

THE GLASS

NUMBER 29

SPRING 2017

The Storm-Cloud of the Twenty-First Century: Biblical Apocalypse, Climate Change and Ian McEwan's <i>Solar</i> <i>Andrew Tate</i>	3
Apocalyptic, Crisis and the Everyday <i>Roger Pooley</i>	13
Redeeming the End in Contemporary Gothic Fictions <i>Simon Marsden</i>	21
Geoffrey Hill's Longing for the End of the Word <i>Tom Docherty</i>	28
Christian Names: Some Aspects of Literary Onomastics <i>Paul Cavill</i>	38
Reviews including:	44
Thomas M. Crisp, Steve L. Porter, & Gregg A. Ten Elshof (eds.), <i>Christian Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century: Prospects and Perils</i>	
Francesca Bugliani Knox and David Lonsdale (eds.), <i>Poetry and the Religious Imagination: The Power of the Word</i>	
Vernon White, <i>Purpose and Providence: Taking Soundings in Western Thought, Literature and Theology</i>	
Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700</i>	
Tamsin Spargo, <i>John Bunyan</i>	
Richard Hughes Gibson, <i>Forgiveness in Victorian Literature: Grammar, Narrative, and Community</i>	
Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (eds.), <i>The Poems of T.S. Eliot: The Annotated Text</i>	
Notes on Contributors	68
News and Notes	70

Published by the Christian Literary Studies Group, a Literary Society in association with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship. Editorial and subscriptions: *The Glass*, 10 Dene Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2AA.

CLSG
www.clsg.org
editor@clsg.org

© the contributors 2017
ISSN 0269-770X

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher. The views of the contributors do not necessarily reflect editorial stance. The CLSG holds personal details on computer for the purpose of mailing in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Editorial

It's a truism that in narrative endings promise to untie knots, solve mysteries and yield the meanings that may have hitherto eluded us. They may light up a preceding story and console us if we have felt sympathy for the vicissitudes of its characters or action. In this way the disciples who had marvelled and believed in Jesus, and who had then suffered profound shock and dismay at his end, discovered transcendent new hope when it became evident that his end was not as they had thought, that God had raised him to resurrection and glory, and that this was of cosmic significance.

Writing to Thessalonica, Paul picked up a question that had become prevalent: what was happening about Jesus' return as promised, the Day of the Lord? Why the delay? Yes it was coming, he told the Christians, and Jesus would be revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. His adversary, a shadowy man of sin working in secret for now, would be blown away, destroyed, by the breath of his mouth. The adversary's plan, to set himself up to be worshipped in the Jerusalem Temple, would seemingly provoke the delayed intervention of Jesus as God's agent of Judgement.

The letter evidences a transition between Jesus' warnings of cosmic disasters and false messiahs, and the Book of Revelation, which picks up and develops these themes, seeks to disclose what is secret, and to give hope to those of steadfast faith of the victory of God, the destruction of evil, and of the glory laid up. Thus in Christian eschatology there's not only the end of a dispensation but also Judgement. Judgement, that is, with a certain conclusiveness. Augustine describes in Book 22 of *The City of God*, at the end of his magnum opus, how it will be for those blessed with admittance to the heavenly City: It will be a Sabbath with no evening, with the peace, joy and rest of God. If we are now in the sixth epoch, or day, then we shall be in the seventh, and find our rest in God. Actually there will be an eighth day, as it were, beyond time, which lasts for ever. 'There we shall be still and see [face to face]; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise.... What is our end but to reach that Kingdom which has no end?'

Frank Kermode, not himself a believer, gave attention to such matters. 'The paradigms of apocalypse continue to lie under our ways of making sense of the world.' The Book of Revelation 'has had vast effects on social and political behaviour over many ages, and continues to do so.' 'In our time the novel is the central form of literary art', but tragedy may be thought of as the successor of apocalypse, in an endless world. 'Tragedy assumes the figurations of apocalypse, of death and judgement, heaven and hell; but the world goes forward in the hands of exhausted survivors.'

He brings out a punning trope of theology: that the imminent Parousia became in some way immanent; and this may indeed give useful direction to our researches and discourse about more recent writings. Yet Jesus had said much the same in his parables, for instance of the bridesmaids commended for acting in the present with due thought for what was to come. Sure, the advent of the tardy groom is in the story, but the point of the exemplum is located prior to that. When the imminence of the advent is far from clear they are motivated in the unfolding present by the idea of it. Signs of an end, of the End, come to every generation, to watchers, onlookers and to readers. Wisdom lies in reading the signs of the times.

The Storm-Cloud of the Twenty-First Century: Biblical Apocalypse, Climate Change and Ian McEwan's *Solar*

Andrew Tate

'A work of light is one that seeks light, and that, not for its own sake, but to light all men'— John Ruskin, Letter 63, *Fors Clavigera* (March 1876)¹

WORRYING ABOUT THE WEATHER IS A PECULIARLY BRITISH PASTIME. HOWEVER, IN a barely perceptible way, our meteorological small talk has mutated from phatic diversion into dialogue charged with apocalyptic presentiments. Unseasonable warmth might be a sign of malign, unnatural change; record rainfall – and floods that destroy households – are symptoms of a climate that has, we worry, been irrevocably altered. This insistent twenty-first-century anxiety is not, however, without precedent. In February 1884, John Ruskin – erstwhile defender of Turner and 'Modern Painters', historian of Venice and occasional prophet – gave a brace of lectures at the London Institute that were to be his final public statements. These unsettling talks, published as *The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, are an experimental fusion of epistolary reflections with meteorological observation and, typically rich with allusion to biblical texts including Matthew, Job, Joel, Revelation and Malachi, the lectures are replete with homiletic antagonism towards modernity. He re-names the so-called mutating 'storm-cloud' a 'plague-cloud' (*Works*, 34. 9). There is, he notes, no mention of such skies in the vast canon of his own reading – a diverse body of witnesses including Homer, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer, Milton and the Romantics, Scott, Wordsworth and Byron. Ruskin interpolates diary entries from the previous decade into the narrative; many of his days were spent at Brantwood, his Lake District home on the shores of Coniston since the early 1870s. The specific climatological observations are full of foreboding: on 22 June 1876, for example, he noted, 'Thunderstorm; pitch dark, with no *blackness*, – but deep, high, *filthiness* of lurid, yet not sublimely lurid, smoke-cloud; dense manufacturing mist' (*Works*, 34. 36-7). In a later entry he refers to 'Manchester's devil darkness' (*Works*, 34. 37). The lecture builds to a peroration in which Ruskin as preacher offers a Biblically damning indictment of modern 'blasphemy':

Blanched sun, – blighted grass, – blinded man. – If, in conclusion, you ask me for any conceivable cause or meaning of these things – I can tell you none, according to your modern beliefs; but I can tell you what meaning it would have borne to the men of old time [. . .] All Greek, all Christian, all Jewish prophecy insists on the same truth through a thousand myths; but of all the chief, to former thought, was the fable of the Jewish warrior and prophet, for whom the sun hasted not to go down, with which I leave you to compare at leisure the physical result of your own wars and prophecies, as declared by your own elect journal not fourteen days ago, – that the Empire of England, on which formerly the sun never set, has become one on which he never rises. (*Works*, 34. 40-41)

¹The Library Edition of *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols., George Allen, 1903-1912, xxviii, pp. 540-1. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically as volume and page number.

THE GLASS

In the 1880s, Ruskin's lectures, given after years in which he had experienced acute mental distress and shortly before his silent final decade, were not well received. However, to re-read them in 2017 might be both salutary and troubling. The early twenty-first century seems to thrive on apocalyptic visions of imminent catastrophe. Indeed, contemporary writers have become extraordinarily skilled at imagining the end of the world. Literary and cinematic visions of what Patrick Parrinder once named the 'ruined' future have become such a defining element of contemporary narrative that they are, at their worst, something of a cliché, an odd form of entertainment that might actually nullify all thoughts of potential disaster instead of sharpening a sense that action is needed.² The world ends – or almost ends – again and again in an overabundance of plagues, floods, alien invasions, neo-fascist dictatorships and, with alarming regularity, zombies. These horrendous scenarios seem to suggest a somewhat dark truth about the state of humanity. 'The truth of late-modernity,' notes one critic, 'is that we love the apocalypse. We truly love it.'³

The principal context for this canon of catastrophe is the chief current threat to life on earth: what Peter Boxall names 'the ongoing, unassailable, slow motion destruction of the planet heralded by climate change'.⁴ 'The Earth is now warmer than it has been for over 90 per cent of its 4.6 billion year history,' warns geophysicist Bill McGuire, 'and by the end of the twenty-first century our planet may see higher temperatures than at any time for the last 150,000 years'.⁵ The potential consequences of anthropogenic climate change are terrifying: floods that might destroy cities; displacement of vast numbers of people; destruction of crops followed by famine; political destabilisation and the end of economic security. This ominous prospect galvanises many into activism whilst others sink into despair and an alarmingly vast number, including some political leaders and industrialists, perpetuate scepticism about humanity's impact on the planet.

A deep theological critique of environmental damage is overdue but progress is being made. 'Global warming is the earth's judgment on the global market empire, and on the heedless consumption it fosters,' claims Michael Northcott, for example.⁶ However, religions that emphasise an apocalyptic teleology are frequently regarded as hostile to justice. More specifically, Christianity is viewed as particularly culpable in perpetuating environmental damage because church teaching emphasises the dominion of human beings over the planet. Peter Scott quotes Lynn White's enormously influential claim, made 50 years ago, that '[w]e shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man'. This 'contribution to the disgracing and subsequent mastery of nature', perpetuated by the creation story of Genesis 1, is part of a bigger, more complex story of theological understandings of the relationship

² Patrick Parrinder, 'The Ruined Futures of British Science Fiction', in *On Modern British Fiction*, ed. Zachary Leader, OUP, 2002, pp. 209-33. My book, *Apocalyptic Fiction*, Bloomsbury, 2017, explores a variety of twenty-first-century iterations of these 'ruined' futures.

³ Michael Titlestad, 'The Logic of the Apocalypse: A Clerical Rejoinder', *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies*, 14.1 (2013), pp. 93-110 (p. 104).

⁴ Peter Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, [Kindle Edition], p. 216.

⁵ Bill McGuire, *A Guide to the End of the World: Everything You Never Wanted to Know*, OUP, pp. 36-7.

⁶ Michael Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*, Darton, 2007, p. 7.

between human beings and ecology.⁷ There is also fairly recent evidence that some Christian communities are particularly sceptical about the reasons for climate change. For example, the results of a 2008 survey conducted in the United States by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press about the occurrence and causes of global warming, analysed by its forum on Religion and Public Life, indicated that only 34% of white Evangelical Protestants believe that climate change is a result of human activity compared with 47% of the population as a whole.⁸

One cultural response to the growing realisation that this incipient environmental disaster cannot simply be wished away is a developing body of climate change fiction or 'Cli-fi'. This emerging canon includes Kim Stanley Robinson's 'Science in the Capital' trilogy (2004-7) and more obliquely, Michel Faber's lyrical, estranging *The Book of Strange New Things* (2014), which imagines an unfolding disaster on earth from the perspective of a Christian missionary to another planet.⁹

This article focuses on Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2010), a grotesquely funny novel of ideas; not just an attempt at 'Cli-fi' by an already highly distinguished author, but, more daringly, a climate change comedy, if such a thing is possible. McEwan, one time winner and six-time nominee of the Booker Prize, is the most eminent British writer to publish a novel that focuses so directly on the challenges of climate change. The tripartite narrative tracks a decade in the chaotic life of Michael Beard, a Nobel Prize winning physicist who has long abandoned a serious commitment to his discipline or any sense of ethical responsibility towards other human beings. The erstwhile genius, one who is sufficiently self-aware 'to concede that he never quite got the hang of brotherly feeling', enjoys the pleasures of fame and insouciantly exploits all around him, including ex-wives, current lovers and idealistic young researchers.¹⁰ Beard's opportunism allows him to exploit a breakthrough that might both rescue the planet from the deleterious impact of humanity on the environment and make him a vast sum of money. This essay will address the position of McEwan's satire in the wider context of twenty-first-century fictions of catastrophe. How does a novel described by one critic as 'thoroughly secular' connect with the Biblical form of apocalypse that informed Ruskin's troubled reflections on the changing clouds?¹¹ What theological hope, if any, can ostensibly irreligious climate change fiction offer?

⁷ Peter Scott, *A Political Theology of Nature*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 8. Scott is quoting Lynn White, 'The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis', *Science* 155 (1967), pp. 1203-7.

⁸ 'Religious Groups' Views of Global Warming', Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life, 16 April 2009, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/04/16/religious-groups-views-on-global-warming/>, accessed 18 November 2015. For further analysis of the survey see Leo Hickman, 'Just what is it with evangelical Christians and global warming?', *The Guardian*, 17 April 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2009/apr/17/climate-change-religion>, accessed 18 November 2015.

⁹ The most detailed and convincing account of this diverse genre so far is Adam Trexler's *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, University of Virginia Press, 2015. Trexler names Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971) as the first novel to engage directly with greenhouse gas emissions, more than a decade before 'Cli-fi' became a wider publishing phenomenon, p. 8.

¹⁰ Ian McEwan, *Solar*, Vintage, 2011, p. 193. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

¹¹ Greg Garrard, 'Solar: Apocalypse Not', in *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Sebastian Groes, second edition, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 123-136 (p. 133).

I.

The Christian eschaton, described by Paul Fiddes as ‘the final advent of the Lord of the cosmos, the last judgement, heaven and hell’ is, *pace* contemporary despair, one that moves from darkness and destruction into the hope of new creation.¹² The popular understanding of apocalypse as spectacular, violent, global cataclysm has displaced the primary signification of *apocalypsis* as revelation, the uncovering of what was previously hidden. Indeed, the Revelation of St John, the last book of the Christian scriptures, begins with this Greek term ‘suggesting a disclosure or unveiling’.¹³ The legacies of this shaping narrative are far from straightforward. For Boxall, the mood of contemporary literature signifies the ‘emergence of a new kind of apocalyptic fear, the sense in the culture not only that we cannot envisage the future clearly, but that there might in fact be no future for us at all’.¹⁴ However, there are also ‘rumours of glory’, to borrow the title of an old Bruce Cockburn song, even in a number of twenty-first-century fictions: Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006), set in a perpetually gloomy ruined world ‘[l]ike the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world’, is bleak and heart-breaking.¹⁵ However the austere story of a nameless father and son’s walk across a charred, denatured American landscape in search of the coast is also informed by a quiet sense of messianic hope: the father, for example, ‘knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke’ (*The Road*, p. 3).¹⁶ The novel has also been described by George Monbiot, the influential Green activist, as ‘the most important environmental book ever written.’¹⁷ This is a curious piece of hyperbole as the novel does not offer any explanation of the causes of the world’s desolate state. However, since McCarthy represents human beings at their most rapacious and destructive – the travellers encounter horrific scenes of cannibalism during their desperate pilgrimage – the novel is certainly not sanguine about our innate goodness. It also ends with a prelapsarian vision of a harmonious, inexplicably beautiful world before ruin, one that cannot be restored, at least not by wishful thinking. Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003-13), a kind of satirical re-writing of the Prometheus myth via a riot of other intertexts including the book of

¹² Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature*, Blackwell, 2000, p. 6.

¹³ Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*, SCM Press, 2010, p. 37.

¹⁴ Boxall, p. 216.

¹⁵ ‘Rumours of Glory’ is a song on Cockburn’s *Humans* (1980). Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, Picador, 2007, p. 1. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

¹⁶ The novel has attracted a diverse range of theological interpretations. See, for example, Hannah Stark, “‘All These Things He Saw and Did Not See’: Witnessing the End of the World in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*”, *Critical Survey*, 25.2 (2013), 71-84; Stefan Skrimshire, “‘There is no God and we are his prophets’: Deconstructing Redemption in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*”, *Journal for Cultural Research*, 15.1 (2011), 1-14; Thomas A. Carlson, ‘With the World at Heart: Reading Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* with Augustine and Heidegger’, *Religion & Literature*, 39.3 (2007), 47-71; Shelly L. Rambo, “Beyond Redemption?: Reading Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* after the End of the World,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 41.2 (2008), 99-120; D. Marcel DeCoste, “‘A Thing That Even Death Cannot Undo’: The Operation of the Theological Virtues in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*”, *Religion and Literature*, 44.2 (2012), 67-91; Allen Josephs, ‘The Quest for God in *The Road*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*, ed. Steven Frye, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 133-145.

¹⁷ George Monbiot, ‘Civilization Ends With A Shut Down of Human Concern. Are We There Already?’ 30 October 2007, *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/oct/30/comment.books>, accessed 27 February 2016.

THE GLASS

Genesis and the writing of Jonathan Swift, William Blake and H.G. Wells as well as a variety of dystopian narratives, is similarly pessimistic about humanity's ability to rise above corrupt desires but it also demonstrates a rich engagement with scriptural ideas of faith, hope and love. Both McCarthy and Atwood offer powerful narratives of creation ruined – whether by human hand or some cosmic accident – and remind their readers that the mysterious beauty of the planet should not simply be taken for granted.

II.

How does McEwan's novel connect with this contemporary turn to the transcendent? The author is, after all, an avowed and articulate non-believer – indeed my colleague Arthur Bradley and I included him alongside Martin Amis, Philip Pullman and Salman Rushdie in our study of *The New Atheist Novel* (2010) – who is committed to a rationalist, scrupulously non-transcendent worldview.¹⁸ However, despite McEwan's commitments to principled non-belief, Greg Garrard's description of *Solar* as a 'thoroughly secular novel' and 'above all, not apocalyptic' strike me as wide of the mark for a number of reasons.¹⁹ This claim has more than one valence and might make a Christian reader speculate that, as well as diminishing the prospect of global catastrophe via its comic plot, the novel also neuters the possibility of revelation, of the veiled truth being brought out into the light. Is the primary meaning of apocalypse also evaded? In a number of senses, *Solar* belongs to a subgenre of end-of-the-world fictions that might best be termed pre-apocalyptic: the world that it evokes, ostensibly our own, stands on the brink of irreversible ecological ruin; its protagonist knows that radical change is needed if such a catastrophe is to be averted but has little faith in the possibility of such a moral conversion.²⁰ Beard and his contemporaries are on the threshold of a revelation but seem keener on short-term pleasures rather than the inconvenience of reality.

McEwan's fiction frequently relies on the plot of a middle-aged, middle-class man at a moment of crisis. McEwan's protagonists are often successful professional men whose rational, enlightened worldviews are radically tested by (sometimes literally) violent encounters with disturbingly irrational adversaries. In *Enduring Love* (1997), for example, Jed Parry, a devout individual who suffers from a rare psychiatric disorder, obsessively pursues Joe Rose, a successful writer of popular science. Similarly, in McEwan's circadian novel, *Saturday* (2005), Henry Perowne, a distinguished neurosurgeon, is pursued by a violent man. Baxter's aggressive behaviour, it is revealed, is caused by Huntingdon's disease. These confrontations display McEwan's fascination with scientific materialism and a certain clumsily allegorical mode: the liberal, progressive conscience finds itself in continual opposition to antagonistic, regressive forces that are not just wrong-headed but literally pathological. Michael Beard belongs to this trope of masculinity in crisis but instead of finding some vicious *doppelgänger*, Beard's own adversary is himself: he is clever enough to have been awarded a Nobel Prize as a young man but not smart enough to keep himself in good physical or moral health. McEwan's protagonist is an opportunist who is

¹⁸ Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate, *The New Atheist Novel: Philosophy, Fiction and Polemic After 9/11*, Continuum, 2010, p. 16 ff.

¹⁹ Garrard, pp. 133, 135.

²⁰ I discuss the phenomenon of fiction set in the threshold space before an anticipated global disaster in *Apocalyptic Fiction*, 2017, pp. 8-11.

THE GLASS

not guilty of having a single conviction and this is represented as both blessing and curse. The novel reveals Beard's character in a variety of set-pieces involving public shame: these moments include, for example, a misunderstanding about the rightful ownership of a packet of salt and vinegar crisps on a train; a brilliant public lecture on the need to make a radical but self-interested rather than virtue-based change in the public understanding of climate change that is followed by an episode of extravagant vomiting backstage; and, perhaps most distinctively, a comic adventure in the Arctic alongside artists and scientists in which he encounters certain truths about humanity and, at one moment, fears that he has lost his penis to frostbite.

Beard is a serial adulterer and a liar. He has no interest in the scientific work of the institute that he notionally heads until the bizarre accidental death of his young colleague, Tom Aldous (who was also having an affair with Beard's fifth wife). He frames another of his love rivals for murder and steals the ground-breaking research of Aldous, whose ideas about artificial photosynthesis he had arrogantly dismissed. Beard is the scientist as anti-hero: he is not just flawed but a cynical chancer ready to abuse the trust and decency of anybody unfortunate enough to come into his orbit. His increasing weight and failure to deal with health crises – including an ominous lesion on his wrist – are slightly crude symbols of humanity's failure to attend to the causes of incipient climate disaster. He might be a comic figure, a kind of academic Homer Simpson with a Nobel Prize, but Beard's compulsive appetites – for junk food as well as illicit sex – perpetuate a near tragic status. He is a fallen man, though McEwan's decision to make him 'part of that class of men – vaguely unprepossessing, often bald, short, fat, clever – who were unaccountably attractive to certain beautiful women' is a somewhat clichéd version of masculinity in crisis (*Solar*, p. 3). *Solar* is a warning but it is also an exploration of the aesthetic difficulties of engaging with ethical imperatives, especially an ethics that is not grounded in transcendent faith. The novel is as clear as its cynical anti-hero that virtue will not be enough to save human beings or the planet that we seem so determined to destroy.

Jacqueline A. Kellish reads Beard's 'unwillingness to sacrifice convenience, live moderately or to forego his immediate desires in favor of long-term wellness' as a representation of the 'modern human condition writ large'.²¹ Similarly, in his mildly disappointed eco-critical appraisal of *Solar*, Garrard describes the novel as 'a comic allegory of the destructive consequences of selfishness'.²² This debt to a much older – and now deeply unfashionable – form is also recognised by Adam Trexler who describes aspects of the novel variously as 'evolutionary' and 'scientific' allegory.²³ John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) is such a significant point of reference in English fiction to have become a condition of possibility for many subgenres of the novel, including contemporary comic realism. Michael Beard may seem to be an unlikely avatar of Bunyan's Christian but *Solar* does, against the grain of its apparent rationalism, suggest a similarly bleak view of humanity's ability to escape its own capacity for self-destruction by sheer force of will. Given McEwan's candid critique of religious practice in his non-fiction, it is not a surprise that any theological implications of the novel might be missed or denied.

²¹ Jacqueline A. Kellish, "'No Laughable Thing under the Sun": Satire, Realism, and the Crisis of Climate Change in Ian McEwan's *Solar*', *Aesthetics of the Anthropocene*, <http://sites.fhi.duke.edu/anthropocene/comedy-and-climate-crisis/>, p. 9.

²² Garrard, p. 124.

²³ Trexler, p. 54, p. 46.

THE GLASS

Certainly, Beard – in an echo of his creator’s essay ‘End of the World Blues’ (2007) – is profoundly distrustful of apocalyptic thought. As the narrative begins, Beard is ‘not wholly sceptical about climate change’ but neither is he in any way exercised about its likely implications. His scepticism about apocalyptic culture appears impishly self-referential on McEwan’s behalf:

And he was unimpressed by some of the wild commentary that suggested the world was in ‘peril’, that humankind was drifting towards calamity, when coastal cities would disappear under the waves, crops fail, and hundreds of millions of refugees surge from one country, one continent, to another, driven by drought, floods, famine, tempests, unceasing wars for diminishing resources. There was an Old Testament ring to the forewarnings, an air of plague-of-boils and deluge-of-frogs, that suggested a deep and constant inclination, enacted over the centuries, to believe that one was always living at the end of days, that one’s own demise was urgently bound up with the end of the world, and therefore made more sense, or was just a little less irrelevant. The end of the world was never pitched in the present, where it could be seen for the fantasy it was, but just around the corner, and when it did not happen, a new issue, a new date would soon emerge (*Solar*, p. 16).

