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## Book Reviews

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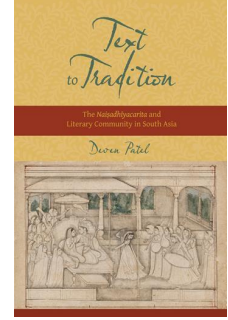
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*Text to Tradition: The Naiṣadhiyacarita and Literary Community in South Asia*, by Deven M. Patel

New York: Columbia University Press, 2014 | xi + 277 pages | ISBN: 978-0-231-16680-5 (hardcover) \$55.00



In this comprehensive examination of a seminal work of classical Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*), Deven Patel emphasizes that any text is rich with hermeneutic possibilities, never existing as a fixed, static entity in the minds of its readers. So why then, he inquires, do studies of historical Sanskrit literature routinely strive to read them as such? Criticizing earlier scholarship as myopic due to a narrow and limited consideration of the text as a singular object of focus, Patel rightly argues for an expanded analysis that investigates how a given work has been variously received by literary communities across time and locales. He charges Sanskrit literary studies with a misguided conflation of the Ricoeurian worlds of text and reader, such that “even today, it is virtually impossible to think of individual works as having a complicated history mediated by various approaches to explain and interpret a text over time.” In the seven relatively concise chapters of his monograph, Patel provides an admirably novel and compelling example of how we as modern readers might expand our appreciation of historical works by moving beyond the text to consider instead the broader textual *tradition*. Including scholarly addenda that build around the source text—such as commentaries, encomia, pseudepigrapha, and narrative histories—he allows for a shift in focus from the text to the reading community, and so enriches our modern interpretations of both the oeuvre and its evolving historical evaluations. His precise, rigorous, and informed methodology, which should serve as a model for self-aware literary analyses, admirably animates both text and reader, emphasizing that the two remain mutually constitutive within a defining interpretive community that ceaselessly mediates textual readings.

The nucleus of Patel’s study is the *Naiṣadhiyacarita*, a twelfth-century Sanskrit poem in 2,760 verses composed by the renowned Śrīharṣa. Recognized as one of the canonical five “great poems” of classical Sanskrit literature, it quickly attracted a rich and extensive commentarial tradition,

rendering it especially well suited to the proposed methodology of investigating reading communities. Though ultimately Patel aims to extend beyond the work itself, he devotes the first chapter to introducing this foundational composition and the revolutionary genius of Śrīharṣa; consequently, his insightful and engaging analyses underscore the continued importance of the source text in his approach. His systematic interpretations of both the *Naiṣadhīya* as well as Śrīharṣa's philosophically oriented companion piece, the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, are some of the most stimulating components of the monograph. Offering precise analyses of word choice, dual meaning, versification, and metaphor, Patel showcases his informed, sensitive, and ardent approach to Sanskrit poetry. For instance, his description of the “vigorous tone” of a verse in the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* as consonant with its philosophical message—or, as he puts it, “pitch-perfect notes of fusion between form and content, sound and feeling”—is inspired, as is his consideration of the *Naiṣadhīya*'s wordplay as exuberant on the surface yet emotionally turbulent underneath. In these passages, Patel unambiguously reveals his great respect for Śrīharṣa as wordsmith, and maintains a lively enthusiasm for displaying the ways in which the composer pushed the boundaries of poetic standards. However, in striving to authenticate Śrīharṣa's brilliance—which he unquestionably achieves—his selection of excerpts at times seems somewhat disjointed; further contextualization of fragmented snippets and an increased thematic drive could have provided increased integration of passages, particularly for those readers unfamiliar with Sanskrit literature or poetic analysis.

Following this initial exploration of the verbal artistry of Śrīharṣa's *Naiṣadhīya*, the next four chapters offer comprehensive engagement with the text's expansive commentarial addenda. With the stated agenda of situating commentaries in time and space as well as identifying relationships among them, Patel rightly recognizes each individual commentary as an autonomous work, itself located within an historical context and exhibiting its own hermeneutic strategies. The genre of commentary is frequently underappreciated, viewed merely as a crutch for understanding the primary text; however, valuing commentary and foregrounding its capacity for evolutionary shifts in trajectory yield fascinating results. Patel identifies three general phases of the *Naiṣadhīya*'s commentarial development: (1) early encounters that seek to understand the poem and establish its legitimacy, (2) a second phase that displays the *Naiṣadhīya* as a locus of intense scholarly debate, and (3) a final period of overinterpretation in which creative evaluations uncover polyvalent

readings and meanings. In elaborating each of these stages through meticulous exploration of a wide array of significant commentaries, Patel shows “how the types of commentaries that emerged in successive periods formed shifting paradigms of social and aesthetic practices of reading, teaching, and learning in Sanskrit literary culture.” One of the most fascinating of Patel’s findings is a shift from a weak pedagogy, such as that of early influential commentators Vidyādhara and Cāṇḍupaṇḍita, to more rigid interpretative approaches in the middle period, exemplified by the commentary of the renowned Mallinātha. Patel deftly maneuvers through a series of well-selected passages to demonstrate that the question-answer-explanation style of early commentaries, which were informed by a history of oral instruction, allows the text to unfold gradually before the reader in a manner that prompts exploration of open-ended interpretive possibilities. The argument that this exegetical trend suggests an early period of legitimization, in which commentators sought to understand the text and appreciate its poetic value, seems sound.

By the middle phase, however, the importance of the *Naiṣadhīya* was well established in literary circles, resulting in more boastful commentaries that sought to control the text by establishing authoritative readings and interpretations that could earn the commentator scholarly titles in the courts of the day. Another commentarial shift in the sixteenth century, however, abandons this tendency towards interpretative competition and favors instead “an articulation of the poem’s semantic polyvalence.” Patel offers lengthy commentarial passages that compellingly indicate the inclination to overinterpret and allegorize during this phase; rather than debating acceptable standards of Sanskrit poetics, later commentators engage in creative exegesis that strives to uncover hidden readings, dual meanings, and spiritual symbols, or as Patel eloquently explains, “to convert surface meanings in the poem to more textured forms of significance.” While Patel’s argument for this tripartite evolution of commentarial development along a trajectory of exploration-interpretation-overinterpretation is cogent and his supporting selection of commentarial passages apt, these phases should not be considered in an overly rigid fashion. Generally, Patel does a nice job of blending boundaries, but occasionally ambiguities bring the thrust of his phases into question. Also, Patel briefly mentions a series of seventeenth-century Pahāri paintings that may be construed as visual representations of the poem; an expanded consideration of this sort of pictorial commentary would add an additional layer of depth to his project.

In the final two chapters, Patel enriches his study by moving beyond formal literary commentaries to consider the ways in which conceptions of the poem and composer have circulated in the popular imagination, both pan-Indic and regional. He engagingly explores the semi-historical and pseudo-biographical narratives that arise in accompaniment to the work, demonstrating how anecdotal legends influence its reception. This intriguing intersection of textual transmission and social exchange extends to regional interpretations as well. The *Naiṣadhbīya*, which itself reveals a conscious incorporation of vernacular vocabulary and meters, spawns numerous regional-language translations that themselves stand as foundational works. In a sweeping historical survey, Patel effectively argues that these *Naiṣadhbīya* translations engage established commentarial conversations while also transforming the composition's semantic possibilities for both Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit literati. While this consideration of the exchange between Sanskrit and regional languages—an area of study that calls for increased attention—is admirable and informative, the broad scope of Patel's survey occasionally results in a lurching read and it limits the depth of his findings. This chapter on regional expansion is undoubtedly valuable to his study, but would benefit from further elaboration and analysis.

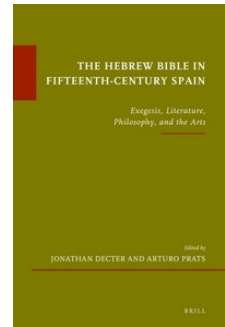
Patel's project of embracing comprehensive textual biographies in order to acknowledge composers, reading communities, commentarial contexts, and literary offspring is novel in the study of South Asian literature, and should serve as a methodological model for future scholarly endeavors in Sanskrit studies and beyond. Patel's grasp of an expansive commentarial tradition is impressively rigorous, and his findings clearly demonstrate the inherent benefits of shifting one's focus beyond the text to its accompanying addenda in order to elevate the text's hermeneutical potential. An additional facet which Patel refrains from addressing, however, is the development of the *Naiṣadhbīya*'s own commentarial tradition in comparison to that of other influential texts. For example, do commentarial threads surrounding other compositions reveal similar shifts in their evolution? Is there an established pattern in commentarial development, or are the changes in commentarial aims indicative of broader scholarly historical trends? A consideration of the role of the *Naiṣadhbīya* in the contemporary context would also provide an additional component to his study; while Patel briefly mentions the influence of the *Naiṣadhbīya* in modern Sanskrit curricula, he forgoes any substantive exploration of its current spirit. Despite these areas for growth, *Text to Tradition* is a significant and welcome addition to the field, and will advance

textual studies by encouraging scholars to expand their perspectives beyond a single textual focus and thereby enrich their studies by incorporating an array of associated sources.

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***The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain:  
Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts,*  
edited by Jonathan Decter and Arturo Prats**

Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012 | vi + 294 pages | ISBN: 978-9-004-23248-8 (hardcover) €117.00; ISBN: 978-9-004-23249-5 (e-book) €117.00



This volume collects eleven contributions read in 2009 at the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Madrid, as part of the project “Inteleg: The Intellectual and Material Legacies of Late Medieval Sephardic Judaism.” The papers present various aspects of the Jewish cultural milieu, as it changed and adjusted to the social changes occurring between the end of the High Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern era, by analyzing literary and artistic productions related in numerous ways to the Hebrew Bible. By dealing with materials produced by different communities (religious and not), not found only in Spain but also in Portugal and in the Italian peninsula, they effectively sketch a lively, multi-religious, multi-cultural depiction of fifteenth-century Southern Europe.

The fifteenth century represents a distinctive stage of Jewish culture and identity in the Iberian Peninsula. The timeframe considered by this volume stretches from the start of the anti-Jewish riots in 1391 to the final expulsion from Spain in 1492, dates which bracket a period marked by uncertainty, but also by cultural renewal. During the previous centuries, in the kingdoms that would later become Spain, Jewish culture had flourished under the patronage of royal figures such as Alfonso VI of León and Castile, who favored the migration of Jewish communities into his lands, or Alfonso I of Aragon and Navarra, who confirmed the rights Jewish people had enjoyed under Muslim rule when they passed under his control. The faiths cohabiting in the Iberian



Peninsula in these years come in contact through collaborative projects, such as the multi-language translation school that retranslated, from Arabic, Greek philosophical manuscripts lost to Christians.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, the movement of Jewish people was restricted by the creation of new legislation. With the beginning of the thirteenth century, religious tensions heightened, helped by zealous Dominicans, who aimed at converting Jewish people, and by debates held in the hope of demonstrating that Jewish belief was inferior, such as the disputation of Barcelona (1263). In 1391, mass persecutions erupted in Seville, set ablaze by the virulent sermons of Ferrand Martínez; they quickly spread to the whole of Castile and then to Aragon, devastating many Jewish communities, through murder or forced conversion. These pogroms had a tangible impact on more than the people they directly affected, rattling also the lives of the Jewish communities that had avoided conversion, and upsetting their internal cohesion.

The following fifteenth century was characterized by a slow worsening of the conditions of Jewish people, sometimes at the hands of recent converts to Christianity, such as the disputes of Tortosa, organized between 1412 and 1413 by *converso* Jerónimo de Santa Fe. The preaching of Vincent Ferrer, too, impacted negatively on everyday Jewish life, as did the influence he exerted on the Ordinance of Valladolid of 1412; such laws limited the movements of Jewish people, their contacts with Christians, and their professions, officially to diminish their influence on Christians and aid the integration of new converts.<sup>2</sup> All these factors contributed to the conversion of many notables, which caused much scandal and disheartening in their communities.

