward
a rumble rises an outcry one more burnt offering

Two Poems

Jane Beal

I Have Wrestled with Death

I have wrestled with death like Hercules
when he brought Alcestis back from the grave;
I have descended into Tartarus
like Orpheus seeking to save.

I have seen the dead Odysseus did
when he sailed to the utmost bounds of night;
I have thrice embraced Antekleia's ghost
and begged her to return to bright day's light.

I have gone to hell with Persephone
and eaten six pomegranate seeds there;
I have stood on the shores of Acheron
among the restless souls in Death's dark care.

But when I heard Christ cry, *talitha cumi!*,
I rose from death to life in victory.

Margaret's Garden before Midsummer

John's Favorite Flower

Not everything has bloomed, but Margaret knows
that just as the white orchids are embraced
by the humid air, just as the wisteria vine has curled
around the thatched trellis, just as surely
as the golden Troilus has opened wide,
so too must John's Easter-lily trumpets.
His favorite flower is still just a green plant,
six inches high, overshadowed by gray
leaves nearby, but it will soon grow tall,
until it makes its own Annunciation
to the world, a real reminder of paint
Rossetti lavished on bright Gabriel,
a reluctant Mary, and the lily,
shining, open, and white, between them both.

Margaret's Story Garden

Margaret's son, the brilliant young pianist,
planted the tree for her five years ago
so that now it stands tall, its leaves blocking
the sight of a telephone pole that looms
over Margaret's arrow-head garden just
beyond her white picket-fence of perfect
dreams. Her husband picked up the wisteria
pods for her when they were together
in Central Park, New York, and they brought them back
to the Midwest and planted them close
to the trellis and trained them up its wooden
sides. Margaret herself went to Sutton's Seed
Shop in London and found English flowers
for that garden: her growing life-story.

The Passion Vine

Margaret planted six different vines in pots
under the six squares of a glass-less, white
window-frame, paint chipped, that she rescued
on the roadside, and she plans to train the vines
up, over, and around the wooden frame
until the faithful Ivy is twined with
the Morning Glory, bursting with flowers,
and the tiny Passion vine has become
stronger than the onset of death after
the fall. Bending down low, Margaret plucks up
some lemon thyme, crushing its little leaves
between her fingers, so that the fragrance
fills the summer air around her hard-working
hands like a promise come down from heaven.

“Country Church” and Other Poems

Kim Hyeon-seung¹
(1913-75)



Translated from the Korean by John J. Han

村 禮拜堂

깊은 산골에 흐르는
맑은 물소리와 함께
나와 나의 벗들의 마음은
가난합니다
주여 여기 함께 하소서.

밀 방아가 끝나는
달 뜨는 수요일 밤
肉松으로 다듬은 당신의 壇 앞에
기름불을 밝히나이다
주여 여기 임하소서.

여기 산 기슭에
잔디는 푸르고
새소리 아름답도소이가.
주여 당신의 장막을 예다 펴리이까
나사렛의 주여
우리와 함께 여기 계시옵소서.

Country Church²

Like the sound of clear waters
gurgling down this deep mountain,
my friends and I are poor
at heart.
Lord, come here and be with us.

This Wednesday night when
the water mill's sound ends and
the moon rises,
we light up the lamplight
on the altar smoothed from a pine tree.
Lord, be present here.

Here at the foot of the mountain
the grass is green,
birds sound beautiful.
Lord, we are spreading your tent.
Lord of Nazareth,
be present with us.

눈물

더러는
옥토(沃土)에 떨어지는 작은 생명이고저.....

흙도 티도,
금 가지 않은
나의 전체는 오직 이뿐!

더욱 값진 것으로
드리라 하올 제,

나의 가장 나아종 지닌 것도 오직 이뿐.

아름다운 나무의 꽃이 시들을 보시고
열매를 맺게 하신 당신은

나의 웃음을 만드신 후에
새로이 나의 눈물을 지어 주시다.

Tears³

My prayer is to be
a little life that sometimes falls on good soil...