The millennial beginning of the novel connects with the narrative’s scepticism about apocalyptic teleology. The world has not ended but remains as full of trouble and sorrow as ever. Climate change fear, for the mild sceptic, is ‘yet another beast’ that has been ‘conjured’ by ‘the apocalyptic tendency’ in the ‘absence of any other overwhelming concern’ (*Solar*, p. 16). His grand and rational objections to the varieties of popular catastrophism that periodically emerge are undercut by the fact that he is ‘always on the lookout for an official role with a stipend attached’ (*Solar*, p. 16). In some ways, despite its author’s ecological commitments, the novel cannot quite transcend Beard’s private complacency. However, if we concur with Paul Fiddes’ claim that ‘eschatology [is] the basic mood’ not just of theology but also of ‘literary creation’, *Solar* might be read rather differently.²⁴ Beard’s failure to wake up to his own destructive behaviour is not merely a nihilist’s cry of despair but a warning to the reader. In Garrard’s terms, the scientific ingenuity of Beard’s project to produce artificial photosynthesis – based on plans that he stole from his dead protégé – ‘betrays’ the author’s ‘residual Enlightenment optimism’.²⁵ This in itself is a kind of displaced apocalyptic faith.

McEwan creates a fiction of an amoral man in a world on the brink but he is a writer with a strong sense of ethical commitment. The novel’s episode in the Arctic is inspired by McEwan’s own trip north with Cape Farewell, an organisation dedicated to raising consciousness of climate change via the work of artists, novelists and thinkers. McEwan wrote an essay about his experience called ‘A Boot Room in the Frozen North’ in which he reflects on the difficulties of transcending selfishness. However, his solution is one rooted in generosity:

We must not be too hard on ourselves. If you were banished to another galaxy tomorrow, you would soon be fatally homesick for your brothers and sisters and all their flaws: somewhat co-operative, somewhat selfish, and very funny. But we will not rescue the earth from our own depredations until we understand ourselves a little more, even if we accept that we can never really change our natures.²⁶

²⁴ Fiddes, p. 6.

²⁵ Garrard, p. 125.

²⁶ Ian McEwan, ‘A Boot Room in the Frozen North’ (2005), *Cape Farewell*, <http://www>.

Another narrative complication undercuts the ostensible secularism of *Solar*. Its single epigraph is taken from John Updike's *Rabbit is Rich* (1981): 'It gives him great pleasure, makes Rabbit feel rich, to contemplate the world's wasting, to know the earth is mortal too'. *Solar* might then, among other things, be read as an atheist's homage to one of the twentieth century's great theological writers. Updike – who died a year before *Solar* was published – was deeply indebted to the austere theologies of Karl Barth and Søren Kierkegaard and the *Rabbit* trilogy is, in part, a meditation on the presence of grace in an absurd world; Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom is, like Beard after him, unreliable and driven by appetites but he also encounters the gratuity of God's forgiveness. Updike wrote with masterful wit and sympathy of middle-class, middle-aged men in crisis. The *New York Times* review of Updike's novel read Rabbit as an allegory of nation: 'Inconveniently, Harry is also America, going down the rabbit hole.'²⁷ In a stringent review of *Solar*, Leo Robson noted that 'McEwan is unable to adapt Updike's example to his customary purposes. Updike is prissy, sunny and theological where he is pragmatic, apprehensive and secular'.²⁸ If McEwan is sceptical of all apocalyptic presentiments – Christian, political or scientific – this is a novel that tries, and perhaps fails, to come to terms with the finitude of human life. McEwan's novel is neither a sermon against technology nor a misanthropic counsel of despair about the human capacity for self-destruction. Although the novel constantly questions the validity of cultural responses to global problems, it ultimately offers itself as a kind of quasi-religious alternative to the reductive qualities of pure scientific rationalism. As Trexler notes: 'Scientific realism is too abstract to deal with such human minutiae, necessitating the novel. In short, science holds reality, while art stands above it'.²⁹

The novel ends with predictable disaster when Michael's various deceptions – romantic, scientific, commercial, legal – with tragi-comic inevitability, are discovered. As he contemplates escape, once again bingeing in an American diner, the scientist *manqué* is seen by his young daughter who rushes toward him:

As Beard rose to greet her, he felt in his heart an unfamiliar, swelling sensation, but he doubted as he opened his arms to her that anyone would ever believe him now if he tried to pass it off as love (*Solar*, p. 278).

This ambiguous ending, in which it is not absolutely clear whether the protagonist is experiencing a rush of emotion or an incipient cardiac episode also suggests the possibility of messianic change. This might be a realist's parody of conversion: *pace* John Wesley, however, Beard's heart is not 'strangely warmed'.³⁰ However, the rogue scientist's reluctant, unanticipated love for the child that he did not want is a further allegorical move. She will inherit the planet that Michael and his passive, greedy, incompetent generation leave behind.

capefarewell.com/explore/215-a-boot-room-in-the-frozen-north.html, accessed 4 November 2016.

²⁷ John Leonard, Review of *Rabbit is Rich*, *New York Times*, 22 September 1981, <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/09/22/books/updike-rabbitrich.html>, accessed 3 November 2016.

²⁸ Leo Robson, 'Total Eclipse' (review of Ian McEwan, *Solar*), *New Statesman*, 22 March 2010, pp. 52-53.

²⁹ Trexler, p. 54.

³⁰ *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, 4 vols. Dent, 1906, I, 102. This famous description by Wesley is also quoted by John Wolffe in *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945*, Routledge, Paul, 1994, pp.20-21.

III.

Solar is a novel that points beyond the world of mundane human activity but it also suggests that all life is interconnected. Tom Aldous' theory of artificial photosynthesis, exploited by his cynical boss for profit, is a reminder that the earth is utterly dependent on its relationship with the sun. Michael Beard is the most important astral body in his own imagined universe but this self-deception, as he must know, cannot finally surpass the laws of physics. More than a century before McEwan's novel, Ruskin, committed to a theistic worldview, similarly reflected on the primacy of the sun in science and culture:

the discovery by modern science that all mortal strength is from the Sun, while it has thrown foolish persons into atheism, is, to wise ones, the most precious testimony to their faith yet given by physical nature; for it gives us the arithmetical and measurable assurance that men vitally active are living sunshine (*Works*, 28. 541).³¹

It would be difficult to describe Beard as 'living sunshine' but *Solar*, like Ruskin, is deeply troubled by the consequences of human disregard for landscape, community and futurity. The theologian Richard Bauckham has reflected on the 'unforeseen and unwanted effects' of the 'western project of scientific-technological domination of nature [. . .] dedicated to the unlimited extension of human power over nature'. Climate change is the most alarming consequence of the conquest of nature. Paraphrasing George Monbiot, Bauckham notes that '[t]he brief historical interlude between ecological constraint and ecological catastrophe is very nearly over. From a Christian point of view what is obviously at stake here is the proper relationship between humans and the rest of God's creation'.³² This last theological assertion is one that Ruskin would certainly have recognised. *Solar* may seem a very long way from Ruskin's apocalyptic vision given its debt to evolutionary biology and scepticism about the human capacity for selfless action. It is, however, a novel written in the shadow of Ruskin's lamented storm-cloud in which the sun is 'blanched' and humanity is 'blinded'. Ruskin did not leave his reader without hope; the 'storm-cloud' lectures may suggest a despondent, tortured mind – and we have good evidence that this was the case – but they are also the work of a teacher and one who believed that change was possible:

What is best to be done, do you ask me? The answer is plain. Whether you can affect the signs of the sky or not, you can the signs of the times. Whether you can bring the sun back or not, you can assuredly bring back your own cheerfulness, and your own honesty. You may not be able to say to the winds, 'Peace; be still,' but you can cease from the insolence of your own lips, and the troubling of your own passions [. . .] But, the paths of rectitude and piety once regained, who shall say that the promise of old time would not be found to hold for us also? — 'Bring ye all the tithes into my storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord God, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' (*Works*, 34. 41)

³¹ For a discussion of this passage and the significance of solar imagery in aspects of Ruskin's writing see Francis O'Gorman, *Late Ruskin: New Contexts*, Ashgate, 2001, p. 111.

³² Richard Bauckham, *Living With Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology*, Baylor University Press, 2011, pp. 1-2.

THE GLASS

Alastair McIntosh, an ecological activist and academic whose work is infused with a strong sense of the spiritual roots of climate crisis, reminds us that apocalyptic discourse, if worthy of the name, 'implies a transformation, perhaps in consciousness, by which an existing corrupt socio-ecological order is turned upside-down by the astonishing irruption of new hope'.³³ The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre argues that ethical living is only thinkable with what he calls 'conceptions of a possible shared future'.³⁴ *Solar* is a reminder that if we are to participate in a 'shared future', in which the sun shines, a radical change of heart and mind is needed now.

³³ Alastair McIntosh, 'Foreword', in *Future Ethics: Climate Change and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, Continuum, 2010, vii-xi (p. ix).

³⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 250.

Apocalyptic, Crisis and the Everyday

Roger Pooley

EVERY SO OFTEN A 'DISASTER OF BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS' STRIKES, ACCORDING TO THE news media: by which is normally meant something that reminds us of Noah's flood or the end of the earth in Revelation, though it's normally more localised than that. Unless the threat of the icecaps melting or a nuclear holocaust is being invoked, we have to mark it down as one more example of news hyperbole. However, after recent elections in the USA, someone posted a photo of a billboard from outside a bookshop (allegedly): 'Post-apocalyptic Fiction has now been moved to Current Affairs.' Is Revelation now the Biblical book for our times?

Speaking anecdotally, I've heard from people that they would be interested in coming to church if only we talked about the Book of Revelation. Only once did one of them actually come, when the Lectionary had given me one of the early chapters on the seven churches to preach on – and he sat in the gallery, away from the rest of the congregation, and left before the end. I'd clearly failed – or not got to the exciting bits. However, it's that image, of a marginal, or marginalised interest in the last book of the Bible, that stays with me – not really part of mainstream devotion or theology, except for Bible studies on the seven churches and reading Chapter 21 at funeral services.

It may be that contemporary 'mainstream' Christian thinking regards the apocalypse, or at least any concern with it that involves precise calculation of when it will happen (usually quite soon), as a fringe, even lunatic fringe activity, and it's arguable that this extends to much evangelical proclamation now, in a way that it used not to. That could be due to suspicion of its association with the American Right (via the 'Left Behind' series of novels), or a changing approach to the Christian proclamation of salvation and rescue, and in particular of what will happen if the hearer refuses the offer of forgiveness in the Gospel. It could be due to the events of April 1993, when David Koresh and his fellow members of the Branch Davidian sect in Waco, Texas, died in a stand-off with the FBI, convinced that their leader was the seventh angel of Revelation who would usher in the end time.¹ Go into most non-academic Christian bookshops (at least, the ones in my area) and you will think that the most pressing issue on this topic is the precise order of the last things – does the rapture come before or after the great tribulation? But aside from the eccentric or hobbyist or even obsessive interest in Revelation, which might be characterised as a fascination with the marginal in Christianity, as much a distraction from the kingdom as, say, the minutiae of canon law, there is a loftier criticism, that apocalyptic has a belated, marginal or apocryphal status in the Bible, that it represents a decadence compared to the gospels and the Psalms, for example. Although the Eastern Orthodox Church regards some of the apocalyptic texts in the West's apocrypha as canonical, they do not read Revelation as part of their liturgy.² It has even dropped off the contents of the

¹ There is an interesting account and analysis of this in Christopher Keep, 'An Absolute Acceleration: Apocalypticism and the War Machines of Waco', in *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, ed. Richard Dellamora, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995, pp. 262-273.

² Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation: The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, Blackwell, 2004, p. 15.

magazine of the Jehovah's Witnesses we get delivered each month. Or, as Nick Page puts it in his appealing account of a personal journey to Patmos, *Revelation Road*, 'The Apocalypse, to put it bluntly, was a nutter-magnet.'³

From quite another angle, the German line of form-critical, soi-disant 'scientific' analysis of the New Testament, comes Ernst Käsemann, former Professor of New Testament at Tübingen who, in two lectures given in the early 1960s, pronounced that 'Apocalyptic was the mother of Christian theology.'⁴ Behind that statement is not just a rigorous attempt to unpack the historical layers within the gospel narratives, in order to see what drove the proclamation of the earliest church, but a sensitivity to the post-war situation of the church in Germany. My old friend and collaborator Philip Seddon, who was a pupil of Käsemann in the early 1970s, saw this affirmation as of a piece with his central message that 'Jesus is Lord' in the disastrous aftermath of a totalitarian personality cult. 'Jesus is Lord' is not just the earliest Christian formulation of faith, but a necessary antithesis to the mistake of a German church that had, in large part, fallen for Hitler (Käsemann himself had been a member of the Confessing Church, like Bonhoeffer, and had been imprisoned by the Nazis in the 1930s). In a similar vein, Tom Wright argues that apocalyptic was doing the same job for Käsemann as 'Gnosticism' did for Rudolf Bultmann, who had been his doctoral advisor, providing a 'convincing religio-historical matrix within which Paul's thought developed'. The difference was that he had found it 'grossly inadequate in enabling the church to be the church at a time of crisis (why oppose the Nazis when what matters is the authenticity of your own personal faith?)'⁵

Whatever the motives behind Käsemann's shift, it is clear that this puts eschatology back at the centre of early Christian theology. It sets it against the prophetic legalism of John the Baptist as well as against a rarefied, usually Gnostic, 'spirituality' that escapes confrontation with the religion of the Roman Empire and its collaborators. As he summarises it:

Faith before Easter appears as essentially personal, as the hearing of the Word and as discipleship, whereas after Easter it appears primarily as the appropriation of 'acts of salvation' such as the Cross, the Resurrection, forgiveness, New Covenant etc., and presupposes a developed eschatology, Christology and ecclesiology.⁶

For Käsemann, then, apocalyptic is foundational and mainstream for very early Christianity at least. It's not confined to the last book of the Bible: it's part of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom in the gospels, as well as Paul's in the letters. This led me to wonder, if that is the case, whether the association of apocalyptic with special historical moments of crisis is altogether just, though the idea of 'Everyday Apocalypse', which was my working title for this paper for a while, is probably too paradoxical if not positively bathetic. David Hellholm has argued that an apocalypse, by definition, is 'intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority'.⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins's book *Crisis and*

³ Nick Page, *Revelation Road: One man's journey to the heart of the apocalypse – and back again*, Hodder and Stoughton, 2014, p. 7.

⁴ Ernst Käsemann, trans. W.J. Montague, *New Testament Questions of Today*, SCM Press, 1969, p. 102.

⁵ N.T. Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters*, SPCK, 2015, p. 146.

⁶ Käsemann, p. 120.

⁷ Quoted by John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic*

THE GLASS

Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse is probably the most influential recent discussion of such an identification, but she is sceptical of the role played by identifiable, precise historical events. Without naming sources, she suggests that the notion of Revelation as triggered by the persecution of Emperor Domitian is less plausible than a whole series of perceived crises – conflict with Jews who had not accepted Jesus, social tensions over different degrees of wealth in the Christian communities of Asia Minor, as well as with the Roman Empire, politically as well as economically. She concludes that:

A new set of expectations had arisen as a result of faith in Jesus as the Messiah and of belief that the kingdom of God and Christ has been established. It was the tension between John's vision of the kingdom of God and his environment that moved him to write his Apocalypse.⁸

Mixing the everyday with this transcendent vision can often seem irreverent, or least comic, but John's revelation invites that perceptual move. While searching through Amazon for books with 'apocalyptic' in the title, I forgot to limit the search for books, so discovered that one can get 'Original Juan Zombie Repellent Hot Sauce' and 'Knitting: a post-apocalyptic life skill tote bag.' Then there is Marty Feldman's wonderful vet sketch where he brings in a 'Thing' which doesn't appear in the Cattle-breeders Guide or the Book of British Birds, but does occur in the Book of Revelation.⁹ Richard Bauckham puts it more seriously in his 1993 study *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*:

The world seen from this transcendent perspective, in apocalyptic vision, is a kind of new symbolic world into which John's readers are taken as his artistry creates it for them. But really it is not another world. It is John's readers' concrete, day-to-day world seen in heavenly and eschatological perspective. (p. 8)

He goes on to argue that, as a result, it counters the dominant ideology of the Roman imperial power, the 'natural' world-view of his readers' time. Bauckham is also well known as an admirer and interpreter of Jürgen Moltmann's theology; and Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*, first published in German in 1965, is arguably part of the same shift in post-war German theology as Käsemann's, at a time when Germany was reinventing itself while still remaining, as it had been since the early nineteenth century, in the vanguard of theological scholarship and thinking:

Christian theology speaks of 'revelation', when on the ground of the Easter appearances of the risen Lord it perceives and proclaims the identity of the risen one with the crucified one. Jesus is recognized in the Easter appearances as what he really was.... But the messianic titles, in which this identity of Jesus in cross and resurrection is claimed and described, all anticipate at the same time the not yet apparent future of the risen Lord.¹⁰

So this is what a theology with apocalypse at its centre might look like. It is a

Literature, 2nd edition, Eerdmans, 1998, p.41. Collins's first chapter, on the apocalyptic genre, is of great interest.

⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse*, Westminster John Knox Press, 1984, p. 106.

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIPAVm8Gl6M>, accessed 30 Dec. 2016.

¹⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, SCM Press, 1967, pp. 84-5.

consequence of the resurrection appearances.

Only then comes the explanation from history, that Revelation is being addressed to churches in danger of losing the faith in the face of persecution. Either way, apocalyptic becomes a call to faithfulness under pressure. That more nuanced account might allow us to accept that apocalyptic is still central for much of the early church, as Käsemann argues.

But there are other ways of recognising apocalyptic as crisis literature. There is an interesting literary critical variation in Frank Kermode's discussion of *Macbeth* as 'a play of crisis' in *The Sense of an Ending*. Kermode's whole book is a virtuoso application of apocalyptic as an explanatory fiction, one of the significant stories humans tell to make sense of the world. It is profoundly indebted to the ideas of Wallace Stevens, particularly his long poem 'Notes towards a Supreme Fiction', as well as being attentive to writers who took the apocalypse to be more than a fiction. Kermode's reading of *Macbeth* is persuasive, not just because of the crises of the Macbeth family's conscience, which raises the fear of judgement from God as well as on earth; but also because of the play's complex discussion of time, which moves it further into the realm of apocalyptic. If apocalypse marks a change of era, then Macbeth's desire to 'jump the life to come', or Lady Macbeth's seeking 'the abolition of the interim between desire and act' are clearly theologically aware, but both are atheist in the particular early modern sense of discounting the reality of God's judgement.¹¹

What shifts in the timing of apocalypse in the first Christian century is the balance between waiting and immediacy. In the first Letter to the Thessalonians, which many regard as the earliest part of the New Testament to be composed, Paul addresses the question of timing. 'The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (1 Thess. 5:2) – so a surprise, and not a pleasant one for everyone. 'Sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman' (5:3) – a kind of expected surprise, as J.P. Davies puts it in an article splendidly titled 'What to Expect when you're Expecting: Maternity, Salvation, History, and the Apocalyptic Paul'.¹² Beverly Gaventa has also drawn attention to the importance of the labour pains analogy for Paul. It's in Romans, of course:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly, while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:22-3)

Where it doesn't quite work in a predictive sense (and stretching Paul's images into allegory is often a tricky business) is that the gestation period for animals, including humans, isn't completely elastic. By the time we get to 2 Peter, the issue of why Christ's return still hasn't happened becomes urgent, and the argument is made that it's because God is showing patience in giving people time to change before the Judgement (2 Peter 3:4-10). There is, then, an issue of the centrality of an apocalyptic return of Christ, and then the challenges emerging because it appears to have been deferred from an apparently early date.

Then there is a third issue. We might also remember that that 'apocalypse', like prophecy, to which it is closely related, is not just a theological concept demanding belief (and warning against the dangers of unbelief). Apocalyptic as a term goes

¹¹ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, 2nd edn., OUP, 2000, pp. 84-6.

¹² *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38.3 (2016), 301-15.

THE GLASS

beyond its etymological root of 'revelation'. It is a genre of Biblical literature, including Daniel 9-12 as well as Revelation, and a genre of Jewish apocryphal literature, such as 4 Ezra (also called 2 Esdras). There are numerous early Christian apocalypses which didn't make it into the New Testament canon, including two ascribed to Peter. There is an Apocalypse of Paul, which attempts to fill out the details of what Paul experienced when he was taken up into 'the third heaven'.¹³ (There are apocalypses in the Qumran manuscripts as well.) We might approach this by suggesting that 'apocalyptic' is a hybrid genre, defined not by some irreducible essence, but by the combination of certain elements of style and subject matter. So, for example, judgement of the wicked and cosmic transformation are virtually compulsory, whereas other elements, like the destruction of the world, or of otherworldly beings like Satan, prophecy, persecution of God's people and a description of the afterlife, are common but not universal. (See the grid diagram from *Semeia* 14 reprinted with variations in John J. Collins p.7). But this also renews the question of apocalyptic's centrality for the gospel proclamation of the early church, and how tricky the process of canon formation was. There are apocryphal gospels and (allegedly) apostolic epistles that didn't make it either. It's not a problem unique to the genre of apocalyptic.

However, there remains the issue of whether the flamboyance of apocalyptic is an issue. Is it an issue of taste, or decorum for the cultured or cautious believer? My argument would be that the challenge of Biblical apocalyptic is to see the eternal in the everyday, whether that includes an alarming prospect of persecution or imminent death, or simply a postbag of charity appeals or walking down a street containing beggars and the homeless. Consider the apocalyptic vision of Matthew 25, the vision of the sheep and the goats. Entry into the kingdom of God doesn't appear to need heroic quests or spectacular feats of bravery; rather, entry into the kingdom can come down to doing simple acts of kindness to humble people in trouble. Erich Auerbach's analysis in *Mimesis* of 'the true and distinctive greatness of Holy Scripture – namely, that it had created an entirely new kind of sublimity, in which the everyday and the low were included, not excluded, so that, in style as in content, it directly connected the lowest with the highest' is relevant here.¹⁴

.....

In the second part of the paper I want to investigate the links between apocalyptic and the everyday in three twentieth-century literary examples of apocalyptic, only the second of them from a reasonably orthodox Christian position: Yeats' poem 'The Second Coming' (1919), Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (written and revised 1928-40 when he died but only published in its entirety in Russian (1973)), and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1980).

The first examines an apocalypse which is the product of a cyclical rather than a teleological idea of history. 'The Second Coming' comes from Yeats' fascination with the patterns of history, in which he had a personal as well as an occult interest. Ed Larrissy's point, that Yeats' early involvement with the occult was an attempt to tap into its power, not just for poetry but for the Irish nationalist cause, is persuasive. But one should add that Yeats' almost lifelong engagement with such forces is part of a more pervasive modernist search for artistic power from beyond the Western

¹³ 2 Corinthians 12 and *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman, OUP, 1999, pp. 301-8.

¹⁴ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tr. Willard R. Trask, Princeton University Press, 1953, p. 154.

THE GLASS

Judeo-Christian or Enlightenment traditions: for example, Picasso's use of West African masks, Pound's investigation of Chinese characters and Eliot's concluding *The Waste Land* with Sanskrit. But by the time of this poem, Yeats had moved on to a more systematic analysis of history, still occult, and one that draws on the fascination with millennialism in Christian history. But there is a crucial difference. For Christians, the second coming is the prelude to the Last Judgement, the new heaven and the new earth. 'Strictly speaking, "second coming" is a misnomer. After all, Yeats' system of history as expounded in *A Vision* and earlier shows a cyclic alternation of principles, not the victory of one over another.'¹⁵ And so the 'rough beast', like a reanimated sphinx, slouches towards Bethlehem, as a precise antitype of Christ coming quickly (Rev. 22:20). Part of the brilliance of that concluding image is that it's put as a question:

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

This might be a stretch, but it reminds me of Blake's 'The Tyger' (Yeats edited Blake in the 1880s) with its fusillade of questions in a context of opposites and symmetry: 'Did he who made the Lamb make thee?' For Blake this is a question about the nature of the creator God, an issue of theodicy; for Yeats, unable to accept the Christian account of the return of Christ as the end of time, it is a question about the occult, powerful but impersonal forces of history. This was developed into a spiritual theory of history in *A Vision*, parts of which were thought out in All Souls Chapel in Oxford, 'though never at service time' (pp. 6-7), and were being formulated after 1917, when his wife began her automatic writing and then talking in her sleep from, as Yeats believed, a series of 'communicators' who had 'come to give you metaphors for poetry' (8) before he began to systematise these revelations into the historical system that is the central part of *A Vision*, which appeared in its final form in 1937.