Furthermore, these traumas motivated a strong religious response, not only in the form of new tendencies in biblical exegesis, but also in the creation of non-biblical texts that ranged from elegiac productions lamenting the suffering of the Jewish people, to treatises in favor of or against conversion, to new liturgical corpora. On an interfaith level, contacts could still be pacific and synergistic, or deteriorate into the polemical and plainly antagonistic. This precarious situation ended in 1492, with the edict of expulsion signed by the Catholic Monarchs Isabel and Fernando, which gave four months to Jewish people to either convert to Christianity or leave their land.

<sup>1</sup> Paloma Díaz Más, *Los sefardíes: historia, lengua, y cultura* (Barcelona: Riopiedras Ediciones, 1997), 20–22.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Kriegel, *Les Juifs à la fin du Moyen Age dans l'Europe Méditerranéenne* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 216–17.

The volume reviewed is subdivided into four thematic sections: literature and art; Jewish exegesis; conversion and the uses of Biblical exegesis; liturgy and translation. Unsurprisingly, *converso* identity is the center of three contributions, by Claude B. Stuczynski, Ryan Szpiech, and Asher Salah. Stuczynski considers how the spreading influence of Paul's epistles in the Early Modern period takes on a specific weight in fifteenth-century *converso* theology; analyzing different pro-*converso* tracts, the author highlights a shared exegetical trend based on the common importance of their political character, which is justified by their aim in vindicating *conversos* as legitimate Christians.

Szpiech focuses on one of the authors of these pro-*converso* tracts, Solomon Halevi/Pablo de Santa María, to describe the influential narrative of his voluntary conversion, on the eve of the mass conversions of 1391. Dedicated to his son as a testament, this text, written in a language close to Paul, presents an Augustinian reading of the past: an exegetical interpretation of personal conversion allows a positive connection with the past self, highlighting the essential role of the testimony of the Jewish people in God's plan.

Portuguese *converso* (*marrano*) liturgy is the focus of the contribution of Salah. The author starts by summarizing the hypotheses advanced about the origins of these prayers: either a tradition invented after the dissolution of the Inquisition, an actual product of the religiosity of the Jewish people before the forced conversions, or a liturgy emerged from religious expressions common to both Old Christians and *conversos* before the creation of the Inquisition. The author then proceeds to consider if the liturgy in question can be considered a coherent corpus or not, suspending the search for a genealogy and choosing instead to contextualize the prayers in the larger sixteenth-century transformation of liturgy across different faiths, finding connections with contemporary phenomena such as *alumbradismo* and *devotio moderna*.

The anti-*converso* position is given space in the contributions by James A. Diamond and Libby Garshowitz. The former considers the interpretation of Isaac Abarbanel (1437–1508) of the binding of Isaac and the figure of Abraham, in the context of their refusal to give up their Jewishness and their God, as an antidote to conversion. Garshowitz looks at Shem Tov ben Isaac Ibn Shaprut (*ca.* 1340 until after 1405) and his exegesis of Job 19:25–27 in his *'Even Boḥan*, composed to try to curtail the conversions that were sweeping the country.

Ora (Rodríguez) Schwarzwald's and Andreina Contessa's papers analyze literal and artistic productions of Sephardic origin, that is, made by Iberian Jewish communities after their expulsion from Spain. The first considers

Ladino translations of biblical passages found in liturgical texts, and their relation to pre-exilic Spanish Bibles. The Spanish translations display a linguistic variety much higher than the post-exilic ones; the author points to the different targets of the texts as a reason for this difference, concluding that the post-exilic productions were derived from oral compositions. Contessa considers the fabrication of illuminated Hebrew Bibles by Italian Christian ateliers, observing the influence that these latter had on the illustrations and styles of the books.

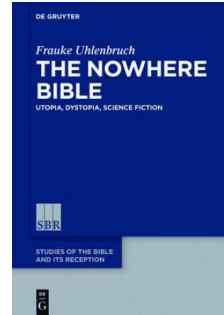
Tom Nickson's paper traces the history of the late fourteenth-century relief of the murder of Abel found in the cathedral of Toledo. The original image, showing Cain overpowering his brother while sinking teeth in his neck, can be linked to very few artistic trends of the time; the closest similarities are found in the Alba Bible, whose commentaries were provided by Toledan rabbi Moses Arragel, and which was illustrated with reference to the Toledo cathedral's sacristy. While this shared iconography points to a productive encounter between Christian and Jewish conventions, the relief in question became also a medium for Christian anxieties about the Jewish presence. Interreligious connections are also touched upon in Luis M. Girón-Negrón's contribution about the midrashic scene of Joseph's grieving over Rachel's tomb, a theme of either Jewish or Islamic origins, which went on to become successful also in Christianity.

Overall, this volume offers a window onto the complex and multifaceted relations between the different faiths existing in fifteenth-century Iberia, and beyond, thanks to its focus on a text of common interest. The wide range of topics touched by the contributions allows a wide perspective on infra- and intra-religious contacts, the various shapes they took, and the transformations that they underwent during and after the century considered, following the traumatic events that affected the Jewish communities of Spain and Portugal.

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*The Nowhere Bible: Utopia, Dystopia, Science Fiction*, by Frauke Uhlenbruch

Studies of the Bible and Its Reception 4 | Berlin: DeGruyter, 2015 | ix + 210 pages | ISBN: 978-3-11-041154-6 (hardcover) €109.95; ISBN: 978-3-11-041427-1 (e-book) €109.95



The following words appear near the end of Frauke Uhlenbruch's book, and they nicely summarize its contents:

I started out most interested in what a utopian reading would tell us about an historical community of creators, but ended up being most interested in using utopia to show how method shapes result. On the way, I found that utopian readings say more about interpreting communities than about creating communities.... (192)

This is a divided book, torn between the longing for historical Truth that haunts the modernist ideology (and modernist biblical studies), and the longing for creativity, diversity, and plurality that draws the others of modernism, whether we call them post-colonialism, feminism, post-structuralism, queer theory, or some such.

The biblical text that is the central focus of this book is Numbers 13, the story of “spies” sent ahead of the Israelites to scout out the “promised land.” Uhlenbruch's book itself seems to be a scouting foray into the prospects of a utopian reading of biblical texts, only not just one such foray, as in Numbers 13, but several of them, as though the spies went out many times and came back with various reports. After two introductory chapters, the next two chapters (3 and 4) deal with questions related to the value of thinking of a text as utopia for understanding of “an historical community of creators.” In other words, can utopia studies say anything of interest to historical study of the Bible: its relation to historical reality, to the author's intention or how early readers would have understood it, the relevance of the genre of utopia, etc.? Uhlenbruch's conclusions tend to be negative, but she seems unable to drop these issues, and some of them recur later in the book. It is as though she can't break free from thinking of the Numbers text in historical terms.

For example, she recognizes that the category of “utopia” is anachronistic, at best a heuristic, but she returns to the matter later in the book (in regard to dystopia, which is basically the same category). However, genre categories are inevitably anachronistic, as all reading is inevitably anachronistic, even the most “objective” and scholarly. Does anyone use Aristotle’s categories of tragedy and epic any more? Do we even know how he used those categories, except through our own (anachronistic) understanding of his writings today? There is an extensive and relevant literature on genre theory and the limits of genre categories, which Uhlenbruch unfortunately does not note.

The next three chapters are chiefly concerned with “how method shapes result.” In chapter 5, Uhlenbruch examines ways that William Bradford and Cotton Mather drew upon and rewrote Numbers 13 in their accounts of early American colonial settlement. This in turn leads her to insightful considerations of maps and boundaries. In the next chapter, she examines the Numbers text in light of the complex and fluid relation between utopia considered as a good place (“eu-topia”) and dystopia. This chapter concludes with an excursus on literary fantasy, with a helpful discussion of Rosemary Jackson and Eric Rabkin’s views on the topic. However, Uhlenbruch’s description of Tzvetan Todorov’s distinctions between the uncanny and the marvelous and between the poetic and the allegorical seem deficient to me. In chapter 9, she explores the relation between utopia and science fiction using intertextual (although she does not use that word) readings of Numbers 13 with recent science-fiction novels and TV shows. Her comparison of the Nephilim with science-fiction cyborgs, drawing upon Donna Haraway, is especially intriguing.

The concluding chapter is very brief, but in it Uhlenbruch suggests an application of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s notion of the rhizome (from *A Thousand Plateaus*) to questions of reception and transmission of culture. This suggests to me further thoughts about Numbers 13. As the Bible tells the story, there were just two reports brought back to the Israelites, but there were twelve spies. If this were a more realistic narrative, would there not be at least some disagreement between Joshua and Caleb? And would the ten others all speak as one, or would they also describe different versions of the land? Would this diversity of spies not lead to what Uhlenbruch calls the “hermeneutic free-for-all” that results outside of “academic debates about [the Bible’s] historicity” (81–82). She uses these phrases to warn against careless use of the texts for narrow dogmatic purposes, but do they apply also to those scholars who have little use for debates about historicity? Then

the obscured diversity of the ten “slanderers” might correspond to those post-colonialist, feminist, post-structuralist, queer or other readers who treat Numbers 13 or other biblical texts without “proper” regard for historical discipline.

Yet as I noted above, later in her book Uhlenbruch seems to join this group. This is the division within the book that she mentions in the quote at the beginning of this review. Perhaps we have here a scholar who is herself migrating from one place to another, in hope that her new “home” will not be nowhere. If so, I wish her well.

This book is generally well-written, but excessive redundancies in the text and numerous repeated citations and even footnotes suggest hasty proof-reading. In addition to the chapters that I have mentioned, there is a brief preface and a single index that includes terms, names, and other biblical references. A separate index of authors is unfortunately not included. I recommend the book to anyone with special interests in utopia studies of the Bible or the book of Numbers.

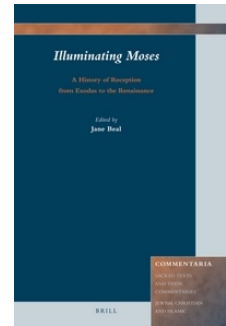
George Aichele  
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*illuminating Moses: A History of Reception  
from Exodus to the Renaissance*, edited by Jane Beal

Leiden: Brill, 2014 | Commentaria 4 | 456 pages | ISBN: 978-9-004-23577-9 (hardcover) €146.00; ISBN: 978-9-004-25854-9 (e-book) €146.00

This volume offers a wide spectrum of studies which all focus on the portrayal of Moses in the Hebrew Bible and beyond. In a solid introduction, the editor Jane Beal offers a brief biography of Moses, as told in the Hebrew Bible. She further introduces the volume and summarizes the articles.

Robert D. Miller II locates three different portrayals of Moses within the Pentateuch and argues that they are tied in with the different communities responsible for the different textual strands. The earliest portrayal, stemming from the northern kingdom of Israel, presents Moses as an alternative to the



Jerusalem monarchy. The intermediate portrayal, located in the exilic book of Deuteronomy, prefers a heroic Moses which could serve as a (failed) model. Finally, the Moses of the post-exilic priestly source depicts a man who died for his own and well as other people's sins. In order to reach these results, Miller begins with a brief survey of scholarship on the life of Moses and on the development of the Moses narrative. After discussing the approaches of Gerhard von Rad and John Van Seters, Miller concludes that the quest for the historical Moses is futile; instead it is more fruitful to explore the historical communities behind the extant textual portrayals of him. This quest leads him to the realm of folklore and myth and to the theories of Otto Rank, Joseph Campbell, and Lord Raglan, who each presents Moses as a type of mythic hero on a journey: the Rankian "saved child" who returns to overthrow Pharaoh, the "hero" of Campbell's theory who leaves his homeland in order to reach the promised land, and Lord Raglan's "hero" who falls out of divine favour and dies alone on a mountain top.