This is all I have—
something without blemishes,
without cracks!

You want me to offer you
something much more valuable,

but this one has outlasted everything else.

Seeing the flowers on a beautiful tree wither,
you willed their fruition.

After creating my laughter,
you have created my tears anew.

감사

감사는
곧
믿음이다.

감사할 줄 모르면
이 뜻도 모른다.

감사는
반드시 얻은 후에 하지 않는다.
감사는
잃었을 때에도 한다.
감사하는 마음은
잃지 않았기 때문이다.

감사는
곧
사랑이다.

감사할 줄 모르면
이 뜻도 알지 못한다.

사랑은 받는 것만이 아닌
사랑은 오히려 드리고 바친다.

몸에 지니인
가장 소중한 것으로—

과부는
과부의 엽전 한푼으로,
부자는
부자의 많은 보석으로

그리고 나는 나의
서툰고 무딘 訥辯의 詩로……

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving
is
faith.

You will know this only if
you give thanks.

Thanks are not what you give
only after you obtain something.
You can give thanks
even after you have lost something
because you have not lost
a heart of gratitude.

Thanksgiving
is
love.

You will know this only if
you give thanks.

Love is not always what you receive,
love is what you give and offer,

the most precious thing that you carry—

for the widow
it is a copper coin,
for the wealthy
it is a large amount of rich jewels.

As for me
it is poetry written in clumsy, dull words...

가을의 碑銘

봄은 입술로 말하더니
가을은 눈으로 말을 한다.

말들은 꽃잎처럼 피고 지더니
눈물은 내 가슴에
보석과 같이 오래 남는다.
밤 이슬에 나아와
十月의 이마 위에 손을 얹어 보았는가.
대리석과 같이 찬 것이다.
그러나 네 영혼의 피를 내어
그 돌에 하나의 물음을
새기는 이만이,

굳은 열매와 같이
種子 속에 길이 남을 것이다!

Autumn Epitaph

Spring spoke with its lips,
autumn speaks with its eyes.

Words bloomed and fell away like flowers,
tears linger long in my heart
like gemstones.

Draw near to night's dew and
touch October's forehead with your hand.
It will feel cold like marble.
Only those who engrave a question
on the marble with the blood
of their souls

will remain forever inside the seed
like a firm fruit!

新年頌

단 한 마디를
열 마디와
백 마디로
利潤을 남기면서,

五十도 넘도록
나는 천국의 노래를 불렀다.
보석과 눈물과
하얀 치아가 반짝이는
이방의 시를 썼다.

그 백 마디를
이제는 열 마디와
한 마디로
경손을 배우면서,
모든 언어의 재산을 팔아
나의 마지막 침묵을 지키는
내 언어의 寡婦가 되고저.

Song for New Year's Day

With just one word
I gained the profit of
ten words,
a hundred words,

singing songs of heaven
even after I turned fifty.
I wrote poetry of a distant country
sparkling with jewelry, tears,
and white teeth.

Now is the time to learn humility,
to reduce one hundred words
to ten words,
to one word.
It is time to sell all my property of words
and become their widower that
guards my ultimate silence.

Translator's Notes

¹ In spelling the poet's name in English, we follow the contemporary Northeast Asian practice to place the family name first and the given name second. Kim was born as a pastor's son in Pyongyang (now in North Korea) and, from age seven, grew up in Gwangju, South Jeolla Province, South Korea. He graduated from Soongsil College in Pyongyang, a Protestant institution founded by an American missionary, Dr. William Baird. Kim served as a teacher at Sungil Middle School in Gwangju (1936), as a professor at Chosun University in Gwangju (1951-59), and as a professor at Soongsil University (1960-75). His poetry volumes include *Selected Poems of Kim Hyeon-seung* (1957), *The Defender's Song* (1963), *Solid Solitude* (1968), and *Absolute Solitude* (1970). Kim died while leading a congregational prayer in chapel at Soongsil University in Seoul, formerly Soongsil College in Pyongyang.