Yeats is content to use the millennial framework in its literal sense, blocking out human history in one and two thousand year units and perceiving the end of those units of time to be coincident with a particular form of crisis. There have been a number of millennial movements, based more or less on a Christian calendar, and often conscious that the precise timing of AD (or CE) doesn't quite coincide with the likely date of Christ's birth. Bernard McGinn, in an essay titled 'The End of the World and the Beginning of Christendom', as well as in longer studies, points out that the sums still have an impact – though not as strong as they did around the year 1000. And he points to the paradox that 'the formation of a distinctive West European culture was the product of leaders whose hopes were not centred on building a new society but in the expectation of the end of all human effort in the Last Judgment.'¹⁶

My second twentieth-century example is, for all its playfulness, rooted in a more orthodox (large and small 'o') apocalyptic Christianity. Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, as its epigraph from Goethe suggests, is also partly based on the Faust story:

'so who are you in the end?'
'I am a part of that power which eternally desires evil and eternally does good.'

The paradox is that even the ill-intended are helplessly, like Milton's 'stupidly good'

¹⁵ Edward Larrissy, *W.B. Yeats*, Northcote House, 1998, p. 50; cf. Margaret Mills Harper, 'Yeats and the Occult' in *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats*, ed. Marjorie Howes and John Kelly, Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 144-166.

¹⁶ In Malcolm Bull, ed., *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, Blackwell, 1995, p. 58.

THE GLASS

Satan, drawn into the benevolent purposes of God. The devil figure, Woland, appears in Goethe's *Faust* and the confidently atheist character Berlioz, who is beheaded by a tram early in the novel, is named after the composer of *The Damnation of Faust*. There are a number of characters named after composers who had written Faustian pieces. His early, knowing exchanges with Berlioz aren't immediately signalled as Satanic – indeed, because the Devil knows perfectly well that God exists, he could just as well be an assured pro-Christian apologist. And after the death of Berlioz, Bulgakov has a great deal of fun with the pompous (particularly in literary circles) and the unbelieving; not unlike the clownish scenes in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the supernatural becomes the driver of a series of comic reversals, as people are sent on impossibly long and swift journeys by means of black magic. Yet, even though people die, it is more of a comedy than a tragedy, thus following Goethe's form though with more of Marlowe's knockabout. Therefore, inevitably, it is a rather literal form of 'magic realism' – not a term that Bulgakov would have recognised, though. But if 'magic realism', as it appears in some of the novels of Garcia Marquez or Salman Rushdie, for example, is an attempt to describe a time and place within a process of modernisation but with a strong residue of what that modernity would call unscientific or superstitious belief, then *The Master & Margarita* is that, with the extra fillip of there being a self-proclaimed magician at the heart of it. Perhaps magician realism might be a more precise term.

Time as well as space operates elusively. There is a rerun of the encounter between Pilate and Jesus in the gospels, and, although that is also a homage to Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor chapter in *The Brothers Karamazov*, it is the true heart of the book. The last sentence of the book is signalled early on: 'the cruel fifth Procurator of Judaea, the horseman Pontius Pilate' first appears in Chapter 23, over two hundred pages before the end in the translation I've used.¹⁷

In the final chapters of the novel we have something close to a parody of the Last Judgment in Revelation.¹⁸ There are apocalyptic horsemen (three rather than four) and a last trumpet which is actually a last whistle (pp. 383-4). And it concludes with the city sinking – except that there is a post-apocalyptic conclusion, where everything returns, though not to normal.

Finally, Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* is an unusual form of 'post-apocalyptic' fiction, a sub-genre that imagines life after some environmental or nuclear catastrophe. Hoban has been helpfully open about his creative process, describing the inspiration from the Legend of St Cuthbert in Canterbury Cathedral along with a notion that, a long while after a nuclear war, civilisation might have made it back to something like the Iron Age. The other key invention is the special, riddling language that Hoban has fashioned for Riddley to tell his story. 'Riddley' is the clue – his name might be paraphrased as 'enigmatic pilgrim', but that doesn't do complete justice to the book's layering of meaning, and the way in which reading the novel becomes an exercise in slowing down in order to decode it. In such a post-apocalyptic world, the past exists in archaeological fragments and passed on memories.

There is charcoal, so iron can be smelted: but, more worryingly, there is the re-invention of gunpowder, a development which might lead to another arms race, culminating in another '1 Big 1'. A civilisation which has just killed the last wild boar,

¹⁷ Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, tr. Hugh Aplin, Richmond, Alma Classics, 2008, pp. 139 and 390.

¹⁸ For an extensive discussion, see the final chapter of Edward E. Ericson, Jr., *The Apocalyptic Vision of Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita*, Lampeter, Edwin Mellen Press, c. 1991.

and whose guiding story is a version of Mr Punch does not look as though it will do any better second time around.

Within a traditional Christian theology, post-apocalyptic ought not to be like this. The new heaven and new earth should involve the death of death, not same old, same old. Hoban gracefully suggests, through the legend of St Eustace depicted in Canterbury Cathedral ('Cambry' in his wonderful invented language) that desolation, figured by his children being devoured by wild animals, is yet inspired by a vision of the crucified Christ in a deer's antlers. Walker tries to work it out – though it could be that 'what I'm saying may be just theory'.¹⁹ And there is 'the hoap of a tree'. Possibly Christ's cross, though intermingled with a renewing of the natural world: 'Looking up in to the black where the goast of Power circlet blyn and oansome like a Drop John roun the los hump of Cambry I larft I yelt, "SPIRIT OF GOD ROAD WITH ME"!' (197).

Somewhere between the symbolic magnificence of Jewish and Christian apocalypses and Jesus identifying himself with the least in the apocalypse in Matthew's gospel lies the meaning of apocalyptic: power to the powerless and persecuted, revelation in the everyday. 'The real core of the truth', as Eugene Lampert argues, is 'that the End is coming and is already here, and that from this End Time acquires meaning and History is being fulfilled.'²⁰

¹⁹ Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*, expanded edition, Bloomsbury 2012, pp. 128-9.

²⁰ E. Lampert, *The Apocalypse of History: Problems of Providence and Human Destiny*, Faber and Faber, 1948, p. 57.

Redeeming the End in Contemporary Gothic Fictions

Simon Marsden

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.' (1 Thessalonians 4: 16)

IN MODERN GOTHIC FICTIONS, THE RETURNS AND RENEWALS IMAGINED IN CHRISTIAN apocalyptic have been refigured as sources of horror. If Christian eschatology anticipates a day upon which 'the dead in Christ shall rise first', Gothic narratives often imagine a world in which the dead have already risen; risen not into the renewed life of the heavenly city, but in parodic and hopeless versions of resurrection. As John Sears has noted, it is a trope of Gothic fictions that 'whatever returns is *never Christ*'.¹ Yet these Gothic returns derive something of their horrifying affectivity from their relationship to the redemptive returns that they deny. The risen dead of Gothic fictions – returned as vampires, spectres, zombies – both invoke and refuse the redemptive trajectory of Christian eschatology. Gothic's relationship with Christian apocalyptic, always implicit in Gothic versions of resurrection, has become increasingly overt in the work of several prominent contemporary writers, a shift that remains largely unexamined by scholars in both Gothic studies and those of literature and religion. This paper begins to chart this renewal of Gothic interest in Christian eschatology and apocalyptic, with a focus on the work of the contemporary American novelists Peter Straub and Justin Cronin. I will argue that, contrary to the disturbing or horrifying eschatologies invoked by much of the Gothic tradition, both Straub and Cronin employ versions of apocalyptic that can properly be called redemptive.

The apocalyptic tendencies of Gothic in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been shaped not only by the 'sense of an ending' provided by Biblical apocalypse, but also by the revelatory nihilism of Nietzsche. The madman who speaks prophetically of the death of God in *The Gay Science* (1882/7) becomes for some Gothic writers the model of an apocalyptic discourse that refuses the very possibility of a meaningful end. 'Whither do we move?' asks Nietzsche's madman. 'Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder?'² The madman invites his audience to contemplate a vision of endless time; an eternity devoid of content or meaning. In twentieth-century Gothic, the most influential exponent of Nietzschean prophetic nihilism was H. P. Lovecraft. Echoing the revelatory tone of Nietzsche's madman, Lovecraft's narrators open visions of terrifying absence and chaos behind the veneer of human rationality. Humanity is on an inevitable trajectory toward the unbearable revelation of our own insignificance – a future emptied of redemptive possibility – as depicted in the opening of Lovecraft's most famous story, 'The Call of

¹ John Sears, *Stephen King's Gothic*, University of Wales Press, 2011, p. 16.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Thomas Common, New York, Barnes & Noble, 2008, p. 103.

Cthulhu':

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto armed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.³

Lovecraftian Gothic thus echoes the revelatory function of Biblical apocalypse while maintaining that the visionary's glimpse of elsewhere can reveal only chaos. Subverting Frank Kermode's 'sense of an ending', Gothic writers in the tradition of Nietzsche and Lovecraft imagine endings emptied of redemptive significance; rather than the *kairotic* time in which the present moment is 'filled with significance, charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end', Gothic writers have often imagined the present as emptied of significance by the prospect of a meaningless end.⁴ These Gothic eschatologies are often framed overtly as distorted versions of Christian apocalyptic. In Stephen King's 2014 novel *Revival*, for example, a glimpse beyond the horizons of time and space reveals a hopeless eternity:

The foolish mirage of earthly life had been torn away and instead of the heaven preachers of all persuasions promised, what awaited them was a dead city of cyclopean stone blocks below a sky that was itself a scrim. The howling stars weren't stars at all. They were holes, and the howls emerging from them came from the true potestas magnum universum. Beyond the sky were entities. They were alive, and all-powerful, and totally insane.⁵

The Gothic apocalyptic of *Revival* is self-consciously parasitic upon Christian eschatology, simultaneously invoking and denying its trajectory toward a redemptive ending.

Yet Gothic's engagement with Christian eschatology and apocalyptic is more complex than the mere affective negation of the redemptive ending. *Revival* is not simply a parody of Christian eschatology, but a critique of the notion of heaven used both as a cheap consolation for earthly suffering and as a cynical money-making tool for celebrity evangelists. The novel's revelation of a hopeless eternity compels its protagonists to seek meaning and significance in the ordinary experiences and relationships of human life; despite the novel's superficially anti-religious tone, King's concerns are theologically and ethically serious. Indeed, one of the striking features of contemporary Gothic is the emergence of a renewed and nuanced interest in theology consistent with the religious 'turn' in contemporary western culture identified by Zygmunt Bauman and others.⁶ Some religious commentators have viewed this cultural turn with unease: Graham Ward, for example, sees in postmodern deployments of

³ H. P. Lovecraft, 'The Call of Cthulhu', in *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, ed. S. T. Joshi, Penguin, 1999, pp. 139-69 (p. 139).

⁴ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, OUP, 1967, p. 47.

⁵ Stephen King, *Revival*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2014, p. 351.

⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*, Routledge, 1992. For a helpful overview of the postmodern theological turn and its implications for literary criticism, see Gavin Hopps and Jane Stabler, 'Introduction: Grace Under Pressure', in Hopps and Stabler (eds.), *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens*, Ashgate, 2006, pp. 1-23.

religious iconography an attempt to baptise contemporary culture with ‘the allure of cheap transcendence’.⁷ For Gothic fiction, religious symbols and iconography have become tropes of the genre that continue to be deployed outside of specific religious contexts: the cross need not be worn as a sign of Christian faith to remain a useful method for fending off vampires. Yet if Gothic seems particularly prone to the kind of fetishised, commodified deployment of religion described by Ward, I want to suggest that the genre also provides space for more sustained and serious theological reflection and debate. As I will attempt to demonstrate, the American novelists Peter Straub and Justin Cronin approach the nature of evil and redemption with a considerable degree of philosophical and theological nuance. I will argue that both Straub and Cronin allow moments of authentic transcendence, and that these glimpses of transcendence are orientated toward the possibility of a redemptive ending.

The eschatological themes of Peter Straub’s fiction are perhaps most overt in his novels *lost boy lost girl* (2003) and its sequel *In the Night Room* (2004). The novels are based around a fictional series of child murders committed by the now-deceased Joseph Kalendar. One of Kalendar’s presumed victims was his daughter, Lily.⁸ Both novels are narrated (at times indirectly) by the novelist Tim Underhill, the narrative voice shifting between Tim’s journal entries and a series of creative rewritings. At the beginning of *lost boy lost girl*, Tim’s nephew, Mark, has disappeared; it is discovered later that he has become a victim of a copycat killer who now owns the Kalendar house. In Tim’s reimagining of his nephew’s death, however, Mark meets and falls in love with a girl named Lucy Cleveland, who appears to live in the Kalendar house. In this alternative narrative, Mark is drawn into the Kalendar household – and therefore to his death – by his desire to protect Lucy.

lost boy lost girl is a metafiction that frequently signals its own constructedness. It is concerned less with the distinction between the fictional and the real than with the ways in which the real is mediated in narrative. In this respect, it illustrates Geoffrey Hartman’s observation that ‘what active reading discloses is a structure of *words within words*, a structure so deeply mediated, ghostly, and echoic that we find it hard to locate the *res* in the *verba*. The *res*, or subject matter, seems to be already words’.⁹ When Tim is told by a friend that he writes his journal as if it were fiction, he replies: ‘What makes you think it isn’t?’¹⁰ As the novel moves towards its conclusion, Tim tacitly acknowledges what the narrative has brought subtly into view: ‘Lucy Cleveland’ is a fictionalised version of Lily Kalendar, resurrected in the pages of Tim’s narrative.

Yet the disclosure of Lucy’s identity, and thus of the fictional status of her relationship with Mark, is presented not as a denial of hope, but rather as a moment of redemptive revelation when Tim glimpses Mark and Lucy together in a café:

It was a gift. Not the only one, but the first. Mark and his ‘Lucy Cleveland,’ whose real name I knew, had exited their *elsewhere* long enough to display themselves before me in all the fullness of their new lives. After all, *elsewhere* was right next door.

...

⁷ Graham Ward, *True Religion*, Blackwell, 2003, p. ix.

⁸ It is revealed in *In the Night Room* that Lily Kalendar survived her father’s abuse and now lives under an assumed name.

⁹ Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Saving the Text: Literature/Derrida/Philosophy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, p. 129.

¹⁰ Peter Straub, *lost boy lost girl*, New York, Ballantine, 2003, p. 289. Further references are given in parentheses with the abbreviation *lbg*.

THE GLASS

God bless Mark Underhill, I say within the resounding chambers of my heart and mind,
God bless Lucy Cleveland, too, though already they are so blessed, they have the power
to bless me. (*lblg* p. 296.)

Tim is given one more glimpse of Mark and Lucy, via an online film sent to him from Mark's email address and viewable only once; 'a webcam, Tim thought, broadcasting to an audience of one from a world where there were no webcams' (*lblg* p. 330). As Tim watches the film, outside the detectives begin the recovery of the bodies from Kalendar's garden; a recovery that in the novel's closing sentence is described in terms strangely suggestive of resurrection. Tim and his brother 'looked on as the first of the adolescent dead began his journey upward into daylight' (*lblg* p. 336).

The ending of *lost boy lost girl*, then, juxtaposes the material reality of the bodies recovered from the garden with the imaginative attempt to find redemptive possibility. The glimpses of resurrection and new life in the novel are fictions, a fact made explicit in the novel's sequel *In the Night Room*: 'Tim had written a novel that permitted Mark the continued life a monster named Ronald Lloyd-Jones had stolen from him'.¹¹ Yet in emphasising the fictionality of the new life given to Mark Underhill and Lily Kalendar, Straub insists upon the possibility that storytelling itself might become a redemptive act. Tim's persistent rewritings of Mark and Lily are acts of love: they seek to return to the children the gift of being. *In the Night Room* is another retelling, this time focused on a woman named Willy Patrick, a character in Tim's latest novel who escapes the confines of the novel and enters Tim's own reality (which is, of course, another narrative). Willy is a combination of Mark and Lily, another attempt to restore the children to life: 'that's what *you're* doing, you old writer', Willy tells Tim; 'You're washing away his crimes, and you're doing it through me' (*ItNR* p. 354). For Christian theology, as Gerard Loughlin observes, 'love's gift of being is more commonly known by way of the doctrine of creation'.¹² Straub draws the analogy between divine creativity and the creative work of the novelist when Tim articulates his love for Willy, the character summoned into being by his words: 'These simple words, all this deep feeling. I hope this is what God feels for his creatures' (*ItNR* p. 250).

lost boy lost girl and *In the Night Room* offer no assurances of restored life for the murdered children. The glimpses of elsewhere that permeate the novels are aspects of Tim Underhill's persistent attempts to rewrite the stories of Lily and Mark. Yet in constructing these multiple textual returns for the murdered children, Straub stakes a claim for storytelling itself as an act of grace. With the only creative tools at his disposal, Tim seeks to give renewed being and freedom to the children from whom it was taken away by Joseph Kalendar and Ronald Lloyd-Jones. Where Lloyd-Jones sought the repetition of Kalendar's crimes, Tim seeks to write the story differently. The ending of Tim's narrative in *lost boy lost girl* is redemptive, not in the sense of assuring a resurrected life for the children, but in its aspiration to undo the privations inflicted upon them. Tim's attempts to rewrite the story, to change the ending, are acts of creative love.

A similar emphasis on story and the redemptive power of rewriting is integral to

¹¹ Peter Straub, *In the Night Room*, New York, Ballantine, 2006, p. 18. Further references are given in parentheses with the abbreviation *ItNR*.

¹² Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 237.

THE GLASS

Justin Cronin's *Passage* trilogy (2010-2016). Set for the most part in a post-apocalyptic America ravaged by a form of vampirism caused by military research into the biological enhancement of soldiers, Cronin's trilogy juxtaposes a military struggle against the vampires ('virals') with a metaphysical struggle for the redemption of humanity. The narrative signals its theological heritage overtly: the military research that creates the virals is known as Project NOAH, a name chosen initially to reflect the great age of the Biblical Noah, which the project aims to reproduce in its subjects, but which ultimately identifies the viral outbreak as a second flood; another cleansing of the earth. Though the virals number in the millions, most are controlled by a group known as the Twelve: the military's original test subjects, each of them a convict sentenced to death. Behind the Twelve is Zero, originally a research scientist named Tim Fanning who was infected in South America and became the source of the virus given to the Twelve. 'Zero' is a military codename – as the source of the virus, he is Subject Zero – but also reflects the Augustinian roots of the novel's metaphysics. Zero is a figure of privation, who seeks to efface variety and hope from the world. As Anthony Carter – the only one of the Twelve to have been wrongfully convicted of the crime for which he was sentenced to death – observes, Zero 'wouldn't rest until the whole world was a mirror to his grief'.¹³ Zero seeks to efface all other human lives and stories and to replace them with his own, reshaping the world in the image of his own pain.

Zero and the Twelve live in a state of perpetual repetition of key moments in their lives. For most of the Twelve, these moments are the crimes for which they were sentenced to death: many of them take pleasure in the repetition of murder and sexual violence. The virals initiated into the collectives controlled by each of the Twelve are compelled to repeat the same memory, taking the place of the killer and enacting the crime within the dream-memory that they now share. There are two exceptions to these repetitions of violence. Carter, an innocent man wrongly convicted of the murder of his employer – whose life he tried to save when she drowned herself – relives the death of the woman, Rachel Wood, as a moment of profound grief. Zero/Fanning's dream is similarly a repetition of grief: he relives endlessly the death from cancer of Liz Lear, the woman he has loved since they met in college. Liz had dated and married Fanning's friend and fellow scientist Jonas Lear; only in Liz's final days, as Jonas was absent on the expedition that would discover the virus, did she and Fanning become lovers. As Zero, Fanning now seeks to refashion the world in the image of his grief; to make his story the sole narrative of the world.

The virals thus represent a condition of stasis: an endless, identical repetition of a single narrative that effaces all other stories. Catherine Pickstock has argued that 'where divine transcendence is occluded, one finds oneself in the domain of buttressed immanence, in which nothing new can occur, since the ontological bounds of finitude have been transcendently set once and for all'.¹⁴ The repeated dreams of Cronin's virals are analogous to this state of buffered immanence. By incorporating all people into the repetition of their own stories – and thus making all people identical repetitions of themselves – the virals seek to efface the possibility of transcendence or change: reshaping the whole of reality into the image of their dreams, they deny the possibility of an 'outside' from which interruption or change might come. Yet this

¹³ Justin Cronin, *The City of Mirrors*, Orion, 2016, p. 267. Further references are given parenthetically with the abbreviation TCOM.

¹⁴ Catherine Pickstock, *Repetition and Identity*, OUP, 2013, p. xi.

attempt to shape reality in accordance with their own stories is, ironically, a denial of story. Pickstock writes:

Above all, there is only story because of the resurrection. Resurrection is the process at work in non-identical repetition by which that which is repeated is not unmediably different, but analogously the same. This redemptive return is what allows a person to tell a story, since for there to be a story, there must be 'analogous' subjects and objects, persisting as same-yet-different.¹⁵

The identical repetitions performed by Zero and the Twelve exclude the possibility of newness or change and, therefore, the possibility of redemption. Zero's dream is 'a nightmare of infinite waiting in a universe barren of pity – without hope, without love, without the purpose that only hope and love could bear upon it' (*TCOM* p. 229).

A new openness to redemptive change is introduced into the narrative by Amy, a quasi-messianic figure who as a child is infected with an alternative strain of the virus by Jonas Lear in the hope that she will become an antidote to Fanning's strain. Rather than offering a biological or chemical defence against the virus, however, Amy becomes the opposing pole in a metaphysical contest with Zero. Carter, the innocent man appalled by the viral that he has become, is the only one of the Twelve to understand what Amy represents:

That was when he felt her: Amy. Not dark, like the others; her soul was made of light. A great sob racked his body. His loneliness was leaving him. It lifted from his spirit like a veil, and what lay behind it was a sorrow of a different kind – a beautiful, holy sorrow for the world and all its woes. (*TCOM* p. 267).

Where Zero seeks to transform the world into the image of his own grief, Amy embodies agapeic love that seeks to give itself to the world and to receive in return the world in all of its infinite variety. In Cronin's rewriting of the Biblical flood narrative, Amy is the ship: she carries the memories and identities of the people incorporated into the Twelve and returns these identities to them as their viral bodies die.

The contest between Amy and Zero is fundamentally a contest between two views of reality. The night of Liz's death was a metaphysical awakening for Tim Fanning; it was the moment when he became Zero emotionally and ideologically, if not yet physically:

Believe me, I appal myself sometimes. But the truth is the truth. There's no one watching over us. That's the cold heart of it, the grand delusion. Or if there is, he's the cruellest kind of bastard, letting us believe he cares. I'm nothing, compared to him... What God would let Liz be all alone at the end, not the touch of a hand or a single word of kindness to help her leave her life? I'll tell you what kind, Amy. The same one who made me. (*TCOM* p. 482)

The novel finally resists Zero's nihilistic worldview not simply by destroying him – though he is killed in his final struggle with Amy – but by granting him the possibility of redemption. In death, Fanning is reunited with Liz. She allows him to see and to grieve for the full extent of his crimes, yet she also offers him forgiveness and healing grace:

¹⁵ Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Blackwell, 1998, p. 265.