Tawny Holm investigates how the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the Writings understood the figure of Moses differently and used him for different purposes. Beginning with the DtrH, Holm notes that the book of Joshua refers to Moses by far the most. Moses is used to show continuity with the exodus-conquest narrative and to clarify that Joshua did everything that Moses had commanded him to do. In the rest of the DtrH, Moses is mentioned infrequently and primarily in conjunction with references to the law. Likewise, Moses is relatively insignificant in the prophetic literature which features his name only five times. He is an intercessor (Jer 15:1) and part of the leadership team who brought the people out of Egypt (Isa 63:11, 12; Micah 6:4). He is finally the recipient of the law according to Mal 3:22. Moses appears more frequently in the Writings. In the Psalter, Moses is again an intercessor (Ps 99:6). In contrast, Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah depict him primarily as the recipient of the Law and as the founder of the Israelite cult. Notably, this portrayal of Moses as the founding father of the Israelite religious institutions differs from the depiction of him in the Pentateuch where his brother Aaron dominates the cultic realm as the High Priest. In addition, Moses's prophetic role is enhanced in the material outside of the Pentateuch.

Larry J. Swain explores the portrayals of Moses in the writings of Paul, Matthew's Gospel, John's Gospel, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Swain begins by noting that Moses is by far the most important Hebrew Bible character in the NT, something which reflects his importance in early Christianity. For Paul, Moses is primarily the mediator of the Law. In fact, although it is

often difficult to distinguish between Paul's understanding of the Law and Paul's depiction of Moses, Swain emphasizes the importance of making such a distinction. Paul depicts Moses as a mystical figure who in many respects functions as a symbol for the people of Israel, in contrast to Jesus who represents the Christians. The covenant of Moses is a faint foreshadowing of the covenant of Christ. Turning to Matthew's Gospel, Swain demonstrates that the birth, life, teaching, and death of Moses function as typologies for Jesus. Jesus is depicted as the inheritor of Moses's authority and as his successor. In a similar way, John's Gospel depicts Jesus as fulfilling and ultimately surpassing Moses: "Moses was good and the Law God-given, but Jesus is better" (75). Finally, Hebrews compares Moses with Jesus and again reaches the same conclusion as Matthew and John: "Moses is faithful; Moses is head of the house as a servant. Jesus, too, is faithful, but faithful as a son" (79). In these different yet also similar ways, the New Testament writers make clear that Jesus is a new Moses who supersedes the earlier one in the Hebrew Bible.

Christopher A. Hall continues in the same vein as he investigates the ways in which the Church Fathers portrayed Moses. He opens with a discussion of the Church Fathers' conundrum vis-à-vis the Hebrew Bible: in response to the claims by various other Christian groups such as the Marcionites who rejected its authority, they had to make sense of the Hebrew Bible and to show that it was an integral part of Christian Scripture. The way forward was to transpose and adapt the story of Moses to the story of Jesus. The Church Fathers walked a tight-rope between on the one hand praising Moses and thus emphasizing continuity, and on the other hand pointing out his failings in order to stress Jesus's newness and superiority. They also resorted to typology in that key actions of Moses became prefigurations of Jesus. For instance, Moses's position with his arms outstretched during the battle against Amalek which ensured Israelite victory came to foreshadow Jesus's outstretched arms on the cross. Even more so, the whole exodus event was understood as a type for Jesus's death and resurrection. In the same way, the bronze serpent in the wilderness and the transformation of Moses's rod into a serpent were connected with Jesus's death on the cross. Finally, Moses's near death and miraculous survival as an infant was interpreted allegorically: Pharaoh's daughter symbolizes the Gentile church which rescues Moses (a symbol of the Law) in the water of baptism. In this way, the Church Fathers made clear that the Moses narrative, in fact the entire narrative of the Hebrew Bible, culminated in Jesus. When they read about Moses in the Hebrew Bible, Christian readers are meant to discover Jesus.



Luciana Cuppo-Csaki explores the presence of Moses in select Christian texts, ranging from 300 to 600 CE, which connect Passover with Easter. The chosen texts represent a range of Christian traditions, with focus on the Irish and the Roman. In these texts, two questions dominate the discourse. First, should the celebration of Easter follow the Jewish celebration of Passover? Expressed differently, how should the church convert the Jewish lunar calendar into the Greek or Roman solar calendar? Secondly, should Easter predominantly be a celebration of Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday or rather a remembrance of Jesus's suffering and death on Good Friday? Cuppo-Csaki begins by looking at the writings of Anatolius of Laodicea who was held in high esteem in Irish culture. His writings follow the Eastern tradition which emphasizes Jesus's resurrection and he refers implicitly to Moses and Aaron as he seeks to uphold the calendrical link between Passover and Easter. In contrast, Columbanus of Bobbio, also belonging to the Irish tradition, mentions Moses in his writings yet reaches the opposite conclusion: the church cannot follow the Jewish calendar because the Jews, now without a temple, cannot celebrate Passover as God intended it to be celebrated. Turning to the Roman tradition, Cuppo-Csaki notes that MS Lucca 490 states that the Church should not "celebrate with the Jews." In contrast, Dionysius Exiguus, adhering to the Greek school of Alexandria, advocated fidelity to the Mosaic tradition and thus insisted that the church should seek to establish the first of Nisan and to celebrate Easter on that date.

Howard Kreisel surveys the role of Moses in mediaeval Jewish philosophy. He covers a wide range of philosophers who all sought, each in his own way, to understand the nature of prophecy and divine revelation. They were all influenced by the religious-intellectual ideas and philosophical traditions prevalent in their times. At the same time, as Jews they needed to explain how the Torah was perfect and constituted God's true speech. Many of them, among them Saadia Gaon, accepted the prevalent notion that God is incorporeal. How, then, could Moses see him "face-to-face"? Further, what does it mean that God "spoke," given that he has no body and thus no ability to form sounds? Going one step further, Judah Halevi rejected the idea of a personal God who played a role in history. Prophecy was thus an emanation from the Active Intellect to the rational human intellect. Even so, in order to remain faithful to Judaism, he conceded that God's revelation to Moses on Sinai was an exception. Going yet one step further, Maimonides argued that prophecy could only be perceived by a person of perfect intellect and imagination. The sounds of prophecy were products of his own imagination

as a result of the emanation from the Active Intellect. Likewise, Nissim of Marseilles understood the voice at Sinai as Moses's own voice: Moses, the perfect human being, wrote the Torah as the result of prophetic illumination (rather than as the result of hearing God's voice). Along similar lines, Levi Gersonides understood the Torah to be the product of the impersonal activity of the Active Intellect (rather than of personal divine communication). In contrast, the later Hasdai Crescas treated prophecy as a combination of the natural and the supernatural, as he insisted that Moses received prophecies directly from God. Spinoza ultimately removed the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible from philosophy, claiming that the biblical texts are not concerned with philosophical truths. On the contrary, they form a political treaty which advocates theocracy. Moreover, the people of ancient Israel understood God to have feelings and prophecy to be God's actual words.

Rachel S. Mikva explores the portrayal of Moses in what is often called the "Minor Midrashim," namely *The Chronicles of Moses*, *Midrash vaYosha*, and *Midrash Petirat Mosheh*, which expand on the biblical material and turn the exodus narrative into an epic and a romance. Mikva investigates, among other matters, what factors and processes triggered and also enabled these transformations of the biblical narrative. In short, she argues that there are "gaps" within the biblical text which demand to be filled. Mikva looks at four key areas: Moses's birth, Moses and Pharaoh's crown, Moses's escape from Egypt, and Moses's return to Egypt. In the case of Moses's birth, for example, *Midrash vaYosha* transforms the biblical narrative in order to highlight God's omnipotence and care for Israel: what a casual reader may understand to be a mere coincidence is, in fact, a divine miracle. As for Moses's return to Egypt, *Midrash vaYosha* writes that Jethro had stipulated that Moses and Zipporah's second son would not be circumcised but instead be brought up to worship idols. This stipulation helps to explain not only why Moses decided to return to Egypt but also the incident on the road where Zipporah saved their lives by circumcising her son. Mikva also highlights how these Minor Midrashim turn Moses into a romantic hero. *The Chronicles of Moses*, for instance, depicts Moses as a military hero and has him marrying the widow queen of Ethiopia. Mikva concludes by arguing that the origin of these "romantic" transformations of Moses is situated in the synagogue, rooted in and triggered by exegetical concerns. Furthermore, although these expansions contain folk-motifs and, as such, testify to Jewish participation within the surrounding wider culture, they are given a distinct Jewish flavour in order to fit their Jewish audience.

Devorah Schoenfeld explores the two main ways in which the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic midrash, and the later mediaeval Jewish exegetes understood Moses's culpability in his own death. Beginning with the biblical records, Num 20:13 explains Moses's premature death (i.e., before he was able to enter into the Promised Land) as the result of his sin when striking the rock. In contrast, Deut 1–4 depicts Moses as arguing that his death is the result not of his own sin but of the sins of the people of Israel. These two contrasting explanations co-exist also in the midrashic literature. While the earlier *Sifre* does not question God's justice but instead attributes the reason for Moses's death to his own sin, the later *Midrash Tanhuma* and *Deuteronomy Rabbah* portray Moses as pleading his case before God, claiming that though he had sinned, it would be reasonable for God to forgive him, just as he forgave Israel who had sinned so much more. Finally, Schoenfeld shows that these two exegetical traditions are to be found also in mediaeval Jewish exegesis. While Rashi and his fellow interpreters in Provence emphasized Moses's culpability, the exegetes belonging to the Spanish tradition, in particular Nahmanides but also Rabbenu Asher and Abravanel, and to a certain degree also Abraham ibn Ezra, stressed the notion that Israel's sin caused Moses's untimely death and, as such, upheld the tradition of theodicy.

Gernot Wieland explores the attitudes towards Moses in Anglo-Saxon literature. He begins by looking at a trio of Anglo-Latin writers: Alcuin, Aldhelm, and Bede. In each case, Wieland cites the Latin text and his own English translation of the relevant passages. He notes that in all three cases, Moses is neglected and to a certain extent also criticized. Alcuin conveys the impression that Moses is a less-than-successful leader who towards the end of his life felt that he had failed to lead the people properly. Aldhelm is not openly critical yet the very sparse references to Moses reveal a certain reluctance to speak about him. Bede is most openly hostile to Moses, stating that Moses's writing falls short of the ideal as his account of the creation failed to take the participation of the Son into account! Turning to Old English poetry such as the *Exodus*, *Andreas*, and *Elene*, Wieland notes a similar tendency. Moses is associated with the Law and blamed for his failure to foreshadow Christianity. Wieland concludes that Moses was so strongly identified with Judaism and the Torah that he could not easily be transformed into a type for Jesus: "he is not allowed entry into the New Testament through the doorway of typology and he was not allowed entry into the Promised Land" (209).

Deborah L. Goodwin explores how mediaeval Christian commentators understood and evaluated Moses, with focus on the reasons behind God's

decision not to allow Moses to enter into the Promised Land. She demonstrates that an exegete's evaluation of Moses was often tied to his own understanding of the Torah and its role in God's salvific plan for humanity. Beginning with Augustine as a representative of the Latin tradition, Goodwin highlights how Augustine, in the *City of God*, treated Moses's failure to reach the Promised Land as a symbol of the inadequacies of the Old Law. In other contexts, Augustine explores Moses's failures as leader and uses him as a model for the individual Christian's struggles. The rest of the article focuses on the portrayal of Moses in Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. Goodwin argues that Comestor drew not only from Josephus's account of Moses but also from Mediaeval Jewish commentators with whom Comestor may have met and discussed. In particular, there are parallels between Rashbam's and Comestor's suggestions that Moses struck the rock as an expression of his doubt. Further, both commentators postulate that Moses was punished for the sins of the people rather than for any sin of his own. These influences from Jewish sources may, in turn, have caused Comestor to preserve a more positive portrayal of Moses than what is found in other contemporaneous Christian sources. Comestor understood Moses, the giver of the Old Law, as a heroic figure and as a worthy forerunner of Jesus, the new lawgiver.