² Kim composed this poem after the loss of his son.

³ Except for "Autumn Epitaph," the poems translated herein originally appeared in Korean-language periodicals:

"Country Church": *Seoul Daily News* (seoul shinmun), May 1973

"Tears": *Modern Literature* (hyeondae munhak), December 1967

"Thanksgiving": *Christian Newspaper* (krischian shinmun), January 1972

"Song for New Year's Day": *Modern Literature* (hyeondae munhak),
December 1967.

Novels with Christian Concerns: Haiku

John J. Han

“Anyone, I think, serious about [the] elemental conditions of story, person, and place in which our salvation is worked out will welcome novelists as friends, and seek to spend time in their company. Not all writers of fiction, of course, qualify as allies. Discernment must be exercised, but a considerable number take their stand with us against the spirituality-debilitating conditions of the world.”

—Eugene H. Peterson, *Take & Read: Spiritual Reading* (1996), p. 49.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (1866, Russia)

axing two women
then saved by a woman,
a streetwalker

exiled in Siberia—
the moral superman
picks up the Bible

*

François Mauriac, *Viper's Tangle* (1932, France)

successful but lonely,
Louis celebrates his birthday
alone

life's sunset—
the miser pens his journal,
his confession

*

Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine* (1936, Italy)

Spina/Spada—
the Communist masquerades
as an old priest,

who learns that
the peasants of simple faith
don't need politics

*

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* (1937, UK)

half the size
of a man, Bilbo Baggins
finds the Ring

then who spies
the dragon's Achilles' heel?
it's Bilbo

*

Georges Bernanos, *The Diary of a Country Priest* (1937, France)

a surprise—
the nice rural town far
from being nice

the dying priest's small voice—
Does it matter? Grace
is everywhere...

*

Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (1939, UK)

once proud—
the priest fights a stray dog
over a bone

priest executed—
the police lieutenant gripped
with emptiness

*

Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (1945, UK)

passion, betrayal, guilt—
vanity of vanities,
all is vanity

now middle-aged and loveless
Charles steps into
the chapel

*

C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950, UK)

White Witch country—
always winter but never
Christmas

melting snow—
Aslan, the great lion,
back in Narnia

*

Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* (1952, USA)

born to preach, he flees
Jesus until a cop crashes
his church

dying in the ditch
his hand twitches to grip
something

*

Ayako Miura, *Freezing Point* (1964, Japan)

Hokkaido—
snow country where a hurt
turns into revenge,

which fails
to fill the heart with
happiness

*

Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred* (1964, Korea/USA)

Reverend Shin—
Communists spare his life
for keeping the faith

a holy lie—
Shin transforms apostates
into martyrs

*

Shusaku Endo, *Silence* (1966, Japan)

tied to poles at sea
Japanese martyrs sing
songs of joy

the higher the tides
the louder their voices grow,
we'll enter Paradise

Notes on Contributors

C. D. Albin's <CraigAlbin@MissouriState.edu> poems, stories, and reviews have appeared in a number of journals, including *Arkansas Review*, *Big Muddy*, *Cape Rock*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Georgia Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Natural Bridge*, and *Roanoke Review*. He is Professor of English at Missouri State University-West Plains, where he edits *Elder Mountain: A Journal of Ozarks Studies*.

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Jane Beal, Ph.D. <janebeal@gmail.com> writes poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction as well as works of literary scholarship. She is the creator of more than a dozen poetry collections, including *Sanctuary* (Finishing Line Press, 2008) and *The Roots of Apples* (Lulu Press, 2012), as well as three recording projects: *Songs from the Secret Life*, *Love-Song*, and with her brother, saxophonist and composer Andrew Beal, *The Jazz Bird*. She has written *John Trevisa and the English Polychronicon* (ACMRS/Brepols, 2012), edited *Illuminating Moses: A History of Reception from Exodus to the Renaissance* (Brill, 2014), and with Mark Bradshaw Busbee, co-edited *Translating the Past: Essays on Medieval Literature* (ACMRS, 2013) and *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl* (MLA, forthcoming). She has served as a professor at Wheaton College and Colorado Christian University, teaching literature and creative writing, and as a missionary midwife for low-income, at-risk families in the United States, Uganda, and the Philippines. To learn more, see <http://sanctuarypoet.net>.