THE GLASS

It took some time. It took days, weeks, years. But this was unimportant. It would pass in a blink, not even. All things fell into the past but one; and what that was, was love. (TCOM p. 521)¹⁶

The ending of Fanning's story echoes the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13: 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' In the *Passage* trilogy, love is understood overtly in terms of gift-exchange: to love is to give the gift of oneself and one's story to another, and to receive their reciprocal gift in return. Love in the novel is an act of faith, as Peter, the leader of Amy's followers, is told by one of his companions:

When I was growing up in the orphanage, the sisters always taught us that a person of faith is someone who believes something he can't prove. I don't disagree, but that's only half the story. It's the end, not the means. A hundred years ago, humanity just about destroyed itself. It'd be easy to think that God doesn't like us very much. Or that there is no God, there's no rhyme or reason to anything and we might just as well hang it up and call it a day. Thanks, planet Earth, it was nice knowing you. But that's not you, Peter. For you, hunting the Twelve isn't an answer. It's a question. Does anybody out there care? Are we worth saving? What would God want from me, if there is a God? The greatest faith is the willingness to ask in the first place, all evidence to the contrary. Faith not just in God, but in all of us.¹⁷

In different ways, both Justin Cronin and Peter Straub identify creative, agapeic love as a redemptive response to evil's privations. For Straub, this love is located in the work of the writer who seeks to revise out of existence the horrors of the past, and to restore the goodness of being that has been lost. This restoration remains located outside the realm of the possible: redemptive possibility in *lost boy lost girl* is identified not with a secure happy ending for Mark Underhill and Lily Kalendar, but with the creative love that seeks to grant them such an ending. Cronin's *Passage* trilogy stakes a bolder claim for love as redemptive possibility, enabling non-identical repetition to break cycles of stasis and violence. Cronin and Straub represent the emergence of a theologically-nuanced version of horror fiction for which Gothic returns represent not the denial of a redemptive ending, but rather a hope staked in the possibility of new creation.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 521.

¹⁷ Justin Cronin, *The Twelve*, Orion, 2012, pp. 262-3.

Geoffrey Hill's Longing for the End of the Word

Tom Docherty

It was an unexpected privilege to speak at the CLSG conference of November 2016 about Geoffrey Hill, in the year of his death, and in the city of Oxford, where he was educated at Keble College and where he graced the chair of Professor of Poetry until 2015. Hill had the eloquence, and the somewhat studied look, of a prophet (a Jeremianic one, though he was ostensibly far more interested in Amos, Habakkuk, and the other Minor Prophets). It was curious, therefore, during last year's sad spate of earthquakes in central Italy, to see repeatedly in my research, in Petrarch's Italian, the title of Hill's final collection: *Al Tempo de' Tremuoti*, or 'In the Time of Earthquakes'. Hill, as well as being thoroughly a poet of tradition, was, in a specific sense, peculiarly forward-looking. His sight was fixed on the end.

* * *

'Begin with golden curtains,' Hill exhorts in his collection *The Orchards of Syon*, 'sometimes helps | to anticipate THE END'.¹ That gratifying two-word sentence in the centre of the line rarely follows a poem. With 'the end', the conclusion is definite; the reader need read no more. Without 'the end', there is merely the remaining white space on the page. Lacking a stated end, the last word takes on a longer echo into the fresh silence. Conclusion is undetermined; the end has come seemingly by default, as though the pen has simply run dry, or the voice been lost.

The end of the last poem in Geoffrey Hill's *Broken Hierarchies*, a book that takes a long time to finish, breaks and goes suddenly:

Time is the demiurge
For which our impotence cannot atone.
Nothing so fatal as creation's clone.
The stars asunder, gibbering, on the verge
(*Al Tempo de' Tremuoti*, 95, p. 936)

There could hardly be an end less like 'the end'. The last of all of Hill's collected lines teeters on a verge: on the verge of a verb, of completion, of consummation. The rhyme is fulfilled, but not the sentence. If poetry is, at least by design, 'creation's clone', it appears to be immediately 'fatal' for its writer, struck off before finishing the next sentence. Hill is aware of the word that marks the end of his own speaking, the verge at the end of his life. The word brings to mind Regan speaking to her father, King Lear:

O, sir, you are old,
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of his confine.²

Nature cannot exist without confinement. As life can only occur within the confines of a body, so a poem can only come to be through confined words in the body of its text.

¹ Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon*, XI, in *Broken Hierarchies: Poems 1952–2012*, OUP, 2013, p. 361. All subsequent quotations of Hill's poetry will be incorporated in the text and will cite the individual collection, the page numbers referring to *Broken Hierarchies*.

² William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, II. iv. 143–45, in *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed. Sylvan Barnet, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972, p. 1199.

THE GLASS

By ending his poem 'on the verge' without verb or full stop, Hill suggests its attempt to reach beyond its confines of language. The poem's design is to be more than its design, its end to be more than its end.

For Charles Péguy, that French poet revered by Hill, Christ is not *Le Mot* but *Le Verbe*. Potentially, the only word missing from this final utterance of Hill, in both linguistic and theological senses, is the verb. In the former sense, what is missing is a main verb: the present participle 'gibbering' functions as an adjective. In the latter sense, this verb is the consummation of all things in Christ, to which Christ Himself refers, and for which Hill's poetry longs. The speaking of this verb is a kenotic, a self-emptying, action. 'Let verbs excrete blood, voiding confession', Hill writes elsewhere (*Expostulations on the Volcano*, 12, p. 640). The 'picnic party' of this last poem has, up to the passage quoted above, been populated by Brunelleschi, Donatello, the Virgin Mary, the Christ Child, God the Father, Abraham, John the Baptist, Judith, Holofernes, the Apostles, Pilate, and, by another name, God the Father again: 'Yahweh himself not wholly disabused | | Of procreation' (p. 936). Needless to say, of the humans here none is alive; this picnic party, though not perhaps exclusively heavenly, is a party of the dead, the dead of the Christian story. It is a poem that ends with a vision of the end, the only thing missing being the arrival of the Verb and, with Him, the end of the world. Having begun, in 1952, with a poem called 'Genesis', it is fitting that Hill's poetic oeuvre should end with a vision of the apocalypse. But, looking at this oeuvre, the latter vision is clearly the prevalent one.

In *Oraclau | Oracles*, another of Hill's last collections, he writes: 'It is not long, not long to eternity' (134, p. 785). This book, apparently composed upon Hill's proud discovery that his great-grandfather was a Welsh iron-puddler, includes thirteen poems under the title 'Welsh apocalypse' and nine under the title 'Welsh apotheosis', both of which meditate on the poet's own death and on the Book of Revelation. In a video-recorded interview for *The Economist* in 2011, Hill said:

I have never begun a poem knowing how it will end, and I have never ended a poem knowing how it will begin.... I mean, some of my poems get written from the end backwards.... The moment anyone says to me, 'we find your poems a form of Christian discourse', I want to run and hide. It's, to use a word I never wholly understand, it's a kind of existential thing; that is, my sense of what I am is inextricably caught up with a lifetime's anxiety about things, prominent among which is an anxiety about the fate of my own soul.³

Hill's poetry deeply reflects this anxiety about the end. Nevertheless, it seeks the end. The longing of Hill's poetry for consummation is expressed, and certain consummations are even enacted, by the puns and rhymes to which it has recourse. Hill's obsession with language, and with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, are well-documented. The pun and the rhyme are natural etymologists. They forge the connection between meanings of words, and between different words, without explanation or proof. The fact of verbal familiarity stands for itself. The pun and the rhyme consummate words; they render words related by their very existence. To consummate words is a Godly, even an apocalyptic, act. The final stanza of Thomas Hardy's 'The Convergence of the Twain' comes to mind: 'Till the Spinner of the Years | Said "Now!" and each one

³ These and other words can be heard at <http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2011/12/economist-books-year-festival-geoffrey-hill>, accessed 23 November 2016.

hears, | And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.⁴ The Titanic and the iceberg seemed unconnected until that fated ‘Now!’, after which they would be forever entwined. The pun and the rhyme are the spinners of the words: they say ‘Now!’ and words’ hidden bonds are revealed.

Etymology, the figuring out of words’ relations and connections, was, in Greco-Roman antiquity, a kind of punning act. It was the use of language’s *données* themselves. This pertains in one of the oldest theoretical texts about etymology, Plato’s *Cratylus*. For the Socrates of *Cratylus*, the name-maker is the law-maker. The word not only embodies its concept but ‘instructs’ as to that concept’s true and full significance.⁵ For example, Socrates takes the Greek word for man, *anthrōpos*, and puns on it, spinning it out to *anathrōn ha opōpe*, which means one who ‘looks up at what he has seen’.⁶ These things, perception (seeing) and investigation (looking), it is implied, are precisely what distinguish man from everything else. In this way, the word expounds its own meaning, seems to create its own semantic space.

Hill’s puns and rhymes work in a similar way; they are apocalyptic agents in his poems. Hill is fully aware, at times wary, at times weary, of puns’ and rhymes’ capacity to forge meanings, to arrive at their own ends. As in *Cratylus*, they derive their meaning and their potency from apparent quirks of sound and etymology. The name-maker certainly has a kind of judicial power in the second of the *Mercian Hymns*, in which King Offa is given numerous punning and associative descriptions, all in reference to his name. The echoes of Offa in proximate words are to ‘instruct’ Offa about his calling and his character:

A pet-name, a common name. Best-selling brand, curt
graffito. A laugh; a cough. A syndicate. A specious
gift. Scoffed-at horned phonograph.

The starting-cry of a race. A name to conjure with.
(*Mercian Hymns*, II, p. 84)

Note the pun on ‘race’. (And they’re off. A.) There is also the ‘specious gift’ or the ‘[b]est-selling brand’ that both might be on ‘offa’. The pun can indeed be a specious gift. But here, as far as King Offa is concerned, the puns operate in the Platonic sense as gods of words: they push Offa towards what his name seems to be asking of him.

The pun pervades Hill’s work. Even the titles of his collections demonstrate it: from *Without Title*, published before Hill was knighted, to *Odi Barbare*, which means both ‘I hate Barbarians’ and ‘Barbarian odes’, because, after all, in a culture of barbarism one can only speak in the language of the barbarian. In his *Etymologiæ*, Isidore of Seville claims: ‘Barbarism is so called after the barbarian peoples, since they

⁴ Thomas Hardy, ‘The Convergence of the Twain’, *The Complete Poems*, ed. James Gibson, Macmillan, 1972, p. 248.

⁵ Plato, *Cratylus*, 399b–c, in *Cratylus. Parmenides. Greater Hippias. Lesser Hippias*, trans. by Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), p. 175. I am indebted here to Glenn W. Most’s essay ‘Allegoresis and etymology’, in *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Glenn W. Most, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 52–74; and to David Sedley, ‘Plato’s *Cratylus*’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2013 edn, ed. Edward N. Zalta, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/plato-cratylus/>, accessed 26 November 2016.

⁶ *Cratylus*, pp. 58–59.

THE GLASS

do not properly know the Latin language.’⁷ Simple enough. Hill, then, with his Latin title, is distancing himself even further from these ‘barbarian peoples’.

The single-word pun is the distilling of more than one meaning in one word. It is a seeming imprecision that can become a surprising furtherance of precision. ‘It is also | furtherance of slow exile,’ Hill writes (of ‘creation’) in *The Orchards of Syon*, ‘but enjoy – | best to enjoy – riding that *vague*’ (V, p. 355). Here the French word for a wave becomes *vague* simply because it resembles an English word. Hill is writing that *vague*. By employing a word with numerous potential senses in its context, the distance between those senses is not only acknowledged but confronted, scrutinised, pressed for significance. A greater precision can be attained by confronting the *vague*. As Hill has said in a radio interview, it is ‘precision of a certain kind, because it’s precision that can’t rule out ambiguity. [...] The ambiguities can’t come in accidentally, because that’s a solecism. You’ve got to be accurate in your ambiguities.’⁸

Elsewhere in *The Orchards of Syon*, the tenth poem ends, ‘Strophe after strophe | ever more catastrophic. Did I say | strophe? I meant salvo, sorry’ (X, p. 360). This metanoia, this correcting turn, is a pun on ‘strophe’, which in Greek means *turning*. Clearly, more and more salvos, simultaneous blasts of artillery, end in catastrophe, literally *downturn*; but the first sentence, by which strophes lead to catastrophe, still stands. Just before these lines the poem refers to ‘Dead Tragedy’ and states that ‘death of Comedy is perhaps a worse | dereliction’; every turn of verse (another word that has its origin in a turn), coming at the end of a line, leads to the end of the poem, as the dramatic catastrophe in tragedy turns the play towards its end.⁹

Speaking of strophes, in the antistrophe of Hill’s seventeenth Pindaric ode, he asks:

What assigns *double, treble, reality*
to a single word? Make that *in context*,
I’m yours, free spirit, dead cobber. All in all
Simone outwitted us: *L’enracinement*:
working on multiple planes.
(*Pindarics*, 17, p. 539)

The single-word pun is uniquely faithful to the reality that is ‘*double, treble*’. It is interesting that the wording of this question presupposes that the double or treble reality – which might mean the coexistence, the harmony or disharmony, the overlap, of thoughts and things – precedes the pun. It suggests that the pun is not simply or not wholly a result ‘of being at the mercy of accidents, the prey of one’s own presumptuous energy’; that the pun is arbitrary, but in the full, self-contradictory double sense of

⁷ *Etymologiæ*, I. 32. Available at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Isidore/1*.html#32, accessed 26 November 2016.

⁸ *Private Passions*, BBC Radio 3, 25 April 2004. Cited in David-Antoine Williams, *Defending Poetry*, OUP, 2010, p. 166.

⁹ See Kathryn Murphy, ‘Hill’s Conversions’, in *Geoffrey Hill and His Contexts*, ed. Piers Pennington and Matthew Sperling, Bern, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 61–80 (p. 77). As Murphy notes, the word ‘verse’ derives from a metaphor (though surely not a pun, as Murphy claims it is, since for it to be a pun both meanings would have to have been previously understood) in the first two lines of Virgil’s first Georgic: ‘Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram | vertere, Maecenas, ulmisque adiungere vitis’, which in Dryden’s version reads, ‘What makes a plenteous Harvest, when to turn | The fruitful soil, and when to sowe the Corn’ (John Dryden, *The Works of Virgil*, London, Jacob Tonson, 1697, sig. H1r.)

that word.¹⁰ The pun, as in *Cratylus*, does not merely point to but in fact generates the doubling, the coupling, the forging of reality. ‘All in all’ is a twinning phrase; it is verbally symmetrical. It also corresponds with ‘I’m yours’ at the opposing end of the line: if the pun can align realities, even mine and yours, it can be all in all: all of a word’s senses, all of its connotations, at once.

If realities can be said to coexist, they must do so at the same time; for this reason, the language that ‘describes and imitates’ them also must attempt simultaneity (though it is difficult, since one word follows another).¹¹ In the most immediate way, the pun does this: in one spoken word, more than one meaning can be uttered. Similarly, the poem as a whole can speak or do in synchronous multiples. Perhaps, in *Pindarics*, 17, this is what recalls Simone Weil to the poem’s consciousness. Weil appears in only the first and last essays in Hill’s *Collected Critical Writings*. As Hill has implied and others have suggested, Hill detects something of his poetry’s feeling towards Christianity in Weil’s ‘self-excommunicate’ position in relation to the Catholic Church.¹² The passage from Weil alluded to in *Pindarics*, 17, however, has been cited by Hill on numerous occasions (and with special approval). Here it is:

Simultaneous composition on several planes at once is the law of artistic creation, and wherein, in fact, lies its difficulty.

A poet, in the arrangement of words and the choice of each word, must simultaneously bear in mind matters on at least five or six different planes of composition.¹³

L’enracinement is the book from which this comes. In a previous chapter, Weil claims that it is urgent to consider a ‘plan for re-establishing the working-class by the

¹⁰ The quotation beginning ‘of being at the mercy’ is from Geoffrey Hill, *Collected Critical Writings*, OUP, 2008, p. 155. On the double sense of arbitrariness, see also pp. 563 and 573 of the *Collected Critical Writings*: “‘Arbitrary’ itself can mean either discretionary or despotic; ‘[t]he arbitrary, by a long process of semantic conglomeration, is at once freedom of will and the will obdurate in itself and subject to, and in service to, a greater obduracy (“difficulty is our plough”)’”. As Matthew Sperling notes in *Visionary Philology: Geoffrey Hill and the Study of Words*, OUP, 2014, p. 66, Hill’s 1963 review of T.S. Eliot’s *Collected Poems* is titled ‘The Poet as Arbiter’ (*Yorkshire Post*, 3 October 1963, p. 4).

¹¹ William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), in *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, OUP, 2013, p. 104. The passage from which this quotation comes is cited in the manuscript of an unpublished talk Hill gave to the GB–USSR Association at Leeds University in 1966, titled ‘Osip Mandelstam’, which was printed as an appendix to Kenneth Haynes and Andrew Kahn, “‘Difficult Friend’: Geoffrey Hill and Osip Mandelstam’, *Essays in Criticism*, 63 (2013), 51–80 (p. 74; appendix pp. 71–76).

¹² Hill, speaking to John Haffenden, quotes a phrase of Joseph Cary on the work of an Italian poet whose name Hill has forgotten, and first says tentatively that it ‘might not seem to be wholly irrelevant’ to his ‘own poetry’: “‘a heretic’s dream of salvation expressed in the images of the orthodoxy from which he is excommunicate.” That seems to me an apt phrase to describe the area in which my poetry moves’ (*Viewpoints*, p. 98). The amendment to ‘self-excommunicate’ is Hill’s, describing Charles Péguy (‘Notes and Acknowledgements’, *Collected Poems*, Penguin, 1985, p. 207). Murphy (see note 9), as well as noting Weil and Péguy, adds Aleksander Wat as another ‘stubbornly “self-excommunicate” writer of importance to Hill’s poetry’ (‘Hill’s Conversions’, p. 65).

¹³ Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, trans. Arthur Wills, Boston, Beacon, 1952, p. 207. Cited in Hill, *Collected Critical Writings*, p. 573. See also Geoffrey Hill, ‘Civil Polity and the Confessing State’, *The Warwick Review*, 2 (2008), 7–20 (p. 11); and “‘The Conscious Mind’s Intelligible Structure’: A Debate’, *Agenda*, 9–10 (1971–72), 14–23 (pp. 14–15).

roots', in which society's 'goal would be, not, according to the expression now inclined to become popular, the interest of the consumer – such an interest can only be a grossly material one – but Man's dignity in his work, which is a value of a spiritual order'.¹⁴ Hill is convinced of the spiritual value of work.¹⁵ The 'working on multiple planes' to which he refers itself works on multiple planes: the pun is the word 'working'. If a pun or a poem is 'working' on multiple planes then it is succeeding in various respects. At the same time it is, perhaps visibly, travailing to cohere, trying hard to achieve the end that it intends.

In *Liber Illustrium Virorum*, Hill says more about the pun's ability to 'work', and be put to work, on multiple planes, creating new words from old concepts, and new concepts from old words:

It is the simplest narrative that flies
 Together in double chronology;
 For that words are analogues of crisis;
 Cross-stress and dissonance bind eulogy:
 Obedience held axiomatic,
 The circle is not squared by dividers.
 (XLIII, p. 727)

Words are analogues of crisis: in utterance they hold together their disparate meanings and connotations: they speak in twisted-together multiples, and to both past and future in 'double chronology'. Even 'analogues' here is a play on words; in fact it is a play on the word for word, since the Greek *logos* is at its root. The crisis, the '[c]ross-stress', of words is an everlasting balance between two struggling forces: one of their divine nature and one of their fallen human nature; between the vertical beam and the horizontal beam. The cross-stress is Aristotelian and Chestertonian. Discussing Christianity's way of finding Aristotle's *mesotēs*, or balance, G. K. Chesterton characterises Christianity as 'like a huge and ragged and romantic rock, which, though it sways on its pedestal at a touch, yet, because its exaggerated excrescences exactly balance each other, is enthroned there for a thousand years'.¹⁶ In Christendom, he writes, 'apparent accidents balanced'. Hill's word-games – the expansion of 'crisis' into '[c]ross-stress'; the puns of 'flies' and 'held' – are also apparent accidents that aim to re-balance the awkwardly-weighted language through which they work.

Rhymes, too, are apparent accidents. Hill said in one of his lectures as Oxford's Professor of Poetry that a poem is to be 'hated for what its programmed rhyme schemes

¹⁴ *The Need for Roots*, pp. 70, 74.

¹⁵ For an examination of the meanings of work in Hill's poetry, see Peter McDonald, "'But to my Task": Work, Truth, and Metre in Later Hill', in *Geoffrey Hill: Essays on his Later Work*, ed. John Lyon and Peter McDonald, OUP, 2012, pp. 143–169.

¹⁶ G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, in *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, 23 vols., San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, i, p. 303; Chesterton's reference to Aristotle is at pp. 296–97. Chesterton uses the adjective *meson* rather than the noun *mesotēs*; both can be translated as mean, though Aristotle makes a distinction between the two that is elided in some English translations: 'Virtue, therefore, is a mean [*mesotēs*] state in the sense that it is able to hit the mean [*meson*]' (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 2. 6. 13–14, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), pp. 94–95). See Charles M. Young, 'Aristotle on Temperance', in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy IV: Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. John Peter Anton and Anthony Preus, State University of New York, 1991, pp. 107–08, 121. In this essay I use the noun *mesotēs*.

THE GLASS

twist you into confessing'.¹⁷ But, in Hill's poetry, the anxiety with rhymes is sometimes that they align and forge realities; and sometimes the anxiety is that, as hard as one might force them to, they cannot. Take his early poem 'The Pentecost Castle'. It is a poem about desiring and not possessing; and consequently desiring not to desire. What the poem's narrator is seeking seems contradictory: he wishes both for an everlasting love with an ever-lost woman and for loss of desire in death. But these are two halves of the same desire: for consummation in love. And, just as the narrator cannot be 'mystically espoused' (*Hymns to Our Lady of Chartres*, 7, p. 160) either to the human object of his desire or to Christ, the words, too, struggle to be reconciled in rhyme.

Here, rhyme is not 'programmed'; it emerges only at times and, where it does, its pattern differs. It accrues gradually, and goes on to fade and reappear continually. The sections in which rhyme is strongest are the twelfth and thirteenth: they represent moments of desperation, in which the rhymes feel forced together, first in autorhyme and then in bold repetitive sequences. The last two stanzas of section 12 find difference even in the starkest reiterations:

faithful to my desire
lost in the dream's grasp where
shall I find you everywhere
unmatched in my desire

each of us dispossessed
so richly in my sleep
I rise out of my sleep
crying like one possessed
(*'The Pentecost Castle'*, 12, *Tenebrae*, p. 119)

Though the ends of the lines may match, one need only travel backwards to find them somewhere, somehow, 'unmatched', as in the parallels of the first and fourth lines. The second line's 'where', ending the line like a question, is answered unhelpfully by 'everywhere'; the 'us' who are 'dispossessed' are subtracted to 'one possessed'; and the reality 'in my sleep' is never encountered 'out of my sleep'.

In the thirteenth section, the linguistic likenesses are so close as to be confusing. The proximity of the words evokes frustration in their very sound: how can it be that consummation is tangibly near and yet unattainable? The effort prompts paradoxes:

Splendidly-shining darkness
proud citadel of meekness
likening us our unlikeness
majesty of our distress

emptiness ever thronging
untenable belonging
how long until this longing
end in unending song

and soul for soul discover

¹⁷ Lecture at the University of Oxford, 8 March 2011, 'Eccentric to the endes of his Master or State', available at <http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/kebl/general/2011-hill-poetry-2.mp3>, accessed 26 November 2016.

THE GLASS

no strangeness to dissever
and lover keep with lover
a moment and for ever

(‘The Pentecost Castle’, 13, p. 119)

Everything here speaks of impossibility. Seven of the first eight lines are self-contained oxymorons, which the last four are left to attempt to resolve. Seen another way, the first six lines describe a single oxymoron – the consummation so eminently imaginable that it can be experienced vicariously, but that is in reality impossible – and the next six lines explain what this vicarious experience looks like. In both the second and third stanzas, a kind of linguistic Occam’s razor seems to be in action: the rhymes pare themselves away to their end. In the first, ‘thronging’, ‘belonging’, and ‘longing’, the latter a pared-down version of ‘belonging’, are completed by ‘song’, which rhymes with the first syllables of each but cuts off the gerund. The gerunds move and are longing; but ‘song’ simply is, in nounal perpetuity. Similarly, in the second stanza ‘discover’ loses a phoneme and becomes ‘dissever’, which in turn drops a syllable to find ‘lover’, and this is at last reduced to ‘ever’. Both ‘song’, in this context, and ‘ever’ are atemporal; and the eight lines above are all about the desire for atemporal consummation. The rhymes, not building to that end but dismantling to it, find themselves nevertheless having to start over again. The irony of this ‘unending song’ is that it fails even to end the song of this antepenultimate section of ‘The Pentecost Castle’. Here the ‘strangeness to dissever’ is constantly evident, as one rhyming word dissevers and estranges itself from another.