Franklin T. Harkins discusses the ways in which Thomas Aquinas employs the figure of Moses in his *Summa theologiae*. First and foremost, Thomas saw himself as a teacher, and he presents Moses as a source and model for his own theological work. According to Thomas, Moses was *primus doctor Iudaeorum*, i.e., the first teacher of the Jews whose main task was to share with Israel his knowledge about God and Law in an erudite yet also pedagogical manner. Thomas portrays Moses as an "effective Master of sacred doctrine" (240) whose understanding of the divine surpassed that of the prophets because God spoke to him "face to face" (Exod 33:11). In particular, assuming Mosaic authorship of Genesis, Thomas presents Moses as a teacher of the doctrine of creation and as a competent instructor who adapts his teaching to the level of his pupils. Moses omits more complex insights from his teaching because his audience—Israel—would not have been able to understand it. Instead he uses language and symbols that were fitting to his audience's capabilities. Thomas further presents Moses as wise teacher in the doctrine of Christ, in the sense that the Old Law was given by God (1) as a witness of the future saviour and (2) as a guide to a life pleasing to God which, in turn, would prepare the followers of the Law for the later worship of Christ. Finally, Thomas presents Moses as a skilled teacher who is able to teach his less

learned students to draw conclusions from principles, a task which Thomas himself considered to be a teacher's prime function.

Gail Ivy Berlin discusses the mostly negative portrayals of Moses that are presented in Middle English biblical literature, in the mystery play cycles, and in William Langland's vision report *Piers Plowman B*. She begins by noting that Moses is a "split figure" (263) in the sense that, on the one hand, he is the bringer of God's law and thus to be honoured, while on the other hand, as the purveyor of the Mosaic Law, Moses is associated with ritual sacrifices and with harsh punishments such as stoning and thus a problematic and disturbing figure. Moses, having lived in the pre-Christ era, is further associated with sin and with a time under a deficient law which had not yet been fulfilled by Jesus. The people are sinful because although they have the Law, they do not obey it. Berlin begins by exploring the portrayal of Moses (his life, his laws, and his figurative value) in verse and prose retellings of the Bible. She concludes that Moses is revered because God chose him to be the recipient of the Old Law. However, as the representative of that same deficient Law, he cannot be trusted. Berlin reveals that the Mystery Plays display a similar set of attitudes. In some plays the audience are encouraged to side with Moses against Pharaoh, yet the same audience is subsequently led to side with Jesus as the giver of the New Law against Moses as the giver of the Old Law. In other plays, the Decalogue is Christianised in the sense that Jesus is presented as having written it prior to Moses. The triune God inspired Moses to write it, a claim which effectively disassociates Moses from the Law. In yet other cases, Moses himself is Christianised, resulting in plays that are intensely anti-Jewish: Moses is turned into an anti-Jewish Christian preacher who blames the Jews for failing to understand that the Old Law spoke about Jesus. The situation is similar in *Piers Plowman* where Moses is Christianised by being portrayed as Hope alongside Abraham who goes under the name Faith. Both Old Testament characters are positive characters, yet they cannot function without Love (i.e., Jesus). The interaction between the three figures is played out in a retelling of the Good Samaritan. Faith and Hope both fail to help the wounded man whereas only Charity/Love is capable of true compassion.

Jane Beal's substantial contribution explores the manifold uses of Moses as a model in Christian contemplative literature, whom those in the contemplative life should seek to emulate. On the basis of the account of the burning bush (Exod 3) and the reception of the Law (Exod 19, 20, 24), Moses is understood as having sought and experienced the presence of God and as hav-

ing had an intimate relationship with him. Beal discusses systematically and chronologically a wide range of authors. Beginning with Late Antiquity, Beal surveys the use and significance of Moses in the writings of especially Origen, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Egeria. Her discussion of Egeria's *Itinerarium*, for example, highlights how Egeria identified with Moses throughout her pilgrimage to Sinai and the Holy Land. Turning to the High Middle Ages, Beal shows how Bernard of Clairvaux portrays Moses as a model that he and his Cistercian brothers would do well to imitate: humble and compassionate yet at the same time also powerful and influential. In a very different way, Beal reveals how Hildegard of Bingen employs the words of Moses as the means to lend authority and authenticity to her own visionary experiences. Beal also explores the ways in which Bonaventure used Moses as a type for both Jesus and St Francis. Moving to the contemplative authors of the Late Middle Ages, among them Birgitta of Sweden and Meister Eckhart, Beal highlights that Birgitta employed Moses alongside Mary as male and female models of humility. Further, Beal explains the curious lack of references to Moses in contemporaneous contemplative English writings as the result of the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290: the importance of Moses in Jewish thinking had simply no impact in England. Beal further discusses the ways in which the Dutch *Biblia pauperum* depict various events in Moses's life as prefiguring key event in Jesus's life. Finally, Beal investigates the contemplative writings of the Counter-Reformation (Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross) and how it referred to Moses as a model for the Bride of Christ and for the ascent of the soul whereby the soul is joined with Christ in spiritual matrimony.

Brett Foster concludes the volume with another substantial article which reviews and discusses the diverse and often conflicting portrayals of Moses found in the literature of the Renaissance and beyond. The opening and closing sections of the article are devoted to the depiction of Moses in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Foster argues that the many allusions to Moses throughout the poem must be understood against the background of the overall treatment of Moses in Renaissance literature. For Milton, Moses was a visionary model, a fellow writer and poet, and a pioneering figure worthy of imitation. The rest of the article surveys chronologically the references to Moses in key works of literature. Among other things, Foster discusses the relatively negative view of Moses found in the Elizabethan double agent Richard Baines's so-called "Baines Note" which attributes heretical statements to the English playwright Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe is said to have called Moses a

charlatan who did not have the kind of (magical) powers that the Bible assigns to him. Foster then analyses the ways that the Gospels and the writings of Paul portray Moses, as well as how Moses was understood and evaluated by the reformers Calvin and Luther and also by the English Bible translator William Tyndale. Foster notes how they all depend upon the evaluation of Moses in the New Testament, yet they also differ from one another in their overall estimation of him. In fact, their views of Moses do, to a certain extent, reflect their own concerns. While Luther tends to regard Moses as a figure of the Law and, as such, a figure of bondage and death, Calvin commends Moses for recording the Law and for being an impartial leader, and Tyndale praises Moses for having communicated God's truth in the language of the people (Hebrew). Foster further explores the literary uses of Moses in English Renaissance literature (e.g., in the writings of John Bale, Edmund Spenser, and George Herbert) and notes that English monarchs such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I have been likened to Moses. Foster concludes by surveying the various depictions of Moses in the writings of the Counter-Reformation and Renaissance Rome (e.g., Machiavelli) and in the art of Rome (e.g., the Sistine Chapel and the statue of Moses at Pope Sixtus V's Acqua Felice).

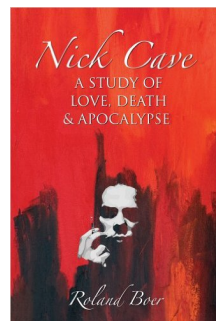
The volume concludes with a bibliography and a Subject Index. This is a very fine volume and all the articles are of a consistently high standard. It can be highly recommended.

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***Nick Cave: A Study of Love, Death and Apocalypse*, by Roland Boer**

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The experience of reading Roland Boer's *Nick Cave: A Study of Love, Death and Apocalypse* is much like a late-night conversation with an exceedingly well-read, flawlessly erudite, and occasionally filthy-minded old friend with whom one shares some aesthetic tastes and obsessions. It is, in every respect, a pleasure



to read and contemplate. That this pleasure, on occasion, is tempered with doubts and frustration detracts but little from its cumulative effect, like a long argument with one of those friends that one can't help but want to smack upside the head from time to time. The image of a conversation with an old friend is apt here for another reason as well: I know Nick Cave's music and his other work well, though not as well as Boer, by any means. That Boer's study—always respectful and at turns playful, deadly serious, and challenging—has only deepened my appreciation for and understanding of Cave as an artist and a thinker says volumes about the quality of Boer's analysis.

It is again to Boer's credit that these chapters, though originally published independently in various journals and anthologies, offer far more as a complete package than they do in isolation. These chapters, and the ideas and analyses within them, build upon and complement each other, creating a nicely understated ebb and flow of feedback and commentary from chapter to chapter. Despite Boer's admission in his introduction that the idea to produce a book about Cave came to him only gradually (and at the suggestion of others), this is not merely a scattershot collection of articles thrown together unconvincingly into a single book (an all-too-common feature on academic publishers' lists these days); it is a coherent, thorough, and constantly engaging study of one of the few figures in contemporary popular music whose work could stand up to a study of such depth and detail.

For Boer, the Australian-born Cave is "singular, idiosyncratic and brilliant" (vii). He is also something of a polymath, in artistic terms at least, producing not only a stunning (if occasionally uneven) body of songs—dating back to the 1970s—but also novels, plays, screenplays, essays, short stories, and lectures, all of which feature in Boer's wide-ranging analysis, which remains focused on the ways in which Cave interacts with the Bible, biblical language, and the Christian theological tradition. Even as the book exemplifies the best tendencies within the range of work we call "reception history," Boer explicitly separates himself from some of the lazier and more apologetic impulses which the label attracts (and more on Boer's somewhat fraught relationship with various forms of *apologia* later): "Far more interesting are the patterns of interpretation in which Cave engages, the creative reconstructions of the theological and biblical motifs (in which neither the Bible nor theology has priority), rather than any concern for the legitimacy or otherwise of those reconstructions" (xii). Instead of looking for any definitive readings of these texts, or drawing an artificial line between text and reception, Boer



allows himself to be guided by Cave and his fragmented aesthetic, adopting a borderline-chaotic method influenced by a number of thinkers from Ernst Bloch to Theodor Adorno to Jacques Attali. Though Boer clearly has a great deal of respect for his subject, he never succumbs to the temptations of hagiography, and treats Cave's own attempts to influence the interpretation of his music with as much suspicion as sympathy, going as far as "casting aspersions on Cave's written and spoken word as means of controlling interpretation" (xiv).

After a short, punchy introduction, the first chapter, "Searching the Holy Books," sets the scene and allows those readers who are unfamiliar with Cave—or even those who are only casual listeners—to catch up, at least a little. Most interestingly, Boer here undertakes to examine critically what Cave himself has said about his relationship with the Bible and with Christianity more generally. Though Boer states simply that "Cave is not always the best guide to his own work" (3–4), he notes at the same time that "autobiography and Bible have a symbiotic relation in Cave's carefully crafted narratives concerning his own life.... [W]henver Cave writes, sings and speaks about the Bible, he is very keen to control how that engagement is interpreted" (4). Boer argues that Cave's persistent attempts to exert this control are related to his Christology, a tantalizing if not altogether convincing idea.

The second chapter, "The Total Depravity of Cave's Literary World," is in many ways the most intriguing study in the whole volume, and it serves as an interesting case study of how a non-Christian artist both deploys and challenges the central notions of Christian theology. The chapter examines a smattering of Cave's literary work, taking in his poetry, short plays, the occasional lecture/essay, screenplays and, most importantly, Cave's novels *And the Ass Saw the Angel* (1989) and *The Death of Bunny Munro* (2009). Boer argues that his diegetic world—"relatively consistent," "distinct and continuous," and built across a number of works—is a "world whose unifying theme may best be understood in terms of that irreproachable Calvinist doctrine of total depravity" (16). Reading these works can be taken as an invitation to enter this imaginary world, but not lightly, for this is "not a world, however, into which one willingly escapes, for it is grim, deranged, fevered, stark, sordid, violent, treacherous and perverse, in short, utterly depraved" (18). These novels, which mix hints of the American South with the English countryside and the Australian Outback, paint a world that is, perhaps, unredeemable. Here Boer mixes in a bit of his own autobiography, which gels somewhat

with Cave's novels, particularly his itinerant religious upbringing in small-town Australia. It is a tribute to both Boer's skill as a writer and the depths of his engagements with Cave that this brief insertion is not more jarring than it is; the attentive reader knows that such things are a relevant, even necessary part of his analysis. Boer equates Cave's fictional world with the rural outliers he encountered in his youth, though Boer admits that his perspective "was always that of an outsider" (20). Cave's work tries to bring the reader the *insider's* perspective, and it is here that the total depravity of this world finds its fullest expression, for these people are as bad as everyone already thinks they are, maybe even worse: "In a depraved world, in a depraved valley, that house on the edge of town is the most depraved of all" (21). Cave's earliest journeys into this world offer little if any redemption, Boer argues, but Cave has been growing more optimistic, offering admittedly "ambiguous and unresolved" forms of redemption (29).