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Mariposa, Prune Juice, Shot Glass Journal, Simply Haiku, South by Southeast, Steinbeck Studies, Taj Mahal Review, Under the Basho, Valley Voices, and World Haiku Review. Academically, he is the editor of *Wise Blood: A Re-Consideration* (Rodopi, 2011) and the author of hundreds of scholarly articles, reference entries, and book reviews that have appeared in *Journal of Transnational American Studies, Literature and Belief, The Moral Philosophy of John Steinbeck, Steinbeck Studies, The Steinbeck Review,* and other journals and compendiums.

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Intégrité: *A Faith and Learning Journal*

Submission Guidelines

Interested Christian scholars are encouraged to submit academic articles (15-25 pages), short essays (6-10 pages), review articles (10-12 pages), book reviews (4-8 pages), and 3-5 poems (40 or fewer lines each) for consideration. Send manuscripts as e-mail attachments (Microsoft Word format) to the editor, John J. Han, at hanjn@mobap.edu. Due dates are March 1 for inclusion in the spring issue and September 1 for the fall issue. We accept submissions all year round.

All prose submissions must be typewritten double-spaced. For citation style, refer to the current edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Articles and short essays should include in-text citations in parentheses, a list of endnotes (if applicable), and an alphabetical listing of works cited at the end of the article. Book reviews need only page numbers in parentheses after direct quotations.

Articles

Articles should examine historical, theological, philosophical, cultural, and/or pedagogical issues related to faith-learning integration. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- the current state and/or future of the church-related college
- history of Christian liberal arts education
- Christianity and contemporary culture
- a Christian perspective on multiculturalism and diversity
- service learning
- academic freedom in a Christian context
- implementation of Christian truths in academic disciplines
- Christian education in the non-Western world
- global Christianity.

Articles must engage in faith-learning issues or controversies in a scholarly, critical manner. We generally do not consider manuscripts that are merely factual, devotional, or sermonic. We typically do not consider articles that use more than twenty-five secondary sources; merely present other scholars' opinions without developing extended, thoughtful analysis; and/or use excessive endnotes. Direct quotations, especially lengthy ones, should be used sparingly.

Short Essays

We welcome short essays on issues related to Christian higher education, such as pedagogy, culture, diversity, and globalization.

Review Articles

We consider review articles—extended and in-depth reviews of recently published books. In addition to a summary and critique of the book(s), the article should elucidate the key issues related to the topic.

Book Reviews

Each issue of *Intégrité* includes several book reviews. Scholars are welcome to submit reviews of books published during the past few years.

Poems

We welcome submissions of poems that pay attention to both form and content.

On prose style

Considering that most *Intégrité* readers are Christian scholars and educators who may not have expertise on multiple disciplines, we recommend concise, precise, and easy-to-understand writing style. Writers should follow what William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White suggest in *The Elements of Style*: use definite, specific, concrete language; omit needless words; avoid a succession of loose sentences; write in a way that comes naturally; and avoid fancy words.

Place serial commas to separate all items in a list (as in “poetry, short fiction, and nonfiction). Use curved quotes (curly quotes) for quotation marks and apostrophes: Opening quotation marks should look like 66 (“), closing quotation marks should look like 99 (”), opening apostrophes should look like 9 (’til), and apostrophes indicating the possessive case should look like 9 (Emily’s, not Emily's). Periods and commas are placed inside quotation marks (“It is very simple,” the giant creature replied. “I can easily shrink my body and get inside the jar.”). Press the tab key once for the first line of a new paragraph, leave two (not one, not three) spaces between sentences, and follow MLA (Modern Language Association) style if citation is needed.