What is expressed about the impossibility of consummation in ‘The Pentecost Castle’ would not be possible without its fitful rhymes, its incomplete reconciliations of sound. In the poem ‘Ovid in the Third Reich’, the consummations offered by the rhymes are instead not merely incomplete reconciliations but misleading ones. These are rhymes, as Hill demonstrates, that ought not to chime, ends that should not have been arrived at. Here is Hill’s imagined Ovid transposed into the horror of Nazi Germany:

I love my work and my children. God
Is distant, difficult. Things happen.
Too near the ancient troughs of blood
Innocence is no earthly weapon.

I have learned one thing: not to look down
Too much upon the damned. They, in their sphere,
Harmonize strangely with the divine
Love. I, in mine, celebrate the love-choir.

(*King Log*, p. 39)

The technical and rhetorical poise of this poem, which hinges on its rhymes, allows it to sound perfectly unobjectionable. It is only the title that sheds light on the poem. With the title in mind, the reader can begin to perceive that the deceit of the speaker is revealed and subverted by the subtle confluences of the poem’s syntactic parallels, and most obviously of its rhymes. ‘I love my work and my children. God’: at first this appears to be a perfectly laudable list of priorities for a poet, or for anyone, in Nazi Germany. But it is no accident that the vague, tensile word ‘work’ comes first, before ‘children’, while ‘God’ is mentioned last and cut off on both sides by the full stop and the line break, grammatically isolated. He is made ‘distant, difficult’ by

his position on the line. In the circumstances, the distance and difficulty of God for the speaker is ostensibly reasonable; but, followed by the suspiciously unemotional '[t]hings happen', the sentence's function as an equivocation and an excuse for complicity starts to be manifest. ('Things happen' anticipates 'September Song', which comes four poems later in *King Log*: 'Things marched, | sufficient, to that end' (p. 44).) The cut-off 'God' is rhymed with 'blood'. The rhyme, also 'distant, difficult', and distinctly unsettling in the context of the Third Reich, undermines the poet: both words have ended up finishing their lines by default, having been pushed there, pushed as far out of the poet's conscious mind as possible (the words having been '[t]oo near', too close for comfortable thought); but, consequently, their off-key chime makes them stand out as extreme contradictions. The second rhyme is another dangerous parallel. 'Things happen' is, here, an eschewal of ethical responsibility; it is rhymed with 'earthly weapon'. Morality has been removed from the situation, and what is left is only the wielding of power over the weak, over those with '[i]nnocence'. The rhyme, another telling half-rhyme, is a demonstration of words' slipperiness and of their fragility under the pressure of authorial manipulation: the morally lax contingency of '[t]hings happen' is so easily reduced to the brutality of the 'earthly weapon'.

The question of what can be made to '[h]armonize strangely' is at the centre of this poem. The second stanza offers two more rhymes of contrast: 'down/divine' and 'their sphere/love-choir', in which 'their sphere' means the place of the 'damned'. They pair images of heaven and hell, claiming, in a Blakeian fashion, a relationship of affinity and even mutual dependence between the two. But this is not the strange harmony that is in fact suggested by the lines. How can the damned be said to harmonise with God's love, and how can the poet be so sure that he belongs to a different 'sphere'? The answer is in the lack of a parallel word for 'damned' in the poem: no one is deemed saved; the sphere the poet calls 'mine' is unsubstantiated. The 'damned' here are not the spiritually damned but those condemned, though innocent, by the régime. This is their strange harmony with God's 'Love', Christ, also condemned though innocent. The speaker's 'sphere' is an insulated bubble, from which he composes harmonies for the 'love-choir' that are strange because falsely achieved. The fifth line on its own summarises his vantage point: 'I have learned one thing: not to look down'. He is like someone at a great height, with eyes closed, refusing to acknowledge the danger of falling.

This, then, is Ovid's vision of the end: between the lines, a bleak one. But there are rhyming reconciliations in Hill, which acknowledge as usual their inevitable imperfection, but which come to see the sheer fact of words' likeness as a consummation in itself. The coincidences of language, words' ever-surprising capacity to be reconciled and near-reconciled, 'held and set apart' (*Al Tempo de' Tremuoti*, 17, p. 895), are considered as one with the contingencies of human life. For Hill, life, at the most profound level, is inexorably linguistic. At the end of life, in prayer, faith in the wedlock of language becomes paramount:

Intractability of happenstance
 Reduced to final supplication: Mary
 Mediatrix, absolve my word-memory
 Uprisen in this late self-hallowing trance.
 (*Al Tempo de' Tremuoti*, 19, p. 895)

The rhyme of 'happenstance' is sleepwalked into: 'trance'. But the etymology of the

THE GLASS

latter word, from the Latin *transire*, denotes a deeper sleep, meaning 'to go across'. This is what Hill's late rhymes demonstrate: a going across, from the certainty of life to the certainty of death, forming a connection and, like Mary, a mediation, between known and unknown.

The thirtieth poem in this final collection is italicised as a confession of its debt to Aleksandr Blok and his translator Lucy E. Vogel. It appears to be going across its Sienese cemetery in a transcending 'trance' of its own. Here is its last stanza:

*My soul, be still, even as you strive and love;
Neither urge onward nor yet hold me back.
It will come soon enough, that stark
Encounter | with the certainty of love.*
(*Al Tempo de' Tremuoti*, 30, p. 900)

The first and fourth lines of each stanza in this poem end on the same word. It is indeed a kind of 'certainty'. The rhyme, as *Cratylus's* Socrates would notice, pairs its words in order to try to reconcile realities. The stark half-rhyme of 'back' and 'stark' is enough of a jolt to evoke the predestined yet astonishing '[e]ncounter' in the last line. This encounter is predestined precisely because of the rhyme. The consummation of divine love is exactly as certain as that of the autorhyme. The autorhyme has come four times already, and by the structure of the poem is bound to come again. The penultimate line even offers the assurance: 'It will come soon enough'. Being bound, the autorhyme seems to bind with it love itself, obliging love to return at the end.

The season of Advent encourages Christians to see the end of life and the end of the world as related. At the end of Advent is a consummation: the coming of Christ, which foreshadows even more strongly the consummation of the world, the second coming. Hill's poetry sees the utterance as consummating if not consummate: it is imperfect, but it can bring about ends. There is no utterance quite as self-reconciled as 'O', as in the O Antiphons. The seventh of Hill's 'Psalms of Assize' in the collection *Canaan* (p. 229), which reckons 'how it ends | how it goes at the last day', hears what it calls '[t]he great O of advent', the 'O that nothing may touch'. The pun unsettles it: is the 'O' truly untouchable, or can the word 'nothing' touch it? This 'O', whether complete or never quite, nevertheless brings about the end with a consummate verbal flourish: 'its ultimate | cadence | its fall impeccable'.

Christian Names: Some Aspects of Literary Onomastics

Paul Cavill

LITERARY ONOMASTICS IS, AS MIGHT BE GUESSED FROM THE NAME, THE DISCIPLINE OF interpreting literature through the names it uses. The idea was commonplace in medieval times, but in recent centuries there has been a reaction against medieval 'allegory', with the assumption that it is both over-complicated and profoundly fanciful, which has thrown the whole notion that names in literature might *mean* something under a cloud. This is at least partly due to the fact that most appellatives in Present-Day English do not, in fact, mean much; the link with etymology and semantics has faded. People call their children Nigel without any sense that the child might be dark-haired; their street might be called The Ridings without any sense that it might be a third part of something (or indeed have an association with horses); or their terraced house might be called Ivy Dene with little sign of ivy or a valley. But while there must have been people in the Middle Ages and later who missed some of the more complex and subtle meanings of names in literature, there was and still is an expectation that such names would have an impact and role in the overall scheme of composition and reception. This expectation was shaped first by the Bible itself, but then by Christian teaching.

My aim in this paper is to give some sense of how onomastics has been deployed in the Bible, in Christian thought, and in English literature. The topic embraces both a linguistic methodology across languages and also literary stylistics in texts, and for this reason is difficult to summarise briefly.¹ I discuss some aspects of naming and how and what names mean, starting with the Bible. Then I explore some aspects of the history and interpretation of Biblical names and how they influenced the literary onomastics of Middle and Early Modern English. I close with some detailed reflections on possible interpretations of the use of one name in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.

In recent critical literature, two extremes of view have been called Cratyllic and Hermogenean, after characters in Plato's dialogue *Cratylus*.² Cratyllic names are meaningful, whereas Hermogenean names are not. The Cratyllic tradition of name-interpretation is a long one, and perhaps more influential with regard to personal names than to place-names. But both types figure in the Bible. The names of Abram and Sarai are changed in Genesis 17, as is Saul's in the New Testament, to reflect changes in status. Bible footnotes tell us that Abram means 'exalted father', while Abraham means 'father of many'; and while it is not quite so obvious what Sarai means (probably 'Jah is prince'), Sarah means 'princess', and thus the name changes are motivated.³ Saul's

¹ Treatment of all major aspects of naming, including methodologies in literary onomastics, is to be found in Carole Hough (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, OUP, 2016.

² See the discussion in Alastair Fowler, *Literary Names: Personal Names in English Literature*, OUP, 2012, pp. 1–22.

³ There is a good deal of uncertainty about the interpretation of some Hebrew names. The footnotes referred to are those of the New International Version of the Bible, but NIV does not gloss Sarai, and many scholars believe the names are practically identical. The Geneva Bible, following Jerome (see further below) gives Sarai as 'my dame or mastres [mistress]' and Sarah as 'a ladie or dame'. 'Jah is prince' is the interpretation given by Robert Young, *Analytical*

THE GLASS

transition to Paul is made at Acts 13:9 'Saul who is also called Paul' in the episode with Elymas, but no explanation is given, and the assumption presumably is that the reader understands the appropriateness of a name meaning 'small' for the man who characterised himself as 'the least of the apostles'. Again, the names of places are changed: Luz to Bethel and Jebus(i) to Jerusalem. After Jacob's encounter with God in a dream at Luz, he 'called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first' (Gen 28:19). Whether Jacob or the writer knew that Luz might mean 'bending' is unclear, but they certainly knew that Bethel means 'house of God', echoing Jacob's earlier exclamation, 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God' (Gen 28:17). There is no particular story told to account for the change of name of Jebus(i), probably 'trodden down', to Jerusalem, traditionally 'possession of peace', but it is frequently referred to in the Bible (Jos 18:28, Jdg 19:10 etc.). The original names of these places seem to be ordinary toponyms, places probably associated with particular forms of the landscape; but they are changed for etiological reasons, named to recall events or the aspirations of the people.

These onomastic changes are variously repeated and interpreted in the Middle Ages. Jerome was instrumental, through his knowledge of Hebrew, in establishing a tradition of Cratylic interpretation of the names of Scripture in the Christian world. His *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* gave brief interpretations of Hebrew names,⁴ and the work was largely quoted by the Protestant Geneva Bible of 1560.⁵ Before that, however, it was taken up and used with a mixture of linguistic skill, literary imagination and homiletic enthusiasm by Isidore of Seville in his encyclopaedic work the *Etymologiae*.⁶ This became a handbook for allegorical commentators throughout the medieval period. The interpretations given, particularly by Isidore, are not quite those of sober modern scholarship. Of Saul–Paul he writes:

Saul in Hebrew speech means 'temptation,' because he was at first involved in temptation of the Church, for he was a persecutor; hence he had that name when he was persecuting Christians. Afterwards, with the name changed, from Saul was made Paul, which is interpreted 'the wonderful one' or 'the chosen one.' Wonderful, because he performed many signs or because from east to west he preached the gospel of Christ to all the nations. Chosen, as the Holy Spirit says in the Acts of the Apostles (13:2), 'Separate me Barnabas and Paul, for the work whereunto I have chosen them.' Further in Latin speech Paul (Paulus; cf. paulus, 'little') is so called from 'little,' whence he himself says (I Corinthians 15:9), 'For I am the least of all the apostles.' Thus when he was Saul he was proud and haughty; when Paul, humble and little. Therefore we speak thus, 'after a little (paulo) I will see you,' that is, after a short time. Now because he became little, he himself says (cf. I Corinthians 15:8), 'For I am the last [of all] the apostles,' and (Ephesians 3:8), 'To me, the least of all the saints.' ... Saul, then, [was]

Concordance to the Bible, 7th rev. ed. William B. Stevenson, Edinburgh, George Adam Young and Company, 1890, and further interpretations of Hebrew names are from Young unless otherwise stated.

⁴ [Jerome] *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera, pars I, opera exegetica I ... Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 72, Turnhout, 1959. References to Jerome are to this edition.

⁵ Lloyd E. Berry (ed.), *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, Peabody MA, Hendrickson, 2007 (tables and appendices unpaginated).

⁶ Stephen Barney et al. (trans.), *Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, CUP, 2006. References to Isidore are to this edition.

THE GLASS

called by a changed name so that [he] would indeed be new even in [his] name, like Abraham and Sarah (Barney et al., p. 169).

In a discussion of King Saul, Isidore gives a slightly different sense for the name: 'Saul [means] "petition," for it is well known how the Hebrew people petitioned for him as a king for themselves, and received him not according to God, but according to their own will' (Barney et al., p. 164). Isidore's interpretations are convoluted, with Hebrew, Greek and Latin serving to build meanings which nod in the direction of etymology; but their main function here is to uncover the mystical senses of the names and make them bear homiletic freight. The Isidorean style of onomastic interpretation is not completely unexampled among preachers today.

Jerome's interpretation was more restrained than his later copier. After their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and the promise that Eve will have sorrow in childbirth but before she has children, Genesis 3:20 tells us that Adam proleptically 'called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living'. Jerome expands this a little: 'Eva calamitas aut uae uel uita' (Jerome, p. 65, 'Eve = calamity or woe or life'). Isidore, not to be outdone, etymologises Jerome's Latin: 'Eve (*Eva*) means "life" or "calamity" or "woe" (*vae*). Life, because she was the origin of being born; calamity and woe because by her lying she was the cause of death – for "calamity" takes its name from "falling" (*cadere*)' (Barney et al., p. 162). These ideas are developed rather attractively in medieval lyrics about Mary. At the annunciation, Gabriel greets Mary with *Ave* 'hail', and as the Latin hymn *Ave maris stella* puts it, 'Receiving that greeting from the mouth of Gabriel, [Mary], establish us in peace, reversing the name of Eve'. The translation by William Herebert (c. 1330) has

þylk 'Aue' þat þou vonge in spel
Of þe aungeles mouhþ kald Gabriel,
In gryht ous sette and shyld vrom shome,
þat turnst abakward eues nome,

Gulty monnes bond vnbynd,
Bryng lyht tyl hoem þat boeth blynd...

[May that same 'Ave' that you received in the message
from the mouth of the Angel Gabriel
establish us in peace and shield us from shame;
it turns Eva's name back to front,

may it unbind guilty humanity's bond
and bring light to those who are blind...]⁷

The greeting of the angel at the annunciation, 'Ave', not only reverses Eve's name in Latin literally, but also brings about the reversal of the Fall, brings peace for woe (*vae*), sight to the blind and all the other transformations of the Gospel. Mary is also figured as the second Eve after the pattern of Christ as the second Adam in I Cor 15.⁸ The three meaningful configurations of the letters of the name in Latin are neatly

⁷ See the collection of Middle English texts, 'with an edition Herebert's works', including 'Ave maris stella', at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/Herebert/1:8.7?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>, accessed 21 October 2013. Translation mine.

⁸ See further Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*, Clarendon Press, 1968, pp. 115–16.

THE GLASS

and economically used to explore the connections between the name and texts, both Biblical and extra-Biblical. It is undoubtedly conventional for the time in the way it uses the texts, but it is a thoroughly literary — and literate — exploration of the name. The writer expects his English audience to understand and appreciate the ingenuity of the method, but also the beauty of the ideas; while it is a Latin anagram, it is not merely a juggling with letters. It resonates with the postmodern delight in playful language.

Jerome's sobriety and learning in onomastic matters appealed to scholars beyond the Middle Ages. His *Liber interpretationis* was borrowed in part by the translators and commentators of the Geneva Bible. The table of the interpretation of proper names in the Old Testament given as an appendix in that work attempted to redress the 'wickednes of time, and the blindnes of the former age' by explaining what the names of the Bible mean so that children 'may have testimonies by their very names, that they are within that faithful familie that in all their doing had euer God before their eyes, and that they are bounde by these their names to serue God from their infancie'. Biblical personal names like Peter, Paul, David and Adam were very rarely given in England until after the Norman Conquest. But thereafter Biblically-derived personal names were given, but without much regard for their meaning. The Puritan attempt to abate the wickedness of Hermogenean naming had some limited effect: some fairly sententious names like Makepeace or Continnence were given; some of the more obscure Old Testament personal names became temporarily popular like Obadiah or Hezekiah. Bunyan's characters such as Mr Holy-Man or Mr Valiant-for-Truth (from Jer 9:3) reflect this adoption of sententious and Biblical names for individuals. But Bunyan may have been instrumental in undermining these patterns of naming since the majority of such names in his work relate to negative traits, as in Mr Facing-bothways, Mrs Love-the-flesh and Mr Worldly-Wiseman.⁹ It is to be doubted that the obscurer Biblical names remained meaningful for long, or, in the case of the sententious English names, that they were very popular with children so named, and the 'wickednes of time' overtook them.

Nevertheless, in literature names such as Obadiah Slope or Uriah Heep inevitably signify some aspects of character, and are not just a random association of syllables. Slope is of the Evangelical persuasion, ambitious and controlling, Heep particularly 'umble', but insincerely so: the names in context seem to be designed to connote false humility and duplicity. In these and similar cases, the names themselves are unlikely to have any particular reference to their etymological Hebrew denotation, and probably not to the Biblical prophet or soldier so named either. The significance depends on the negative associations of the names as attached to and used by Puritans, and they carry with them those historical socio-semantic accretions.

In my essay for the *Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* I discuss further the history of literary onomastics through a number of examples. I would like to conclude this essay by discussing an example relevant to Oxford, where the annual conference of the Christian Literary Studies Group takes place. It may perhaps illustrate some of the problems that modern readers face with literary onomastics.

It is widely recognised that the name 'Beersheba' given to the suburb of Christminster where Jude (the Obscure) stays in the eponymous novel, is overwhelmingly likely in 'real life' to be the Oxford suburb of Jericho, as the Walton

⁹ For some more extreme examples of Puritan names and the notion that the negative names might have contributed to their decline, see Richard Coates, 'Names', in Richard Hogg and David Denison (eds.), *A History of the English Language*, CUP, 2006, pp. 312–51.

Street pub-name *Jude the Obscure* indicates. Hardy could simply have replaced one Biblical name with another in a rather random way, though the reader seldom has the sense that naming in Hardy is random. It is not impossible, for example, that Hardy was thinking of Jude's attempts to break into the city, here Christminster/Oxford, from outside, as Joshua did Jericho, when he remodelled the name. But it is worth exploring further what possible resonances the name might have had for the author and his readers.

In 'real life' such a name as Jericho would have been originally given to a place on the outskirts of the town as an indicator of remoteness. There is (or was) a Jerico Farm [sic] at a remote spot to the east of Nottingham on the Fosse Way, and a Jericho Road on the outskirts of Balderton in Nottinghamshire; there is (in a similar vein) a Nineveh Farm on the outskirts of Nuneham Courtenay in Oxfordshire. Names suggesting remoteness without any Biblical reference include Botany Bay and California.¹⁰ It happens that the Biblical name Beersheba is also a name used to indicate one extremity of the land settled by the Israelites: the phrase 'from Dan to Beersheba' is used several times to signify and include 'all Israel', from the remotest parts (Jdg 20:1, I Sam 3:20, I Kgs 4:25). Beersheba in the novel could, then, function perfectly well as a marker of remoteness much as Jericho did in the Bible: it is not implausible that Hardy knew the origin and implication of the names in both local custom and Biblical usage and simply substituted one for the other. At Beersheba, Jude is as far from his dreams as he can be, while yet being within the Promised Land.

The Bible and Christian tradition are repeatedly used as devices of plot development by Hardy. Among the more obvious examples in *Jude the Obscure*, Jude and Sue's fortunes take a turn for the worse when they restore the tables of the Ten Commandments in a country church, thus falling under condemnation for their adultery; and Jude whispers the lament of Job as he lies dying, without the hope of restoration that the Biblical text offers. We might also recall that St Jude is the patron saint of lost causes. Sensitised by Hardy's insistent use of this frame of reference and Biblical language, the reader might speculate that there is deeper significance to the name Beersheba in the novel. In the Bible, it was the place where Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant and Abraham offered sacrifices (Gen 21:31); Genesis specifies that it was so named 'because there they swore both of them'. It is in Beersheba in Hardy's novel that Sue Brideshead tells Jude that she intends to marry Phillotson, sacrificing herself and entering into a covenant that neither she nor Jude wants. Hardy has a tendency to use the Bible ironically, and here the breaking of one covenant and swearing of another by one participant but not both, and the offering of sacrifices by one participant, makes play with the associations of the Biblical name.

The use in the Bible of literary onomastics, and the role of the Bible in historical literary naming is varied, but clearly demonstrable. This goes some way towards answering an objection to literary onomastics as a methodology of literary study voiced by T. L. Markey: 'there can be no continuity to literary onomastics, and no meaningful history that appeals to implication'. In this particular branch of literary onomastics there is evidence of continuity and development, and a meaningful history of implication. A similar objection of Markey's, 'one cannot make a science of sensitivity', is not quite so easily dismissed.¹¹ While we can readily observe the use

¹⁰ See John Field, *English Field-Names: A Dictionary*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1972, appendix 2: Distance from village, pp. 275–6.

¹¹ T. L. Markey, 'Crisis and Cognition in Onomastics', *Names*, 30 (1982), 129–142: 134–5.

THE GLASS

of the Bible name Beersheba in Hardy's novel, we cannot be sure what implications the name might have had for either Hardy or his readers. But while it might not be a science, literary criticism nevertheless must be sensitive to such implications.

Names are coherently and imaginatively used in English literature for literary purposes. The range of techniques used is extensive: etymology (including folk- or Isidorean etymology), association, and implication. Some aspects dominate in different periods, so there is undoubtedly a history and tradition that can be traced; some elements of continuity are also evident in the use of names for Christian reference and teaching. Literary onomastics is a flexible tool for interpretation, and I hope that I have shown that it can enrich our understanding of the context and content of literary work.

Book Reviews

Thomas M. Crisp, Steve L. Porter, & Gregg A. Ten Elshof (eds.) *Christian Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century: Prospects and Perils*, Eerdmans, 2014, xii + 196 pp., £16.99, 9780802871442.

Overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of writing on Christian scholarship and higher education, Amos Yong, one of the contributors to this volume, exclaims: 'there is by now an industry of such writings that would take any researcher more than a year-long sabbatical to digest!' Do we really need any more?

Perhaps we do.

Each era presents new challenges for theology, and new complexities for academic disciplines – both of these demand that we rethink how Christian scholarship is to be understood and pursued. Secondly, scholarship is fundamentally an ongoing dialogue, not just within and between disciplines, but about the very fundamental principles and perspectives of the disciplines themselves. Fresh theological understandings encounter shifts in culture and disciplines, as when the modern deterministic worldview moves to a postmodern relativistic paradigm of chaos theory and quantum mechanics. This cannot leave Christian scholarship untouched. This is where this new collection of essays is a useful contribution.

Somewhat like a themed food-tasting event, some essays are closer to the theme, others stimulate the taste buds and leave you wanting more, while still others are a niche experience, or an acquired taste. With its diverse understandings of the nature and place of Christian scholarship today, this book is valuable both for those starting out as Christian scholars (postgraduates or undergraduates), or for those already on their way, yet interested in fresh perspectives on their journey.

This collection was commissioned by Biola University's newly launched Center for Christian Thought, which promotes Christian scholarship that examines both the Christian community and the wider world. This particular collection of essays was the outcome of interdisciplinary discussions between Christian thinkers on the question 'What is Christian scholarship?'