Chapter 3, "Some Routine Atrocity, or Apocalyptic," offers an analysis of Cave's use of end-times and revelatory language, in which Cave "constructs his own apocalyptic world from the building blocks of biblical apocalyptic" (32). Apocalyptic finds a ready home in Cave's world of absolute depravity, and in his fierce individualism, as when he employs frequent apocalyptic images, language, and mood on his *No More Shall We Part*, the album he wrote and recorded while struggling to overcome heroin addiction. Cave's apocalypses are thus idiosyncratic, even intimate, crossing over into his famed murder ballads, in which "we have ... a strong doctrine of sin and evil" (40), a sense that something could, indeed, should, be different: "slaughter, destruction and atrocity may be the way the world is, but it should not be so" (40).

The fourth chapter, simply titled "Death," brings the reader fully into one of the most important elements in all of Cave's work, one that pervades his songs and his literary worlds. Boer argues that, in contrast to much of mainstream contemporary culture, where death is often hidden away or ignored in favour of life, "Cave is refreshingly, if at times scandalously, direct" (44). This confrontation most often takes place in what Boer dubs the "sinister song," a bridging form between Cave's hymn-like slower songs and the anarchic, noisy, and downright messy discordant strain that has been a feature of his music since the earliest days of his career. Drawing on Adorno and Horkheimer's work on capitalism and death, Boer delves more fully into Cave's extensive catalogue of murder ballads, which recount individual

deaths, often in precise, chilling detail. Cave makes no bones about the fact that these are *murders*, often of women, deaths inflicted rather than natural deaths:

he dwells at length on precisely such deaths, dissecting them, joking about them, not allowing us to forget, deny or push them from our consciousness. It is as though he focuses precisely on the extreme, accidental and violent forms of death in order to bring that too into the realm of life—for all too often death is brutal... for Cave there is no denial, no effort to forget and bury death under police, law or a mountain of commercial crap; he focuses squarely on death in a way that is difficult to disregard. (51)

The next chapter, “God, Pain and the Love Song,” takes what seems at first to be a radical change of direction; however, as Cave is so often able to remind the listener (or reader, viewer, etc.), love, death, and conceptions of the supernatural are often inextricably tied up with one another. For even Cave’s love songs are haunted by shadows. Even his most sentimental ballads can draw blood. It is God and pain that make Cave’s love songs unique, Boer argues, and it is also this conjunction that unifies the diversity of love songs across Cave’s extensive catalogue. Here again Boer’s analysis runs next to, and in some senses against, Cave’s own comments, particularly on the *Song of Songs* and the *Psalms*. Where Cave strives for simplicity, Boer goes further: “The two terms of pain and God appear in a pattern of presence and absence, for a song may include or exclude pain and it may do the same with God” (60). Boer even provides the reader with a series of helpful diagrams to illustrate the relationship between the four logical possibilities created by these binaries of presence and absence. Boer is openly dismissive of the first type, the “secular songs of love,” which are “the type of song we hear spewing out of the radio at all times of the day or night” (61). He is understandably thankful that he is only able to identify seven such “secular soppy songs” in Cave’s back catalogue. Songs of “painful love,” or about the “sadness of love, the disappointment it brings, the anger and desire for revenge that the more passionate among us feel; in short, the sorrow of love,” are “by far the most common of Cave’s love songs” (65). In his songs with no pain, but with God (and Cave’s God is a “very Christian” God [62]), Boer argues that Cave

demonstrates a remarkable technique: “the elision of faith with love ... this feature of Cave’s love songs is what may be called Cave’s Trinity... God, Cave and woman, with the outcome that God and the woman merge into one” (63). This elision is both “extraordinarily conventional” and “touches on taboo” (63), as in the song “Brompton Oratory,” which gives the listener an unconventionally frank collision of worship and the blunt physicality of human sexuality. Boer wonders of the song’s narrator, “Have they been fucking just before he worships?” (64).

“Jesus of the Moon, or, Christology,” opens with a sentence that could serve as a deft summary of the whole volume: “In about the year 1988, a major event in music history happened: at the same time that Nicholas Edward Cave made his first serious attempt to give up heroin he also became rather interested in Jesus” (72). He brings a typically eclectic mix of scholarly tools to the party, involving Theodore Gracyk, Jacques Attali, and Theodor Adorno in the process. He also, though not unproblematically, tries to trace the softening of Cave’s musical voice—though not his lyrical fury in many cases—to the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc (75). These slower songs are potent, and potently seductive, as Boer notes (76). Throughout songs (and Boer calls them “hymns” with some justification) like “Brompton Oratory,” Cave sings of an unidentified other who may be a lover, may be Jesus, Jesus as Christ, or an amalgam of all three figures. Returning to this patchwork Christ later in the volume, Boer writes, “In place of the redemptive Christ, Cave prefers Jesus-the-amazing-man, the one given to sensuality, creative imagination and stunning teaching, but suffering chronic misunderstanding.... In fact, the Christ with whom Cave identifies is much like himself, but in this respect Cave is by no means unique” (114–15). Cave’s Christ is, as Boer quite rightly points out, a deeply sensual, sexual figure (not unlike Cave himself, of course), a divine figure in the tradition of the Song of Songs.

The next and very intriguing chapter, “Hearing Around Corners: Nick Cave Meets Ernst Bloch,” appeared in an expanded and, frankly, better edited and proofread form in an earlier issue of this journal (vol. 1, no. 2, 2011). Here, Boer focuses more on the sonic form and genre of Cave’s shifting musical language than in previous chapters of the book, which were more concerned with matters of language. Boer delves into Cave’s massive catalogue with the help of Ernst Bloch’s philosophy of music. He identifies a number of different types of Cave songs, which become central to his argument:

the nub of my argument may be stated briefly: the basic form of the song in Cave's work is the anarchic or discordant song (even though he worked hard in his early days to discover this form), but he attempts to resolve the internal tensions of this song through two main approaches and a few sidelines: one is the hymn and the lament (and then also a delightful perversion which I call the sinister song), and the other is the dialectical song.... Always tempered by the hymn, I suggest that musical redemption is achieved—always partially—only through the dialectical garage song, in which the former anarchic song is allowed full reign. (89)

This analysis leads Boer into some interesting speculations, many of which, sadly, go largely unexplored:

Only in the last few centuries, and especially ... since the explosion of the myriad forms of rock music since the 1950s, has music come into its own as a central and complex cultural form (Cave of course is part of this late flourishing). Why? Not only does it step in the role of a seemingly fading religion, but the lateness of music gives it a uniquely dialectical role in the anticipation of utopia, for it both negates and transforms, or rather sublates (*Aufhebung*) the hope embodied in religion. (86)

This chapter also reveals some of the inherent weaknesses in Boer's analysis, or at least lays bare his artistic biases. At one point, he calls 1997's *The Boatman's Call* "perhaps the least listenable of all Cave's recordings" with little justification beyond the fact that it is composed mainly of hymns or ballads, which he happens to dislike. The album also, we must imagine, rubs Boer the wrong way in that it is one of Cave's most easily accessible works, at least for those listeners disinclined to Cave's more chaotic work. In contrast, all of his anarchic songs are given a free pass, and are "In a word: brilliant" (92). Much as this reporter might be inclined to agree with this simple assessment, I also have to realise that this is largely because I share many of Boer's tastes musically (and perhaps even ideologically), not because such songs have any intrinsic value over and above slower, more hymn-like numbers.

Boer's conclusion, "Gates to the Garden—The Search for Redemption," takes this idea further before going off in some curious directions for an anal-

ysis that largely maintains an admirable sense of focus on one man and his work. It is here that the main problem with Boer's study truly raises its head over the parapet (though there are hints of it throughout), as when Boer writes of Cave's varied love songs:

The problem with these myriad invocations of love is that it so often operates with a similar universality of exclusion to the one we saw with beauty. If a preacher, philosopher, or singer calls on us to love another, if that God loves us, it so often means: do not worry about your class differences, the patterns of exploitation, the fact that the wealthy boss over there is screwing you, for we must love one another. (113)

Even accepting without question that such a criticism is valid, the question has to arise, from a scholarly, analytical standpoint, at the very least, why stop here? Why not turn on Cave for writing more songs about heterosexual love than homosexual love, for example? Why not chastise him for not explicitly attacking other social ills, from discrimination to the ongoing ravaging of the ecosystems on which we all depend? As we have seen, Boer often chastises Cave for being a typical modern liberal for whom personal expression and truth are paramount, though he gives little enough justification for this (what *should* be top of our list of concerns remains largely unspoken in Boer's analysis, although—perhaps contrary to Boer's intentions—a Trotskyite collective revolution would do the trick).

There is, in fact, a never-acknowledged tension between warring orthodoxies that is visible through the volume as a whole and Boer's book is, ultimately, a curious thing. Taking his judgments of Cave's worth over the book as a whole, Boer praises Cave to the heavens for failing to adhere to an orthodox Christian theology when grappling with both humanity and the gods we create. At the same time, Cave is damned for failing to subscribe to a Marxist orthodoxy that is every bit as dogmatic and ahistorical. That Boer presents the tenets of his Marxism as the same sort of universal, self-evident truths that theologians have been peddling for centuries only worsens the damage and serves to weaken both his analysis and his very pointed criticisms of the blindness of theological orthodoxy. Is Boer merely dismissing one orthodoxy so that a different one can take its place, just as he accuses Cave of doing when valorising the needs of the individual genius over the good of the collective? Are these two warring dogmatisms even that different? A num-

ber of thinkers—and John Gray comes to mind most immediately—have argued convincingly that there are demonstrable historical connections between Christian eschatology and Marxist visions of a glorious future shaped by historical materialist ideals.

That all of this passes by unmentioned in Boer's study lends to the volume a certain feeling of incompleteness and, furthermore, opens up questions about the overall integrity of Boer's analysis. A careful reader, tuned in to such tensions, can uncover easily enough some of Boer's other unstated assertions or preconceptions. Boer's aesthetic judgements—in short, that Cave's chaotic songs are his best—also strangely seem to blind him from treating Cave fairly on the terms of the analysis itself. A case in point: the song "Darker with the Day," which makes the occasional appearance in the book, is largely treated as another of Cave's tiresome laments. A closer look at the song, however, reveals an abiding anger with and dismissal of the petty bourgeoisie, as when Cave sings of the "amateurs, dilettantes, hacks, cowboys, clones/The streets groan with little Caesars, Napoleons, and punks" too occupied with their "building blocks and their tiny plastic phones/Counting on their fingers with the crumbs down their fronts" to notice the signs of what might very well be the apocalypse. These self-important figures, recognisable denizens of any modern city, remain in the song pathetic obstacles around which the song's narrator is forced to weave on his own mysterious errands. When writing of this song, Boer heaps praise upon Cave's chilling, graphic, and counter-intuitive use of theological language—the song describes an image in a Bible of a "woolly lamb dozing in an issue of blood and a gilled Jesus shivering on a fisherman's hook"—but somehow overlooks that later verses of the song render just the sort of political and ideological critique that Boer finds missing in Cave's work.

Falling back on what we can only call a theological stance as the book draws to a close, Boer asks, "Is redemption possible at all, at least in Cave's work?" (115). Working again with Bloch's thinking on the redemptive possibilities of music, Boer concludes:

it seems to me that Cave may indeed offer possibilities for redemptive and utopian transformation despite himself. . . . By now it should be clear what redemption actually means for Cave. . . . redemption now becomes the dialectical response to total depravity, the ability to find gaps in apocalyptic mayhem, the refusal to allow death its famed finality, the unexpected and un-

deserved possibility of a better world and even a challenge, despite Cave's avoidance of politics, a possibility of overthrowing oppressive powers. (116–17)

The question that goes largely unasked in Boer's analysis is whether or not Cave is actually looking for redemption in any of the senses that this word has been used over the centuries of Christian theology, irrespective of whether it ultimately makes sense to describe the work of an artist as iconoclastic as Nick Cave in such traditional language. Perhaps this is the next step for Boer to take when facing up to Cave's ever-evolving body of work (he has released a film and an album, *Push the Sky Away*, since the book was published). Given the very real strengths of this study, despite its missteps, it would be a genuine loss for engaged listeners and readers if this is Roland Boer's last word on Cave, for Cave certainly hasn't finished with us yet.

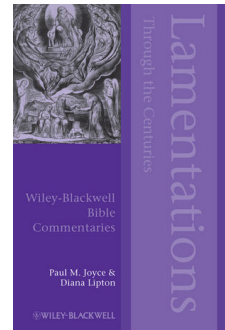
Eric Repphun  
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***Lamentations through the Centuries*, by Paul M. Joyce and Diana Lipton**

Wiley-Blackwell Bible Commentaries | Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013 | 232 pages | ISBN: 978-0-631-21978-1 (hardcover) £62.99; ISBN: 978-1-118-33264-1 (e-book) £56.99

This volume in the Wiley-Blackwell Bible Commentaries series presents a “reception exegesis” (17) of the book of Lamentations. The editors' preface sets out the series aim: to encourage “readers to consider how the biblical text has been interpreted down the ages and ... to open their eyes to different uses of the Bible in contemporary culture” (ix). In the case of Lamentations, this requires reckoning with some 2500 years of interpretation.

The authors' introduction sets out some specific considerations taken when considering Lamentations and its reception (1–25). A brief overview of the book of Lamentations directs readers to Provan (1991), Berlin (1992), and Hillers (2002) for introductions to the usual historical-critical discussions (2). There follows a discussion of the traditional ascription to Jeremiah,





accompanied by paintings for illustration (2–6). Indeed, Joyce and Lipton identify this ascription as one of the key difficulties in undertaking reception-critical work of Lamentations. That is, since the book from earliest times was ascribed to Jeremiah, there is a question as to whether *every* appearance of Jeremiah in succeeding works of art or literature might obliquely allude to the book of Lamentations, even though modern biblical scholars generally agree that he was not the historical author of the poems (17). Similarly, works entitled “Lamentations” may or may not be explicitly referencing the biblical book. Joyce and Lipton take the decision to consider these regardless of any intentionality (17).

Joyce and Lipton suggest that Lamentations is a book whose “time has come” (7). They locate the origins of current scholarly interest in Brueggemann’s seminal article and highlight several important recent studies from the UK, Germany, and the US, as well as identifying a similar interest in continental systematic theology (7). It is notable that no works from the global south appear in their list of “important contributions” (7)—Liz Boase’s work (Australia), at the very least, should rate a mention. Similarly, when they later observe the increasing recognition of reception *history* as a discipline they note (12) the contributions of the series in which they write, the *Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, and Sheffield’s annual, *Biblical Reception*; but not *Relegere* (established 2011).

The introduction offers a whistle-stop tour of contexts in which Lamentations has been “received,” including the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Targum Lamentations*, Josephus, Jewish liturgical practice, the Church Fathers, Medieval Jewish Rabbinics, liturgical settings for Holy Week from the Middle Ages onwards, the reformers, mystic and devotional writers, Eastern European Jewish modernist thought, Western European social contexts, the Shoah, the Balkans, South Africa, and 9/11; it spans media as diverse as art, modern novels and autobiography, political philosophy and historical criticism (7–9).

Joyce and Lipton then sketch out their understanding of reception history, beginning with John Sawyer’s definition thereof as “the study of post-biblical readings and artistic representations . . . that is, the history of the effect the Bible has had on its readers.” They helpfully observe Jonathan Roberts’s distinction between reception as “every act or word of interpretation of the Bible” and reception history as “a scholarly enterprise, consisting of selecting and collating shards of that infinite wealth of reception material

in accordance with the particular interest of the historian concerned, and giving them a narrative frame.” These definitions are set against Yvonne Sherwood’s “afterlife” of a biblical text, and Joyce and Lipton locate their volume as one that “falls somewhere between an afterlife of the book of Lamentations and a reception history” (11). They rightly include academic biblical criticism as one oeuvre under consideration when examining the reception history of Lamentations (11), recognising that the way in which historical critics/biblical scholars have approached Lamentations is as worthy of study as the way in which creators of other works have used or responded to it.

In defining the audience for reception history—and hence their audience—the authors identify biblical scholars, “members of faith communities that hold the Bible sacred,” (13) those who “turn to the Bible in times of trauma” (13), and “all who enjoy being taken on a journey, through time and space, in the company of a text that has spoken to an astoundingly varied audience, and continues to speak” (14). And indeed, there is much in the volume that should be of interest to all of these groups.

Joyce and Lipton then acknowledge some of the ethical questions of undertaking reception history of Lamentations. First, they note that there must necessarily be some selectivity. Joyce and Lipton identify as priorities in their selection “feminist issues and . . . sensitivities in the relationship between Christians and Jews, and where possible also . . . questions bearing on race” (14). Second, they raise the question of enjoying the artistry of Lamentations and its receptions when the content it covers is so disturbing. Third, they acknowledge the much-discussed problematic of Lamentations’ depiction of women; fourth, the appropriation of the Hebrew Bible and supersessionist attitudes in Christian interpretation; and fifth, the injunction that victims turn for relief and comfort to their abusers (14–15).

Duly acknowledged, Joyce and Lipton set out their aim: “to showcase the book of Lamentations as it has been interpreted, alluded to and used in as wide as possible a range of media” (16). They cover an impressive array of material, taking in both obvious (Deutero-Isaiah, Tallis, Chagall) and less obvious receptions (Zimbabwean junk art, Virginia Woolf) of Lamentations. While they have raised the issue of selectivity, however, some further explanation of how they selected the particular material with which they chose to showcase Lamentations would be welcome. To be sure, Joyce and Lipton include autobiographical cameos at the end of the introduction, and these go some way toward explaining the choices. That the authors are a male Christian (Joyce) and a female Jew (Lipton), both Oxford educated, could

account for the particular care given to including feminist perspectives and due sensitivity to both Jewish and Christian interpretations, as well as the predominance of the UK and Europe in the chosen receptions' origins. But a volume such as this cannot be a comprehensive catalogue of all receptions, and so some further explanation of why *these* works were chosen for inclusion would be helpful.

Joyce and Lipton further define their commentary as “reception exegesis” (17), and this is, I think, where they make a distinctive contribution. Reception exegesis is the name they give to the phenomenon whereby receptions of Lamentations are not just studied for how they have used and responded to the text, but are then in turn brought to bear on the interpretation and exposition of Lamentations. In this way the volume is quasi-midrashic, but whereas midrash brings other verses of the Bible to bear on the interpretation of each verse of Lamentations, Joyce and Lipton bring “an interpretation or use of the Lamentations verse” (18) under consideration to bear on its exegesis. As such, they intend to “show the biblical scholars bent on interpretation do not have a monopoly on explication of the ancient text” (18).

Their “reception exegesis” as it plays out through the commentary produces some very fruitful observations, illuminating the text in new and sometimes surprising ways. This practice of turning the reception back to the text in order to exegete in light of it is not undertaken in every case, but where it is it is groundbreaking. For example, in their discussion of Lam 4:10, Joyce and Lipton discuss a poem by Abraham Sutzkever from the Vilna ghetto in 1943, in which the poet does not consider himself worthy to eat his infant son and be his grave. Turning this back to (re)interpret Lam 4:10, Joyce and Lipton are then able to suggest that instead of hunger driving compassionate women to eat their children in an abhorrent subversion of the nurturing role (as usually inferred by commentators), it could be that “these mothers longed to return their babies to the place from which they came, not to the earth, but to their own bodies” (159).

After the introduction the remainder of the volume presents the commentary, working through each chapter verse by verse, or unit by unit. For each verse or unit, one, or maybe two, examples of how the text has been used are presented, sometimes with comment on how the receiving work can then be brought to bear on the exegesis of the text, with some genuine illumination of the text thereby. Each chapter includes a handy bibliography of the works cited. It is a particular challenge of this kind of work that the many receptions must be summarised and communicated in brief, giving enough

context to the work under discussion such that a reader of the commentary who has not read, seen, heard, or experienced the reception itself can understand the point being made. Joyce and Lipton achieve this admirably, although it is interesting to note that a fair bit of their discussion of reception comes by way of a third party again—for example, discussion of 4Q179 comes as interpreted by Tal Ilan (36–39). This adds another dimension again to the notion of reception—not only is a reception of Lamentations being discussed, but it is done so as that reception has, in turn, been received by other scholars. This volume has much to offer, both in its distinctive understanding of its task as reception *exegesis*, rather than reception history, and in the particular receptions under discussion, which are then in turn used to illuminate the biblical text.

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***Bibelrezeption in der Aufklärung*, by Christoph Bultmann**

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012 | x + 256 pages | ISBN: 978-3-16-151968-0 (softcover) €39.00

A gathering of essays originally published between 2001 and 2012, *The Reception of the Bible in the Enlightenment's* implicit, overall goal is related less to questions of reception theory than it is to show that the popular image of the Enlightenment as a strike against religion is on shakier ground than a secularizing narrative would like it to be. Voltaire, Hume, and Paine cease to be representative figures and become specific voices within a panoply of Enlightenment perspectives. Bultmann analyzes eighteenth-century interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, with the question of how philosophers related exegetical procedures to the tenets of natural religion as one of his central concerns. As a counterweight to narratives of the Enlightenment as a key moment of secular progress, the book adds detail to arguments such as David Sorkin's *The Religious Enlightenment*, Louis Dupré's *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture*, and Thomas Howard's *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*. Bultmann aims for a strictly historical approach to



his subject—he brackets the question about the extent to which the respective claims of the Enlightenment and Christianity can be reconciled within a systematic theology—yet his overall sympathies lie with those thinkers who attempted such a reconciliation. While I share these sympathies, I would have liked them to have been better interrogated. Bultmann does not engage important critiques of the Enlightenment such as those of Adorno and Horkheimer, Foucault, or feminist analyses of the gendering of secularism. He distances himself from such critiques in a footnote, distinguishing his approach from that of Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood in *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar* (186). The almost total exclusion of such perspectives allows Bultmann to proceed with his detailed readings of specific Enlightenment texts as an implicit endorsement of the Enlightenment project.

The explicit, narrower goal Bultmann sets for himself is to gain an understanding of the development of those biblical hermeneutics that seek to free biblical interpretation from dogmatic limitations (2). The cumulative effect of the volume makes clear that he favors those Enlightened thinkers who took on a double move of freeing biblical interpretation from dogma and reconfiguring, not rejecting, human religiosity. To this end, he outlines his guiding ideas in three strokes at the outset of the book. First, he highlights the preacher Johann Joachim Spalding (1714–1804) as paradigmatic for the work of biblical interpretation in the Enlightenment. Second, he raises the question of periodization. It is in the way he pursues this question that his task of providing a counterweight to secularizing narratives of the Enlightenment is most apparent. Bultmann situates the Enlightenment reading of the Bible in a “stable tradition” that includes the sixteenth-century writers Erasmus, Sebastian Castellio, and Drusius (191). This move allows him to weaken the Confessional/Enlightened dichotomy and position critical approaches to the Bible within the mainstream of Christian thought well before Schleiermacher and later liberal theologians. Third, he pursues the ethical foundation for pluralism. The book proceeds through a series of loosely connected portraits of figures of the European Enlightenment, with emphasis on German figures. This format is both a weakness and a strength of the book. The weakness lies in the fact that as a collection of previously published articles, the book moves haphazardly through the various figures he analyzes. Examining the essays in light of the three broad strokes Bultmann sets forth in his introduction, one finds that the extent to which they correspond to his stated aims varies widely. Yet, the method of providing a series of portraits is also the book’s greatest strength. One gets varying angles on a single figure

and discovering interconnections and direct lines of influence between the figures makes for a very subtle way of viewing the writers.