The essays address this theme from varied perspectives and angles. There is thoughtful engagement with topics from the impulse and formation of the Christian scholar, the nature of Christian scholarship, and the structure of Christian scholarship, to the presence of the Holy Spirit in education. The absence of a rigorous theological engagement with art is discussed and an attempt is made to create a 'Christ-shaped philosophy'. Barth's concept of human nature is explored and the possibility of a Cross-centred Christian scholarship is queried. Further, the role of the Holy Spirit in the context of the university is examined, the possible danger of triumphalism within Christian scholarship is considered, and a theological argument for the need for dissent within the venture of Christian scholarship is presented.

Three of the essays in the collection respond fairly directly to the question of the nature of Christian scholarship. Nicholas Wolterstorff's opening essay '*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*' is not just an ardent affirmation of the Christian scholar and the pursuit of Christian scholarship, but is also an impassioned argument for the academic life, generated by wonder and the desire for wisdom. The three opening questions, a touchstone for the 'why' of scholarship – 'Do you love it? Are you good at it? And is it worthwhile?' – extend a refreshing invitation to fall in love with one's chosen

subject. This is something we rarely discuss. Yet, surely, our relationship with a God of love implies that what we pursue, even in academia, must arise out of love and be carried out with love. Wolterstorff also explores the ‘how’ of scholarship: the ‘doing’ and ‘making’ of the activity. He argues that the Christian voice must speak with grace towards others, and at the same time be a scholarly and rigorous voice that contributes to the discipline. There is a touch of impatience and frustration as Wolterstorff makes a passing reference to evangelical students who speak with more of a ‘Bible camp’ voice in the philosophy class than that of academic scholarship. His belief that the Christian scholar is called to pursue holistic formation, as opposed to merely an engagement of the mind, or theology, or a narrowly conceived ‘integration’, is well worth pondering. (These are themes considered more fully by James K.A. Smith in the context of formation in the Christian university, in his book *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Baker Academic, 2009).)

Wolterstorff’s essay is complemented by both Alvin Plantinga’s ‘On Christian Scholarship’ and M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall’s ‘Structuring the Scholarly Imagination: Strategies for Christian Engagement with the Disciplines’. Plantinga explores the role of Scripture in determining the nature of a Christian scholar’s dual engagement with their disciplines: firstly, to critique aspects of the discipline (in Plantinga’s case, science) that do not resonate with Biblical truth; secondly, to strive to engage in a way that accords with Scriptural perspectives. Plantinga’s use of Augustine’s distinction between the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas Mundi* unfortunately generates a defensiveness towards and a negative attitude to scholarship, especially when compared to Wolterstorff, leading to a subtle sense that Christian scholarship is pitted against secular scholarship.

In contrast to both Wolterstorff and Plantinga, Lewis Hall’s essay is designed to address in a practical way how to begin the task of scholarship – the construction of the ‘scaffolding’ that supports the work of scholarship, and cultivating a Christian scholarly imagination. Hall observes that Christian scholarship is impossible in the absence of a rigorous theological understanding that both informs scholarly thought and forms ‘moral intuitions’. Particularly valuable in this essay is a section on the ‘Typology of Modes of Engagement’ that manages to be both philosophical and practical – it even includes a table with a helpful summary. Despite being somewhat long and repetitive, written more as a series of quotations from various authors than as a critical engagement with their ideas, the essay would be of interest to undergraduates or postgraduates who are starting to ask ‘what is Christian scholarship?’ and, more importantly, ‘how can I begin?’.

Of particular value for those in the arts and humanities is Jonathan A. Anderson’s essay ‘The (In)visibility of Theology in Contemporary Art Criticism’, which focuses on the inconspicuousness of Christian scholarship in the arts. He charts the growing chasm between the theoretical discourse and critique of art, and the religious (or more specifically Christian) engagement. The discussion of the reasons for this invisibility, as well as the careful analysis of how we engage with the gradual return of religion makes this an extremely helpful essay for Christian scholars who are passionate about the arts. Like Wolterstorff, Anderson recognises how easy it is to lapse into ‘Christian language’ (‘Bible camp language’). A further difficulty is that, in the interface between theology and the arts, ‘the majority of it resides in worlds of academic theology’ as opposed to that of art criticism. Anderson believes it is imperative that we cultivate scholarly theological engagement (as opposed to dogmatic assertions) and that we do it in scholarly language to scholarly standards. He believes that theological *scholarly*

engagement can lead to what he calls a ‘thickening’ of the understanding of art (and literature and other artistic forms), an example of how theology can legitimately enhance a discipline. In the current climate, where theology is gradually making a scholarly return in the arts, this is both timely and beneficial to Christian scholars.

Both Paul K. Moser’s ‘Toward Christ-Shaped Philosophy’ and Amos Yong’s ‘The Holy Spirit and the Christian University: The Renewal of Evangelical Higher Education’ focus on the narrower context of scholarship in a Christian university. I couldn’t help wonder whether Moser’s essay might not, as Anderson observed in the arts, reside more in the world of theology than in critique or engagement. Moser’s essay raises the question of the nature of Christian scholarship: instead of engaging more deeply with secular understandings, should it carve out ground for itself? Moser believes that the Apostle Paul contrasts philosophy with Christ, and that Paul considers philosophy to be ‘outside the authority of Christ’, and ‘dangerous to human freedom’. This is a debatable interpretation of Paul’s comments on secular wisdom. However, Moser, along these lines, advocates a ‘Christ-shaped philosophy’ that assigns primacy to the Gospel and doctrinal truths. Engagement with secular philosophy, for Moser, appears to be about pursuing what can be accommodated directly within the Gospel paradigm. The question of whether such a cloistered (in my opinion) philosophy is able to hold its own in a secular or pluralist context, or have fruitful dialogue with those outside of the community of faith is unclear. Surely philosophy, both as a scholarly discipline, and as the pursuit of wisdom, should embrace a wider field of discourse in the name of the Creator of all life? And what of that joy of the journey itself in the possibility of conversation with those of different persuasion, and the wide, deeply-needed engagement with ethics, suffering, and morality? Should not a Christ-shaped philosophy be wrestling with these?

George Hunsinger’s essay ‘Barth on What it Means to Be Human: A Christian Scholar Confronts the Options’ is a useful example of how theology and philosophy can dialogue on a topic central to both: the question of human nature. Presenting the six aspects of Barth’s theological anthropology and his interrogation of four secular anthropologies (naturalism, existentialism, idealism and neo-orthodoxy), Hunsinger examines these in the light of more recent philosophical trends of thought. The outcome makes for richer and more informed philosophical discourse, something that contrasts sharply with Moser’s ‘Christ-shaped philosophy’.

Yong’s essay, focused on Christian higher education, seeks a ‘pneumatological vision of higher education’, which might be formulated and articulated solely within Christian universities and colleges. An extensive analysis of the Renewal movement and its impact on scholarship and education precedes an exploration of the working of the Spirit through the charisms within a Christian university, in formation and in scholarship. This, Yong believes, can offer different ‘modalities of knowing’. There is an echo of Wolterstorff in upholding the need for formation rather than the mere shaping of worldviews. Much of what is offered is relevant to any sphere of Christian work or vocation, and not specific to the enterprise of scholarship. I was a little disappointed by the lack of discussion on the presence and working of the Holy Spirit hovering over *all* creation, hallowing our world, but this might reflect more on the theological difference of our respective perspectives than on the intention of the essay. I believe a Christian scholar can and should contribute to secular scholarship in a secular university, in its exploration of God’s world and its meaning.

Two essays – Craig J. Slane’s ‘The Cross and Christian Scholarship’ and Natasha

Duquette's 'Dauntless Spirits: Towards a Theological Aesthetics of Collaborative Dissent' present the imperatives of justice and dissent in Christian scholarship in the attempt to restore righteousness. Slane's essay is an expansive exploration of the dynamics of exclusion and expulsion that arise *within* Christian scholarship, not outside of it. This is something that perhaps all Christian scholars should consider lest we be complicit in injustice. A willingness to reconstruct theology – as the Apostle Paul had to do – is fundamental to ensuring that we, as scholars, do not act 'in the best interests of the god we think we know', which 'runs precisely contrary to the actual will of God'. Two examples provided by Slane are significant here: the historical collusion with empire through a specific theology of creation that was used in the displacement of races; and, closer to home, the exclusions practiced by Christian scholars and within Christian universities in the way difference is addressed – 'ideological, religious, political, racial, sexual ...'. He warns of the danger of 'a sectarian or tribal spirit', a bias that is not challenged, which creates a social order within scholarship. Slane's rationale is an alternative reading of the traditional perspective on Justin Martyr, and a fascinating re-reading of the Johannine prologue, which also at its heart recounts an exclusion of the divine *Logos* based on a human *logos* of violence. This essay reveals a fascinating blend of theology, scholarship, and philosophical engagement in a kind of 'show and tell', as it addresses the question 'what is scholarship?'.

Duquette's essay, in a similar vein to Slane's, presents a theological discussion on 'ethically convicting collaborative dissent' in the book of Acts, and in Burke's theologically referenced discourse on the sublime ('powerful and terrifying, manifested in Old Testament "justice"') and the beautiful ('weak and comforting, displayed in New Testament love'), which appear irreconcilable to him. Duquette discusses her research on eighteenth and nineteenth century female scholars' writings – women doubly marginalised by being members of an ostracised non-conformist Protestant church *and* being women. Writing theories of aesthetics as well as poetry from the edges of their community, these women are held up as an example for Christian scholars of today. Duquette argues, convincingly, that Christian scholars – both those writing from the margins and those writing on their behalf – can be inspired by these women from the past who ensured that they were heard beyond their spheres. Incorporating collaborative dissent into theological aesthetics is a requisite for a holistic, prophetic voice in scholarship.

In 'Steering a Course between Fundamentalism and Transformationalism: J. Gresham Machen's View of Christian Scholarship', Dariusz M. Bryćko places two Christian theologians' understanding of Christian scholarship beside each other. He reflects on two questions: what makes scholarship intellectual, and what makes education Christian. Two aspects of the essay are worth consideration. Machen's impatience with fundamentalism was complemented by his high view of scholarship within the church and in evangelism: he believed in a highly educated clergy, and the need for evangelists to access the best scholarly thought. This is important for Christian scholars to consider in a climate where church life and scholarly life appear to part company, especially in the UK. This is reflected also by Slane, who believes that Christian scholars are called to 'rescue Christian belief and practice from various misperceptions and distortions'. Bryćko's comparison of Kuyper's optimistic 'triumphalist tone', with Machen's pessimism – each arising from a different social milieu – reveals the reality for Christian scholars: that our cultural experiences influence our Christian outlook, as well as our scholarly thinking and vision.

Ultimately, this volume of essays is an attempt to answer and explore the central question – ‘What is Christian scholarship?’ However, just as the editors of the volume acknowledge the difficulty of the question, so the volume itself demonstrates this. It is nevertheless a helpful start to that conversation. It is also a rich collection of signposts and pointers, sometimes in a passing comment in the essay or in the wealth of references and footnotes, that can further our exploration of what Christian scholarship means. The obvious bias of some of the essays towards Christian scholarship in Christian universities in the US detracted somewhat from the potentially wider appeal of those essays, and will be somewhat disappointing for those who wrestle with Christian scholarship in secular universities. I would nevertheless recommend the book to all who are intending to engage seriously with some of the fundamental questions asked here.

Maithrie White

Francesca Bugliani Knox and David Lonsdale (eds.), *Poetry and the Religious Imagination: The Power of the Word*, Ashgate, 2015, xii + 255 pp., £62.99, 9781472426246

This beautifully produced volume offers a multi-author collection of fourteen essays arising from the first *Power of the Word* conference. The opening essays lay the contextual groundwork for what follows by examining possible links between theology and literature as well as attempting to define the, or a, religious imagination – the poet’s, but also the reader’s. Others deal with theoretical and spiritual approaches to the act of reading. As regards poetry, individual essays focus on Aquinas, Dante, Shakespeare, Wallace Stevens, Eliot, Rilke, and Henry Constable; Denise Levertov is the only woman poet represented.

Some essays are not directly concerned with poetry as such, but with works of the imagination that the essays’ authors consider poetic. Michael Paul Gallagher’s essay on ‘Identifying a Religious Imagination’ offers a stimulating interpretation of Terrence Malick’s film *The Tree of Life* (2011). If any contemporary film director has a poetic visual sensibility, it is Malick. But only in his conclusion does Gallagher turn to poetry proper, with a few brief remarks on a Seamus Heaney poem (whose title, ‘Crossings xviii’, is omitted). Gallagher’s example is debatable since, for this reader, he fails to show how a religious imagination is at work here.

Individual essays within the five parts of the volume do not always cohere easily together. The essay on Eliot appears in a section otherwise devoted to general considerations on reading and spirituality, and would have been better suited to the second part which, after an exploration of the concept of religious imagination, focuses successively on Aquinas, Dante, Shakespeare and Stevens. The ambition but also difficulty of the enterprise can be gauged by the struggle which some contributors have with their terminology. Some words are printed in speech marks – ‘actuality’, ‘making’, ‘hypostatic’. In his essay about Stevens, John McDade writes: ‘The world is strangely an autonomous extension *ad extra* of the otherness, the generativity within God that achieves “hypostatic” status.’ Whether the sentence gains in clarity from the speech marks on either side of ‘hypostatic’ is a moot point. ‘Why Theologians are Interested in Literature’, by Georg Langenhorst, shifts from a subtitle announcing ‘Theology and Literature’ to the content of that subpart which focuses, rather, on ‘religion’ and ‘literature’. Surely the terms ‘theology’ and ‘religion’ are not interchangeable.

Olivier-Thomas Venard's 'Religious Imagination and Poetic Audacity in Thomas Aquinas' is one of the essays that consider theology proper most deeply. In the light of an examination of prose texts by Aquinas dealing with poetry and imagination, Venard offers a penetrating reading of Aquinas's familiar Eucharistic poem 'Adoro Te Devote'. Further consideration of the poem might include an exploration of the poem's appeal to English poets of different eras: both Crashaw and Hopkins translated it into English (four versions by Hopkins are available).

One tutelary spirit presiding over this essay collection is Ignatius of Loyola. In 'Reading as Active Contemplation', Jennifer Reek aligns Ignatius, Hélène Cixous and Yves Bonnefoy in order to form a triad which she admits is 'unlikely'. Such an alignment seems to owe something to Barthes's similarly cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, diachronic *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (1976) upon which Reek draws. Her association of Ignatius and Cixous, a pairing she (rightly) calls 'an odd couple', seems questionable: ever since his conversion, Ignatius's single preoccupation was the love of God and the cure of souls in full allegiance to the Holy See. Even if one were to accept that what links such writers is 'a willingness to go into the depths', while Bonnefoy was a poet (d. 1 July 2016) and Cixous is free to call herself one, Ignatius would not have called himself a poet nor was interested in being considered one. Incidentally, Ignatius's autobiography is entirely composed in the third person, a distancing device Reek does not pick up on. Writing the self is an important line of inquiry when discussing texts that focus on the individual's relationship with God: Ignatius's 'he' represents a kind of alter ego for the author and is meant as a guarantee of the objectivity of his account.

Antonio Spadaro SJ's 'Reading Poetry as Spiritual Transformation' is, in this reader's eyes, a better reading of Ignatius and Barthes than Reek's because Spadaro sounds out Barthes's text more deeply, critiquing it in a manner which could itself be considered Ignatian. Both Spadaro and Reek describe Barthes's 'four levels' of responding to Ignatius's text. But Spadaro goes further by suggesting that 'the *Spiritual Exercises* offer more levels of communication than the four described by Barthes'. This interpretation is convincing not only because it refuses to take Barthes at face value but because it brings into play the Ignatian *magis*, God's call in the *Exercises* to ever-greater depth and quality in what we do. Perhaps because of the intellectual risk involved in bringing together her three disparate authors, Reek's essay is nevertheless one of those this reader learnt most from. In its way her essay, too, enacts the Ignatian *magis*, an analogy to which Reek finds in Derrida's fine injunction: 'When you arrive "at the end" (of a thought, of a description etc.) take one more step. When you have taken one more step, continue, take the next step.'

Within a convincing discussion of the possible relationship between divine and human justice and mercy in *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice*, Paul S. Fiddes introduces 'the space of imagination in which tensions can be explored', a space which Shakespeare 'opens up'. But if 'imagination transcends itself towards mystery', surely the result is apophaticism. Fiddes can only repeat in his conclusion that 'Christian theological concepts' act as 'a call to explore a space that is being opened up so that we can experience something transcending it'. This requires some qualification. Any great theatrical production – and Fiddes does not seem to link his spatial metaphor to the stage or theatre as spaces – can offer an experience of transcendence. The authors of the essays often have recourse to spatial imagery: not only the 'depths' in Reek's essay – cf. Mark S. Burrows's idea of the reader entering 'the uncharted depths of [her]

own “interior” – but also the language of journeying, inwardness and outwardness, language which is more descriptive than analytical or critical. On a broader note, the volume neglects contemporary religious poetry. As regards English-language poetry alone, one thinks of work by Geoffrey Hill (d. 30 June 2016), Rowan Williams, Kevin Hart, Les Murray, and Michael Symmons Roberts, none of whom gets a look-in here. (Williams is briefly mentioned twice as a critic.)

The final essay in the collection, by Lilla Grindlay, examines the poetry of Henry Constable (1562–1613). It is perhaps the only essay here to address the word ‘power’ in the volume title with its political connotations. Grindlay close-reads Constable’s sonnets to the Virgin Mary as not merely devotional but also polemical, since they venerate the Virgin at the expense of the Virgin Queen. The encounter Grindlay describes is fascinating, crossing the secular literary tradition of the sonnet form with Counter-Reformation theology and devotional practice.

Such critical work as this volume, on the frontier between poetry and theology, poses problems while generating fruitful debate. The aim of all theology and spirituality is not aesthetics or linguistic expression, but rather the search for God. Where poetry comes into this search is a question not easily answered. For Aquinas, as the late Walter Ong SJ wrote, Christian theology and poetry ‘lie at opposite poles of human knowledge. However, the very fact that they are opposite extremes gives them something of a common relation to that which lies between them: they both operate on the periphery of human intellection.’ The transcendence to which several of these essays appeal is fine as far as it goes. Yet if God is anywhere He, and poetry too, surely inhabit the ‘loose ends and jumble of our common world’ (Auden).

Adrian Grafe

Vernon White, *Purpose and Providence: Taking Soundings in Western Thought, Literature and Theology*, Bloomsbury/T. & T Clark, 2015, viii + 176 pp, £85, 9780567663429

‘I don’t believe in God, but I miss Him,’ confesses Julian Barnes in his memoir, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008). This longing for the transcendent typifies a strand of supposedly sceptical thought that cannot quite overcome its desire for meaning, purpose and, perhaps, the divine. Barnes is one of many figures, disbelieving or devout, whose lament for meaning misplaced is explored in *Purpose and Providence*, a fascinating exploration of the search for meaning in Western culture. Postmodernity is but one phase of a long history of the struggle to believe, or to establish a firm ethical position against believing, that a final purpose exists for life in the universe. Vernon White, Canon Theologian at Westminster Abbey and Visiting Professor in Theology at King’s College London, returns in this book to the subject of his first monograph, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, first published thirty years ago. A ‘sense of providence’, White observes, ‘stalks our literature, our philosophy, our religion’. He is also clear that this sense of purpose is something that might be found rather than just ‘self-created’ and that it is not simply a synonym for ‘progress’. Providence, in theist terms, suggests that, in White’s words, ‘Something or Someone else is also making this story make sense, with us and for us’. This idea, is, he acknowledges, both crucial to a providential worldview and its ‘most problematic part’. However, perhaps more intriguingly, he argues that it is not an idea that has been straightforwardly dismissed or ‘expelled’

and, in a ghostly way, it will find 'a way of re-entering the world'. This is a bold approach to an allegedly disenchanted universe, one in which the whole concept of God as speaking or acting agent has apparently been banished from all realms outside of confessional religious communities. However, for White, even radically sceptical thought sometimes hosts 'the shadows of a transcendent meaning and purpose'.

Purpose and Providence is divided into five substantial chapters and bookended with a helpful introduction and brief conclusion. It does not seek to summarise all major accounts of providentialism but engages with crucial figures that have helped to shape theological and philosophical debates about the presence of God in history. Detailed readings of, among others, Karl Barth, Hans Frei and Friedrich Schleiermacher, suggests that this is a monograph that is intended for those already familiar with debates in the fields of neo-orthodoxy, narrative theology and postmodern discourse. However, White does not assume too much prior knowledge of these figures and their key ideas. It is not, perhaps, designed as a book to introduce theological concepts of divine action but it is pleasingly open to diverse perspectives.

Charles Taylor's enormously influential study of the vicissitudes of belief *A Secular Age* (2007) is an important point of reference as a work that recognises that secularisation and religious belief are not always mutually cancelling ways of understanding the world. In a similar spirit, White approaches sceptics such as the contemporary philosopher and cultural critic, Simon Critchley, with great integrity, noting the ground he and others share with people of faith. Critchley is described as a thinker who 'refuses theism' but whose 'account of the moral self and the infinite nature of the moral demand still reveals similar pressures towards transcendence – of some kind'. The precise nature of this last qualification ('of some kind') might place the author of *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (2007) and *Faith of the Faithless* (2012), at some distance from historic Christianity. However, White suggests that there are 'strong affinities' between Critchley's 'appeal to humour' as a mode of maintaining 'hope and commitment' and 'the Christian virtue of humility, even grace'.

Chapter Two ('Love, Loss, Recovery: A Literary Story') might be the most significant element of the study for readers of *The Glass*. It turns to two major novelists – Thomas Hardy and Julian Barnes – whose writing embodies this continued haunting by the spectre of providence. The spirituality of the great Victorian writer who, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1892), lamented the 'ache of modernism', is treated with more nuance than is common among many critics. Indeed, Hardy's writing, often marked by melancholy and a sense of the tragic, is also 'full of cracks for other meaning to enter'. Hardy's literary universe might be tough, bleak and full of disappointment but it is also, in White's terms, resistant to 'total reductionism'. Similarly, Barnes's postmodern fiction that engages with 'the even more disenchanted world of later modernity' is read with a careful theological eye. White picks up on a range of moments from novels such as *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989) and *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) that contain a 'hint of transcendence'. I enjoyed these relatively brief readings of Hardy and Barnes and hope that White turns to more sustained interpretations of literary texts in the future, and that he gives himself more space to develop these fascinating arguments. Fiction, as White's reading of Barnes suggests, remains a space in which key theological questions regarding purpose, beauty, belonging and love are addressed.

Subsequent chapters engage with the work of a number of contemporary theologians, including work of Ben Quash, Peter Hodgson, Dan Hardy and the late Paul Fletcher. White develops a distinctive set of questions and arguments that are rooted in Biblical narrative and, in his terms, a ‘Christ-shaped and figural providence’. The case that it builds is careful and provisional but also, in my view, quietly persuasive.

This impressive book is characterised by patient and subtle exposition of complex and challenging material. It is also commendably relaxed about the variety of alternative perspectives that remain plausible within a Christian framework and those that might offer relevant critiques from beyond confessional Christianity. The study also has the virtue of great clarity and, though White never pretends that these theological issues are simple, *Purpose and Providence* is written in a way that is accessible to those readers who are not professional theologians but who remain haunted by questions of meaning, transcendence and reason.

Andrew Tate

Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700*, Oxford University Press, 2015, xxi + 783 pp., £110, 9780199686971

Tamsin Spargo, *John Bunyan (Writers and their Work series)*, Northcote House/ British Council, 2016, xiii + 103 pp., £12.99 pb. (£40 hb.), 9780746309827

As with other Oxford Handbooks, *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700* is doorstop-sized with a price to match, but, if you have access via a university library or Oxford Handbooks Online, it is a trove of treasures old and new. The publisher’s website calls this Handbook ‘[t]he first comprehensive study of the English Bible across the two centuries following the Reformation’, containing ‘[a]n unorthodox and eclectic range of chapters, which capture the liveliness and peculiarity of early modern culture’. ‘Comprehensive’ is a dubious claim, given the vastness of the subject. ‘Eclectic’, however, it certainly is, and gloriously so.