The very first sentence explicitly equates the reception history of the Bible with the history of exegesis. Once Bultmann has established that reception history is the history of exegesis, he asserts that while it has become self-evident for biblical interpreters to ask questions of origins, they have let questions of reception languish. However, he is able to situate his work within German scholarship of biblical reception in the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, his equation of “reception” and “exegesis” narrows the theoretical content of “reception history,” excluding literary and artistic adaptations of biblical literature or the presence of biblical subtexts in non-religious discourses. The absence of engagement with reception theory proper—neither Wolfgang Iser nor Hans Robert Jauss makes an appearance—might account for such a narrow understanding of his task. One essay, on Robert Lowth and Horatian poetics, allows Bultmann to explore a broader understanding of reception than indicated in his introduction. The bifurcation of biblical interpretation from biblical subtext is especially apparent in an essay on toleration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: biblical argumentation simply disappears from view. Equating “reception” with “exegesis” also leaves the Bible unfazed by “readerly” approaches that probe how interpretive conflict reveals the text’s indeterminate meanings.

The substance of the book is in nine chapters on Johann Joachim Spalding, Robert Lowth, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Gottfried Herder, Alexander Geddes, and Wilhelm de Wette. Bultmann’s project of weakening the opposition between “Confessional” and “Enlightened” approaches is most apparent in his essays on Spalding and Lessing. He first turns to Spalding’s 1772 text “On the Usefulness of Preaching and Its Promotion” to show how an Enlightened Lutheran responded to a cultural situation in which the question of the Church’s relevance and authority was under challenge. The terms with which Spalding had to frame his argument were those of natural religion. He contextualizes Spalding’s argument by turning to the rebuttal by James Foster (1697–1753) to Matthew Tindal’s articulation of natural theology; Spalding was one of Foster’s German translators. Bultmann finally turns to Spalding’s use of specific New Testament texts. In particular, Spalding reads Paul as a defender of both the traditional doctrine of justification by faith and as a proponent of natural theology. Bultmann next examines Robert Lowth (1710–87), a Bishop and Professor of Poetry at Oxford who gave literary lectures on the psalms. Here, Bultmann notes two

reasons it would have been odd for Lowth to present lectures on Hebrew poetry: first, Horace or a Latin poet would have been a more seemly topic for an eighteenth-century literary scholar; second, poetry, despite its presence in the Bible, has a disruptive effect on dogmatic religion (42). This essay includes a lengthy discussion of the reception of Horace. In his essay on Lessing's understanding of the Bible, Bultmann departs from his focus on the Hebrew Bible to examine the role of the divided will in Romans 7 as central to Lessing's understanding of religion. Through an analysis of Lessing's early poem "Religion," Bultmann shows that the Lutheran emphasis on the weakness of the will motivates Lessing's understanding of religion in general. The chapter on the image of Moses in early modern handbooks provides a counterweight to the general position presented in the rest of the essays. This chapter documents the prevalence and wide distribution of the pre-critical assumption of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in popular, commercially successful handbooks. Here, the role of Castellio in his overall argument becomes ambiguous. Bultmann locates Castellio as a formational figure of critical Bible reading, but also situates Castellio as a key source for the handbooks which disseminated the pre-critical assumption of Mosaic authorship. It seems to bemuse Bultmann that the handbooks virtually ignore Moses's role as the deliverer of the law. However, the ability to interrogate our assumptions about what is central and what is peripheral in a text is precisely the value of historical studies of reception. A stronger investigation of the significance of this difference may have illuminated the background against which eighteenth-century critical investigations proceeded. Alexander Geddes (1737–1802) was an English precursor to the higher criticism of the nineteenth century and was particularly interested in textual studies. He translated the Bible and provided rationales for his translations. Bultmann discusses both Geddes's approach to textual criticism and his understanding of the ethics of the Hebrew Bible. He does not, however, connect Geddes's ethical sensibility as a reader of the Bible to his anti-slavery activism. The essay on de Wette examines the impact of the philosophy of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Fries on his exegesis. The book closes with an essay on Herder's impact on Psalm criticism through de Wette, concluding that there was both openness and opposition to a literary approach to the Psalms and that Herder's conception of the psalms as odes is more important to biblical criticism than his specific historical theories.

The book's merits lie chiefly in the discernable erudition Bultmann brings to his task. He has a strong command of a wide range of primary sources and

is able to situate his arguments in relation to several different contemporary arguments. Unfortunately, Bultmann's writing skills do not rise to the level of his research skills. Often key ideas remain implicit, requiring the reader to guess at the motivation for an argument. Prolegomena sometimes overwhelms argument. For example, the treatment of the book's hero, Spalding, begins with the question of whether he wrote a theological classic. The essay works on the question, comes up with an equivocal answer, and drops Spalding for the rest of the book—two passing mentions aside. Poor organization makes this fascinating collection an often frustrating read.

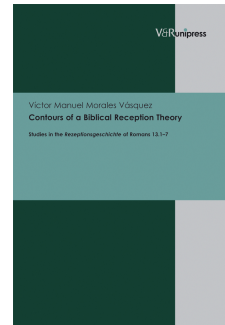
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*Contours of a Biblical Reception Theory: Studies in the Rezeptionsgeschichte of Romans 13.1–7,*  
 by Víctor Manuel Morales Vásquez

Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012 | 255 pages | ISBN: 978-3-89971-895-9 (hardcover) €45.00; ISBN: 978-3-86234-895-4 (e-book) €37.99

The volume is the published version of a doctoral thesis written at the University of Chester, under the supervision of Anthony Thiselton and Eric Christianson. As the book's title makes clear, the aim is to provide both a theoretical account of what might constitute a "biblical reception theory" and a sustained application of that theoretical framework in relation to a specific biblical text. As such, it attempts the same task as Rachel Nicholls's or Moisés Mayordomo's work on the Gospel of Matthew but with the welcome focus on Pauline literature. Romans 13 has been a rich vein for reception history scholars and this work builds on earlier, less obviously theoretically-informed studies by Werner Affeldt and Fritz Hermann Keienburg.

These aims are reflected in a two-part structure. Part 1 (17–80) covers ground that will familiar to anyone acquainted with the philosophical and theoretical background to the rise of reception-focused biblical hermeneutics. Chapter 1 (17–39) begins with Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hans Robert Jauss and provides an overview of their related but differentiated approaches





to reception history. Chapter 2 (41–63) considers the ways in which these theoretical resources have been deployed within contemporary biblical studies, with a focus on Brevard Childs, Ulrich Luz, Thiselton and Mayordomo-Marín. One of the weaknesses of this chapter lies in the nature of the selection. Childs's work is not directly the product of the insights of Gadamer and Jauss, but instead operates from a set of theological convictions about the nature of Scripture in relation to the church, interpretation and history. Luz and Mayordomo-Marín provide related approaches in which the relationship between reception-historical and historical-critical approaches to the biblical text is a dominant focus. The section on Thiselton really only offers a survey of the way that his commentary on 1 Corinthians works rather than a critical analysis of the philosophical and theological assumptions that determine the approach. Morales Vásquez notes that Thiselton's "use of reception theory remains essentially a history of exegesis" (55) or "a history of theological ideas," but in my view the critique lies underdeveloped. In overall terms, the survey of the use of reception theory within biblical studies is unhelpfully narrow. There is little or no consideration of other contributions to the field, such as Christopher Rowland, John Lyons, Christine Joynes, James Crossley, or on other approaches to reception-focused work on New Testament texts that broaden our understanding of what constitutes "reception" beyond the well-known trajectory of historical-exegetical-theological enquiry drawing largely on what Luz calls the "commentary tradition." Chapter 3 (66–80) provides Morales Vásquez's own construal of the appropriate contours for a "biblical reception theory." Such a theory takes seriously the historicity of all understanding, the role of readers in "discursive production" across a range of cultures and media, and the need to reconstruct the readers' horizon of expectations. It generates an exegetical approach that distinguishes between "early" and subsequent reception (helpfully qualifying Mayordomo-Marín's call for attention to "first reception") and is sensitive to the ways in which earlier forms of reception contribute to the "encyclopaedic competence" of subsequent readers. In addition, however, Morales Vásquez affirms the need for evaluative criteria in relation to instances of reception "sorting out legitimate prejudices from illegitimate ones in terms of *productivity*" (77). Interpretations are productive in so far as they provide new ways of opening up the *Sache* of the text in relation to the life-world of the reader.

Part 2 (83–225) moves to the case study of Romans 13:1–7. The study of the reception history of this text begins with an account of contemporary academic treatments of the text (chapter 4, 83–108) before moving on to con-

sider a hypothetical reconstruction of the early reception of the text (chapter 5, 109–57) and subsequent reception in the second to fourth and thirteenth centuries (chapters 6–7, 159–225). It is here that one notices the absence of deep-level and sustained critique of the earlier models of reception exegesis surveyed in part 1. The “complexity of our political life world” is investigated through consideration of “exegetical and theological commentaries and essays” by Herman Ridderbos, C. E. B. Cranfield, Ernst Käsemann, Wolfgang Schrage, Peter Stuhlmacher, Ulrich Wilckens, and James Dunn. Without direct knowledge of the interpretative horizons of these figures (Käsemann being the one who, of all the list, bears these most directly on his sleeve) it is still possible to see that we are safely within the boundaries of the historical-exegetical-theological concerns of the commentary tradition. Scholars whose work on the reception of Pauline texts in general and Romans 13 in particular broadens out to consider instances of reception that are not explicitly textual or theological are not discussed: for example, the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Neil Elliott. Chapter 4 seems to serve the relatively straightforward aim of demonstrating that post–World War Two scholarship, especially in Germany, was alert to the potentially catastrophic consequences of earlier discourses of reception. The scholarly agenda also dominates chapter 5, where a survey of hypothetical reconstructions of the horizon of the implied audience of Romans is offered along with discussion of generic features of the letter itself. This reconstruction facilitates the “productive comparison with the contemporary horizon of expectation and... horizon of expectation of other historically conditioned readers” (157) attempted in chapters 6 and 7 where the author treats the reception discourses of *1 Clement*, *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, and the writings of Irenaeus, Origen, and “Christian Gnosticism” in the first to third centuries, Chrysostom and Ambrosiaster in the fourth century, and Aquinas in the thirteenth century. No arguments are provided in support of these choices beyond the historical argument that they establish important instances of reception that become normative within the interpretative horizons of subsequent readers and problematic for New Testament scholarship after the war.

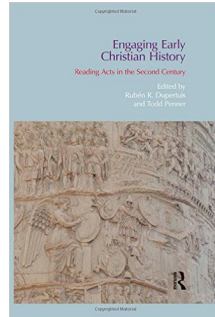
As in any study of this sort, there is much to be learned in the details of the argument and analysis. The discussions of contemporary scholarship and earlier stages of reception of Romans 13 cover the ground well. There are times when the overall argument being made about what kind of reception history work is appropriate for biblical hermeneutics emerges with clarity. Morales Vásquez seeks a method that “could represent an alternative to post-

structural reading practices, which seem to brush aside and ignore our indebtedness to the effects of history” (227) but which also “undermine objectivist positions” and move things “beyond discussions about the intention of the author and the autonomy of the text” (228). This is a task for which I have some sympathy, but I confess that I did not find Morales Vásquez’s proposals about what a “biblical reception theory” should look like to be as clear or as creative as I think necessary. The important comparative work—contrasting different historical interpretations of Paul’s *paranesis*—still remains captive to a limited perception of what constitutes an act of reception, and neglects to give adequate attention to a key question for reception critics: which reception do we choose to investigate and to what ends?

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*University of Divinity*

***Engaging Early Christian History: Reading Acts in the Second Century*, edited by Rubén R. Dupertuis and Todd Penner**

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This collection of articles on Acts in the context of second-century history and culture is an expertly edited, meticulously copy-edited and beautifully produced book. It consists of twelve well-written chapters which together make up a coherent whole—which, as anyone who has attempted to edit knows, is no easy task.