The handbook’s forty chapters by as many contributors are arranged into six main parts grouped broadly by theme, moving from translation to reception, via scholarship, ‘spreading the word’, and political and literary uses of the Bible. As with similar reference works, there is a tension between the goal of providing accessible syntheses of existing scholarship and the desire to showcase new research at the cutting edge of the field. My sense is that the latter goal prevails over the former. For example, while chapters such as Ariel Hessayon’s on attitudes to the Apocrypha provide a broad historical survey, almost half of Susan Wabuda’s chapter on Bible translation in the 1530s focuses on a previously neglected but fascinating incident of 1530 in which Henry VIII expressed sympathy in principle for the idea of issuing an authorised vernacular translation, but had his public pronouncements spun in the opposite direction by Archbishop William Warham.

While the seven chapters of Part V focus specifically on ‘The Bible and Literature’, there are engaging chapters elsewhere in the volume on literary figures such as Donne (Emma Rhatigan) and Milton (Neil Forsyth). Of the designated chapters on literature, Helen Wilcox, Hannibal Hamlin and Barbara Lewalski recapitulate their valuable work elsewhere on (respectively) the King James Version in the light of other 1611

literary texts, the literary style of the KJV, and Milton's Biblical epic form. Questions of genre are also treated by Sarah Ross, who argues that Lucy Hutchinson's Genesis poem *Order and Disorder* is better understood when read alongside verse paraphrases of Scripture that critics have devalued, rather than as an epic in comparison with *Paradise Lost*.

In this section, I learned the most from Russ Leo's account of Reformation tragedy, which explores then-popular but now little-studied Latin Biblical dramas in the light of the sixteenth-century recovery of Aristotle's *Poetics*. As a Bunyanist, I enjoyed Nancy Rosenfeld's account of how Bunyan identifies his own life with the Genesis narrative of Joseph, though wondered if the sparse references to Joseph that Rosenfeld identifies really support the weight of her superstructure. Similarly, I instinctively wanted to cheer Alison Knight's emphasis on reading Herbert's scriptural references in their canonical context (in keeping with Herbert's own stated hermeneutical principles), but will need further persuasion of her eloquently expressed thesis that Herbert's poems often stage the misreading of Scripture by the speaker.

Elsewhere in the volume, I enjoyed Karen Edwards's literary analysis of the varied translations of the creatures that populate the desolate cities of Isaiah 13 and 34. Edwards suggests that the Geneva Bible's retention of Hebrew words of indeterminate meaning in 'Ziim shal lodge there, and their houses shalbe ful of Ohim' 'forces the reader to confront the strangeness of the passage', retaining an uncanny sense of the terrors of divine judgement which is tamed by the King James rendering 'wilde beastes' and 'dolefull creatures'. Jamie Ferguson demonstrates persuasively that English Protestant writers object not so much to writing in Latin as to the use of Latinate English in religious writing and Bible translation – Ferguson highlights the striking instance of Cambridge Puritan William Whitaker's Latin treatise denouncing the Latinisms of the Catholic Rheims translation of the New Testament.

Another noteworthy section of the book that moves beyond traditional foci is Part IV on 'The Political Bible', showing that both staunch royalists and republican revolutionaries equally appealed to scriptural types and precedents. As with literary treatments, the political use of the Bible pervades many chapters of this volume beyond its designated section, such as Yvonne Sherwood's treatment of the typological use of King David. Speaking of politics, the title of this Oxford Handbook is slightly misleading, as the kingdom of England is not the exclusive focus. Alasdair Raffe and Marc Caball contribute chapters focusing specifically on the dissemination of Scripture in Scotland and Ireland respectively, while Femke Molekamp and Debora Shuger among others highlight how continental theological thinking gives context for Bible reading in England and beyond.

The apologetic use of the Bible to persuade unbelievers is addressed by Roger Pooley in a chapter that ably explores the problem of appealing to Scripture to persuade those who do not accept its authority. Similar concerns are also treated by Helen Smith on the Bible as a means of conversion, and by Torrance Kirby on Richard Hooker's 'sapiential theology' that seeks to integrate natural and scriptural revelation. More original topics covered include Zur Shalev's exploration of the genre of 'sacred geography', which wrestled among other things with why the present land of Palestine did not seem to live up to its Biblical billing as flowing with milk and honey, and Andrew Morrall's illustrated account of how Biblical motifs were embodied in domestic handicrafts.

Most of the contributions to this volume display impressive erudition. It is not, however, an infallible or inerrant text. Besides the occasional lapse in proofreading, I spotted at least a couple of clear misinterpretations of sources. In an otherwise commendable account of how the Geneva Bible and its paratextual materials show a convergence of English and continental Protestant influences, Femke Molekamp translates the early modern French ‘vaisseaux de sa miséricorde, & vaisseaux de son ire’ from an earlier Genevan study Bible as ‘vessels for his suffering and vessels for his wrath’. In context this is rather a contrast between the elect ‘vessels of his mercy’ and the reprobate ‘vessels of his wrath’. Similarly, Jamie Ferguson suggests that in the Bishops’ Bible’s ‘He therefore that ministreth to you the spirite’ in Galatians 3:5 ‘suggests a more ancillary role for the official than does “giveth”’ in the Catholic Douai-Rheims translation. Surely it is God himself rather than any official whom Paul describes as ministering/giving the Spirit.

There are occasional inconsistencies between contributors treating the same material. For instance, several chapters repeat the commonplace that the King James Bible, in contrast to its predecessors, was free from annotation, whereas Femke Molekamp and Katrin Ettenhuber point out that, although relatively free of interpretative marginal glosses, the KJB includes chapter summaries, tables, and other paratextual materials that provide hermeneutic guidance.

The publisher’s claim to comprehensiveness (not one I found made by the editors) is somewhat foolhardy. From a literary perspective, for instance, a chapter on Shakespeare’s use of the Bible would be welcome (along the lines of books by Hannibal Hamlin, Steven Marx, Naseeb Shaheen, and Jem Bloomfield). However, alongside the galaxy of stellar scholars here illuminating better- and lesser-known corners of the use of the Bible in the early modern period, the footnotes and further reading provided in each chapter provide enough leads for any number of further research projects. This Handbook is a map with some gaps, and may not be immediately accessible to complete novices, but it provides a bracing orientation to the depth and breadth of early modern Biblical culture, and an enticing invitation down some intriguing highways and byways.

Tamsin Spargo’s introduction to John Bunyan, one of the most Biblically saturated of early modern writers, is a much slimmer volume. After a short introduction and a helpful chapter briefly surveying Bunyan’s biographical and historical/religious context, the bulk of the book consists of six chapters, each focusing on one of Bunyan’s ‘narrative’ or ‘imaginative’ works. Spargo notes that these are selected from among the over sixty works authored by Bunyan, many of which are in a sermonic mode of less interest to most modern readers and scholars. Along the way, Spargo discusses some of these other works as providing helpful context for Bunyan’s thinking (though only three of the thirteen volumes of the Oxford *Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan* find their way into her citations).

Spargo sees Bunyan’s imaginative works as ‘experimental’ in form, a creative and somewhat risky attempt to find an imaginative vehicle for his didactic endeavours. The imaginative works that Spargo identifies include, most famously, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (both parts), alongside Bunyan’s battle allegory *The Holy War*, the proto-novelistic *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, the spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, and, more surprisingly, *A Book for Boys and Girls*, a collection

of didactic verse for children. The inclusion of *A Book for Boys and Girls* echoes *The Cambridge Companion to Bunyan*, which gives it a chapter as one of Bunyan's major works. The attention is welcome, as this is a pioneering text of children's literature that has previously suffered critical neglect (with fun moments such as the comparison of the religious hypocrite to a frog), but it raises the question of why other works of didactic verse by Bunyan (such as *Profitable Meditations* or *Ebal and Gerazim*) are not given similar attention.

In keeping with the focus of the British Council's Writers and their Work series, much of this book helpfully summarises scholarly consensus on Bunyan in a relatively uncontentious manner. Yet even in a brief treatment such as this, the selection of material highlights the author's perspective, and some of the topics highlighted echo some of the concerns found in Spargo's 1997 Ashgate monograph *The Writing of John Bunyan*. These include a focus on anxieties over authorship, authority and interpretation, where Spargo draws on post-structuralist theory, though less obtrusively than in her earlier work, and discussion of Bunyan's ambivalent treatment of women both as fictional characters and as members of his congregation. The focus on Bunyan's need to justify his authority as an author and to dispel anxieties over teaching through the imagination leads to a significant proportion of the book being given to thoughtful close reading of Bunyan's prefatory addresses to his readers.

Spargo provides helpful nuance on the details of seventeenth-century Nonconformist theology in some places (e.g. 'It is difficult to apply labels to churches in that period, especially as names for denominations have since come to mean different things'), but neglects such nuances elsewhere. The statement that 'Members of Nonconformist churches would be baptized as adults' is an over-generalisation: while Baptists were Dissenters, not all Dissenters were baptistic, though gathered churches generally required an adult profession of faith/conversion for full membership. (Bunyan himself, though probably baptised as an adult, rejected the requirement of believer's baptism for church membership.) Likewise, Spargo's assertion that Calvinist belief in predestination meant that one could not know whether one was saved or damned bypasses more nuanced understandings of the quest for assurance in early modern Protestantism.

Spargo's introduction raises the question of the continuing relevance of Bunyan in a more secular or perhaps 'post-secular' age. Throughout the book, one can sense a tension between Spargo's desire to be sensitive to Bunyan's own faith as a motivating force for his writing and her desire to defend the value of reading Bunyan in a post-Christian age for readers who may not share that faith. The introduction articulates a commendable balance here: 'Bunyan's writings are explicitly Christian and cannot be productively explored if the religious faith that motivates them is not taken seriously; it does not have to be shared by the reader, but has to be acknowledged as a driving and determining force.'

A concluding chapter completes the sandwich with a focus on Bunyan's reception from his death to the present, drawing especially on Isabel Hofmeyr's pioneering work on the cross-cultural appropriation of Bunyan around the world. Spargo's account of recent decades, with which I would concur, sees a decline in the readership of Bunyan among the general public alongside a modest increase in interest among scholars of early modern history and literature, as evidenced by the journal *Bunyan Studies* and the International John Bunyan Society, to whose members this book is dedicated. (Spargo gives due credit to evangelical Christians for keeping Bunyan in print and in

circulation at a popular level, but I think even Christian readers today are less familiar with Bunyan than in the past.)

I am hopeful that this book will make a modest contribution to the recovery of Bunyan for undergraduate teaching. Within tight space constraints, it generally manifests historically informed and literarily sensitive reading of Bunyan's texts, communicated with concision and clarity for first-time Bunyan readers.

David Parry

Richard Hughes Gibson, *Forgiveness in Victorian Literature: Grammar, Narrative, and Community*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, ix + 169 pp., £28.99 pb. (£70 hb.), 9781350003750

In this work, Richard Gibson elaborates on the recent resurgence of interest in 'forgiveness' as an area of scholarly interest. In doing so, he follows on from the work of prominent theoreticians such as Paul Ricoeur and Charles Griswold. Such considerations are pertinent to the study of Victorian texts, for, during that period, forgiveness was a central concern, stemming largely from the Victorian preoccupation with religion. Early in his work, Gibson quotes from Dorothy Mermin, a Victorian scholar, who correctly states that 'The center of Victorian discourse, in which all questions were implicated and to which all roads led, was religion'. Starting with a brief sweep through concepts of forgiveness prior to the nineteenth century, Gibson brings his investigation squarely into the Victorian period, relating his work to a broad range of literary texts. The nuanced manner in which forgiveness is used in the unfolding plots of these texts is his principal concern.

Chapter Two concerns the use of forgiveness in the works of Charles Dickens. Gibson explores representations of forgiveness that are conditional and unconditional, commencing with the extreme example of unconditional forgiveness provided by the character of Sir Leicester Dedlock in *Bleak House* (1853). He moves on to conditional examples of forgiveness in *Dombey and Son* (1848), where the consequences of actions cannot be ignored, even when forgiveness is offered. Gibson directs the reader to the correspondence between Charles Dickens and Angela Burdett-Coutts, in which Dickens discusses their plans for implementing Captain Maconochie's 'Mark System' for women rescued from prostitution. Forgiveness and restitution, within a specially designated home for such women (Urania Cottage), was predicated upon them undertaking certain reformatory behaviours as a consequence of their former lives. Likewise, Dickens approved of them being sent to Australia as a clear reinforcement of the inseparable connection between actions and consequences. Deportation was seen as a typical outcome for the 'fallen woman'. Examples like this, however, have to be balanced against works like *The Life of Our Lord* (1846–9), where so much emphasis is placed on the central importance of unconditional forgiveness in the teachings of Jesus Christ. There, forgiveness is frequently offered regardless of whether the transgressor repents or not. So, for Dickens, the concept of forgiveness was complex.

In Chapter Three, Gibson considers *The Vicar of Bullhampton* (1870), by Anthony Trollope, and *Adam Bede* (1859), by George Eliot. Trollope's approach to forgiveness is also complex and subtle. As Stanley Hauerwas states, 'Trollope understood profoundly that at the heart of the Christian faith is the demand to forgive'. His approach to forgiveness, however, is more 'this-worldly'. Whereas Dickens makes forgiveness

THE GLASS

akin to a conversion experience, Gibson asserts, Trollope is more realistic, often seeing it with 'theologically inflected anthropological pessimism'. He often emphasises the communal nature of aspects of forgiveness. *The Vicar of Bullhampton* is an excellent study of the subtleties of forgiveness, with a central character, Fenwick, exercising vigorous, unconditional forgiveness for a young woman's moral impropriety. This is in contrast to the attitudes of one of his clerical colleagues. But, as so often happens, Fenwick has difficulty applying the same principle consistently with another character, Lord Trowbridge, who has behaved towards him 'in a manner which set all Christian charity at defiance'.

George Eliot presents a sterner picture of forgiveness, arguing that it is against the 'law of nature', particularly the cause and effect principle. This view, that 'the past cannot be changed', indicates how much Eliot was influenced by necessitarianism, as embodied in Charles Bray's *The Philosophy of Necessity* (1863). Necessitarianism was a major philosophical influence that carried over from the eighteenth century, but one that eventually waned with the more moderating influences of Romanticism and liberal theology. Anthony Trollope and George Eliot present contrasting approaches to forgiveness.

In Chapter Four Gibson discusses works by Thomas Hardy and Oscar Wilde. He begins by pointing to a curious parallel between the two authors, for in 1895 Wilde's famous trial for 'gross indecency' occurred and Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* was declared 'immoral' by numerous reviewers. In Hardy's world, largely devoid of a benevolent God, forgiveness became a vexed issue. Where divine example and moral absolutes are missing, human responses, such as forgiveness, are even more subject to the vagaries of personal motivation. This is apparent in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). In the latter text, the scene involving one-sided apportioning of forgiveness on Tess and Angel's wedding night confirms the elusive nature of forgiveness. Gibson quotes from an essay by Jacques Derrida, entitled 'On Forgiveness', where the philosopher speaks of the need for a 'shared language' of forgiveness. For forgiveness genuinely to occur, there must be a common ground between all parties concerned. That is more difficult in Hardy's relativistic world. Also in this chapter, Gibson examines several texts by Oscar Wilde, including *De Profundis*, a text of no fixed genre, possibly best seen as a manifesto, testament, confession or prison letter. Discussion of forgiveness plays a central part in this effusive text, with expressions of 'vituperation and forgiveness', 'rebuke and manifesto' (Gibson here citing P.K. Saint-Amour). It is far from a stable consideration of forgiveness.

Gibson's book includes some excellent analysis of individual texts from the Victorian period and discriminates carefully between the various attitudes to forgiveness that were evident at that time. What it lacks is a clearly enunciated thesis regarding the progression of attitudes to forgiveness throughout the century. As interesting as it otherwise is in examining specific cases, any clear sense of how attitudes to forgiveness developed, or were modified, largely eludes the reader. The influences of German Higher Criticism and Romanticism are largely ignored. Gibson's work is good in the particular, but not as a coherent overview.

Peter Stiles

Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (eds.), *The Poems of T.S. Eliot: The Annotated Text, Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems, and Volume II: Practical Cats and Further Verses*, Faber & Faber, 2015, 1,311 pp., 667 pp., £40 each, 9780571238705, 9780571238712

Graham Pechey, *Tongues of Fire: Word and Being in T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot Society (www.eliotociety.org.uk), 2015, 56 pp., £5, (no ISBN)

Ricks and McCue have produced a magisterial edition of all Eliot's known poems, collected hitherto or not, proper and improper, with impressively compendious annotations and an account of their textual history. Eliot is renowned for his raids on other poets, and the editors explain how 'many of Eliot's poems originated as parts which had been published in other contexts, perhaps separately or in different combinations'.

To begin with Eliot was, naturally, his own editor. Authorised collections of his poems were published by Faber and Faber, the firm he joined in 1925, becoming the Poetry Editor. In that role he paid minute attention to matters of layout and punctuation. Despite this, there were failures with compositors and printers, such as the omission in successive editions of a line in 'The Hollow Men': 'With eyes I dare not meet in dreams'. Ricks has already devoted three lectures to revisions made by Eliot to his already published work, mostly his criticism, in *Decisions and Revisions in T.S. Eliot* (2003). After Eliot's death in 1965 his widow Valerie set about collecting his correspondence, and she inaugurated the editing of *The Waste Land* in a carefully prepared facsimile edition published in 1971. In the present edition we have the final version of *The Waste Land* followed by Eliot's much discussed bulking-up Notes. Then, because the sequence is that of the published collections beginning with *Prufrock* (1917), we have 'The Hollow Men' and 'Ash-Wednesday', and later, after 108 pages of occasional verses and uncollected poems, 'The Waste Land: An Editorial Composite'. This assembles the 678-line draft, or set of fragments, from which Eliot, prompted by Ezra Pound and his first wife Vivienne, reduced the poem to 433 lines. It is Eliot's 'Q', so to speak, and begins with studied casualness, 'First we had a couple of feelers down at Tom's place.' Part IV narrates the death by water of Phlebas the Phoenician trader at greater length (92 lines) than the ten eventually published in 1922.

Helpfully Ricks and McCue give a running footer below the texts of the poems, with page references to commentary elsewhere in the volume about the lines on the page above. The footers point also to the textual history, which is placed out of necessity in the second volume. Volume I includes at the end some long quotations in which Eliot offers his views on, for instance, the reaction he perceives and welcomes to (or against) modernism and to the poets of the Thirties, and his advice in a hitherto unpublished Royal Academy speech to young would-be poets ('never aim at novelty'). The Bibliography ranges from books on the Greek classics to Robert Crawford's biography *The Young Eliot*, published in the year of the present edition. Information from Crawford, whose book we reviewed in the last issue, occurs here and there in the commentaries. There is an index of titles and first lines, and the editorial material has its own index.

As an example of the presentation, the two lines from 'Burnt Norton':

Garlic and sapphires in the mud
Clot the bedded axle-tree

receive a page and a half of commentary in which we learn that behind these puzzling lines is a sonnet by Mallarmé where the sapphires were rubies and the garlic was the yet more baffling thunder: 'tonnerre et rubis aux moyeux'. In a lecture, not about his own poem, Eliot instanced Mallarmé, admitting that 'thunder and rubies cannot be seen, heard or thought together', and explained that the poet is perfectly entitled to 'an element of vagueness', especially because, unlike prose, 'poetry is *incantation*'. We are told in the commentary of Eliot's salute to Wilfred Owen's poem 'Strange Meeting' (1918), where in Flanders 'much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels'; and informed of the OED's recording of 'clot' in relation to blood from 1859, which may be illuminating since the next line of 'Burnt Norton' has a 'trilling wire in the blood'. In *The Composition of Four Quartets* (1978) Helen Gardner, noting how thunder is replaced by garlic in an early draft, surmised that these lines were inspired also by a snatch, 'bavant boue et rubis', from Mallarmé's 'Le Tombeau de Charles Baudelaire'.

Practical Cats and Eliot's translation, first published in 1930, of *Anabasis* (the long prose poem in French by St.-John Perse) are given in the second volume, as is *Noctes Binanianae*, a coterie publication of only 25 copies (1939) by and for Eliot with two fellow directors of Fabers and his friend John Hayward. Also included are 'Other Verses' and some 'Improper Rhymes', many culled from correspondence.

Valerie was the dedicatee of poems in *Valerie's Own Book of Poems* by T.S. Eliot, a manuscript collection in Eliot's own hand written in two exercise books in the late 1950s. All are printed here. The reader can investigate the contents by using the listing in Volume II, and locating the poems in Volume I, making use if necessary of the Index of Titles and First Lines which appears in both volumes.

'How unpleasant to meet Mr Eliot / With his features of clerical cut' (*The Criterion*, 1933). Eliot wrote some amusing trifles and also some coarse and obscene things. Many readers of the earlier published collections will be familiar with Sweeney and Doris ('Any man might do a girl in'). Some of these verses are just embarrassingly frank, e.g. savouring nakedness with his young wife in 'How the Tall Girl and I Play Together'. Some are humorous, according to taste. Bawdy poems about King Bolo and his Big Black Queen, figures already known to readers of Ricks's *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917* by T.S. Eliot (1996), here appear in various contexts. Some of these plays may have been to do with bonding with male peers at Harvard and Faber and Faber. In *After Strange Gods* Eliot wrote sagely, 'The only disinfectant which makes either blasphemy or obscenity sufferable is the sense of humour.'

'A straightforward philosophical statement can be great poetry', Eliot wrote à propos of Dante, and that surely is Eliot's great endeavour in the *Quartets*. When therefore Graham Pechey comments that "'Burnt Norton" begins with a stately minuet of abstractions in a pastiche of philosophical prose' we might at first assume he is to some extent out of sympathy with the poem. This is not so, for his lectures spin a web of commentary whose tone is respectful, even reverential. The poem 'takes poetry itself to the limit of its competence'; it has three presiding geniuses, Julian, Dante and the *Cloud*-author. St John of the Cross and Charles Williams are likewise important. He admires 'the poetic faith underlying all of the *Quartets*'. 'The verb *to be*,' he tells us, is the 'signature verb of all the *Quartets*', it 'could be seen as the white light of language, and all other words as so many shades and colours.'

'Burnt Norton' is Eliot's 'spell or incantation against the power of time.' 'Time itself

is ... incarnated in sound' – consider the tolling bell of 'The Dry Salvages'. He invites us to note Eliot's method: 'the discrepancy between two states of affairs displayed by irony may be first elevated into paradox and then illuminated and reconciled by the transcendent light and unity of tautology summed up supremely in the divine *I am*.'

Our reading of Ricks, McCue and Gardner allows us to say that Pechey oversimplifies the stranger on the 'dead patrol' in 'Little Gidding' when he conjectures Yeats. The stranger was of course a 'compound ghost', and Eliot, who was thinking of Brunetto Latini in Dante, said in correspondence that, while he did not want readers to think he was assigning Yeats or anyone else to hell, he admitted he had Yeats, Swift and Mallarmé in his mind.

'The focus is wholly upon close reading of the words on the page.' Unfortunately half a dozen pages on from this we are given a misquotation of 'Humankind cannot bear too much reality' for 'Human kind cannot bear very much reality' in 'Burnt Norton'. But Pechey's is a sensitive, informed and thoughtful commentary on what he calls in conclusion Eliot's 'work of poetic metaphysics'.

Roger Kojecký

Grevel Lindop, *Charles Williams: The Third Inkling*, Oxford University Press, 2015, xx + 493 pp., £25, 9780199284153

It must be generally agreed that in comparison with C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, the life and work of Charles Williams has been much neglected. At his relatively early death in 1945, it appeared that after years of waiting, Williams's star was in the ascendancy, and he was being at long last recognised as a poet as well as novelist, dramatist, theologian, and critic, not to mention as a significant editor at the Oxford University Press.

After his death, C.S. Lewis continued to champion his cause, freely acknowledging the influence Williams had had on him. Also acting as champions were a number of devoted disciples, many of them younger women, but also established poets like W.H. Auden, who acknowledged Williams's influence in guiding him to faith. A Charles Williams Society was formed, which still exists, to promote his work. But changing fashions in poetry and drama away from Romanticism to a new realism cut short this nascent fame. Today, many English students, even if they have heard his name, have never read anything he wrote.

Professor Grevel Lindop has sought to rectify this by issuing a meticulously researched biography. Whilst it may not be the definitive biography, it certainly is ground-breaking, and must play a central part in future Williams studies. Lindop states that he began work on it back in 1998 at the suggestion of the poet Anne Ridler, one of Williams's many regular correspondents. Previous to that, the only biographical work had consisted in a fairly personal account published in 1983 by Alice Hadfield, one of Williams's disciples, a short biography in the Twayne series out of Boston, MA, by Agnes Sibley, and a chapter in Humphrey Carpenter's 1978 account of the Inklings. Williams's wife, Michal (previously Florence, with this Biblical name bestowed by Williams), had opposed any attempts at a biography, and it was not till the death of their son, Michael, that many family papers became available. Critical accounts of Williams's writings have fared better, beginning with Lewis and Ridler, then being

THE GLASS

taken to the USA, where his work, as with that of Lewis, has been the subject of a number of research dissertations and their ensuing publications.

Besides family papers, Lindop has been able to draw on Ridler's material, now in the Bodleian, several sets of letters to and from some of his 'young ladies', and the fine collection of wartime letters between Williams and Michal published in 2002 under the title *From Serge to Michal*. During the war, when the OUP London branch moved to Oxford, Michal preferred to stay in London, hence the separation. Lindop has also drawn on archival material in Oxford of the Charles Williams Society and the Oxford University Press, and also material at the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College.

The book consists of 21 chapters, an epilogue, endnotes (1500 of them!), a list of MS sources, a bibliography and an index. Although the 21 chapters are not grouped by Lindop, it could be said that the book divides between Williams's early life and career; his development as a writer; and his time at Oxford during the war, which is also his time as an Inklings among his many other activities, including lecturing for the University's English School.

It is soon obvious in reading Lindop's biography that Williams's personality was extremely complex. Lindop has done well to avoid the temptation to psychologise too much. He perhaps gets too drawn into the sexual predilections of Williams, and his emotional involvement with a number of younger women, some of whom clearly acted as muse as much as platonic mistress. Partly this is because, I would think, much of the correspondence is now available: correspondence which may be one of the reasons Michal opposed biographical attempts whilst she was alive.

Lindop also makes a great deal of Williams's early occult interests, and his involvement with various occult societies of the Rosicrucian variety. These appear to be influenced in general by freemasonry, and demonstrate Williams's love of secret societies. Later, he sought to found an informal order based on his particular Romantic theological emphasis on transference and 'co-inherence', an extreme interpretation of the Biblical verse enjoining us to 'bear one another's burdens'.

The middle section deals with one particular infatuation of Williams, and the development of his Romantic theology. With only one year of higher education, Williams became both a brilliant lecturer on English literature and a sound, if unconventional, theologian. The link between personal life and intellectual life is traced by Lindop quite astutely, though further studies would no doubt uncover a good deal more of the complexities in Williams.

What I think Lindop fails to do is explain why so many people meeting Williams were drawn to his 'goodness', especially as Lindop has stressed both Williams's occultism and his 'spiritual adultery'. Lindop has established well just how charismatic he was, but not just how good he was. I think, too, that more could be made of the relationship between the 'feminine' side of Williams and the 'masculine' side, as shown by his attachment to the Inklings. I am not at all sure the Inklings would have approved of all of the activities of Williams's 'feminine' side.

I would also like to have seen more of an explanation of the spirit of poverty that seemed to have afflicted Williams all his life, from his wretched 'shabby-genteel' upbringing to his workaholic searching for more and more writing to pay off his many debts. One wonders if the OUP even bothered to pay him, so desperate for money does he seem at times. On the other hand, the OUP allowed him considerable licence to do his own writing at work, take time off to meet friends and lecture, and so on.

Lindop ultimately sees Williams as a poet, and a major Arthurian poet at that, just

about to come into his own voice when he died. I have to say, for myself, that if we want to talk about a neglected twentieth-century Arthurian poet, we should be talking about David Jones with his *The Anathemata* and *In Parenthesis*. But each to his own taste. Although Lindop quotes extensively from Williams's *Taliesin* poems, he has not time to develop any adequate critique to justify his praise.

The strength of this biography is plain: meticulous research; a presentation of events and developments in a coherent way; a refusal to get drawn into too many value judgements and personal theories; and a placing of the man in a literary and theological context. As to the subtitle *The Third Inkling*, I suspect this was an editorial ruse to gain more interest. No real attempt is made by Lindop himself to establish this 'third' place, though he does of course trace Williams's close friendship with Lewis, which actually began before the war, with Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*, in which Williams recognised a kindred medieval spirit. Williams was an Inkling, but he was so much more that the subtitle could be misleading.

To anyone interested in Inklings studies, Romantic theology, or the development of fantasy writing in the twentieth century, this is a must-read.

David Barratt

Abigail Santamaria, *Joy: Poet, Seeker and the Woman who Captivated C.S. Lewis*, SPCK/Houghton Mifflin, 2015, xv + 413 pp., £19.99 (\$28 US), 9780281074273.

Don W. King, *Yet One More Spring: A Critical Study of Joy Davidman*, Eerdmans, 2015, \$32 US, 978 0 8028 6936 4.

2015 saw the publication of two books about Joy Davidman, writer, Communist turned Christian, and wife of C.S. Lewis. In 2011 more of her papers and poems were made public, enabling a closer assessment of her work than had been previously possible, and resulting in *Joy: Poet, Seeker and the Woman who Captivated C.S. Lewis*, by Abigail Santamaria, and *Yet One More Spring: A Critical Study of Joy Davidman* by Don King. The two books complement each other nicely – Santamaria's book is a biography, and King's is a critique of all Davidman's known work. Both books are carefully researched and together they give significant insight into Joy Davidman, and – of particular interest to C.S. Lewis fans – her relationship with Lewis, which has puzzled so many.

Santamaria traces Davidman's life from her birth in 1915 and childhood in New York to her love affair with England and her final years in Oxford, as friend and later wife of C.S. Lewis. As the sickly child of Eastern European/Russian Jewish immigrant parents, Joy was brought up with high expectations and a strong sense of Jewish identity. Joy herself seems to have refused to embrace this, choosing as a 'frighteningly intelligent' young woman to follow Marxism with sufficient fervour that she became an active member of the Communist Party. Always interested in writing – poetry and fiction both – she also edited for the Communist *New Masses* magazines. But her marriage to Bill Gresham coincided with a lessening of interest in Communism (and a complete rejection of it once she read Marx for herself), and an experience of God which cemented a fascination with Jesus Christ which had endured since she was a young woman. Part of her journey to Christianity involved reading the works of C.S. Lewis, with whom she got in contact by letter, and whom she chose to visit in England in 1952. She returned to London with her two sons in 1953, eventually marrying Lewis in 1956, in a secret civil ceremony which indicated a rather complex relationship that

THE GLASS

was eventually cemented in a religious ceremony after Davidman had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She died in 1960, having enjoyed a spell of remission before her cancer returned.

Prior to Santamaria's *Joy*, Lyle Dorsett's *And God Came In* (1983) was the sole biography of Davidman. Santamaria's book overlaps in many ways: both speak of a woman who was highly intelligent, extremely wilful, sharply critical and yet utterly romantic. Both detail the complexities of her writing life and her relationship to Lewis. But Santamaria's text portrays a much more complex Davidman – deeply flawed as well as highly talented. Unlike Dorsett's book, which takes a more warm approach, Santamaria's text oozes with criticism. Joy the teacher, 'lacked warmth, enthusiasm and interest in people', and Joy the editor was dishonest. As a mother she was often neglectful, and as a life-partner she could be scheming and manipulative. The most clear example of this comes in her relationship with Lewis, which Santamaria portrays as having been something that Davidman had set her heart on even before she had met him, leaving her sons with her husband and her cousin in the States, while travelling to Oxford to meet the man who had become her penfriend and her romantic obsession. In England, Santamaria suggests, Davidman was 'intent' on marrying Lewis, wearing down his own reservations about marrying a divorcee.

Is Santamaria correct? In the details, she gives the impression of being a careful researcher. She made contact with people who had known Joy in the States. More significantly, her research had the advantage of having access to the newly discovered papers, stories and poems (including a sonnet sequence about Lewis), to which she had access in 2010 through Joy's son, Douglas Gresham. Much of Santamaria's harsh assessment of Joy is corroborated by extracts from her reviews, letters and poems. There seems to be little room left to salvage Davidman from her critique.

If we hope that Don King would save her, we will be somewhat disappointed. In *Yet One More Spring* I found a text which was focused on the analysis of her oeuvre. Another carefully written book, King's thorough exploration of Davidman's novels, poems and other reviews allow me to hear her voice – 'definite, sharp, penetrating, insistent, earnest, determined'. A sharp critic, ('the cat in me comes out in reviewing'), her novels tend to be rather flawed themselves. *Anya*, written in her early twenties, is a light-hearted account of a young Russian Jewish woman's sexual awakening in the late nineteenth century. Anya is a spirited woman who dislikes the Jewish mores – rather like Davidman herself. Somewhat lacking in psychological insight and character development, King says, it nevertheless shows her to be an able wordsmith, as does *Weeping Bay*, ten years later. More polemical with its anti-Catholic bias, this novel shows Davidman's own Christian beliefs forming, but fails to draw the reader in. But in contrast, King finds Davidman's poems, in particular the newly discovered sonnet sequence, 'astonishingly beautiful'. Technically clever, it is the narrative quality which appeals to King – as the sequence delineates the journey through which Joy travelled in her unrequited love for Lewis. For me, King's careful study of these poems, with their emotional honesty and vibrancy, is the highlight of the book. King's comparison with John Donne and his emotionally direct, vivid, even cunning intelligence, is apt.

But other writings are analysed thoroughly too. King illuminates with greater clarity Davidman's more radical attitudes towards feminism, racism and socialism, and gives some deeper insight into her Christian faith and her struggles at times. We are also given a careful assessment of the likely impact of Davidman's work and presence on Lewis's later work – a section which answered some questions I have

lived with for quite some time.

Yet, like Santamaria, King is unwilling to whitewash Davidman. He finds her as a young woman to be 'brilliant, opinionated, confrontational, perceptive and vain', but his book differs from Santamaria's by a greater feeling of balance. Each criticism of Davidman's books seems to be offset by the positive; *Smoke on the Mountain*, about the Ten Commandments, for example, is memorable and written with simple clarity. It is 'a book of several strengths', King says, drawing on her broad learning but translating the Hebraic laws into contemporary ideas and vernacular. But it is also somewhat brash, and lacks a certain deep conviction, which probably suggests that there was a financial motive behind the writing of the book. King argues that her real gift was poetry, not prose (although she herself thought that her ability to collaborate and critique was her greatest strength). It does seem clear from comments in letters that she turned to the writing of prose in order to make a living, but King argues that the discovery of the new poems will lead to a reassessment of her work. Time will tell.

Having read both books, I am much less puzzled by that aspect of Davidman which is most fascinating to me as a Lewis enthusiast – why did Lewis accede to marriage with a woman who seems to lack the integrity which he valued and embodied? (I suspect that many with an interest in reading more about Joy Davidman will have the same motives.) There are undoubtedly complex reasons. Davidman was indeed a force whom the rather naïve Lewis was not well-equipped to resist. But in Davidman he also found a friend who had remarkably similar experiences in the spiritual realm – of longing in response to beauty and a very clear sense of a mystical divine presence. In her he also found someone who was able to articulate these to such an extent that King is probably right when he suggests that aspects of Lewis's autobiography are based on Joy's short autobiographical piece, 'The Longest Way Round'. And she was also able to converse with him about literature in a way which he clearly found to be enjoyable right from the start; early on, to one friend, he said that she was a 'queer thing' but thankfully not a bore.

As an Irish person myself, it strikes me that Lewis and his brother retained to the end some of their Irishness, with that culture's deep enjoyment of humour and lively personality, which probably made them more accepting of Joy's directness and deeply appreciative of her lively wit. Certainly, both seem to have grown to love her deeply. Moreover, although Lewis's response to Joy's sonnet sequence is not available to us, the technical skill and emotional directness which she put into the poems cannot have left him untouched. Joy Davidman helped bridge his head and his heart. He wrote; 'everything you are was making / My heart into a bridge'. But Davidman too was changed. It was a mutual awakening; in Sonnet XXIX, she describes herself as a naked tree, that given love, grew 'petals like a storm of silver light / Bursting, blazing, blended all of pearl / And moonshine'. I think the puzzle is a puzzle no longer after the publication of these two careful and scholarly books.

Sharon Jebb

Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson, *How to Survive the Apocalypse: Zombies, Cylons, Faith, and Politics at the End of the World*, Eerdmans, 2016, viii + 198 pp., £10.99 (\$16 US), 9780802872715

‘The world is going to hell’. Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson base the cheering opening line of their book on the observation that much of recent popular culture – film, television, literature – is obsessed with apocalypse, from the dystopian society of *The Hunger Games* to the eradication of all but a remnant of humanity in *Battlestar Galactica*, from innumerable fictional zombie epidemics to the disintegration of any moral horizon in the figure of the antihero. While we might sneer at medieval millennial panic or the predictions of doomsday cults, our media consumption seems to suggest that we too are gripped by the idea that the end of the world is coming, or has come.

Joustra and Wilkinson take this much remarked-on trend and use it as the jumping-off point for a concise, wide-ranging, and accessible exploration of the ways in which our stories build us, as individuals and as a society. The philosophy of Charles Taylor provides the underlying framework, to the extent that the authors acknowledge that the book could act as an ‘applied introduction’ to his thinking. His concept of the ‘Secular age’ – our modernity, in which ‘most people in the West can easily choose to live primarily for their own flourishing, rather than for something beyond it ... [r]eligion is just another thing we can choose’ – is at the foundation of the authors’ discussion of the current apocalyptic turn. In a Secular world (the authors deploy the capital when they are using the word in Taylor’s sense), the human person stands alone, disconnected from the sacred; the social order exists only as an agreement between individual consenting minds; and God, if one exists, is relevant to us only as the creator and watcher of an established natural world, rather than its redeemer, and so the moral horizon of our lives and that of the world is more to do with individual human flourishing than with transformative divine providence. This inevitably affects how we conceive of endings, both individual and societal.

The authors’ review of this framework is followed by a chapter dealing with the origins and development of the concept of apocalypse, ‘from religious, to secular, to post-secular’. The chronological survey of the idea is useful in establishing terminology and context, but the strength of this chapter is its final sections. Here the authors discuss the distinction between the genres of apocalypse and *dystopia*, or neo-apocalypse – the former representing revelation and transformation, for better or worse, but the latter typically extending any given malaise of the current social order into the full-blown depiction of a rotten society. They argue that works fitting the generic terms of the latter, while they refrain from depicting the actual end of the world, ‘are more about the end of *our* world. They’re stories that have the distinct sense embedded in them that this social order can’t last ... they manifest in some way the pathological forms of the “malaise of modernity”’. Crucially, this type of story appropriates the *revelatory* function of apocalypse:

Sometimes it looks like things blowing up ... Sometimes it is an impending political ruin ... Sometimes it is an emotional and existential collapse. But taken together, we get a frightening picture of what we, as a culture, think looms on the horizon: a destruction of our own making, with no hope for renewal. But it need not be so. And interestingly enough, our pop culture helps show us why. (emphasis added)

The authors see hope in our fictional apocalypses, not just diagnoses of our failings.

This optimism is one of the most refreshing and stimulating aspects of their approach: one might think that a book titled *How to Survive the Apocalypse* would be a pessimistic one, but this is not the chord struck by this volume. Though the authors carefully explicate throughout how our fictional apocalypses reflect the particular malaises of modern society, and the fears that these might lead to complete societal collapse, they are often at pains to emphasise that the nightmare visions of human nature and culture are not inevitable. More importantly, they position their analyses of these texts as, ultimately, calls to action and not despair: ‘Through embedding our struggle for authenticity within a larger order, through loving faithful institutions, we can work towards a less dystopian future ... what comes after this “creative destruction” is a cultural choice that remains to be made’.

The central seven chapters, which constitute the main body of the authors’ analysis, delve more deeply into the big ideas of Taylor’s cultural history by applying them to various examples of fictional apocalypse in recent popular culture. These range from the obviously apocalyptic or dystopian – *The Walking Dead* series provides a large part of the material for chapter 8, ‘How to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse’, and *The Hunger Games* novels for chapter 10, ‘May the Odds Be Ever in Your Favour: Learning to Love Faithful Institutions’ – to texts apparently a long way from any apocalyptic scenario – Spike Jonze’s 2013 film *Her*, about a man in love with his computer, is the basis for chapter 6’s discussion of the language of personal authenticity and the ways our identities reside in one another, while the soapy political drama *Scandal* is analysed in chapter 9 for its depiction of corrupt institutions. The explication of Taylorian concepts is for the most part clear and accessible, and other philosophers are regularly referred to, without these theoretical frames being allowed to overwhelm sensitive analysis of the pop culture texts in question.

This is not a long book, and at times the discussion of individual texts can be limited; similarly, there is little exploration of the literary tradition of apocalypse beyond the brief historical survey in chapter 3, as this is very much a work focused on current popular culture. The authors’ clarity of purpose in writing this ‘work of loyal opposition’, however, is certainly capable of sparking new work in the area which could address these issues with more detailed exploration. The final chapter, ‘On Babylon’s Side’, claims the prophet Daniel – a ‘faithful compromiser’, in terms borrowed from the philosopher James K. A. Smith – as patron saint of what amounts to a manifesto for cultural criticism, political engagement, and institutional transformation of a deeply Christian character. The authors pinpoint the central tension of this endeavour: religious people *can* and *should* engage productively with the paradigms and institutions of their age, but ‘Babylon ... will never be the New Jerusalem’. This is at once a recognisable and pragmatic assessment of the challenges inherent in working in the academic and literary spheres of a secular age, and a call to do so more faithfully, more enthusiastically, with a broader and more critical vision.

The authors conclude that the apocalyptic trend in popular culture is in large part due to the particular point in history at which we find ourselves: ‘the pathologies of our Secular age – individualism, subjectivism, the double loss of freedom – are reaching a point of both crisis and climax’. Whether or not we take this view, and however the story of our culture proceeds, this volume certainly illustrates that this is a time of opportunity – one which literary scholars, especially those living in the light of a Christian worldview, are well placed to address.

Notes on Contributors

David Barratt with Roger Pooley and Leland Ryken edited *The Discerning Reader: Christian Perspectives on Literature and Theory*, Apollos/Baker Books, 1995. The second edition of his *C. S. Lewis and his World*, retitled: *Narnia: C. S. Lewis and his World* appeared in 2005.

Dr Paul Cavill teaches Old English in the School of English, University of Nottingham. He is a member of the CLSG committee.

Tom Docherty is studying for a PhD in English at the University of Cambridge. He completed an MPhil in Medieval and Renaissance Literature there after receiving graduate and undergraduate degrees from the University of Glasgow. He writes poetry, and plays the organ.

Adrian Grafe, English Professor at Artois University, France, hails from Oxfordshire, and lives in Paris. Author of monographs on Hopkins and Emily Dickinson, he edited *Ecstasy and Understanding* (2008), essays on modern poetry and religious awareness. He is a Fellow of the English Association. Current research includes work on the religious conscience in the fiction of Ron Hansen.

Dr Sharon Jebb is a freelance lecturer in literature and theology. She is based in Scotland, and is the author of *Writing God and the Self: Samuel Beckett and C.S. Lewis* (Wipf and Stock, 2011).

Dr Roger Kojecký's *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* describes Eliot's attempts to engage as a Christian man of letters with social issues. The book, revised (2014) for the Amazon Kindle format, contains first publication of a paper on the role of the clerisy contributed by Eliot to an elite discussion group, The Moot. He is among the contributors to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (IVP). He is Secretary of the Christian Literary Studies Group and has lectured recently at universities in Krakow, Olomouc, Toronto and Beijing. With Andrew Tate he co-edited *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text*.

Dr Simon Marsden is lecturer in English Literature at the University of Liverpool. He writes on literature and theology from the nineteenth century to the present, with a particular emphasis on Gothic fiction. He is the author of *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* and is currently writing a monograph on theological themes in contemporary Gothic fiction.

Dr David Parry teaches early modern English literature and practical criticism for various colleges of the University of Cambridge. He has published articles and chapters on a variety of early modern writers, and is currently writing a monograph on Puritanism and rhetoric. He is the Associate Editor of *The Glass* and a member of the CLSG committee.

THE GLASS

Dr Roger Pooley is Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Humanities at Keele University and a former Chair of the CLSG.

Alicia Smith is studying for a DPhil at the Queen's College, Oxford, having previously gained an MPhil in Medieval Literature at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and is now working on prayer as a practice and a literary-spiritual axis in anchoritic literature of the high Middle Ages. She is also interested in twentieth-century medievalism, particularly that of T. S. Eliot and the Inklings.

Dr Peter Stiles is the Acting Head of Education at Excelsia College (formerly the Wesley Institute) in Sydney, Australia. He is also an Adjunct Professor of English and Religious Studies at Trinity Western University, Canada, and an Honorary Research Fellow at Morling College, Sydney. In addition he is a visiting lecturer in Australian literature at Houghton College, New York. He completed his PhD in Literature and Theology at the University of Glasgow in 1995. He has published both academic and creative works and his scholarly articles on Elizabeth Gaskell have appeared in journals, conference proceedings, and edited collections. He has experience teaching in both secondary and tertiary settings and has served in the administration of several educational institutions. He is the Australian representative for Christianity and Literature, a Fellow of the RSA, a Member of the Australian College of Educators, and a Justice of the Peace (NSW).

Dr Andrew Tate is Reader in Literature, Religion and Aesthetics in the Department of English & Creative Writing at Lancaster University where he is also associate director of the Ruskin Research Centre. His books include *Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* (2008), *The New Atheist Novel* (co-authored with Arthur Bradley) (2010) and *Apocalyptic Fiction* (2017). He is also the co-editor, with Jo Carruthers and Mark Knight, of *Literature and the Bible: A Reader* (2013) and, with Roger Kojec'ky, *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text* (2013).

Dr Maithrie White is a freelance scholar, writer and speaker based in Belfast. She holds a PhD in Literature, Critical Theory and Cultural Studies from the University of Nottingham, and previously served as head of the Department of English at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. She is currently training for ordination in the Church of Ireland and is on the Board of Contemporary Christianity, Northern Ireland. She is also Chair of the annual Transforming the Mind conference for Christian postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

News and Notes

Autumn conference

You are invited to attend, or offer to read a paper, at the CLSG autumn conference at Oxford on Saturday, 4 November 2017. This year's theme will be dramatic: that is, aspects of drama and performance in relation to Christian and Biblical themes in literary writing. A call for papers (deadline 31 May 2017) will be sent to members of the e-list and posted on the websites of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) and the University of Pennsylvania Calls for Papers. The CLSG website *clsg.org* gives the fullest information and will be progressively updated.

Be a member

We would like your support since we have no source of funds other than members' fees, subscriptions and donations. Forms to begin or renew membership (£16 p.a., concessions £12) are available on *clsg.org*. A secure credit/bank card payment can be made online – see 'Get Involved' on the website. Members receive a printed copy of *The Glass* and other entitlements described on the same webpage.

Keep in touch

Send in news of events and of your publications, appointments and other items likely to interest list members. Even if you are not a CLSG member you are invited to join the email list and receive occasional information about developments relating to Christianity and literature. There is no charge for membership of the e-list. Email the editor to be added.

Contribute to *The Glass*

Members don't need to wait to be asked. For example, send an idea or proposal for an article any time up to 30 April, then write it during the summer months. Send ideas and contributions to the Editor, Dr Roger Kojecký, *editor@clsg.org*.

For book reviews, contact Dr David Parry, Associate Editor, *editor2@clsg.org*.

The optimum length for articles is 5,000 words, and for reviews around 1,200 words. Contributors should consult the Style Guidance notes in the Journal section of the website *www.clsg.org*. Submit copy as an email attachment, but a short item can be sent in the body of an email, preferably with HTML formatting preserving italics etc.

Back numbers of *The Glass* are to be found in the UK Copyright Deposit libraries, and the British Library has a virtually complete file at the St Pancras site. Issues since No. 10 (1997) are in the form of Open Access PDFs in the Journal Archive section of the CLSG website. Similarly, past conference topics and leaflets with details of the speakers and brief bibliographies can be found in the Conference section. While many of the PDFs are read-only, constituent articles are available to current members on request.