When beginning this review for *Relegere*, which emphasises reception history, I did puzzle slightly as to how to proceed. Combining the aims of the journal with the subtitle “Reading Acts in the Second Century” produced in my mind an almost unconscious expectation of the book as reflecting on how Acts was read in the second century. I’ll just dispel that expectation right here and now: the articles deal with “Reading Acts [as though it were written] in the Second Century,” with the exception of the last contribution, that of Claire Clivaz, to which I shall return. In the acknowledgements the editors emphasise that the point of this collection of articles was precisely not

what I had first assumed. They note that “conversations related to the second century might take place in more productive and inclusive ways if the point of composition of the book were considered to be a peripheral rather than central concern. What would it look like simply to read Acts in the second century? What might we learn both about Acts and also Christianity in the second century by doing so?” (ix).

The collection does indeed suspend arguments over dating, and instead relegates issues of dating to the assumptions from which the various arguments proceed. After an introductory reflection to the debates over and ideological issues at stake in the dating of Acts by Todd Penner, the articles proceed as follows—and I am following the careful order of the articles in the collection here. The first article analyses the historical results of an assumed dating in the second century: Milton Moreland’s article on the destruction of Jerusalem and Acts. The second article, Joseph B. Tyson’s contribution on Acts, apostolic authority and Marcion, I see as a bridge between the historical section and the following articles which concern themselves with the historical engagements which such a dating makes possible: David M. Reis’s contribution on optics, vision and Acts; David R. McCabe’s piece on the ascension as counter-imperial discourse; and John Moles’s article on the inductive and textually imperialising nature of the text (I personally found the title misleading). The next group is the largest, and concerns reading Acts alongside or against various other cultural productions of the time, be it the production of identities in contrast with Plutarch (Marianne Bjelland Kartzow); the construction of Paul’s Christian identity as group identity in the face of Pliny and Trajan (Christopher Mount); the concept of *parrësia* in Dio Chrysostom, Musonius Rufus, and Lucian (Rubén R. Dupertuis); the relation to Jews and empire in Acts and Justin Martyr (Andrew Gregory); or the narrative of Acts as a reaction to and negotiation of sophistic discourse within the Second Sophistic (Ryan Carhart). Finally, saving the best for last, is Claire Clivaz’s contribution, which treats the reception of Acts in second-century Alexandria. While this is the only strictly reception-oriented article of the collection, its implications are historical, not, however, in the same way as the first two articles. To get to this point, I need to engage with Todd Penner’s reflections on method, history, and desire in the opening article.

Beginning with the various investments that inform our choices of dating Acts in the first or the second century, Penner moves on to examine the first-century versus second-century divide and the assumptions of historicity and fiction that undergird these acts of dating. After describing the history

of scholarship on Acts as oscillating between the desire for stability and instability, he then asserts that dating the text is more than just determining its timeline; it concerns not only the writing of history or theology, but also our place in the larger scheme of things (6). Thus, we tend to use the first and second centuries less as time frames, and more as conceptual categories, with ideas of consistency, coherence, and other equally stable terms mapped onto the former, over against the plurality, compexity, and heterogeneity of the latter (6–7), enshrining one as canonical and stable, and the other as inventive and delightfully unstable. An important observation is that after granting the second century this lively and creative identity, it is then read back into the first century as being present in an embryonic form, the traces of which may be found in the canonical texts, thus stabilizing, as it were, instability.

On the background of this discussion, we then get the following statement: “The discussion in this volume aims to move beyond the usual divisions and derivatives thereof that arise within the binaries above, bringing to the forefront potentially new avenues of historical engagement as a result” (9).

Ambitious, indeed; bold, yes. Does the volume deliver? Perhaps. Initially I thought not, but after reading through Penner’s article again, I reconsidered, especially due to the wording in the quote above, which refers to historical engagement rather than “history.” Historical engagement seems less committing, more encompassing; less canon, more discourse. There seems to be a disciplinary angst about history in New Testament studies which certainly has not quietened down or been dispelled after the linguistic turn. The whole issue of dating may be seen as synecdochal to the questions of history and the relationship between the texts and reality. Only two articles in this collection deal with this issue—in my opinion—while the others stay within the comforts of the textual realm. And while all of these nine articles are well argued and conceptualised, the methodology simply does not excite me. It is either being argued that the agenda of Luke-Acts is similar to the agendas of Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Justin Martyr or dissimilar to that of Plutarch, imperial discourse, and Marcion. There is a predictability in this approach which makes the articles seem very similar, in spite of their diversity in content. The articles that stand out from this intertextual buffet are Moreland’s article on Jerusalem and Clivaz’s article on Alexandria.

Milton Moreland’s contribution, “Jerusalem destroyed: The setting of Acts,” rubs the narrative setting of Jerusalem in Acts against Aelia Capitolina and sets off sparks of thought. Moreland insists that Luke’s relationship to

the Judean heritage “needs to be better understood within a Roman imperial context in which Jerusalem was not, in fact, a Jewish city” (39). Although phrases like “narrative setting,” “Jerusalem,” “destruction of the temple,” are well known and have become blunted over time, the way Moreland presents them and argues his point seems to lend these phrases a fresh urgency. Add to this sentences like “Luke does provide us with a story that was (and still is) extremely influential in the way some Christians imagine their history” (18), an allusion which makes one long for an extra layer of the role of Acts in influencing the image of Jerusalem in the current Christian imagination.

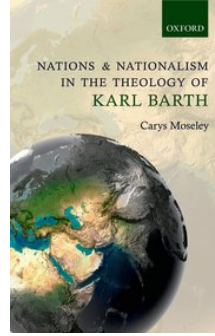
Claire Clivaz’s “Reading Luke-Acts in Second-Century Alexandria: From Clement to the Shadow of Apollos” makes you want to raise your arms and shout, “Yes!” Clivaz wants to consider the reception of Luke-Acts from an Alexandrian point of view with traces of the figure of Apollos the Alexandrian in Acts. This is not only due to the fact that the earliest manuscripts of Acts are mostly of Egyptian origin, but also due to the observation that Clement has some original insights that are worth examining. Clivaz shows how pervasive Irenaeus has been in shaping our thinking of Acts as singular truth over against other non-canonical acts and early Christian memories. She takes us through the manuscript evidence and traditions, and shows how certain lists have taken precedence over others to present a certain context for the text of Acts. She then proceeds by judiciously bringing forth possible receptions of Acts in the *Excerpts of Theodotus* and the *Gospel of Judas*, as well as the more explicit use by Clement, to uncover some of these voices. In fact, when I read Clivaz, I realised how “canonical” most of the other contributions were—in terms of early Christian literatures, that is.

All in all, I find that the volume as a whole has done what it set out to do: set me thinking about what history is and isn’t, can and cannot do, and startling me in the last pages by summoning forth the shadow of Apollos.

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## *Nations and Nationalism in the Theology of Karl Barth*, by Carys Moseley

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Beginning with the bold claim that nationhood and nationalism lie at the heart of Karl Barth's theology, Carys Moseley seeks to correct what she perceives to be a lamentable neglect of Barth's political thought among a particular strand of Barth's interpreters who have focused on "pure" dogmatics and who have "seriously downplayed" his political interest. Moseley contends that "the development of major theological topics in his work such as pneumatology, ecclesiology, and the state cannot be understood properly without fully taking into account the depth and even the obsessiveness of Barth's theological opposition to nationalism" (13). Attention to the political character of Barth's theology was spearheaded, not without controversy, by Friedrich Wilhelm Marquardt in his *Habilitation* thesis written at the University of Berlin in 1972. Marquardt's work, Moseley contends, has "forced theologians to recognize that Barth was very much a political and practical theologian even when conducting exegetical, historical, and dogmatic theology" (13).

On the basis of this recognition, Moseley traces the development of Barth's life-long opposition to the dogma that every nation must have its own state and that the nation is both the highest good and the source of ethics. The latter idea stems, of course, from the political thought of G. W. F. Hegel. Moseley explains that Barth's suspicion of nationalism is evident even in his student years during which he expressed unease about both the tendency toward nationalism and the anti-Semitism that he detected in German liberal theology. That early unease proved to be well-founded as the tumultuous years of the first half of the twentieth century unfolded. The danger of nationalism, in Barth's view, was that the nation itself, and its perceived interests, becomes the ultimate source for what passes as theology and ethics. This elevation of the nation is simply idolatrous.

While nationalism is, in Barth's view, seriously problematic, the idea of nationhood and the entity of the nation itself is not. Nations have their legitimate place, according to Barth, as cultural entities established by human

action under the grace and the judgement of God. Against both Friedrich Gogarten and Paul Althaus, Barth insisted that nations are not founded on the orders of creation and of nature. Nor are they founded upon any pneumatological ground. He resists an essentialist ontological view of nationhood. Nations are human constructions. They may become instruments of God's purposes, but they have no absolute rights over other nations and they cannot be the ultimate source of ethical norms.

A nation is a people-group often bound together by common language. The four linguistic people-groups that make up the Swiss confederation serve as a paradigm of nationhood for Barth. He regarded the co-existence of four nations within a single state as "a secular parable of the kingdom of God, analogous to the Christian church in its embrace of diverse nations and their languages" (1). The promotion of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence between peoples and nations, along with the neutrality of the Swiss confederation, were essential elements of Barth's regard for Switzerland as a parable of the Kingdom. Nationalism, by contrast, under which it is supposed that every nation must have its own state, was regarded by Barth as a principal cause of war.

The biblical basis claimed by Barth for this conception of nationhood was Acts 2, which tells of the coming together at Pentecost of nations living within the Roman state. While the Spirit creates unity and mutual understanding across the diverse people-groups, "the coming of the Spirit," Moseley explains, "does not authorise the extinction of national differences, symbolized as they are and perhaps to an extent constituted by linguistic and cultural differences; rather they are affirmed as morally neutral, and even cautiously accepted as vehicles of the proclamation of the Word of God" (200). A further important feature of Barth's exposition of Acts 2 is the challenge it mounts to the legacy of F. C. Baur in German biblical exegesis and Baur's denial of the historicity of the early chapters of Acts. Crucially for Barth, that denial led to the downplaying of the Jewish origins of the church.

The coming together of nations in Acts 2, along with the example of the Swiss confederation, provided support for Barth's distinction between the nation and the state, legitimised nationhood as a cultural entity, provided evidence of nations playing a part in the working out of God's purposes, and undergirded his insistence that the state has a responsibility to promote reconciliation between peoples. This responsibility became a crucial element of Barth's critique of the rising tide of anti-Semitism that he saw in Germany. Every state should recognise and uphold the existence of sev-



eral nations within its borders. While welcoming and approving this insight in Barth, Moseley nevertheless criticises Barth for what she perceives to be some failings in his campaign against German anti-Semitism. She laments, for instance, the absence of any reference to Israel or to the Jewish people in the Barmen Declaration, although she acknowledges that Barth sought “to make good this deficiency from the late 1930s onwards” (123). Moseley is critical too of Barth’s remaining in “a denomination which had become hopelessly compromised with Nazi ideology which was both anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist” (131). It would have been helpful at this point to have received some explanation from Moseley about why she assumes that leaving the denomination would have been the better option, rather than attempting, as Barth did, to fight the evil from within. While lamenting at several points Barth’s “failure” to be forthright enough in his opposition to anti-Semitism, Moseley nevertheless commends the doctrinal work Barth does in showing the extent to which any desire for Israel’s ruin is a denial of the covenant relationality with Israel established through Christ and brought to fulfilment in the incarnation. Anti-Semitism involves, quite clearly for Barth, a denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In drawing attention to these themes in Barth’s work, in identifying the consistent elements in his conception of nationhood as it was developed through his career, and in showing the degree to which his political concerns were integral to his dogmatic work, Moseley has opened new vistas into the vast landscape of Barth’s theology. She has also brought to light fresh conceptual resources for thinking through the competing claims of nations in the contemporary world. To be sure, a theological conception of nationhood such as Barth offers will not win universal assent; nor will the evils of nationalism be easily defeated. But Barth’s account of nationhood does provide a basis to challenge idolatrous regard for one’s own nation wherever it may be found, most especially among those who claim allegiance to the gospel of Jesus Christ on which Barth’s claims are based.

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